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RED CROSS REPORT SHOWS Torture is U.S. policy in Iraq

End war crimes, bring the troops home now!

By Fred Goldstein

The surfacing of a report by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) demonstrates that the Bush administration and the Pentagon are peddling a pack of lies when they attempt to reduce the torture of Iraqi prisoners to an aberration carried out by a few "untrained" soldiers. A subsequent report by Army Gen. Antonio Taguba on brutality and torture, while sensational, was more narrowly drawn.

The ICRC report shows that the brutality and torture tactics of the U.S. military were not confined to one or two sections of Abu Ghraib prison but were the policy throughout Iraq, from Umm Qasr to Basra to Baghdad. The policy of brutality was not confined to a period of two or three months but began even before the fall of Baghdad. It did not just take place during special interrogations, but was practiced from the moment the U.S. forces attempted to take custody of Iraqis suspected of being useful as prisoners in the struggle against the liberation forces. It began with the raids and pickups, and continued during transportation to internment, as well as during imprisonment.

The ICRC report was handed to the Coalition Forces in February 2004. Excerpts were published in the Wall Street

Journal on May 7, which made the full text available on the web on May 10. The ICRC had already given several other reports to the occupation authorities as far back as April and May of 2003, documenting this type of behavior and worse. With the leaking of photographs, it is now being discussed all over the world.

The most recent report showed that brutality began with the raids and the street sweeps carried out by the U.S. military.

"Arresting authorities," the report says, "entered houses usually after dark, breaking down doors, waking up residents roughly, yelling orders, forcing family members into one room under military guard while searching the rest of the house and further breaking doors, cabinets and other property. They arrested suspects, tying their hands in the back with flexi-cuffs, hooding them, and taking them away. Sometimes they arrested all adult males present in a house, including elderly, handicapped or sick people. Treatment often included pushing people around, insulting, taking aim with rifles, punching and kicking and striking with rifles. Individuals were often led away in whatever they happened to be wearing at the time of arrest—sometimes in pajamas or underwear—and were denied the opportunity to gather a few essential belongings,

such as clothing, hygiene items, medicine or eyeglasses. Those who surrendered with a suitcase often had their belongings confiscated. In many cases personal belongings were seized during the arrest, with no receipt being issued."

Families were not told where people were taken, what they were charged with, or how long they would be gone, "resulting in the de facto 'disappearance' of the arrestee for weeks or even months."

When arrests were made in the streets, at checkpoints or along roads, families were never informed about what had happened until they traced their relatives.

**Up to 90 percent
'arrested by mistake'**

The ICRC said that military intelligence officers told them that "in their estimate between 70 percent and 90 percent of the persons deprived of their liberty in Iraq had been arrested by mistake."

Brutality escalated during transport. One allegation "concerned the arrest of nine men by the CF [coalition forces] in a hotel in Basrah on 13 September 2003. Following their arrest, the nine men were made to kneel, face and hands against the ground, as if in a prayer position. The soldiers stamped on the back of the neck of those raising their head... The suspects

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Many nationalities unite in New York City demonstration, May 8.

WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

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Equal marriage rights

May 17: Day of celebration, day of struggle

By LeiLani Dowell

Monica Roundtree, a Black lesbian, met her partner two years ago on the job in Chicago. She recalls, "One of the first things she told me was, 'I'm going to marry you.' I thought it was just another pickup line." Later they moved in together, and after a couple of months, her partner—with her seven-year old son—sat Roundtree down and proposed marriage. She accepted.

On May 15, they will travel to Canada to get married. Their marriage will not be recognized in the United States, and they will not receive any of the economic or legal benefits that marriage bestows on people in the U.S. Roundtree says it's scary what few rights they have, should anything happen to one of them.

Because of the wedding, Roundtree and her partner will not be present for actions in the U.S. surrounding the weekend of May 17. This is the day that Massachusetts has been ordered by the state's Supreme Judicial Court to begin granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Since that ruling in November, and subsequent rulings that "separate-but-equal" institutions such as civil unions are not equal, thousands of couples and activists across the country have gone on the offensive, participating in civil disobedience and protests demanding the right to marry. Actions have occurred in Oregon, Texas, Minnesota, New Jersey, Michigan, Georgia, California, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Colorado and other states.

In response, the right wing has whipped up a campaign of reaction to defeat the gains of the lesbian, gay, bi, trans movement. A group called Liberty Counsel—which previously worked against the limiting of right-wing picketing at abortion clinics—has filed more than a dozen lawsuits challenging states' attempts to legalize same-sex marriage.

Actions will be held on and around May 17 in Austin, Dallas, and Houston, Texas; Atlanta, Ga.; Manhattan and Brooklyn, N.Y.; Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio; Davis, Calif.; Hartford, Conn.; Portland, Ore.; Sioux Falls, S.D.; Tampa, Fla.; Tucson, Ariz.; Washington, D.C., and other cities.

A national call for solidarity actions for same-sex marriage and against all forms of discrimination, bigotry and racism on May 17 was initiated by three Massachusetts organizations: Boston Stonewall Warriors, the Women's Fightback Network and Boston ANSWER. May 17 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, which outlawed segregated public schools. A statement by Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner reads, "As a person of African descent, I am disturbed by the arguments being made ... to enact a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Given the reality that there are those in this country who would like to reenact differential treatment for people of African descent, I view this movement as not only undermining the civil rights of gays and lesbians but also adding fuel to the movement to strip people of African descent of hard-fought gains."

The struggle for same-sex marriage is a worker's issue, encompassing the right to healthcare, child care and other benefits, and as such has garnered support from labor. Steve Gillis, president of the Boston School Bus Drivers' Union, USWA Local 8571, says, "The basic tenet of unionism is 'an injury to one is an injury to all.' We must fight all forms of discrimination, whether it be



Dowell, a Workers World Party member, is running for Congress on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket in California's 8th Congressional District, which includes most of San Francisco.

racism or anti-gay bigotry and sexism. We view the constitutional amendment as not only discrimination enshrined, but an attempt to further the bosses' program of two-, three-, and four-tiered wage and benefit systems."

In Seattle the May 17 rally at Seattle Central Community College is sponsored by Seattle ANSWER, Don't Amend and the Legal Marriage Alliance. On May 1, an anti-same-sex marriage rally of religious zealots based in from across the state to Seattle's baseball stadium was protested by around 4,000 activists and community members, mobilized on a week's notice.

In Los Angeles, a rally will be held on May 15 in the LGBT community of Silverlake, which pre-dates Stonewall in its history of community fightback against police brutality in LGBT bars. Speakers will include couples facing deportation who are fighting for amnesty and speakers from the transgender community. Spanish-language flyers have been eagerly taken, and weekly planning meetings have grown exponentially, including lots of youth.

San Francisco activists and community members will march on May 17 to City Hall, where history was made: Over 4,000 same-sex couples were married there over a 28-day period in February and March. Speakers at the May 17 rally in San Francisco will include comedian Margaret Cho, war resister Stephen Funk, and Calvin Gipson, grand marshal of San Francisco's 2004 Pride celebration and director of human services at Glide Memorial Church. The California State Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments on the validity of the San Francisco marriages on May 25, with a ruling expected 90 days thereafter.

For thousands of LGBT people, just like Monica Roundtree and her partner, the right to marry is an important struggle, one part of the overall struggle for liberation from a system that works hard to deny rights to workers. □

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Every Friday
Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 7. At 422 S. Western. Phone (213) 500-0529 for info.

NEW YORK

Fri., May 14
Workers World Party meeting: Larry Holmes, member of the ANSWER Steering Committee, will speak on "The Torture Scandal: What's behind it and what are the lessons for the world struggle." 7 pm. Dinner at 6:30. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl. For info (212) 627-2994.

Fri., May 21
Workers World Party meeting: "Defending Immigrant Workers," with guest speakers Brian Barraza, leader of the Association of Mexican American Workers, and a representative of the struggle against racist anti-immigrant attacks in Freehold, N.J. 7 pm.

Dinner at 6:30. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

SAN FRANCISCO

Mon., May 17
National day of local Equal Marriage Rights Solidarity actions. In SF, gather at 5:00 p.m. at Powell & Market Sts. March to City Hall followed by a rally with guest Margaret Cho and others. For info (415) 821-6545.

Sat., May 22
Forum: "The struggle to free the Cuban Five" with attorney Leonard Weinglass and special guest Alice Walker. \$5-\$10 donation. 7 p.m. At 3351-23rd St. (near Valencia). For info (415) 821-6545.

Every Sunday
Workers World Party weekly meetings. These educational meetings cover current events as well as struggles of the peoples from all over the world. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St., No. 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

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JUNE 5 PROTESTS

People's power vs. the Pentagon

By Deirdre Griswold

People's power. That's what has disrupted the plans of the neo-cons in the White House and Pentagon, who thought they could make the conquest of Iraq just a first campaign in an endless war for imperialist world domination.

The Iraqi people have astounded the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz-Rice clique, and all those in positions of power who have fallen in line behind them, with their heroic capacity to resist colonial rule.

This has vindicated the worldwide anti-war movement, which said from the start that this war and occupation was not about improving the lives of the Iraqi people but was an imperialist grab for resources and strategic position in the Middle East.

It appears now that everything is falling apart for Bush and Co. But without the continued pressure of the movement, and the continued resistance in Iraq, they can still continue their occupation in a new form.

The administration is frantically trying to set up a puppet regime in Iraq by June 30 that would "invite" U.S. forces to stay. Most of the Democratic critics of Bush are calling for more troops, not withdrawal. Another big push is needed to end the occupation and get the troops out.

On June 5, the next round of mass demonstrations in the U.S. will take place in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles. Called by the ANSWER Coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—these protests come at a crucial time and will have maximum political impact.

The demonstration in Washington will march from the White House to the Pentagon, which is shaken by the revelations of torture, humiliation and other abuse of prisoners in its jails in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo.

A recent statement from ANSWER says, "There has never been a more urgent time than now to join together and let the whole world know that George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld and other high officials who have carried out unspeakable war

crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace do not speak for us, the people.

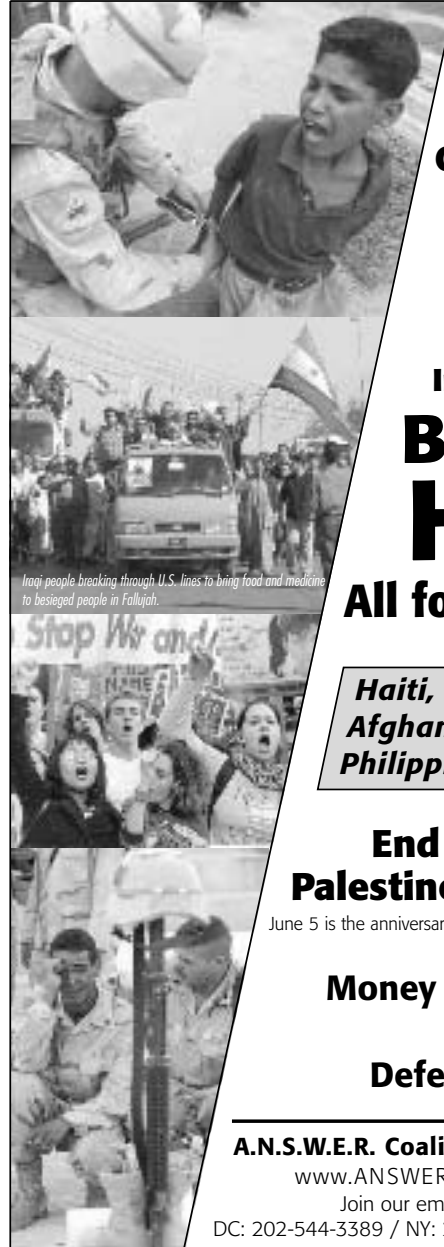
"The world, and especially the people of the Middle East, are seething over the daily experiences and exposés of torture and humiliation imposed by U.S. military forces on Iraqi prisoners. It is not enough to demand the firing of Donald Rumsfeld. He is, of course, a criminal who should be held accountable. But the war itself is a crime. Tens of thousands of men, women and children in Iraq have been killed, their lives destroyed, their homes broken into, their loved ones taken prisoner. ...

"U.S. soldiers, too, used as cannon fodder by Bush and the top brass, are being killed and maimed in growing numbers.

"On June 5, we will solemnly stand with the people of the world who reject the torture and humiliation of Iraqis, both in the dark dungeons like Abu Ghraib, and in the daily humiliations that are endured by Iraqi society at the hands of foreign occupiers. On June 5, we will stand with all of those families and communities who are demanding that U.S. soldiers be brought home from Iraq immediately. On June 5, we will be marching from the White House to the Pentagon and demanding that the \$300 million spent each day for death and destruction in Iraq be used to fund education, housing, healthcare and jobs."

The original ANSWER call for the demonstration also demanded "an end to the colonial occupation of Palestine, and to support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including their right to return to their homeland," pointing out that June 5, 1967, was the opening of the war in which Israel annexed the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

Haitian groups opposed to the occupation of their country after the U.S. kidnapping of their president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, will also be in Washington that day and will join the march to the Pentagon. The ANSWER call stands "in solidarity with the Haitian people who are living under foreign military occupation following the February 28/29 U.S.-coup against the democratically elected government of



Iraqi people breaking through U.S. lines to bring food and medicine to besieged people in Fallujah.

Stop War and

Sat. June 5

Washington, DC

Gather 12 noon • White House

March on the Pentagon

Int'l Day of Emergency Protests:

Bring the Troops Home Now

All foreign troops OUT of Iraq

Haiti, Korea, Afghanistan, **U.S. OUT!** Philippines, Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela

End the Colonial Occupation of Palestine – Support the Right to Return

June 5 is the anniversary of the 1967 war in which Israel conquered the West Bank & Gaza

Money for Jobs, Education, Housing & Healthcare – Not for War! Defend Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism)

www.ANSWERcoalition.org, info@internationalANSWER.org

Join our email alert list! Email us with "subscribe" in your subject line.

DC: 202-544-3389 / NY: 212-633-6646 / SF: 415-821-6545 / LA: 213-487-2368

LOS ANGELES: 12 noon, Olympic & Broadway March to Downtown Federal Building www.ANSWERLA.org

Jean-Bertrand Aristide. President Aristide must be returned to office and U.S., French and other occupation forces must withdraw."

This demonstration against U.S. war and occupation also addresses Washington's threats against Venezuela and Cuba, as well as Korea and the Philippines.

In all these struggles, as inside the U.S. itself, what is at stake is the fight for peo-

SAN FRANCISCO 11 am, UN Plaza Market between 7th & Hyde, Civic Center BART

ple's needs versus the greed of huge corporations that profit from war and exploitation.

Information about the protests is available at the ANSWER web site, internationalanswer.org, or at the following organizing centers: Washington, D.C., (202) 544-3389; New York, (212) 633-6646; San Francisco, (415) 821-6545; Los Angeles, (213) 487-2368. □

SNAFU to U.S. military personnel:

'DISOBEY ILLEGAL ORDERS!'

The following is a May 4 statement issued by SNAFU—the Support Network for an Armed Forces Union—in response to revelations about the torture of Iraqi prisoners.

Sisters and Brothers in the Armed Forces: Resist! Organize! Refuse to participate in war crimes. Join us in taking action to stop the war.

Recent revelations, including hundreds of photos, numerous military reports, and testimony from military and civilian officials reveal the true nature of this war. The torture, abuse, and rape of Iraqi prisoners and civilians is not the work of a few individual soldiers. It is the direct result of the Bush Administration's decision to wage a racist colonial war against an entire people. The demonization of the Iraqi people by the Bush Administration and its accomplices in the media make this sort of brutality inevitable. George W.

Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and the rest of the Administration must be held accountable for their crimes.

In speaking of crimes, we do not speak only of individual acts of torture. The entire process of planning and executing this war is a criminal act, as clearly defined by the Nuremberg Principles and other international laws. The planning of a war of aggression and waging war against a civilian population are clearly illegal.

Under both international and U.S. law, members of the Armed Forces are required to disobey illegal orders. Orders to engage in torture, or to attack civilian targets, or to participate in wars of aggression, for example, are illegal. Soldiers are obligated to disobey these orders and to report those that give the orders.

Therefore, we call upon members of the Armed Forces to:

- Refuse to torture prisoners in violation of International Law.

- Refuse to obey all illegal orders.
- Refuse to commit atrocities against an innocent population.
- Join with the people of the world and take action now to stop the war.
- Do everything within your power to resist the crimes being committed by the U.S. government.

We offer our support and solidarity to all those who choose to follow their conscience and take action.

No enlistment contract will excuse you from your right and obligation to follow the dictates of your conscience. No oath will excuse criminal acts committed against innocent people.

History will condemn George W. Bush as a liar and murderer, who was willing to cause the deaths of thousands of people for the profit of Wall Street. Will you stand with the war criminal Bush or will you choose to stand with the millions of people who oppose his fantasies of global empire? Don't let those monsters in

Washington, D.C., turn you into something less than human. Don't let them deceive and pressure you into committing acts that will haunt you the rest of your life. Turn against the war criminals and take a stand with humanity.

The resistance of soldiers helped bring an end to the war in Vietnam. It was soldiers, participating in the Winter Soldier Investigation, who documented the war crimes committed against the people of Vietnam. Soldiers in Vietnam helped stop the war by deserting, refusing to go into combat, and committing other acts of resistance. By 1970, the Army had 65,643 deserters, roughly the equivalent of four infantry divisions. The war stopped, in part, because soldiers forced the war criminals in Washington to stop.

Join us in stopping this criminal war.

Veterans, military personnel, and military families—to endorse this statement, send an email to resist@join-snafu.org. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

In the shadows of Abu Ghraib prison

Excerpted from a column by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.



The color photos coming out of the dreaded Abu Ghraib prison on Baghdad's outskirts are racing around the world, silent yet eloquent testament to what Americans really think about the people they allegedly came there to "liberate."

The photos, especially in the age of the internet, are racing through the Arab and Muslim world, and showing a side of the American character that seldom gets to be seen, especially abroad.

The photos of naked Arab men, some posed with laughing, jeering U.S. women, is the height of humiliation, and tells everyone who can see that Americans hold the Iraqis, and by extension, other Arabs, in utter contempt.

"This is not America," a politician huffs.

"I am appalled," yet another exclaims.

Yet, what is truly appalling, and perhaps more chilling than the naked, human pyramids shown, is the sheer glee shown in the faces of the Americans.

The photos flashed in British tabloids, of soldiers urinating—pissing!—on naked Iraqis, tells the same baleful tale.

These are the actions of contempt, hatred, disrespect—and conquest.

Are the Americans and the British liberators or occupiers?

One need look no further than the faces in the photos of Abu Ghraib for the answer.

When speaking recently with Emory Douglas, the celebrated former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party and chief graphic artist of its famed newspaper, *The Black Panther*, Emory brought to mind an image that is almost lost in history.

He reminded me of a police raid on the West Philadelphia offices of the Black Panther Party on Aug. 31, 1970, when the police, armed with automatic weapons, stripped men in the streets.

I also thought of the infamous Charles Stuart case, from Boston, when a white man claimed a Black man killed his wife. The cops descended on Roxbury, Black Boston, like a plague. They stripped men in the streets of Beantown.

Many of the Americans working in the prisons of Iraq, especially in the reserves, are cops or prison guards in their civilian lives. Indeed, one of the men identified as a suspect in the brutal mistreatment of people in Abu Ghraib, indeed a corporal in the Army, works here, at SCI-Greene!

The horrific treatment of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib has its dark precedents in the prisons and police stations across America.

Journalist Seymour Hersh, of the *New Yorker* magazine, has alleged that there have been cases of sodomy against Iraqis there at Abu Ghraib, and even killing.

Does the name Abner Louima ring a bell?

If you hate someone; if you disrespect them, if you fear them, how can you "liberate" them?

As we have said from the very beginning, the Iraq Adventure is not, and never has been, about "liberating" an oppressed people. Indeed, a recent CNN/USA Today poll suggests Iraqis have come to that conclusion, with 71 percent stating Americans are "occupiers."

Americans may call it "liberation," but they are bringing torture, humiliation and domination.

Nor are these events the work of people who are "untrained," "poorly trained," or the always useful, "bad apples."

As we have suggested above, many of those who are there in Iraq, and hundreds of the people working in Abu Ghraib prison, were reserves, and came from jobs as prison guards and cops in civilian life. They are perhaps better trained than the average MP.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's latest work, *"We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party,"* is available from Left Books: www.leftbooks.com.

SCI Greene

Home-grown prison torture

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

In Aaron McGruder's comic strip "The Boondocks" May 10, the character Caesar tells his friend Huey, "Rumsfeld says the abuse of Iraqi prisoners is 'un-American.'" To which Huey replies: "Really? A bunch of men stripped, humiliated and abused physically and sexually? Sounds like every prison I've ever heard about in America."

This comparison is no joke. As news surfaced about the U.S. torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, it was revealed that two of the reservists involved are U.S. prison guards.

Staff Sgt. Ivan "Chip" Frederick is a corrections officer at Buckingham Correctional Center in Virginia. He has been linked to the death of one Iraqi prisoner at Abu Ghraib. Charles A. Graner Jr., one of six military police officers charged with supervising the torture of Iraqi prisoners, and who appears in some of the most lurid photos, has been a corrections officer at Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution at Greene since 1996.

SCI Greene, a super-maximum-security prison in western Pennsylvania, houses the overwhelming majority of the state's death row prisoners, including political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. He has published many accounts of abuse and torture of prisoners at the facility.

Reports of prisoner abuse have plagued SCI Greene since it opened less than a decade ago as the "shining jewel in the crown" of the Pennsylvania Department of Correction. In an article written from death row, Abu-Jamal described SCI Greene as a "bright, shining hell" where prisoners were subject to arbitrary cruelties.

Philadelphia, May 12—A former death row prisoner spoke out at a media conference here today about his experiences with Charles A. Graner, Jr., an SCI Greene prison guard reportedly involved in the abuse of Iraqi prisoners of war. Nicholas Yarris, an exonerated Pennsylvania death row prisoner at SCI who was released on Jan. 16, said he had numerous encounters with Graner, describing the guard as "violent, abusive, arrogant and mean-spirited" toward inmates. However the real issue is not the individual, Yarris stressed, but "how the U.S. is training guards in these maximum security hell-holes like SCI Greene and then unleashing them on another peoples' society."

Located in an isolated rural area, 93 percent of the prison's staff is white, while the vast majority of inmates are African American or Latino. The level of racial abuse is so notorious that officers at other institutions in the state prison system reportedly refer to it as the "Good Ol' Boy Jail."

Two years after Graner was hired at SCI Greene, the prison was at the center of an abuse scandal because guards routinely beat and humiliated prisoners. Prison officials—citing privacy laws—refuse to reveal whether Graner was disciplined in that case.

Meanwhile this supervisor of torture of Iraqi prisoners is still on Pennsylvania's payroll, receiving salary and benefits.

The rule, not the exception

While Rumsfeld and Bush claim the torture at Abu Ghraib was "an isolated affair" and "un-American," documented brutality at prisons across the U.S.

exposes this as yet another administration lie.

According to Kara Gotsch, public policy coordinator for the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, horrific abuses—some similar to those revealed in Iraq—occur regularly in U.S. prisons with little or no attention.

"We certainly see many of these same kinds of things here in the United States," said Gotsch. "This office has been involved in cases in which prisoners have been raped by guards and humiliated. But we don't talk about it much in America and we certainly don't hear the president expressing outrage."

From 1995-2000, while Bush served as Texas governor, that state led the country in state-sponsored executions. In 1996, guards at the Brazoria County jail staged a "drug raid" on inmates that was videotaped for training purposes. The tape showed several inmates forced to strip and lie on the ground; a police dog attacking prisoners, biting one on the leg; guards prodding prisoners with stun guns and forcing them to crawl on the ground; and guards dragging injured inmates face-down back to their cells.

"The levels of abuse, the humiliation and degradation, the lack of oversight and accountability ... there were many parallels with Iraq," said Michelle Deitch, who teaches criminal justice at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.

Despite the military's claim that the torture at Abu Ghraib was the result of "poorly prepared and untrained" military police officers, it seems more likely that the training Graner and Frederick received in U.S. prisons contributed to the problem. □

BETSY GIMBEL: An audacious fighter

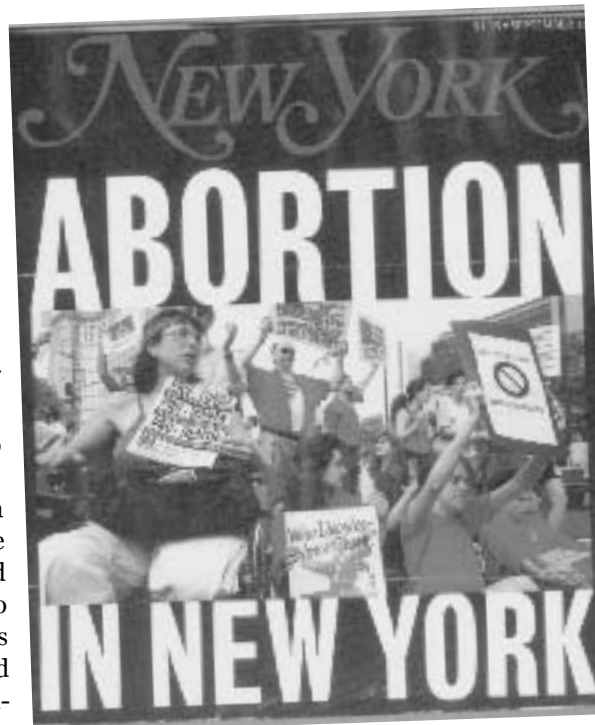
By Deirdre Griswold

Frances Dostal of Cleveland remembers Betsy Gimbel shinnying up a flag pole during the Vietnam War to replace a U.S. flag with one representing the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

Betsy died on April 29 after an illness. As a member of Youth Against War & Fascism in Cleveland, and later of Workers World Party in New York, she found ways to put her audacious stamp on the progressive struggles of her day.

She let the air out of the tires of a police car while anti-war protesters were being arrested in Cleveland. She talked her way into a Republican dinner to heckle President Richard Nixon. She was the main witness against Cleveland police after they beat up young demonstrators from SDS in a prison yard.

In the early 1970s Betsy was one of a small group of women to win jobs as shop clerks in the New York sanitation department's garages and other maintenance shops. As an activist in Local 1549 of DC 37, AFSCME, she became the union protector of these women, who immediately came under a huge chauvinist attack by male garage workers. Almost all the women in this first group were forced out. Without Betsy, who put up feisty resistance to harassment, none would have made it. Today, there are women clerks in virtually every shop, as well as many



Gimbel in wheel chair on left.

bi and trans rights or marching against U.S. military intervention abroad, the spirited group of activists in wheelchairs or with seeing-eye dogs gave inspiration to the whole crowd.

Betsy met her life-partner Mike Gimbel through the political struggle. But they found they had another passion in common: they both loved reptiles, from snakes and iguanas to alligators. Their apartment in Brooklyn, where they lived in an old commercial loft that they fixed up with pools and overhead branches where their pets could roam and relax, became a mecca for neighborhood children. They didn't have

to pay money to go to the Bronx Zoo. They could go to Mike and Betsy's place for an exotic and educational tour.

Betsy for several years headed the Larry Davis Defense Committee, which was hated by the cops because Davis had tangled with them in a gun battle when he tried to stop drug-running in Harlem. Betsy and Mike began receiving threatening phone calls at night. Then the police raided their Brooklyn apartment, killing or injuring many of their pets.

Betsy was courageous and will long be remembered by people across a broad spectrum of communities. □

openly gay clerks.

After she lost one of her legs due to a medical problem, Betsy became an organizer and advocate for the disabled. She was the secretary of Disabled in Action, and led the fight for access to mass transit for the disabled. The group blocked buses with their wheelchairs demanding the public vehicles be made accessible—a demand they won.

Betsy many, many times organized contingents of disabled people in progressive New York demonstrations. Whether it was in support of lesbian, gay,

50th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education

'The stony road we trod'

The following are excerpts from a talk given by Dorothea Peacock at a Workers World meeting in Boston on May 5:

The road I'm taking for discussion is the highway to education. The vehicle I'm using to travel along this highway is Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan., the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the public schools in the U.S.

May 17 marks the 50th anniversary of the decision. How did the separate but equal doctrine come about?

1896 had marked the passing of the Reconstruction era and the return of the pro-slavery government to the Southern states. States' laws were again adopted reminiscent of black codes which had been passed right after the Civil War to keep Black people in their "place."

The laws established, enforced by criminal penalties, were based on racial segregation under which members of the Black and white races were required to be separated in facilities including separate schools, parks, waiting rooms, bus and railroad accommodations. Where completely separate facilities proved later on not to be feasible, as in dining cars or passenger coaches, a curtained partition served to separate the races. A fine of \$25 or 20 days in jail was the penalty for sitting in the wrong compartment.

[Homer] Plessy, who was "one eighth" Black by [Louisiana law], refused to vacate a seat in the white compartment of a railway car and was arrested for violating the statute. [Years later] a Howard University student studying the Plessy vs. Ferguson

ruling and application became disturbed by this use of this ruling towards education and other unfair laws. This student changed his major the same day to study law and became Attorney Oliver Hill, one of the civil rights lawyers who argued the Brown vs. Board of Education case.

In April 1951 Barbara Johns, a senior at Robert Moton High School in Prince Edward County, Va., led her class on strike to procure better school facilities and publicize the deplorable conditions of the Black school. Had the superintendent complied or tried to make better accommodations, the strike wouldn't have escalated at the school, consisting of a small building which was overcrowded when opened in 1939. To correct this situation the county built a number of tar-paper shacks which had tin stove pipes running from room to room. These pathetic rooms were heated through the use of oil drums acting as stoves. Coal was then burned in the drums. During inclement weather the children changing classes were exposed to rain, mud, cold and ice as they made their way to shacks on campus.

It's understandable why on April 23, 1951 students sought help from the NAACP and the pastor of a local Baptist church. The students also had the help and support of their parents. A meeting was held at the Baptist church with NAACP leaders. After two weeks on strike the students were told that they had made their point and [should] discontinue striking. The leaders also informed the students and parents that from now on the NAACP would be seeking to overturn the Plessy [decision] and have the Supreme



Dorothea Peacock

Court declare racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

This was the beginning of the presentation of separate desegregation lawsuits. Ten civil rights lawyers argued those cases before nine white judges. The Supreme Court said go back and consolidate similar cases into one single case, which became the Brown vs. Board of Education case. [The other cases mentioned in Chief Justice Earl Warren's opinion of the court, besides the Virginia lawsuit, included Cumming vs. County Board of Education, Gong Lum vs. Rice, Missouri ex rel. Gaines vs. Canada, Sipuel vs. Oklahoma, Sweatt vs. Painter and McLaurin vs. Oklahoma State Regents.]

Fifty years after that decision the Boston Globe has stated that "Massachusetts is hyper-segregational beyond

regional and national levels." A task force [was established] to discuss neighborhood schools and the quality of them. I was at a meeting among activists, students, parents, teachers, [Boston School] Superintendent Thomas W. Payzant, school committee and councilors. The theme of the meeting was neighborhood schools and what will make a quality school of your choice. Students were asking for tools which are necessary for an education. Parents, activists and friends sat for two hours poring over needs. The answer was, we have to take these issues to the review board—which will not be considered or take effect for a year and a half!

[A recent] Workers World editorial stated that "while winning formal, legal equality was a huge step forward, just like ending colonial rule, it did not end racist oppression any more than neocolonialism has ended the great gap between rich and poor nations. The problem still exists that a small class of super-rich capitalists run this country and the world. They need racism to stay on top just as they need every other tool that divides the workers they exploit. Having advanced this far, however, Black people are in a much stronger position to not only participate in but play a leading role in the next phase of the struggle, which will be for genuine equality of all peoples based on a working-class redistribution of society's wealth—with affirmative action and reparations to eradicate the terrible inequalities inherited from the past."

Stony is the road we trod! □

Emmett Till, Malcolm X and the capitalist state

By Monica Moorehead

The U.S. Justice Department announced May 10 that it was reopening the case of Emmett Till—a case that is almost 50 years old.

In late August 1955, Till, a 14-year-old African American, was brutally lynched by a group of white segregationists while visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi. He was murdered for supposedly whistling at a white woman. This terrible atrocity shocked people all around the country and the world.

Till's mother, Mamie Till Mobley, made sure that her son's coffin was open for public display to reveal his horribly disfigured face after the savage beating he received before being shot in the head and thrown in the Tallahatchie River. Fifty thousand outraged people, the majority Black, filed by his casket in his hometown of Chicago.

Till's lynching, one of countless thousands in the semi-enslaved South, was viewed by many as a major catalyst for the launching of the historic civil rights struggle.

Till's murder happened one year after the Supreme Court's Brown vs. Board of Education decision struck down the racist "separate but equal" doctrine in public schools, and just four months before the Montgomery bus boycott. The civil rights bills were not passed until almost a decade later.

R. Alexander Acosta, a Justice Department spokesperson, stated at a news con-

ference that there was "renewed interest in the case." This interest really amounts to a lot of pressure by civil rights forces—50 years worth.

It was a 2003 PBS documentary called "The Murder of Emmett Till" that introduced a whole new generation to Till, the racist conditions that led to his death and the fact that no one was ever sentenced for his death.

Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were acquitted of Till's murder after just 67 minutes of "deliberations" by an all-white jury following a sham trial. The killers, who boasted gleefully in a 1956 Life magazine interview that they killed Till, are now dead. They knew that legally they could not be retried for this crime.

Mamie Till Mobley, now deceased, and others have long charged that more people were involved in the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till. Based on the original trial testimony which the PBS documentary covered, Acosta stated, others implicated in Till's death could stand trial.

The Justice Department says it wants to right a terrible wrong in the Till case. But such claims runs counter to the sordid history of this appendage of the capitalist state when it comes to Black people and other people of color.

Malcolm X and the FBI

In the early 1950s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the armed wing of the Justice Department, created the Counter-

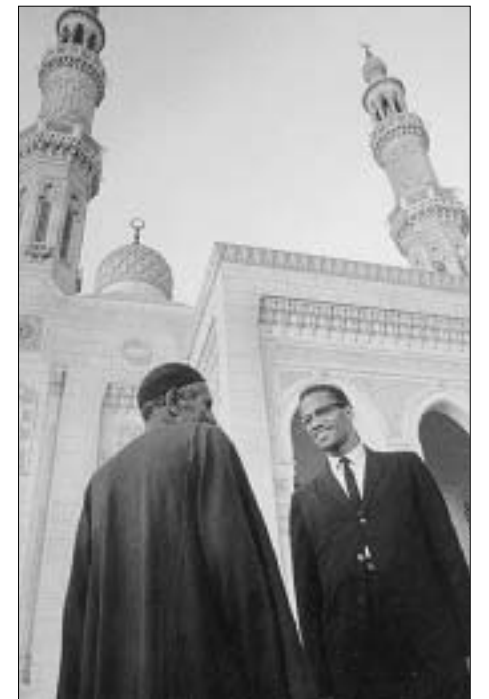
intelligence Program or Cointelpro. Did this program go after white supremacist groups like the KKK or other extra-legal terrorist formations? Absolutely not.

Cointelpro, with its anti-communist, racist ideology, went after any individual or group that espoused progressive social change or national liberation, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement.

Cointelpro kept files on progressive movements and their leaders as a vehicle for infiltration, jailing and murder. One of the earliest targets of Cointelpro was the great Black revolutionary Malcolm X. Documents show that Cointelpro began a file on Malcolm X around 1953 when he was emerging as a prominent spokesperson of the Nation of Islam.

According to the files: "...Malcolm stated [at a Harlem NOI rally in 1961] that there is a law against kidnapping, lynching and raping. He stated that the FBI was sent to the South to find the lynchers of Mack Parker and Emmett Till. Malcolm stated that the FBI found the lynchers, but they went free and were not punished for their crimes." ("Malcolm X: The FBI File," by Clayborne Carson)

While the FBI did keep files on the KKK, it refused to intervene in the original Till case and the cases of many related KKK murders, especially of civil rights activists. The U.S. government did everything it could, covertly and overtly, to hold back



Malcolm X (right) in Mecca, 1964.

the advancement of the civil rights movement and to destroy the more radical Black liberation movement.

Malcolm X, who would have been 79 this May 19, was developing a more anti-imperialist position at the time of his assassination on February 21, 1965. The U.S. government, including the FBI, has been implicated in his death.

The death of Emmett Till and the ever-present revolutionary contributions of Malcolm X have helped to reveal the repressive nature of the capitalist state—the police, the courts and prisons.

The main reason the Justice Department wants to reopen the Till case is to restore its tarnished image worldwide, especially now that U.S. imperialism finds itself more and more isolated thanks to the colonial occupation of Iraq and the unprecedented torture scandal of Iraqi detainees. □

U.S. torture

The exception or the rule?

By Sara Flounders

The horrendous images of torture, degradation and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners are being described as an aberration, an exception or the result of bad training.

Over and over again the public is assured by the military, the government and the corporate media that these are extreme acts carried out by a few bad apples and are universally deplored. These crimes will be rooted out and stopped, they say, through scrupulous military inquiries, congressional hearings or even a special commission.

Suddenly forgotten is the role of the media after September 11. It whipped up a climate of racism and actively encouraged torture as a necessary part of the "war on terror." The senior editor of Newsweek, Jonathan Alter, helped open a public campaign with a commentary entitled, "Time to Think about Torture," published in the magazine on Nov. 5, 2001. CNN, Fox News, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and others then picked up the theme.

Any examination of U.S. wars in the past and others currently underway, or a look inside U.S. prisons today, will show that Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq is not an aberration. It represents a systematic, pervasive and deliberate policy. Extreme force, including torture, is used to control an empire built on the ever-growing impoverishment of millions of people.

The United States is a country founded on the most systematic and pervasive use of torture. How else could the enslavement of millions of African people have

been enforced, or the genocide against Native peoples to confiscate their land? Branding and lynching of African people and bounties paid for the scalps of Native people were acts of public terror organized by the state and blessed by religion. This level of extreme brutality against whole peoples can only be carried out by consciously whipping up the most vicious forms of racism and bigotry, in an effort to mask the enormity of the crimes committed.

The U.S. military has written manuals and books on the use of torture. It operates schools, such as the School of the Americas, to train para-military units and death squads from around the world in the most sophisticated forms of individual torture and targeted assassinations.

It should also be remembered that the Pentagon has an arsenal of weapons that inflict torture on whole populations, such as cluster bombs, napalm and phosphorous bombs.

The following are just a few examples that have recently received sporadic media coverage.

Afghanistan: Massacre at Mazar-i-Sharif

Graphic photographs have appeared in major U.S. newspapers of Afghan prisoners stripped, bound, gagged, blindfolded and their ears muffled for total sensory deprivation. Similar photos and testimony were presented at the trial of John Walker Lindh, the U.S. citizen captured in Afghanistan and tried in California. Photos showed Lindh strapped naked to a stretcher, blindfolded and gagged. He described how he was stacked in a ship-

ping container for two to three days without heat, light or water, along with hundreds of other prisoners.

In Afghanistan thousands of Taliban prisoners who surrendered in late November 2001 were also locked into cargo boxes and then intentionally left without water or air to bake in the sun, according to a report by Physicians for Human Rights. The Scottish film maker Jamie Doran traveled to Afghanistan in early 2002 and made a film based on the report entitled: "Massacre at Mazar." The film documented the role of U.S. troops and CIA agents in the torture and deaths of up to 3,000 men at Mazar-i-Sharif. U.S. troops oversaw the operation and were running the base. This documentary was aired at a special showing in the European Parliament. It led to calls for charges of war crimes against U.S. commanders.

Newsweek white-washed this atrocity in a cover story on Aug. 26, 2002, called "The Death Convoy of Afghanistan." The article presented graphic photos and eyewitness testimony on the thousands left to die of asphyxiation and dehydration in locked containers and the dumping of corpses in mass graves. However, all blame for this atrocity was placed entirely on the shoulders of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance. It exonerated the U.S. forces, who were described as overwhelmed, stretched thin and lacking in oversight or a clear command.

Guantanamo: Camp X-Ray

In Camp X-Ray at the U.S. base at Guantanamo, Cuba, over 600 prisoners have been held for over two years. U.S. officials have asserted they are not bound

by the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war and are outside any scrutiny. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's grouping has created a new category: "enemy combatant."

The prisoners have no rights whatsoever. They cannot speak to a lawyer, contact their families or even know the charges against them. Some are held in total isolation. A few prisoners who hold British or Australian citizenship have been released. They have described systematic torture and abuse, even of elderly prisoners and those as young as 14 years.

In early September a team from the U.S. prison at Guantanamo headed by the commander of Camp X-Ray, Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, went to Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq to help the command there develop procedures. Among its recommendations, according to the report on torture just released by U.S. Army Gen. Antonio Taguba, were that military police guards act as "enablers" for interrogations.

Haiti: Mass graves and U.S. Marines

The U.S.-organized coup in Haiti and the kidnapping of democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has resulted in atrocities similar to those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A delegation from the National Lawyers Guild visited several cities in Haiti from March 29 through April 5. It reported on mass graves near Port au Prince and filmed a site where a number of partially burned bodies were being eaten by pigs. The delegation photographed fresh skulls and other human bones, some still tangled

Report shows torture is U.S. policy in Iraq: End war crimes,

Continued from page 1

were taken to Al-Hakimiya [prison] ... in Basrah and then beaten severely by CF personnel. One of the arrestees died following the ill treatment, ([name excised] aged 28, married, father of two children). Prior to his death, his co-arrestees heard him screaming and asking for assistance."

The report describes another incident: "During a visit of the ICRC in Camp Bucca on 22 September 2003, a 61-year old person deprived of his liberty [ICRC terminology for a prisoner] alleged that he had been tied, hooded and forced to sit on the hot surface of what he surmised to be the engine of a vehicle, which had caused severe burns to his buttocks. The victim had lost consciousness. The ICRC observed large crusted lesions consistent with his allegation."

Another prisoner examined by the ICRC in October 2003 was "hooded, handcuffed in the back, and made to lie face down on a hot surface during transportation. This had caused severe skin burns that required three months hospitalization. ... He had to undergo several skin grafts, the amputation of his right index finger," and the loss of use of other fingers, as well as extensive burns over his abdomen. "The ICRC recommended to the CF that the case be investigated.... At the time of this writing the results of the report were still pending."

The U.S. military was told of behavior that "might amount to torture" and did nothing. "Several military intelligence officers confirmed to the ICRC that it was part of the military intelligence process to hold a person deprived of liberty naked in

a completely dark and empty cell for a prolonged period and to use inhumane and degrading treatment, including physical and psychological coercion ... to secure cooperation."

The ICRC report summarizes some of the most common forms of "ill-treatment" during interrogation. "Hooding, used to prevent people from seeing and to disorient them, and also to prevent them from breathing freely. One or sometimes two bags, sometimes with an elastic blindfold over the eyes which, when slipped down, further impeded proper breathing. Hooding was sometimes used in conjunction with beatings thus increasing anxiety as to when blows would come. The practice of hooding also allowed the interrogators to remain anonymous and thus to act with impunity. Hooding could last for periods from a few hours to up to 2 to 4 consecutive days...."

People were threatened with reprisals against their family members, threatened with execution, beaten with rifle butts, stripped naked for days, paraded around naked, handcuffed to cells, set out in the sun for hours in 120-degree temperature, deprived of sleep, food, water and access to hygiene, among other things.

As early as April 1, 2003, the ICRC informed the commander of the British Armed Forces at the CF Central Command in Doha about methods of "ill-treatment used by military intelligence" against prisoners at the Umm Qasr internment camp.

"In May 2003, the ICRC sent to the CF a memorandum based on over 200 allegations" of abuse of prisoners at "collecting points, battle group stations and tem-

porary holding areas. The allegations were consistent with marks on the bodies observed by the medical delegate. The memorandum was handed over to [name excised in the copy] US Central Command in Doha."

In early July 2003 the ICRC "sent the CF a working paper detailing approximately 50 allegations of ill-treatment in the military section of Camp Cropper at Baghdad International Airport." The working papers included reports of such atrocities as a prisoner who was hooded and cuffed, threatened with death, urinated on, kicked all over and then had "a baseball ... tied into the mouth using a scarf and deprived of sleep for four consecutive days."

Why the photos came out

The main difference between the incidents of brutality that have been recently exposed, the hundreds reported on by the ICRC and the thousands that undoubtedly took place, is that these recent incidents at Abu Ghraib were photographed. There is a huge split in the U.S. ruling class over the decision by the occupation to allow the photographs to come out.

Recent news about growing anger in the higher ranks of the military directed at those commanding the war and occupation—Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, and Gen. Richard B. Myers, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—sheds a great deal of light on the decision of CBS, Seymour Hersh of the New Yorker magazine, and the capitalist media in general to expose the torture regime at Abu Ghraib.

The refusal of the Iraqi people to submit to a colonial occupation and their capacity to mount a growing resistance has driven the foreign policy establishment, but above all important sections among the military commanders in Iraq, to seek a new strategy and new tactics. They are desperately in need of a plan that would allow them to succeed in the occupation, build a pro-U.S. imperialist base in the country and eventually allow them to draw down their forces.

The political-military crisis caused by the Iraqi defense of Falluja and then the insurrection of Shiite leader Moktada al-Sadr in Najaf, Kufa and throughout the south confronted U.S. imperialism with the potential failure of the Iraqi adventure.

There have always been differences within the Bush administration over strategy and tactics—how to prepare for the war in Iraq, how to wage the war and how to carry out the occupation. Secretary of State Colin Powell has represented the broader "multi-lateral" sections of the ruling class and the "overwhelming force on the ground" advocates in the military. But the Powell view has never been able to move Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neo-cons one inch—except for sending Powell to the UN for one last resolution before the war. This view has been stonewalled from day one.

The military opposition to Rumsfeld, as expressed by Army head Gen. Eric Shinseki before the war, when he said it would take several hundred thousand troops to occupy Iraq, is now beginning to boil over.

The military commanders are supposed

in clothes or with shoes and sneakers nearby. They also confirmed that increasing numbers of bodies were being brought to the morgue or were found with their hands bound behind their backs and bags over their heads. The morgue director admitted that 800 bodies had been “dumped and buried” by the morgue, an extraordinarily high number.

The lawyers’ delegation and a recent labor/community delegation reported that U.S. troops have been terrorizing entire neighborhoods with mass sweeps and arrests. There are now approximately 3,600 U.S., French and Canadian marines occupying Haiti. The NLG Summary Report says that “the delegation found overwhelming evidence that the victims of the threats and violence have been supporters of the elected government of President Aristide and the Fanmi Lavalas Party.” Many are in hiding in the mountains or in Port-au-Prince; others have been beaten and/or killed. Many of their homes have been selectively destroyed, mostly by arson.

School of torture

The School of the Americas is a U.S. Army-run school based in Fort Benning, Ga., that has trained Latin American military officers to control and destroy popular mass movements. Its graduates have been consistently involved in the most brutal human rights abuses. In 1996 the Pentagon was forced to release training manuals used at the school, and disseminated by it throughout Latin America, that explained the use of torture, extortion and execution. Many of the 60,000 officers who have attended the SOA have gone on to become dictators, death squad leaders, and perpetrators of the worst atrocities in the region.

An international campaign to close the training center, led by School of the Americas

Continued on page 10

World Tribunal on Iraq

New York war-crimes hearing finds U.S. guilty

By John Catalinotto
New York

Thirteen international jurors at a session of the World Tribunal on Iraq (WTI) held here at Cooper Union May 8 found the U.S. government guilty of war crimes. Their decision followed a full day of presentations establishing both the existence of a body of law defining these war crimes and dramatic eyewitness accounts demonstrating U.S. guilt.

A year ago anti-war activists worldwide began to discuss holding the WTI, basing it on the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Vietnam held in 1967. Turkish activists organized a meeting in the fall of 2003 in Istanbul, which began to set an international framework for holding hearings of people’s tribunals.

There have now been forums or hearings in Mexico, Japan, India, Denmark, a three-day session in Brussels, Belgium, and now New York. Related legal initiatives have been held in Britain and the Philippines, and more hearings are scheduled June 19 in Berlin, in December in Rome and on Aug. 26 in New York, three days before the Republican National Convention.

With moving testimony before hundreds in the auditorium here, witnesses showed how U.S. forces used illegal weapons during the March-April 2003 assault. Attorney Jennifer Ridha questioned Dr. April Hurley, who was in Iraq

during that period, about injuries to a 10-year-old Iraqi boy Ali Esmaeel Abbas. A slide showed Abbas in a metal hospital bed, having lost most of his arms, his body blackened by burns.

Some in the audience gasped, and some sobbed as Dr. Hurley told them that Abbas had said that if he had no use of his limbs he would kill himself. Answering Ridha’s questions, Dr. Hurley explained that the nature of the burns showed that they were caused by incendiary material that stuck to his body as it burned.

Abbas and his family were in a civilian area. As it is impermissible to use incendiary bombs against civilian targets, this was a clear war crime the Pentagon committed, Ridha explained.

California journalist David Martinez said: “During the siege in Falluja I saw an American sniper shoot an older man who was obviously a civilian. He was bleeding to death on the sidewalk. His family could not go to get him, as the U.S. snipers killed anyone who was outside. They had to watch him slowly die.”

Agitated, Martinez described his own change of opinion regarding the occupation. He said this paralleled that of Iraqis

he met. Last summer, many said they “would give the Americans a chance to help Iraq. But then they should leave. Otherwise, we will resist.”

Martinez too thought at that time the U.S. invasion might lead to some good. Now he says, “End the occupation. Leave Iraq now.”

A local Iraqi leader in Baghdad told him it was time to go: “I can no longer control my own people.”

No health care

Belgian emergency room doctor Geert van Moorter had visited Iraq in 2002, under sanctions. He was in Baghdad again in March-April 2003 during the intense bombing and the U.S. takeover. He visited in July 2003 and again this March.

“Frankly, there is no respect for the Geneva Convention,” he told jurors. “Last year during the takeover of Baghdad I saw wounded Iraqi children sent out in an ambulance to a better equipped hospital, only to come back 10 minutes later with additional wounds when U.S. troops fired on their ambulances. I could only reach out and hold their hands as they died.”

Continued on page 10

bring the troops home now!

to secure Iraq for U.S. imperialism, but they are faced with a sea of hostility that is growing more and more turbulent by the day. The atrocities at Abu Ghraib are exploding under them. But at the same time they are seizing upon the exposures to try to shake the grip of the Rumsfeld-Myers-Wolfowitz leadership, whom they blame for their troubles.

Deep divisions in military

The May 9 Washington Post revealed that there are “deep divisions ... emerging at the top of the U.S. military over the course of the occupation of Iraq, with some senior officers beginning to say that the United States faces the prospect of casualties for years” without achieving its objectives.

“Army Maj. Gen. Charles H. Swannack Jr.,” continues the Post, “the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, ... said he believes that at the tactical level at which fighting occurs, the U.S. military is still winning. But when asked whether he believes the United States is losing, he said, ‘I think strategically we are.’”

“Army Col. Paul Hughes, who last year was the first director of strategic planning for the U.S. Occupation Authority in Baghdad ... noted that a pattern of winning battles while losing a war characterized the U.S. failure in Vietnam. ‘Unless we ensure that we have coherence in our policy, we will lose strategically.’”

“Some officers,” continued the Post, “say the place to begin restructuring U.S. policy is by ousting Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.... Several of those interviewed said a profound anger is

building within the Army at Rumsfeld and those around him.”

An unnamed “senior general at the Pentagon said he believes the United States is already on the road to defeat.” He was quoted as saying: “Had someone like Colin Powell been the chairman [of the Joint Chiefs of Staff], he would not have agreed to send troops without a clear exit strategy. The current OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] refused to listen or adhere to military advice.”

From a military point of view, the struggle is over strengthening the occupation by sending more troops. It has nothing to do with ending the occupation itself.

A highly significant editorial appeared in the May 17 edition of the Army Times virtually calling for the resignation of Rumsfeld and Myers.

“Around the halls of the Pentagon, a term of caustic derision has emerged for the enlisted soldiers at the heart of the furor over the Abu Ghraib prison scandal: the six morons who lost the war.”

“Indeed,” continued the editorial, “the damage done to the U.S. military ... by the horrifying photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi detainees at the notorious prison is incalculable.”

“But the folk in the Pentagon are talking about the wrong morons.”

And the editorial goes on to say that responsibility “extends all the way up the chain of command to the highest reaches of the military hierarchy and its civilian leadership.” It concludes with a virtual call for the firing of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers.



“Accountability here is essential—even if it means relieving the top leaders from duty in time of war.”

This editorial appeared simultaneously in the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corp Times. The newspapers are highly regarded in the military, are published by the conservative Gannett chain, and have a circulation of 250,000.

The bottom line is that the entire ruling class was behind this war. All factions backed it. And they all made the fundamental error of underestimating the Iraqi people, their traditions of fighting imperialist rule, and their capabilities for resist-

ance in spite of the many divisions which have been cultivated by imperialism over the years. Now these ruling class factions are turning on each other.

Sympathy for the Iraqi people has nothing to do with the fight over who is to blame in the torture scandal, insofar as the politicians, the military and the ruling class pundits are concerned. Their overriding concern is how to save the occupation and how to eventually conquer Iraq.

For the movement, the scandal should be the signal to fight to end the torture by escalating the struggle to end the occupation. The occupation is the crime. □

U.S. commission wants capitalism in Cuba

Report spells out plans for counter-revolution

By Gloria La Riva

On May 6, the Bush administration's "Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba" unveiled an aggressive plan of attack on the Cuban Revolution. It was in the form of 450 pages of recommendations from the commission's chair, Colin Powell, to George W. Bush.

The report, initiated in October 2003, has chapters headed "Hastening Cuba's Transition" and "Establishing the Core Institutions of a Free Economy" and openly calls for the overthrow of the Cuban government.

Up to \$59 million in U.S. tax dollars are to be funneled into subversive activity on the island over the next two years and \$18 million would be spent on U.S. military flights to beam invasive television and radio into Cuban airspace. Cubans living in the United States would be severely restricted from visiting and giving financial remittances to their families in Cuba. Efforts to economically strangle and politically isolate Cuba are to be greatly accelerated.

On May 10, Cuba issued a statement detailing a series of emergency economic measures to counter the Bush plan. Among them are the suspension of purchases in dollars by the population of items other than food, gasoline and personal hygiene. The intent is to save hard currency. The emergency measures are also designed to: guarantee that every Cuban gets a subsidized food ration; keep the unemployment rate at or below the current 2.5 percent; and continue to fully develop the healthcare system.

The real aim of the U.S. plan is to restore capitalism with a vengeance through a

bloody counter-revolution.

Extensive measures outlined in the report call for a complete overturning of Cuba's socialized property and the return of the "freedom" to exploit.

Page 208 lists some of the wealth and property that would be returned to the former exploiters after "democracy" is restored. It shamelessly admits that "the U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission (FCSC) has certified 5,911 claims by U.S. nationals ... for the taking of their property since January 1, 1959.

"Of this amount, more than 85 percent, or \$1.58 billion, involves 898 corporate claimants ... simple interest at 6 percent should be included as part of the certified claims. Using this figure results in a value in excess of \$7 billion, as of April 2004." By this logic, the U.S. would owe Britain trillions of dollars for its revolution.

In a Washington press conference on May 6 to explain the plan, Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega said, "It's unprecedented. Because for the first time ever, a U.S. administration has articulated a definitive, decisive and integrated strategy that represents a national commitment to help the Cuban people bring an end to the Cuban dictatorship and to be prepared to support a democratic transition. ..."

A "transition toward democracy" is being brutally imposed on Iraq by U.S. bombing and occupation. The Cubans know that a similar crusade by U.S. imperialism against their country would mean massive death and destruction for 11 million people.

The Cuban government swiftly condemned the plan, saying that it "could not contain more lies, malice, frustration and interference in the internal

affairs of any country."

The Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) announced that 7 million workers and their families had rallied on May Day to defend their revolution against this new U.S. aggression.

"In the name of all the Cuban workers, the CTC firmly rejects the cynical and intrusory measures announced by the U.S. government, designed to destroy the Cuban Revolution. ... We state our most firm willingness to resist and overcome each aggression. We will defend at any price necessary our extraordinary work of social justice, and our hopes and dreams for a better world for all the peoples of the planet."

The commission chaired by Powell includes National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Noriega. Its members include a full array of representatives from the State, Defense, Treasury, Homeland Security, and Commerce departments, as well as the National Security Council. Thus, Cuba is threatened not only economically but militarily as well.

While many of the measures have been tried before, or currently exist in some form, the impact of this latest round of measures is potentially more severe.

Its aim is intimidation and terror. Cubans who live in the U.S. and have had the right to visit the island every year on a "general license" will now have to seek a more restrictive "specific license" to travel, and cannot go more than once every three years.

The spending limit for Cuban émigrés visiting their families in Cuba would be cut from \$164 to \$50 per day. How would the U.S. enforce it? By surveillance and prosecution, or, in the words of the report:

"Direct U.S. law enforcement authorities to conduct 'sting' operations against 'mule' networks and others who illegally carry money and offer rewards to those who report on illegal remittances that lead to enforcement actions."

Andrés Gómez, director of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and activist in the progressive Cuban community in Miami, commented: "People are very upset here in Miami by Bush's plan, because of the very close ties they have with their families in Cuba. To tell someone he or she can't see their mother for three years is especially cruel.

"We will mobilize thousands to condemn this policy."

Although the U.S. hostility toward Cuba is nothing new, the recent period has seen a sharp escalation of aggression by the Bush government, and before that, by the Clinton administration.

But U.S. imperialism's plans are one thing. Reality is another. Aware of the benefits of a system that long ago eliminated landlordism and guaranteed housing for all, that educated the people and freed them from ignorance, that created an unbreakable solidarity with the peoples of the world, the Cuban people continue defending and developing their Revolution.

A statement from the Cuban Communist Party concludes, "Without any doubt [Bush's] cruel and cowardly measures will impose a certain sacrifice on our people, but those measures will not succeed in detaining for even one second the people's advance towards the human and social objectives that have been drawn up. ...

"Cuba will never return to the horrible, merciless and inhumane condition of a U.S. colony." □

Spirit of revolutionary resistance comes North

Haitians, Venezuelans unite against U.S. war

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
New York

The spirit of revolutionary resistance rising in the Caribbean, Central and Latin America came to the streets of New York on May 8. Gathering in Times Square, Haitians and Venezuelans united to oppose the U.S. war in Iraq and intervention in their countries. They were joined by workers from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Cuba and Mexico, and by African Americans, Palestinians and activists from other nationalities.

The U.S. Northeast was represented—from Lavalas of Connecticut to the All-People's Congress of Baltimore, from young members of New York's SLAM! (Student Liberation Action Movement) to organizers from the International Action Center in Philadelphia.

More than 300 protesters chanted in Creole, English and Spanish: "Chavez, Fidel, Aristide!" and "Bush, assassin!"

They marched to the statue of Simon Bolivar in Central Park. Bolivar, "the Liberator," won independence for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela in his victories over the Spanish in the early 19th century. In 1816, at a difficult moment in his struggle against colonialism, he traveled to Haiti. That country, newly self-liberated from slavery, gave him refuge and military and

material help.

Johnnie Stevens of People's Video Network, just returned from a labor solidarity trip to Haiti, noted the militancy and depth of the protest: "The coming together of the Haitian and Venezuelan communities is very promising for struggle in Latin America, especially at the time of the U.S. occupation of Haiti and continued threat of a coup in Venezuela."

He also commented that New York police were hostile and intimidating toward the demonstrators, who did not cede an inch.

United against U.S. racism and aggression

The rally was called by Circulo Bolivariano Alberto Lovera New York—named for a comrade of the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) who was tortured and assassinated by the state in 1957—and by the Coalition to Resist the Feb. 29 Coup in Haiti.

The Bolivarian circles, begun in 2000, are the mass organizing structure of an ongoing revolutionary process. Over a million Venezuelans participate in the circles, building housing, literacy campaigns, food programs and cultural development. Springing up around the world in support of Venezuela are other Bolivarian circles, such as the Martin Luther King Bolivarian Circle of Boston, present at the rally.

The Coalition to Resist the Feb. 29th Coup in Haiti had recently gathered a multinational crowd of 2,000, mainly people from Haiti and the English-speaking Caribbean, for a vibrant evening Brooklyn rally entitled "The truth behind the Haiti coup." Coalition members include Ajoupa, Haiti Action Committee, International Action Center, International ANSWER, Komite Beton, Lavalas Fan-mi, Leve Kanpe, OBNH, Patisan Jezikri and PPN Support Committee.

Speaking for the coalition at the May 8 rally, Serge Lilavois denounced the U.S. war in the Middle East and spoke out strongly for Palestinian self-determination. William Camacaro of Circulo Alberto Lovera drew a parallel between the torture of prisoners in Iraq and the racist torments of slavery and apartheid-like segregation in the U.S. South.

Teresa Gutierrez, co-director of the International Action Center, praised the revolutionary regional unity embodied in the rally, especially in light of the recent hostility of the Mexican government of Vicente Fox toward Cuba. That socialist country has sent hundreds of doctors to Haiti. Since 1999 Cuba has assisted peasant associations there with energy and



WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

agriculture projects, including the opening of a sugar mill that provided 250 full-time and 2,000 part-time jobs.

Gutierrez emphasized the necessity to re-double efforts to end the Bush administration's war on Iraq, saying that stopping U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean was tied to stopping it now in the Middle East.

Speaking for labor were Vice President Norman Taylor of AFSCME Local 215, DC 1707, and Sharon Black from the United Food and Commercial Workers. A Local 27 steward and Maryland organizer for the ANSWER coalition, Black appealed to the rally: "Let's march on to Washington, D.C., on June 5th! No to U.S. and French occupation in Haiti! No to U.S. intervention in Venezuela! End the occupation in Iraq!" □

As Venezuela makes progress in health, education

U.S. orchestrates right-wing attacks

By Teresa Gutierrez

Tensions continue to mount in Venezuela as the U.S. persists in plans to sabotage the Bolivarian Revolution.

On May 9, over 50 Colombian paramilitaries entered Venezuela with the aim of carrying out armed attacks against key Venezuelan military and civilian targets. Some were captured.

These ominous events were reported by BBC Mundo, Associated Press and Reuters, as well as on President Hugo Chavez's weekly radio show, "Alo Presidente."

The mercenaries were discovered in a ranch in the mountains south of Caracas, Venezuela. The head of the Department of Police Intelligence of Venezuela, Miguel Rodríguez, confirmed that they had plans to attack the Urban Security Command of the Venezuelan National Guard as well as to rob its weapons.

One of the captured Colombians reported he had been misled on the nature of the mission. Describing himself as a peasant just looking for work, he said he had been offered more than 500 million Colombian pesos. He was told that if he changed his mind or escaped, he would put his family in danger.

Intelligence chief Miguel Rodríguez said most were captured on a ranch belonging to a member of the Venezuelan opposition, Robert Alonso. Since President Chavez's election, the opposition has carried out many acts of sabotage against his government.

This has included a bosses' lockout, street actions aimed to bring chaos and deaths, and an anti-Chavez referendum. In a recent protest at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, supporters of the right-wing oligarchy demanded action. They held signs reading "1. Hussein, 2. Aristide, and 3. Chavez next?"

The opposition has been linked with Cuban right-wing groups in Miami opposed to the Cuban Revolution. In fact, the Wall Street Journal of Jan. 29, 2003, reported that Venezuelans and Cubans were receiving military training in camps in Florida.

The Venezuelan oligarchy has tried to block every progressive turn by the Chavez government. The right-wing in Congress filibusters for hours to kill progressive legislation. When peasants receive acres under agrarian reform, right-wing judges issue summonses to try to stop the turnover of the land to those who work it.

Oil wealth serves the people

Since the election of President Hugo

Chavez in 1998 and the rise of the massive people's movement, U.S. imperialism has worked 24/7 to turn back the clock in Venezuela.

The priority of the Venezuelan government to provide healthcare, education and jobs for the people has alarmed the Bush administration. The fact that the wealth of the country—primarily from its oil reserves—is being used to provide social services to an impoverished nation boils the blood of the U.S. and Venezuelan oligarchy.

The U.S. has worked nonstop to sabotage the Bolivarian Revolution and has launched plans to assassinate President Chavez. It wants to isolate Venezuela, as it has tried to do with Cuba, and to carry out economic and political acts of sabotage with the aim of destabilizing the progressive Chavez administration.

One of the current U.S. strategies is to use Colombia to foster counter-revolution in Venezuela. Colombia, completely in the back pocket of imperialism, has become its buffer state in Latin America.

The last two presidents of Colombia have visited Washington more than any other Latin American heads of state.

Just one week after President Alvaro Uribe met with George W. Bush in April,

the Colombian senate passed a resolution against Venezuela.

On April 13 the Colombian Senate approved a resolution condemning the so-called "dictatorial regime" of Venezuela. The resolution, according to CNN Español and Znet, calls for the Organization of American States to apply the Interamerican Democratic Charter to Venezuela.

The Interamerican Democratic Charter calls for decisions to be made in the event of the collapse of a "democratic order" in a member state. Venezuelans, Colombian progressives and others in defense of Venezuela were alarmed by this resolution. It is generally accepted that this could include "all actions up to and including military intervention by OAS states, including the United States." (Znet, April 18)

The Colombian resolution came at the same time that U.S. Rep. Lincoln Diaz Balart was in Colombia. Diaz Balart, a Cuban-American, is known to support U.S. policies that aim to overturn the Cuban Revolution, including terrorist attacks against the Cuban people and assassination attempts against President Fidel Castro.

That Colombia could be used by the U.S. to initiate a major military conflict in the

region is not an exaggeration.

The Colombian government has bought 40 AMX30 tanks from Spain that threaten not only the people's movement in Colombia but also Venezuela. It has welcomed with open arms Plan Colombia—Washington's aid program of over \$2.5 billion, mostly to the Colombian military.

Plan Colombia is the military arm of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and threatens not only the movement in Colombia but the entire region. What imperialism cannot accomplish with three-piece suits it aims to accomplish with military fatigues.

The current U.S. ambassador to Venezuela is Charles Shapiro, who was the deputy chief of mission in Chile in 1973 when the U.S. backed General Augusto Pinochet in a bloody coup against the government of socialist Salvador Allende. Shapiro in April participated in a large meeting with the right-wing in Caracas. The U.S. has used similar tactics in Havana.

But the Bush administration is mistaken if it thinks it can carry out another Chile in Venezuela. Both the government and the masses are ready for anything and say there is no turning back the Bolivarian Revolution. □

NEW YORK

Delegates report on Haiti fact-finding trip

By G. Dunkel

"Before the coup, many workers in Haiti could afford to eat one meal a day," said Dave Welsh, a San Francisco Labor Council delegate, reporting on a fact-finding trip by labor and religious groups over the May 1 weekend. "Now, since Feb. 29, they can only eat one meal every other day."

Feb. 29 was the day U.S. forces kidnapped Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the Central African Republic and completed the coup Washington had been financing and organizing since Aristide was re-elected in 2000.

AFSCME District Council 1707, which represents daycare and home health-care workers, hosted the report-back May 4. Many of the union's members were born in Haiti.

Raglan George, DC 1707 executive director, welcomed the meeting, saying, "It is necessary to expose the role this country plays in holding down democracy in Haiti. DC 1707 is opposed to overthrowing the democratically-elected president of Haiti."

DC 1707 President Brenda Stokely pointed out the importance of building a reciprocal relationship between the labor movement and the movements struggling for social justice in Haiti, the U.S. and everywhere.

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, chaired the meeting. She emphasized the connections between the struggle against occupation in Haiti and the struggle against U.S. intervention in the rest of Latin America, especially Cuba and Venezuela.

Johnnie Stevens, a co-founder of Labor for Reparations and co-director of Peoples Video Network, and Sharon Black Ceci, a steward in United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27, pointed out that a news whiteout surrounds Haiti. The major media, with few exceptions, are ignoring conditions there.

Some 3,600 foreign troops from the U.S., France, Canada and Chile occupy the country, the delegates reported. Electricity is available for two hours a day at most in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Garbage is piling up in the streets.

According to Welsh, "Schools, literacy programs, the medical school, daycare centers, and any social program associated with Aristide or his Lavalas party have been closed." None of this has been reported in the corporate media.

Urgent need for solidarity

Paul Loulou Chery, secretary-general of the Association of Haitian Workers

(CTH), is very concerned with building international solidarity with the mass movement fighting the occupation, Stevens emphasized. The CTH invited the fact-finding delegation to its conference and helped organize a May Day rally of 15,000 people in Port-au-Prince.

Stevens explained that because of the urgent need for solidarity, an emergency demonstration against the occupation of Iraq in Washington June 5 would also call for ending the occupation of Haiti.

Ceci also connected the struggles against occupation in Haiti and Iraq. "Abu Ghraib [prison]—that is what occupation looks like everywhere," she said.

Omar Sierra of the Bolivarian Circle of New York announced a May 8 demonstration to oppose U.S. intervention in Haiti and Venezuela.

Tom Griffith of the National Lawyers Guild, who participated in an earlier delegation to Haiti, described how the morgue in Port-au-Prince had disposed of at least 1,000 cadavers in a common grave. Most were bodies of young men with hoods over their heads and hands tied behind their backs, which had been shot.

Griffith described how in the small towns and cities in the south the official police have been disbanded by militias that spend most of their time hunting for Lavalas members and supporters.

He said the country's two major "civil-rights organizations" spend most of their time drawing up lists of people for the militias to hunt.

For all the repression and hunger in Haiti, every delegate emphasized that the people's resistance to the coup and occupation was widespread, firm and growing stronger. □

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION 200 years after 1804

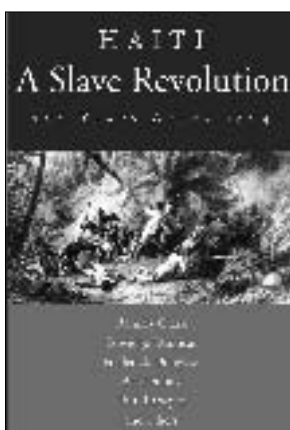
The Haitian Revolution is a singular event in history. Never before or since has an enslaved people risen up, broken their chains, and established a new state. Haiti was a beacon of hope and inspiration to the enslaved Africans of the U.S.

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The meaning of 'life'

If any more proof is needed that U.S. capitalist society is becoming more unstable and repressive, that proof has been provided by the Sentencing Project.

It is common knowledge that the U.S. "justice" system has led to the incarceration of a huge number of people. The U.S. keeps more people behind bars than any other country. One quarter of all the prisoners in the world are held in the United States—at last count, over 2.1 million people. Now the Sentencing Project, a prison research and advocacy group, has released a study showing that almost 10 percent of those detained in federal and state prisons are serving life sentences.

And in some states, the proportion is much higher: almost 20 percent of prisoners in New York and California are in for life. Parole is extremely rare for those serving life sentences.

Moreover, this proportion has increased enormously since 1992, a period in which crime statistics actually declined. Because of stiffer sentencing laws, the number of those in for life has risen by 83 percent over that time.

The Sentencing Project also found that quite a few battered women, in prison for killing the husbands or boyfriends who had beaten them, are serving life. However, a significant number of the people doing life sentences were not convicted of any violent crime. About 4 percent are in for drug offenses. An equal number were convicted of crimes against property.

Some 23,523 inmates serving life sentences were mentally ill, the study said, and their acts might have been caused by their illnesses.

Reporting on the study, the New York Times of May 12 wrote that "Some of those serving a life sentence for the least serious crimes have been sentenced under California's 'three strikes and you're out' law, the report said. The Supreme Court recently upheld the life sentence of Leandro Andrade, whose third strike, or felony conviction, was for the theft of children's videotapes worth \$153 that he intended as Christmas gifts for his nieces."

In 19th-century France, Victor Hugo's novel "Les Miserables" aroused public opinion against that country's vindictive and cruel prison system with the story of a man, Jean Valjean, who spends 19 years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread and then, as an ex-con, is pursued by police for the rest of his life. It led to

demands for prison reform.

This great social novel brought a lot of money to Broadway when it was transformed into a long-running hit musical in the 1980s. But where is the great social artist today who will try to reach people's hearts with the story of Leandro Andrade, now serving a 50-years-to-life sentence for allegedly stealing children's videotapes?

The truth is that at least one great writer with Hugo's passion and social conscience is himself behind bars today—Mumia Abu-Jamal. His weekly columns—many of them printed in this newspaper—hit hard but deftly at the system that locks up so many people of color, so many workers, so many poor and destitute women and men who all their lives have been locked out of the riches of this society as surely as if they had been born behind a prison wall.

The release of this study comes as the lid is being lifted on the brutish methods used by U.S. military police—many of them former prison guards here—in Iraq. They were not only condoned but generated by the high command, who needed "extraordinary" measures to impose their occupation on an unwilling population.

The Pentagon is using atrocious means because the ends it serves are horrendous. The war and occupation of Iraq are not about protecting the U.S. or spreading democracy. All the death-dealing hardware and highly trained soldiers were sent over there to enhance the fortunes of the billionaire ruling class here, that lusts for those billions of barrels of oil as a drug addict craves a fix.

But what about the prison system here at home? Doesn't it uphold a status quo dominated by the same billionaire class? Aren't people of color, who make up more than half the prison population, suffering an occupation of their communities, too?

It is overwhelming social injustice that is at the bottom of the monstrous growth of the repressive state—whether one speaks of endless Pentagon wars abroad or the incarceration of growing numbers of people here at home.

The reorganization of society to end exploitation, racism and war must start with the dismantling of this terrible apparatus of repression by the conscious, organized masses of working and oppressed people. □

U.S. prison torture

The exception or the rule?

Continued from page 7

Americas Watch, led the military to rename it the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation."

Vietnam: What Kerry said then

Presidential contender John Kerry has been trying to distance himself from the testimony on U.S. torture and terror in Vietnam he gave on April 22, 1971—33 years ago—to a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Summing up evidence gathered by Vietnam Veterans Against the War and at the Winter Soldier Investigation in Detroit, he told the senators:

"I would like to talk, representing all those veterans, and say that several months ago in Detroit, we had an investigation at which over 150 honorably discharged and many very highly decorated veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia, not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command. ...

"They told the stories at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and

dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country."

Occupation is torture

Every U.S. war of conquest and colonial occupation was fought the same way, whether the battleground was the Philippines from 1898 to 1913 or Korea from 1950 to 1953.

The U.S. in Vietnam. The French in Vietnam and Algeria. The British in Malaysia, India, Kenya and Ireland. Nazi Germany in Russia and the Balkans. The apartheid regime in South Africa. Israel in Palestine. They all learned that even the most extreme forms of torture do not defeat the struggle, they only deepen the hatred of the oppressed and their resistance.

All of Iraq today is being tortured by a brutal, racist occupation. But hearings, commissions or even the resignation of Rumsfeld won't end the brutality. The only way to end it is to end the occupation. This is something that the U.S. ruling class will never willingly do. But it is what a mass, global movement revolted by the torture and brutality can be mobilized to do. □

World Tribunal on Iraq

New York war-crimes hearing finds U.S. guilty

Continued from page 7

Dr. van Moorter said there is high childhood mortality in Iraq now "because of the general decline of living conditions under the occupation, the lack of food, the lack of purchasing power. Much of the health-related infrastructure was degraded by the sanctions. Now, after a year without sanctions, there has been no significant improvement in the availability of medicines."

The Belgian doctor, who works with "Medical Aid for the Third World," called on the movement to "mobilize in the streets to demand an immediate end to occupation. The legal approach," he said, "can be useful but only when it is combined with mobilizing people. You can't count on legality alone." The audience gave him a standing ovation.

A seven-minute film clip showed U.S. troops raiding a home and arresting all the men. That this was done so cruelly while being videotaped by a European crew and troops were on their best behavior gave a chilling idea of what these nightly raids mean to the Iraqis living under the occupation.

Guilty!

On the jury were Rabab Abdulhadi, Sinan Antoon, Dennis Brutus, Hamid Dabashi, Bhairavi Desai, Eve Ensler, Jenny Green, Lisa Hajjar, Motarilova Hilda Lini, Elias Khoury, Ibrahim Ramey, Kiyoko McCrae and Robert van Lierop. They concluded that the U.S. was guilty and recommended:

"1. That the U.S. and its coalition partners immediately cease all violations of the civil, political and human rights of the people of

Iraq;

"2. That the military occupation of Iraq be immediately ended;

"3. That all parties guilty of war crimes against the Iraqi people be brought to justice under international law;

"4. That reparations be paid by all responsible parties to the people of Iraq for the damages caused by both the war and the occupation;

"5. That we work to strengthen the mobilization of the global antiwar movement;

"6. That the occupation of Palestine, Afghanistan and all other colonized areas are illegal and should be brought to an end immediately."

The final tribunal is scheduled for Istanbul on March 20, 2005, two years after the start of the U.S.-British aggression. The organization that pulled together the New York meeting included many students, with much of the initiative coming from two women students from Turkey, Ayca Cebukcu and Basak Ertur. □

CORRECTION

The article entitled "Going to Cuba this summer: Groups plan challenge to U.S. travel ban" in the May 6 Workers World unintentionally omitted the African Awareness Association from the coalition of activists uniting on July 19 in a historic breaking of the U.S. blockade of Cuba. Read Workers World for upcoming coverage of this exciting solidarity action. □

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Early women's rights and Black liberation

'Nothing to lose but your chains!'

By Leslie Feinberg

By the first light of the 20th century, the struggle for women's rights and Black liberation was inseparably bound with the raging battle between the two major economic classes in society: the class that had nothing to sell for survival but its ability to work, and the class that claimed ownership to all that was produced by collective labor.

U.S. imperialism was exporting capital around the world to exploit resources and human labor. Wall Street and its financial institutions were emerging as the capital of world capital.

The fusion of banking and industrial capital in the U.S. created behemoths, ravenous for profits. Their advanced military machine rode shotgun. U.S. imperialism held oppressed nations captive as virtual colonies—inside, as well as outside, the boundaries of North America.

"Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains," Marx had called out to workers struggling against their bosses in early laissez-faire capitalism. But as the imperialist powers enslaved oppressed nations around the world, not allowing them to develop their own economic stages, the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin spoke to the new phase of struggle: "Workers and oppressed of the world unite!"

Wherever oppressed nations battled imperialist domination, the struggle for the liberation of women was inextricably bound to the overall fight for national liberation.

The struggle of Black women in the United States continued to be entwined with the movement for Black liberation, as well. And just as Frederick Douglass had come forward in the 19th century as the leading champion of women's rights, W.E.B. Du Bois in the early 20th century was arguably the most militant ally in this country of women's freedom. He defended reproductive rights, emancipation from homework, and the right to jobs and higher wages for women in the great laboring class.

"The uplift of woman is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause. When, now, two of these movements—woman and color—combine in one, the combination has great meaning," Du Bois penned in his now-famous 1920 essay "The Damnation of Women."

Birth of International Women's Day

Conditions of life and work under capitalism created class cataclysms. And working and poor women, many of them immigrants, led these battles against their bosses.

On March 8, 1908, hundreds of working and poor women in New York City's Lower East Side, mostly East European immigrants, poured out of sweatshops and tenements and marched through the streets to protest child labor and brutal working conditions and to demand women's suffrage.

News of the uprising of women workers was telegraphed across the Atlantic, electrifying socialist leaders like Clara Zetkin in Germany, who in August 1907 had first proposed the idea of an annual demonstration in support of working women and women's rights at a caucus of socialist women prior to the annual conference of the Second International.

One year after the March 8 protest, in

1909, women needle-trade sweatshop workers on the Lower East Side—mostly Jewish and Italian immigrants—made history in their "Uprising of 20,000." They walked off their jobs and marched and rallied for union rights, decent wages and working conditions.

A year later, Zetkin—with the support of revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg in Germany and Alexandra Kollantai and

Lenin in Russia—led the Second International Conference of Socialists in Copenhagen to declare March 8 International Women's Day, in honor of the 1908 demonstration by women needle trade workers.

IWD was a clarion call, not merely for rights, but for full emancipation from the exploitative grip of bosses, from centuries-old domination by patriarchy, and liberation from all the forms of oppression and inequality that class society had fomented.

The revolutionary aspirations of International Women's Day were so vivid, so dynamic and so bone-deep, that on that day in 1917—even as the battles of World War I were raging—thousands of women garment workers in St. Petersburg, Russia, spontaneously walked off their jobs to strike. They marched, shoulder-to-shoulder in the streets, their numbers swelled by working-class men, demanding "peace, bread and land."

With half a million Russian workers already on strike against their bosses, the militant women-led protest forced Tzar Nicholas II from his throne and sparked the Russian Revolution.

The revolutionary road

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution immediately struck a blow for women's emancipation and sexual freedom. The young workers' state could do this because it was beginning the process of transforming private ownership of large-scale production and land into collective ownership. The dog-eat-dog social relations inherited from capitalism were a hindrance to building socialist participation and unity.

The government of workers and peasants abolished anti-gay laws and legislation that codified discrimination against women within weeks of the seizure of power. Abortion became legal. Maternity leave gave women workers greater freedom to make reproductive choices. Divorce was stripped of severe restrictions. Children born outside of marriage gained legal recognition. Medical care and education were provided free for all.

And the revolution immediately unlocked the cell door of the tzarist "prison-house" of nations. Lenin had steered the Bolshevik Party in working-class internationalism. He understood that in order to forge a Soviet Union, revolutionaries from the former oppressor nation must support the right of self-determination—including the right of separation—of the nationalities that had been held in bondage by the tzarist Russian state.

In 1918, the Bolshevik call for the Baku Conference electrified those of all sexes and sexualities among the oppressed nationalities in the region:

"Muslims in Russia, Tartars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirgiz, Kazakhs, and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tartars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and Mountaineers of the Caucasus, and all you whose mosques and oratories have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled under foot by

the Tzars and the oppressors of Russia: Your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are henceforth free and inviolable. Organize your life in complete freedom. You have the right. Know that your rights, like all the peoples of Russia, are under the powerful safeguard of the revolution and of its organs, the Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants. Lend your support to this revolution and to its government."

Lenin and the revolutionary Bolsheviks understood, however, that liberation from the legacy of centuries of class rule required a dramatic raising of the productive ability to raise living standards. That was particularly true for women of all nationalities who worked a "second shift" at home.

Lenin stressed: "Notwithstanding all the liberating laws that have been passed, woman continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labor on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-wracking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real emancipation of women ... will begin only when a mass struggle is started against this petty domestic economy, or rather when it is transformed on a mass scale into large-scale socialist economy."

But the technologically underdeveloped Soviet Union, like a maroon community of those who had escaped from slavery, was surrounded by the imperialist powers. Finance capital worked overtime to sabotage, economically isolate and militarily bankrupt the workers' state. The struggle to liberate women workers through socializing much of their individual labor in the household—such as setting up collective laundries, dining halls and childcare—was made more difficult by material scarcity.

Yet the first successful workers' state demonstrated what gains could be made in a planned economy in the direction of genuine emancipation for oppressed nationalities, sexes and sexualities. And a deeper understanding of the gains as well as the obstacles encountered by the Soviet Revolution and those that followed will

arm today's generations of freedom fighters as well.

The Russian Revolution brought the fresh winds of change and hope to those fighting the bosses, and their military and police boot heels. In the United States, two wings emerged in the women's rights movement: those who were fighting merely to tinker with capitalism, and those who were clear about the need to abolish it. Both wings continued to fight for reforms, like women's suffrage, in the United States and around the world.

It took a mighty battle over many generations before women in this country finally won the right to vote on Aug. 26, 1920, with passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. It was a hard-won and basic democratic demand—a matter of simple justice.

For those who looked to the political establishment and powers that be to grant modest economic and social demands as a route to class peace, the victory of suffrage ended their struggle.

But the most revolutionary fighters in the movement, then as now, learned from their struggle experiences that the act of voting every four years meant pulling the lever to decide which of the two political parties of big business would administer a capitalist system that kept them down-trodden and disenfranchised.

And then, as now, anti-capitalist freedom fighters have kept fighting for important reforms as stepping-stone victories in the revolutionary process. They look to the workers and the oppressed as the only economic class with the potential to take over the monopolies built with their collective labor and then plan production to meet human needs and desires.

Only the historic overturn of private ownership of the apparatus of production can ultimately liberate nationality, sex, gender, sexuality and human ability once and for all. This historic act—simple, but not easy—will, on a world scale, end a brutal and divisive economic system that widens fault lines of oppression in order to divide and weaken the vast laboring class that produces the immense wealth of society. □

PART 7
CONCLUSION



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La expansión europea: Más riqueza para los empresarios, más miseria para los obreros

Por John Catalinotto
Bruselas, Bélgica

Hubo mucho entusiasmo aquí en el parlamento europeo en los días antes del 1º de Mayo. Los obreros esperaban con anticipación su día festivo. La clase gobernante europea y sus oficiales por su parte esperaban con anticipación la llamada Expansión Europea.

Diez países europeos, en su mayoría del centro y del este, se unieron a la Unión Europea el 1º de mayo, elevando la membresía a 25. Los nuevos miembros de la Unión Europea son Chipre, la República Checa, Estonia, Hungría, Latvia, Lituania, Malta, Polonia, Eslovaquia y Eslovenia.

Esto hace crecer la población de la Unión Europea de 350 millones a 455 millones de habitantes, y su área a más de un 30 por ciento.

La expansión tiene diferentes impactos sobre la clase gobernante imperialista europea, sobre los obreros de la Europa occidental y sobre los de toda la Europa oriental ex socialista que ahora es introducida en el mundo imperialista como estados subyugados.

La clase gobernante de Europa se aseguró de celebrar la expansión. Mesas informativas sobre Eslovenia y Eslovaquia atrajeron a los visitantes en

una sección de los grandes pasillos del edificio del Parlamento de la Unión Europea. En la noche se podían escuchar los fuegos artificiales. Un izquierdista alemán se quejó de que el Canciller Gerhard Schroeder debería ser castigado por malgastar 1.5 millones de Euros en juegos pirotécnicos sobre el Río Odra en la frontera oriental con Polonia.

Los países de la Unión Europea están en completa competencia con el imperialismo estadounidense. Washington expandió su mercado con el Tratado de Libre Comercio en 1994. Y ha tratado de subyugar, sin éxito, a toda América Latina con el Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas. Ahora la Unión Europea se ha adelantado al absorber Europa Oriental.

La industria europea está construyendo su propio sistema de misiles y satélites, Galileo, para competir con el Sistema de Posición Global usado hoy en todo el mundo y basado en los Estados Unidos. Los jefes aquí en Europa no quieren depender de los Estados Unidos para sus comunicaciones.

La mayoría de los obreros europeos están disgustados por la agresión de Bush y sus colegas contra Irak, por su arrogancia respecto a cada área de tratados y leyes internacionales, sus intentos de intimidación en todas partes del

mundo. En la coalición de los reacios a servir a los intereses de los Estados Unidos, o sea Francia, Alemania y Bélgica, aún la prensa del establecimiento dio promoción a los sentimientos anti-estadounidenses.

¿Y para los trabajadores?

Esto penetra profundamente entre la población. Uno o dos días antes del Primero de Mayo, un trabajador de Bruselas ganó unos miles de Euros en un concurso de televisión. Al preguntarle qué iba a hacer con el dinero, él contestó: "Hace unos años hubiera tomado unas vacaciones en los Estados Unidos. Siempre soñé visitar allá. Pero ahora, con Bush como Presidente, ni siquiera pensaría en visitar allá".

A pesar de tales sentimientos, muchos trabajadores se dan cuenta que la expansión europea no fue calculada para ayudarles a ellos. Va a hacer más fácil para los patrones de Europa del oeste encontrar trabajadores que devengan sueldos más bajos y bajar así todos los salarios.

Hasta hoy la gente relata la historia de la primera empresa de textiles que se mudó a Alemania del este después de la contrarrevolución del 1989 que derrocó al socialismo allí. Después de pocos años, el dueño descubrió que podía operar con mano de obra más barata en Rumania. Poco después, la fábrica fue reubicada de nuevo a Ucrania, dejando a trabajadores desempleados en Alemania del este y del oeste, y en Rumania.

Los trabajadores en Europa Occidental habían ganado beneficios sociales tremendos -cuidado de la salud gratis, altos pagos por seguro de desempleo y pensiones adecuadas a través de las décadas cuando existía un bloque socialista vecino. Ahora, encuentran que todos estos beneficios están bajo ataque.

En un foro de discusión durante las celebraciones del Primero de Mayo del Partido de los Trabajadores de Bélgica, este ataque de los patrones fue el tema principal. La gente se refirió a los recortes como un intento de "americanización" pues se conoce a los Estados Unidos como país con beneficios sociales miserables.

Las colonias del este

Los mayores perdedores son los trabajadores en los países de Europa del

Este. Es un retraso, especialmente en comparación con la vida de los trabajadores en un sistema socialista.

Muchos creyeron que con el fin del socialismo y la absorción por el Oeste se iba a producir un estándar de vida alto como en el Oeste más la conservación de la mayoría de los beneficios sociales que disfrutaban. Ahora se sienten muy desilusionados.

Estos trabajadores han perdido la mayoría de los beneficios de cuidado de salud, educación y jubilación. Para los que aún trabajan, la paga no se ajusta a la inflación. Para los muchos que perdieron sus empleos, la vida se ha vuelto muy dura.

Mientras que la nueva UE permitirá que fluya libremente el capital hacia el Este, todavía está restringiendo la inmigración hacia el Oeste. Hasta el líder contrarrevolucionario polaco Lech Walesa se quejó sobre esto. Como parte de las negociaciones de acceso, los miembros antiguos de la UE se aseguraron el derecho de rehusar permisos de trabajo a las personas de los países del Este durante un período de transición que es hasta siete años en Alemania y en Austria.

"¿Cómo se puede inventar tal idea?" preguntó Walesa retóricamente a un grupo de periodistas.

Europa del Este tiene más o menos la misma relación a Europa del Oeste que tiene México y las naciones del Caribe a los EE.UU.: la de una neo-colonia. El Oeste, especialmente las empresas alemanas, son dueñas de todos los monopolios de la banca, de las industrias mayores y de los medios de comunicación con una fuerza laboral insegura que está sujeta a difíciles condiciones durante las negociaciones.

Quizás la ironía más grande es el destino de los campesinos polacos. Durante el socialismo podían quedarse con sus relativamente pequeñas fincas y sobrevivir. Ahora, al competir con la producción más eficiente del Oeste, tienen que vender sus tierras, que según muchos sospechan, pronto serán propiedad alemana.

Todo esto sería un cuadro desolador si no incluyera otro aspecto: el potencial organizativo de la clase trabajadora a nivel continental para la lucha contra los capitalistas. No será nada fácil, pero no hay más alternativa para los trabajadores aquí. □



WW FOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Testigos de Venezuela

Por Sharon Ayling

Nuestro partido, Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero, fue anfitrión de una reunión el 30 de abril en la ciudad de Nueva York para reportar sobre los acontecimientos en Venezuela. Los oradores principales de la reunión fueron William Camacaro, miembro de la Red de Solidaridad con Venezuela y co-fundador del Círculo Bolivariano Alberto Lovera, y Teresa Gutiérrez, codirectora nacional del Centro de Acción Internacional. Los oradores, que aparecen en la fotografía, participaron en el Segundo Encuentro de Solidaridad con

la Revolución Bolivariana en Caracas, Venezuela desde el 12 al 16 de abril. Analizaron la revolución que se propaga en Venezuela, donde el cuidado de la salud, la educación y el servicio de energía están siendo organizados para beneficio del pueblo, algo nunca antes ocurrido. Reportaron sobre la reunión masiva que asistieron donde el Presidente Chávez arremetió contra el gobierno de los Estados Unidos, acusándolo de la muerte de niños iraquíes, del secuestro del Presidente Aristide de Haití y de haber sido partícipe en el atentado del golpe en Venezuela en el año 2002. □

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