

Same-sex marriage victory

Milestone in struggle for equal rights

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In a swirl of rainbow confetti, Hillary and Julie Goodridge entered the history books as they walked down the aisle at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Boston on May 17 to marry each other. Their 8-year-old daughter Anna, who strewed their path with rose petals, preceded these victorious lead plaintiffs in the Massachusetts court case that declared same-sex marriage legal in the state. Friends and family sang: "Here come the brides, so gay with pride, isn't it a wonder that they somehow survived!"

The happy couple—and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans population across the country—had done more than survive. Their movement had triumphed once again, battling institutionalized discrimination by forcing the state to grant equal access to civil marriage for all couples.

The Goodridges had filed suit in 2001, along with seven other gay and lesbian couples, after being denied licenses to marry in their local municipalities. Turned down by courts at every level, they appealed to the state Supreme Court. The court ruled, in a historic 4-3 vote in November 2003, that the Massachusetts ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional and gave the state six months to put a plan in place for the marriages.

This victory was won less than a year after the LGBT movement and its supporters wrested a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court that effectively decriminalized same-sex love.

The Massachusetts victory reflects the profound change in U.S. social attitudes

that have been won by decades of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans organizing. According to a new Gallup Poll, acceptance of same-sex unions is rapidly climbing in the U.S., with a ten point increase in less than six months, to 42 percent in early May.

Support for same-sex marriage has also been voiced by the National Black Justice Coalition, which launched a nationwide campaign in December 2003 "to counter right-wing misinformation about Blacks and marriage equality," defeat the proposed U.S. constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, and focus on support for such marriages in the African American community. Members include Coretta Scott King, Rep. John Lewis, the Rev. Al Sharpton, former Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun, Whoopi Goldberg, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, and former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders. (Gay City)

Throughout the day on May 17—in Massachusetts and throughout the United States—many lesbian, gay, bi and trans activists celebrated. When the clock struck midnight, ushering in May 17, 10,000 supporters cheered and threw rice at the 263 couples that exited City Hall with their paperwork. Some of the couples had waited in line for longer than a day.

The first couple to be married in Cambridge, Marcia Hams, 57, and Susan Shepherd, 52, have been together since they met while working as machinists 27 years ago.

More than 1,000 gay and lesbian couples applied for marriage licenses in Massachusetts on May 17. The Boston

Globe reported that two-thirds were women, and that 40 percent of those female couples have children in their homes. Half have been together for over a decade.

Erin Golden, 45, who married her partner of 25 years, Eileen Counihan, on a Cape Cod beach with their 10-year-old son between them, said: "This is one small kiss for us and one giant kiss for humankind." (Melbourne Herald)

In Northampton, teacher Becky Lederma brought fourth- through sixth-graders from Solomon Schechter Day School to see "history in the making" at its City Hall weddings.

Battling the establishment

The political establishment, as well as the state, has fought same-sex marriage at every step of the way.

Following the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision, President George W. Bush announced his support for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as the "union of a man and a woman."

Following suit, bigots in the Massachusetts State Legislature managed to get approval of a state constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, which cannot be put on the ballot for statewide voter consideration before 2006. Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry also made clear his support for his state's legislative efforts to defeat equal marriage access.

During and after this bruising legislative fight, rolling civil disobedience was taking place across the country. Same-sex marriages were being performed in San

Continued on page 7

BROWN vs. BOARD

- 50 years later, still protesting 5
- A look back 5

THAT CREEP AGAIN?

- Huntington attacks immigrants 2

BUSH PALS SHAKEN

- War, economy worry Wall Street 4

IRAQ OCCUPATION

- Four-star war criminals blame enlistees 9

NEW ATTACK ON CUBA

- Fidel Castro answers 8

REPORT FROM SOUTH KOREA

- 'No troops to Iraq' 11

INDIA VOTE

- Rightists set back 10



Rallies across U.S. celebrate marriage 6



Subscribe to Workers World

Trial subscription: \$2 for 8 weeks
One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Workers World Newspaper

55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011

212-627-2994

www.workers.org read it online

Huntington's newest enemy: Mexicans

The best answer is solidarity

By Teresa Gutierrez

The Mexican people are currently a running theme in the bourgeois media.

For example, a recent article by Samuel Huntington in Foreign Policy, a magazine published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, made certain headlines and created a stir in some press. Huntington was a member of the National Security Council during President Jimmy Carter's Democratic administration.

The March/April front cover headline of Foreign Policy reads: "José, Can You See? Samuel Huntington on how Hispanic immigrants threaten America's identity, values and way of life."

The Foreign Policy article is one of the most anti-immigrant articles ever. It was racist, appealing to a narrow sector of the white population, and a call to arms to defend "white America."

Not just any "white America"—white Anglo-Saxon Protestant "America."

(We should remind our readers here that "America" is not synonymous with the United States as it is presented in the media here. That formulation is colonialist language that represents U.S. desires to dominate the entire hemisphere. We should remind the imperialists that the Americas are two continents, not just the United States.)

The Foreign Policy front cover picture is a Latino dressed in a suit. The man is crossing his heart with his hand while holding a small U.S. flag. One imagines he is at his U.S. citizenship induction ceremony.

Huntington's entire premise is that the multitude of immigrants coming to the United States—specifically Mexican immigrants—is threatening the very fabric of his society.

He writes: "The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves—from Los Angeles to Miami—and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril."

Huntington may be singling out Latin@s now, but in 1996 he also foretold a "global conflict between the West and the Muslim world."

Huntington states in Foreign Policy that the "values, institutions, and culture" of the "white, British and Protestant settlers" are the foundation of this country that shaped the United States for all following centuries.

That it is these values and institutions that attract so many immigrants.

That even though this country is "multiethnic and multi-racial," ethnicity and race have "virtually disappeared as a defining component of national identity."

(Tell that, Huntington, to the thousands of African American youth who are daily stopped—or worse—by police solely for being Black.)

Today, Huntington declares, the "United States' national identity ... is challenged by the forces of globalization.

"The single most immediate and serious challenge to America's traditional identity comes from the ... immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico, and the fertility rates of these immigrants compared to Black and white American natives."

(The magazine's second front-page cover cleverly

shows a picture of a Mexican woman holding a baby. We guess this is meant to drive the fertility point home.)

Mexican migration is different for several reasons, Huntington fears. One is that the United States and Mexico share a border. "No other First World country has such an extensive frontier with a Third World country," he wails.

Another is the scale of immigration. "Hispanics may constitute up to 25 percent of the U.S. population by 2050," Huntington laments.

Another concern for Huntington is that "illegal" immigration is overwhelmingly a Mexican phenomenon. That "Hispanics ... tend to concentrate regionally," he continues, and that the "schools of Los Angeles are becoming Mexican" ("Eekes!" Or better yet: "Chihuahua!").

Huntington warns, "No other immigrant group in U.S. history has asserted or could assert a historical claim to U.S. territory."

(After all, when they stole over half of Mexico, it never occurred to the robber barons that Mexicans might want the land back! What audacity.)

Huntington is really concerned that the size of "Hispanic immigration tends to perpetuate the use of Spanish. ... Spanish speakers in New York, Miami and Los Angeles" can live "normal lives without knowing English." (Again, what audacity!)

He quotes a late Republican reactionary senator as asking, "Why is it that no Filipinos, no Koreans object to making English the official language?" (Is Huntington promoting the racist stereotype that Asians are the "model minority"? We think so.)

Huntington's last sentences provide words to remember: "There is no American dream. There is only the American dream created by the Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English."

A rebuttal to Huntington

We should first point out to Huntington that the "American dream created by the Anglo-Protestant society" he refers to is in fact a horrible nightmare for the vast majority of humanity. That nightmare is best represented today by the photos of Iraqis tortured by U.S. occupiers in their own land.

We should ask Huntington: Who is cutting his lawn? Who is delivering his food? Who is packing the meat that arrives on his dinner plate every night? Who is it that is working in the most dangerous industries of all?

And who is dying for it?

The gap between Huntington's views of Mexican immigrants and the reality of their daily lives is so wide an ocean could not fill it.

One Mexican worker a day dies at the work place in this country, according to a recent shocking Associated Press report.

"A Mexican worker is four times more likely to die on the job than the average U.S. born worker" in some places in the country, the AP reported.

"These accidental deaths are almost always preventable and often gruesome: Workers are impaled, shredded in machinery, buried alive. Some are 15 years old."

So much for your "American dream," Huntington.

Conditions for Mexican workers in this country are so deplorable and so widespread that the AP report actually described the situation as an epidemic. This should have made national news. But the facts were buried and little

Continued on page 11

This week ...



★ National

- May 17: Equal marriage rights 1
- Huntington's newest enemy: Mexicans 2
- Georgia activists fight for right to protest 3
- Prison officials ban Mumia's book 3
- U.S. prison abuse 3
- Rift in ruling class stems from war, economy 4
- On the picket line 4
- D.C. protest marks Brown decision 5
- The mass movement for education 5
- Celebrate marriage rights victory 6
- San Diego student protest 6

★ International

- Castro stands up to Bush's threats 8
- Haiti 8
- Iraq 9
- India vote 10
- Gwangju, South Korea, uprising remembered 11

★ Editorials

- Kerry and unemployment 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Torturas por Estados Unidos 12

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) 487-2368 for info.

NEW YORK

Fri., May 21

Workers World Forum. "Defending Immigrant Workers: A vital task for the working class." Hear Brian Barraza of the Association of Mexican American Workers, a representative of the struggle against racist anti-immigrant attacks in Freehold, N.J., and Anya Mukarji-Connelly on the detentions targeting South Asian communities. 7 p.m. Dinner at 6:30. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl. For info (212) 627-2994.

Tue., May 25

Poison Dust: A new look at radioactive weapons in the Gulf. Hear GI's and vets affected by DU weapons; Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general; Juan Gonzalez, Daily News reporter and Democracy Now host; Maj. Doug Rokke, American Gulf War Veterans Assn.; Dr. Michio Kaku, physics professor CUNY; Viequest Support Campaign; Movement in Motion Hip Hop Arts Collective. 6:30 p.m. At United Nations Church Center, 777 UN Plaza, 44th St & 1st Ave., Manhattan For info (212) 633-6646.

Every Friday

Workers World Party weekly meeting. 7 pm. Dinner at 6:30. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl. For info (212) 627-2994.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 46, No. 21 • May 27, 2004
Closing date: May 19, 2004

Editor: Deirdre Griswold;
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk;
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson;
Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Pat Chin, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez;
Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger; Maggie Vascassenno;
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Carlos Vargas;
Internet: Janet Mayes

Workers World-WW (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

Selected articles are available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to wwnews-on@wwpublish.com.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World-WW, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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

Atlanta P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, Ga. 30301
(404) 235-5704

Baltimore 426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, Md. 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston 284 Armory St.,
Boston, Mass. 02130
(617) 983-3835;
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
P.O. Box 1204
Buffalo NY 14213
(716) 566-1115
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago P.O. Box 06178,
Wacker Drive Station,
Chicago, Ill. 60606
(773) 381-5839;
Fax (773) 761-9330;
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

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

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

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

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139
(610) 453-0490;
phila@workers.org

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

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

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St., Suite 230
San Diego, Calif. 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2489 Mission St.
Rm. 28,
San Francisco,
Calif. 94110
(415) 826-4828;
fax (415) 821-5782;
sf@workers.org

Seattle
1218 E. Cherry #201,
Seattle, Wash. 98122
(206) 325-0085;
seattle@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College,
Pa. 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

Wealthy enclave to host G-8 Summit

Georgia activists fight for right to protest

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

From June 8 to June 10, thousands of visitors will arrive on the Georgia Golden Coast. But they won't be the usual families heading for the beach at the end of the school year.

Instead, from Savannah to the barrier islands of St. Simon's and Sea Island closer to the Florida border, tens of thousands of security personnel, 3,500 journalists and more than 1,000 government officials will invade the area for the 2004 G-8 Summit.

At this annual private meeting of top officials from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia, global economic and political policies are formulated. And so it has become an annual focus of international protest.

Huge demonstrations demanding cancellation of the Third World debt commanded the attention of past summits held in Berlin and London.

In an attempt to prevent protest, recent summits have been held in remote mountain resorts in Italy, France and Canada.

The G-8 meetings themselves do not

produce any specific trade agreement or formal political alliance. But the discussions held among top government officials of the wealthiest countries affect the policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. These institutions have mired billions of people around the planet in a vicious cycle of poverty and disease.

Likewise, policies of international trade groups such as the World Trade Organization, and free trade deals like NAFTA and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, are hashed out at G-8 meetings.

The impact of corporate globalization promoted by these entities has forced millions of workers in Africa, Latin America and Asia into sweatshops, producing goods for the industrialized countries; undercut local agriculture and driven up food prices; ravaged forests; poisoned water, air and soil; and stripped countries of their mineral wealth.

Resistance derails Bush plans

First held in 1975, the summits have increasingly become a U.S. government tool to line up support for its more aggressive economic and military strategies, such as sanctions and war on Iraq.

When President George W. Bush announced in July 2003 that Sea Island would be the site of the next G-8 meeting, he as the host indicated what the main agenda items would be.

Bush said he anticipated making his "Greater Middle East Initiative"—a plan to remodel the Middle East more to the liking of neo-cons like Cheney and Wolfowitz, and of international banks and oil companies—the centerpiece of the G-8.

In addition, advancing free trade proposals and securing greater cooperation in the "war on terrorism" were identified as high priorities as the Bush administration sought to use the summit to boost the re-election campaign.

In a later statement about the G-8, Bush declared it would be the "environmental summit," to showcase how environmental stewardship is compatible with a strong capitalist economy.

Just as the reality of mass opposition to the occupation of Iraq, failure to find weapons of mass destruction, and the unfolding prisoner abuse scandal puts the lie to all the White House's political mouthings about "bringing democracy to Iraq," the choice of Sea Island exposes another contradiction.

Sea Island is a privately owned, small barrier island. It is home to some of the wealthiest people in the United States.

They inhabit multi-million-dollar "cot-

tages" in which most live for only a few months of the year. Most belong to the Sea Island Club, whose initiation fee is \$100,000.

The dominant landowner is the Sea Island Corp., which operates the Cloister, a very posh hotel that will serve as the summit's meeting site.

Across the causeway on the mainland is Brunswick. This is a predominantly African American city of about 16,000. People in Brunswick make their living working the docks, as commercial fishers, or at chemical plants and pulp mills.

Brunswick is one of the most polluted towns in the United States. Toxic wastes like mercury, toxaphene, benzene, formaldehyde and creosote have been released into the air, soil and water by chemical plants owned by companies such as Hercules Inc., and by pulp mills operated by Georgia Power.

In this single small town alone, there are four identified Superfund environmental cleanup sites. Glynn County, which includes Brunswick and Sea Island, has 16 hazardous waste sites.

Residents of the area complain of elevated rates of respiratory ailments, liver disease, and cancer as they struggle to get sufficient funding from the federal government to clean up the toxic materials.

Coincidentally, according to company

Continued on page 10

Abu Ghraib tied to U.S. prison abuse

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Nicholas Yarris, an exonerated Pennsylvania death row prisoner formerly incarcerated at SCI-Greene, said May 12 that he had had numerous encounters with Charles A. Graner Jr.

Graner, a current employee of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, is the soldier pictured smiling in photos of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. From 1998 through his release in January 2004, Yarris was imprisoned on the death row unit at SCI-Greene where Graner has been employed as an entry-level guard since 1996.

Speaking at a news conference, Yarris described Graner as "violent, abusive, arrogant and mean-spirited" toward inmates. "However," Yaner stressed, "the problem is not about Graner, but that the U.S. is training guards like Graner in these maximum security hell-holes like SCI-Greene and then unleashing them on another peoples' society."

Yarris described cases of abuse at SCI-Greene eerily similar to those reported at Abu Ghraib. He spoke of an atmosphere "where prisoners are stripped of their humanity for no other purpose than to break them. The problem at Abu Ghraib," Yarris said, "was that someone with limited intelligence like Graner, the product of a prison system badly out of whack, was put in charge."

Joining Yarris at the news conference were Kamau Becktemba, leader of the Uhuru Movement in Philadelphia, and Jeff Garis, director of the Pennsylvania Abolitionists United Against the Death Penalty. Becktemba said: "The African community is appalled but not surprised by the vicious abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib by the U.S. military. These same abuses go on every day for African people stuffed into concentration camps called U.S. prisons.

"In the past 25 years, 40 state prisons have been cited for overcrowding and lack

of medical care, including in Texas under then-Gov. George W. Bush. Abner Louima was tortured by New York police."

"At an absolute minimum," Garis said, "we believe that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections should immediately begin a serious investigation into allegations of abuse in our state prisons. Further, it is our opinion that the DOC should adopt a 'zero-tolerance' policy on abuse, immediately terminating criminal employees who assault prisoners.

"I am disgusted that Pennsylvania taxpayers have paid Charles Graner \$6,000 over the past 12 months while he was supervising and committing what Amnesty International has called 'war crimes.' It's appalling that he is still an employee in good standing with our DOC."

Garis brought a 10-inch-thick stack of prisoner complaints of abuse that had been filed with the Pennsylvania Abolitionists over the past two years, and presented copies of several to the media. He also said that complaints received over the past five years, contained in several boxes in his office, show evidence that one out of three prison guards was involved in abuse.

Garis's organization is seeking the release of all videotapes of abuse discovered in 1998 at SCI-Greene.

SCI-Greene, the state's super-maximum-security prison, houses the overwhelming majority of Pennsylvania's death row prisoners. It was the center of an abuse scandal in the late 1990s. Rather than firing guards who routinely abused and humiliated prisoners, however, the Department of Corrections simply transferred them to other prisons—in much the same way the Catholic Church moved around priests who were accused of sexual abuse.

Yarris noted that many of the guards and prison administrators who opened SCI-Greene less than a decade ago were brought in from Huntington Prison—whose abusive practices, including a "no talking policy," were condemned by the DOC and world community. □

Prison officials bar Mumia's new book

By Heather Cottin

The Security Threat Group Coordinator of the Indiana Department of Correction at Pendleton recently confiscated from a Black prisoner a copy of Mumia Abu-Jamal's new book, "We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party." The prisoner, Zolo Agona Azania, is on death row.

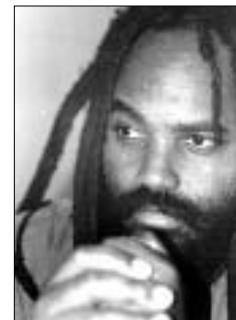
Officials objected to "The Empire Strikes Back: COINTELPRO, page #117." At least, that's what they said.

In that chapter, and on that page, Abu-Jamal, using public sources from the 1976 U.S. Senate Church Committee Report, writes about the perils of the government using secrecy to hide its crimes against the people and the Constitution. COINTELPRO, or Counter Intelligence Program, was an FBI initiative to track and destroy revolutionary and progressive movements, including the Black Panther Party, from the 1950s through the 1970s.

The page begins with a quote from Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black: "History should teach us ... that in times of high emotional excitement, minority parties and groups ... will always be typed as criminal gangs."

The National Lawyers Guild and South End Press protested the book banning. NLG Executive Director Heidi Boghosian said: "It confounds common sense that ... 'We Want Freedom' should be deemed a security threat. ... The National Lawyers Guild is curious to see if talking about COINTELPRO will soon be illegal for the general public."

Abu-Jamal responded: "Apparently, for the State of Indiana, COINTELPRO, which occurred between 1956 and 1974 ... is a state secret in 2004! Indianans are forbidden from accessing such data, for to do so is a 'security threat.'" □



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Abu-Jamal, the world's best-known death-row prisoner, is on 23-hour-a-day lockup at the SCI Greene facility in Western Pennsyl-

vania. The African American journalist and activist was put in punitive detention after writing his first book, "Live from Death Row."

"We Want Freedom" analyzes the Black liberation struggle and describes the heroic efforts of hundreds of activists who built the Black Panther Party. It shows how the party was part of a centuries-long tradition of Black resistance.

Zolo Agona Azania, an artist, writer and activist, has been imprisoned since 1981, like Abu-Jamal. He wrote, "U.S. capital punishment is fatally flawed, an instrument of class warfare, organized and designed to permit an elite, local and multinational, to operate without any constraint from democratic human rights processes." (See the web site ccadp.org/zolo-thelawisfor.htm)

Agona's supporters say that he, like Abu-Jamal, was falsely charged with killing a police officer, and that his trial was a travesty of justice.

This is not the first time the state has tried to silence Abu-Jamal. Author Alice Walker has described him as "a rare and courageous voice speaking from a place we fear to know."

Indiana prison officials know that Mumia Abu-Jamal speaks directly to the people captive in the U.S. prison-industrial complex—and to those who fight for freedom. □

Rift in ruling class stems from war, economy

By Milt Neidenberg

The heart of Wall Street is gripped by uncertainty. Since exposure of widespread torture of Iraqi prisoners of war, the financial markets here and abroad have been on a roller coaster. The Dow Jones index lost 123 points on May 7, and 127 on May 10.

On that day the world markets plunged as well. The Asian markets fell over 6 percent, led by Japan and South Korea. It was the worst day since Sept. 12, 2001.

On May 7, the major European markets dropped over 2 percent. The crisis spread to Latin America. Brazil, the largest economy, plunged 5.4 percent.

On May 12, the Dow Jones index fell more than 160 points before recovering for a small gain. It closed below 10,000 for the first time this year, down 4 percent from the beginning of 2004.

Are these titanic events an aberration? Or are they a barometer of an imperialist crisis barreling toward a catastrophe, out of the control of the U.S. ruling class?

In a May 13 Wall Street Journal editorial, the epigones of high finance confirmed that there is a crisis. The Journal expressed fear that Iraq is the driving force behind it. It was a sober assessment, unprecedented for the arrogant Wall Street mouthpiece that had been praising the Bush/Cheney "mission accomplished" line.

"The revelations of prisoner abuse in Iraq," the Journal wrote, "not only represent a setback to the American effort to stabilize the country, but may be used by domestic critics of the war to undermine public support for victory. Oil [now goes for] \$40 a barrel."

The Journal didn't mention other factors in the crisis. These include the popular resistance to the occupation, burning fires of Iraqi oil pipelines, and military costs that have reached \$200 billion since the preparations for the invasion and are now growing at over \$4 billion a month.

This tweaking of "domestic critics of the war" was a reference to Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic presidential candidate. But the formulation is far from true. This is not a Republican vs. Democrat issue.

It cloaks a more fundamental class reality. There is a split in the ruling class, pervasive and unpredictable.

The superpower's imperialist dream of conquest of the Middle East, its oil and geopolitical importance, is at stake. The impending threats to the dream have rattled the ruling class. There is a realization that the Bush/Cheney cabal is moving the empire in a dangerous direction and stretching its resources beyond limits militarily and economically.

This is the basis for the split.

Opposition to the Bush administration's approach includes, to name a few, Wall Street's Robert Rubin, Bill Clinton's treasury secretary and a partner in the global banking/investment corporation Goldman Saks; Warren Buffett, billionaire chief of Berkshire Hathaway, a worldwide investor with deep pockets; George Soros, veteran member of the Fortune 500; and many others like them. They, alongside a pack of Clinton advisors, have regrouped behind John Kerry.

Both factions recognize the dangers to U.S. imperialism. The struggle for power under way takes place under cover of a bourgeois election. The opposition faction has found a war hero who opposed the Vietnam war, and who is now eager to internationalize the Iraq conflict, prepared to share the plunder of Iraq with imperialist allies, and willing to add more troops if necessary.

Kerry, a recycled Clintonite, is a safe bet to do their bidding on the looming economic crisis in the United States.

Will Greenspan depart?

About the time pictures of the torture of Iraqi prisoners hit the front pages, Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Board chairperson, spoke to a group of conferees at the FRB in Chicago about the budget deficits. The May 7 New York Times report was headlined "Greenspan Warns of Deficits as Big Threat to Economy."

This implied that the die-hard Republican was warning President George W. Bush, the Pentagon and Wall Street that a blank check, particularly for the war, the tax cuts for the wealthy one-percenters, the debt service, and Congressional pet projects are unsustainable.

Compounding the problem, according to the latest Labor Department figures, the U.S. trade deficit for March widened to a record \$45.96 billion. The rising price of imported oil was blamed. But the trend is more widespread. The last two months have seen an unexpectedly rapid rise in other consumer prices.

The huge, intractable debt has convinced the FRB to apply brakes to the out-of-control crisis by raising interest rates. Greenspan broke his earlier promise to Bush that he would keep the flow of paper money plentiful and cheap until after the election.

Given the fact that the economic recovery was rolling along for Bush's Wall Street buddies, this could be a serious blow to his electoral campaign. It does not sit well with the Bush/Cheney/Pentagon clique.

Recently, to shore up support for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, an intimate get-together was held at his grandiose home in Washington. The president and Laura Bush attended. Hobnobbing with them at the dinner was Greenspan, the banker of last resort for Wall Street. Was Greenspan whose current term expires in June, pressured to adjust monetary policy to suit the Pentagon? The coming months will tell, for on May 18 President Bush appointed Greenspan to yet another term in office.

Compared to these conniving conspirators, Machiavelli was a saint.

Is the genie out?

According to James Grant, editor of Grant's Interest Rate Observer: "Inflation is returning to the American checkout counter. ... Overall debt, excluding the borrowings of banks and the federal government ... stands at 163 percent of GDP [gross domestic product]. ... Now the 1 percent era is fast closing and financial markets worldwide are shuddering. Just the prospect of a slightly higher borrowing rate has brought about disturbances in

the temples of high finance." (New York Times, May 16)

At its lowest in 43 years, 1 percent, the rate has been profitable for Wall Street bankers and the corporate transnational giants. Privatizing and investing recklessly with borrowed funds, they have prospered from a cheap currency that has blanketed the globe.

These high-risk investments spurred on by hedge-fund trading in the currency and commodity markets and other derivative speculation is sometimes referred to as "casino capitalism." The Federal Reserve Board is about to reverse itself and raise interest rates to try to slow down this dangerous development.

Marxists call this speculation "fictitious capital."

The financial markets reflect a fear that the U.S. worldwide debt will destabilize the global financial markets. Foreign central banks hold most of this debt. They may decide to trade in their markers if the U.S. economy slows down. Some Wall Street analysts are worried this is about to happen.

Inflation and the rise in prices have begun. The future of this debt-fueled capitalist expansion is in doubt.

What's in store for the multinational workers and the oppressed nationalities as this crisis unfolds? The approximately 650,000 new jobs that have appeared in the last two months are still nearly 1.5 million below the number when Bush took office. Union contracts reflect a two-tiered race to the bottom. Forty-four million workers have no health insurance. Premiums, co-payments, and deductibles have raised the risk that those covered will join the uninsured.

Nearly 7 million in the work force are poor, making wages below the poverty level. These are overwhelmingly people of color, women, and Black and Latin@ teenagers who are denied higher education.

Over 14.7 million workers are jobless, underemployed or have given up looking for work. (Transportation Communication Union AFL-CIO, March-April 2004) Prisoners—who, as in the Pentagon's Iraq torture chambers, are subjected to violence and abuse—play a role in production of goods and services under super-exploitative conditions. The prison population has grown 10-fold in the last 30 years.

It doesn't take an economist to recognize that while all this is going on and prices are surging, the conditions faced by millions of workers will become intolerable. Take-home pay will be even further depleted by inflation. Neither the Bush nor the Kerry electoral campaign has solutions for these catastrophic developments.

This is an imperialist/capitalist political crisis worsened by unfolding events in Iraq. It has led to a split in the ruling class. How can the labor movement exploit this split? How can an independent class-wide movement be built that changes the relationship of class forces more favorably?

Here is a moment in history for the multinational working class and the oppressed nationalities to ponder—and to act. □

ON THE

Grad Students strike at Columbia

Graduate teaching and research assistants at Columbia University have been on strike since April 19. They're demanding that Columbia drop its appeal of a unionization election that the National Labor Relations Board approved two years ago. As long as the appeal is unresolved, the ballots remain uncounted, the union unrecognized—and the teaching assistants without raises or better working conditions.

The AFL-CIO called out New York labor for an April 28 rally to support the striking members of Graduate Student Employees United, Auto Workers Local 2110. Since then, a series of rallies have been called, the most recent on May 14.

Columbia has hired the notorious union-busting firm of Proskauer Rose to counter the strike. By adopting Wal-Mart tactics, the university shows its liberal traditions are nothing but a sham.

A number of professors at other schools where graduate students have successfully organized wrote to Columbia President Lee Bollinger urging him to drop the appeal. They noted that graduate employees' collective bargaining has been successful at some 24 major U.S. universities and the same number in Canada, in some cases for decades.

Wis. teaching assistants on strike

For the first time in almost 25 years, unionized graduate assistants at the University of Wisconsin-Madison walked out of classrooms April 27 to protest a lousy contract. The state of Wisconsin offered no salary increase for the first year and an average 4.6-percent increase the second year. (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

Another major issue is that the state insists the teaching assistants, who earn less than \$11,000 a year, have to pay part of their health-care premiums. Because the state is running a deficit, Wisconsin is demanding that all state employees pay for part of their coverage.

The two-day walkout by 1,200 assistants was the first phase of the Teaching Assistants Association's strike plan. The assistants also vowed to withhold students' grades when the semester ends.

Strike averted at NYU

New York University's part-time professors reached a tentative contract agreement with the university on April 21 just in time to avert a strike. The agreement, which Auto Workers officials called "groundbreaking," was the first negotiated by 2,300 adjuncts since they organized in 2002. Adjunct instructors make less than \$3,000 for a three-credit course. The union, ACT-UAW Local 7902, is the biggest adjunct-only union at a private university in the United States. (New York Times, April 22)

Caterpillar workers reject contract

Caterpillar, which produces construction equipment, recently reported a 200-percent increase in first-quarter profits, and predicted strong profits for the rest of the year. But what did the company offer its workers? A contract with one-time bonuses instead of raises, bigger worker contributions for health insurance and significantly lower pay for new hires. No wonder Caterpillar's 8,000 union workers voted the contract down.

"The contract was a slap in the face," Randy Ary, a 30-year Caterpillar veteran who voted against the pact, told the Boston Globe (May 5). "The company is making good money. All

PICKETLINE

By SUE DAVIS

we are asking for is a share.”

This year Caterpillar's profits are rising rapidly as wages rise barely at all. “In the fourth quarter of 2003, profits as a share of the total economy reached their highest level in more than 50 years,” wrote Charles Stein in the *Globe*. “The share of the pie going to wages and salaries hit a 50-year low.”

Defend miners on strike in Utah

The Coop miners, who voted to be represented by the Mine Workers union, have been on strike in Utah for over five months to protest poverty wages, violations of the National Labor Relations Act, the Mining Safety and Health Act and many other laws.

Although the Utah Department of Transportation granted permission for the strikers to have a trailer on the picket line, which is needed to maintain the 24/7 protest, the UDOT recently revoked the special permit under pressure from the Kingston mine owners. The union is asking labor supporters to call Dale Stapely of the UDOT to protest this hardship: (435) 636-1402. □

Washington, D.C., protest marks Brown decision

By Anita Grey
Washington, D.C.

On the May 15 weekend people all over the country marked the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision that outlawed separate and unequal treatment in education.

Over 300 students marched through the streets of Washington, D.C., shouting, “They say Jim Crow, we say hell no.”

The students, some as young as 9, are part of *By Any Means Necessary*. The march also included many of their allies in the struggle to maintain affirmative action.

BAMN was formed to fight back against the attacks on affirmative action at the University of Michigan last year and around the country.

In the days of *Brown*, people of color attended schools that were disintegrating, received less funding per student from state government, and received inadequate education and books. Many parents of color felt that by integrating into the more affluent white school systems they would secure a better education for their

children.

What followed was white flight to suburban and private schools, and a funding system based on property taxes, in which children of those who had more money would attend better schools than those who did not. Fifty years after the desegregation of schools, many communities find their schools even more segregated than before the *Brown* decision.

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity recently sued the state of New York for unequal funding practices, and won. According to Timothy G. Kremer, executive director of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit, “The state's highest court has declared what should be a prompt end to this state's long and sorry history of making children's educational opportunity a function of the wealth of their community.”

Affirmative action was established in 1960s–1970s as a concession wrested from the ruling class to hold back the revolt by the masses who had taken to the streets and who took over school administration buildings. It was a remedy for the past injustices to women and people of

color who were locked out and prevented from access to higher education and better-paying jobs. It provided an opportunity to move from abject poverty and to join the working class. It was an opportunity for those who were the best and brightest to have a better future.

But today the ruling class has denigrated affirmative action in an effort to take back all the gains made by the people during the upsurge of the 1970s. Affirmative action is now described as giving something they don't deserve to people, and as a quota system, unfair to those who have worked equally hard.

The ruling class now sees no need for mass education.

A white female student sued the University of Michigan when she failed to gain entry into the school. The student claimed she was barred from attending the college due to an affirmative action point system. She did this even though other white students had gotten into the college despite the point system and with points awarded to them for in-state status as well as other criteria. □

Brown vs. Board of Ed and the mass movement for education

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation by “race” to be illegal. The case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* was based on the reality of Linda Brown, a Black third grader in Topeka, Kan., who had to walk a mile through a railroad switchyard to get to her elementary school while an elementary school for whites was only seven blocks away from her home.

Linda Brown's circumstances were multiplied hundreds of thousands of times in the lives of other African-American children, as well as Native American and Latino children.

In Prince Edward County, Va., children went to school in flimsy shacks heated only by oil-drum stoves. Black students had no textbooks, or used hand-me-down, outdated textbooks from the schools for whites. They had little or none of the amenities, like science equipment, of the white schools.

Despite this, African American teachers labored valiantly to transmit their proud history of struggle to the students, who continued the fight. At the Prince Edward schools in 1951, students went on strike for two weeks to protest the terrible conditions.

It was this militant action that led to a Virginia court case that was also part of the *Brown* decision.

Separate and unequal

The *Brown* decision overturned an 1896 Reconstruction-era Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, that declared segregation legal if there were “equal but separate accommodations” for Black and white people.

The *Plessy* decision was part of an overall assault by the U.S. ruling class on the “unfinished revolution” under way in the South after the abolition of slavery—the attempt by freed Black people to assert self-determination through economic and political means.

Establishment of a free public school system in the South was one element in this revolution.

In “Black Reconstruction,” W.E.B. DuBois wrote: “The first great mass movement for public education at the expense of the state, in the South,” came from freed Black people, not permitted by law to learn to read or write when enslaved. There had been virtually no public schools for anyone in the South, including poor whites. Schools began during the Civil War when Black refugees and soldiers were taught in camps, and continued to the establishment of public schools like those in Charleston, S.C., open to “all children without distinction of color.”

The old slavocracy segregated this embryonic integrated public school system in order to divide the white and newly freed Black working-class.

Defeating Reconstruction in the South, the former slave owners violently forced themselves back into power and passed a series of laws to return freed Black people to de facto bondage. Northern capital joined hands with the Southern ruling class, and the *Plessy* decision was the codification of this racist strategy at the national level.

Determined resistance

The *Brown* decision, almost 50 years after *Plessy*, was a tremendous victory over that racism. The decision came in the middle of a period of intense reaction within the United States. Only a few months after the ruling, a Black schoolchild was lynched.

Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African American visiting from Chicago, was brutally killed and mutilated in Mississippi. His white murderers used the phony old pretext of alleged sexual advances toward a white woman.

His assailants were acquitted. But the unrelenting determination of his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, brought Emmett Till's case to national attention.

The U.S. Justice Department just

announced that it is reopening prosecution of Till's murder, perhaps for some of the same reasons that the Supreme Court ruled for Linda Brown 50 years ago—the need to whitewash “U.S. justice” to a world increasingly skeptical of that idea.

Today the need comes from the horrific racist tortures of Iraqis by U.S. soldiers. The pictures of white soldiers smirking as they stand over tortured Iraqi instantly recall the photographs of smiling whites at lynchings, or Till's murderers laughing in the courtroom during their trial.

In the 1950s, racist repression in the South took the form both of physical violence like that done to Till, and institutional violence such as segregated schools. But African Americans met repression with determined resistance before and after the *Brown* decision.

This rising militancy, fueled by Black veterans returning from World War II and the Korean War, was strengthened by local organizing. This included the Montgomery bus boycott initiated by African American women in Alabama, and the growing anti-colonial struggles in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

These historic factors of struggle led to the unanimous Supreme Court decision in *Brown*, even though at least one of the justices, Hugo Black of Alabama, was affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan.

Education for profit

Today, the elementary schools in Linda Brown's hometown of Topeka are fully integrated—and staggering from insufficient funds, particularly in districts with impoverished children of color. Field trips and counseling are cut this year, perhaps nurses and teachers next.

Legal access to public schools regardless of nationality came with *Brown*, and then came a 50-year struggle to enforce it. But money and support for quality education for children of color did not follow from local, state, and federal govern-

ments. In the South many local white-controlled school boards stripped the public schools of books, equipment, and buses to set up segregated whites-only Christian academies.

Activists are waging an intense legal struggle to adequately finance public schools. But a 2002 decision by the Supreme Court in favor of school vouchers will funnel money away from the public education of poor school children, especially children of color, into private schools they cannot afford to attend, even with vouchers.

In the for-profit privatization promoted by the U.S. ruling class, states are attempting to seize control of local schools under the pretext of “low performance,” and turn them over to companies whose students perform substantially below standard levels. In Philadelphia, where more than 80 percent of the students are children of color, and 78 percent from low-income households, a move to sell out the city's schools to such a company was met by fierce community opposition and student walkouts.

Education as class struggle

Fifty years after *Brown*, oppressed communities are fighting not legal but economic barriers to the education of their children. They are also still fighting for their right to self-determination, to choose where and how that education can best occur.

The state exists to protect the interests of the owning capitalist class—and it never concedes without a struggle to any change that would strengthen the working class. The state never allocates without a fight a portion of capitalist profits back to working-class and oppressed people who generate the surplus value in the first place.

Brown was a concession wrung from the state by such fierce, protracted struggle, and at the cost of many lives. The continuing struggle for our children's education is part of the on-going struggle for our class. □

Rallies across U.S. celebrate marriage rights victory

May 17 rallies in solidarity with the Massachusetts victory for same-sex marriage rights were held all over the U.S., including Texas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, D.C., and Washington state.

BOSTON

May 17 was also the 50th anniversary of the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that outlawed segregation in U.S. public schools. The plaintiff in that case was Linda Brown—a Black third-grader in Topeka, Kan.—who had to walk a mile through a railroad switchyard to get to her elementary school. An elementary school for white children was only seven blocks away.

In recognition of that anniversary, the Boston Equal Marriage Solidarity Coalition called for “unity across all nationalities, sexes, genders and sexualities in this and all struggles for civil rights” at its rally in support of same-sex marriage on May 17.

Hundreds gathered with placards reading “A victory for one is a victory for all” and “Universal health care for all regardless of marital status.”

Contingents from three local high school Gay/Straight Alliances took part. Ed Childs, chief shop steward of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 26, came representing President Janet Loux. Steve Gillis, president of Steel Workers Local 8751—the Boston school bus drivers’ union—also took part.

Gloria Lopez of Somos Latinos co-chaired the rally with Frank Neisser of the International Action Center’s Stonewall Warriors.

One recently married gay couple wept as they spoke about how the battle against the AIDS-related illnesses of one were made more difficult by the state’s refusal to recognize them as a couple. Legally married couples automatically get hundreds of rights under Massachusetts law, including making medical decisions for an ill or disabled spouse and receiving workers’ compensation benefits.

More than 1,000 other rights bestowed by the federal government on married couples, such as access to a spouse’s Social Security benefits, are still not available to same-sex couples married in Massachusetts.



Los Angeles

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

City Council members Felix Arroyo and Chuck Turner and former state legislator Mel King stressed that the same reactionary elements attempting to re-segregate Boston schools were also opposed to same-sex marriage. Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran, author of the constitutional amendment to ban such marriages in Massachusetts, is under federal grand jury investigation for his role in a re-districting plan that would deny people of color equal legislative representation.

Participants marched chanting to the Statehouse behind a sound truck decorated with wedding bells and streamers, and a banner reading: “Celebrate equal marriage rites in Massachusetts—No School Re-Segregation: May 17, 1954-2004.”

—Frank Neisser

SAN FRANCISCO

In San Francisco, 500 people conducted a spirited march along Market Street to City Hall, where comedian Margaret Cho greeted them. Stephen Funk, a gay Filipino war resister, joined the front of the march.

Signs reading “Marriage equality for all” and “End bigotry, racism and inequality” peppered the march. Marchers included some San Francisco same-sex couples that wed in February and March,

before the State Supreme Court halted those rites.

Rally speakers included Zulma Olivares of the San Francisco Women’s Building and Comite ‘98 and Lisa Francis from the International ANSWER Coalition. Maurice Campbell of the Community First Coalition expressed his solidarity with the struggle for equal marriage rights and invited marchers’ support for the struggle to save San Francisco’s Bayview community from redevelopment.

Calvin Gipson, 2004 Grand Marshal of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans Pride Parade, and director of Human Services at Glide Memorial Church, co-chaired the rally. Gipson recounted his experiences under segregation in the South and how that led him to a spirit of resistance against racism and homophobia.

LeiLani Dowell, Peace and Freedom Party candidate for Congress and member of Workers World Party, also co-chaired the rally. Dowell spoke of “how this victory in Massachusetts is big step for LGBT liberation, but we demand an end to violence, bashings, and police brutality, with full access to AIDS treatments and research.”

Of the scheduled May 25 California Supreme Court hearing on the validity of San Francisco’s 4,037 same-sex marriages, Dowell said, “We are here to be a loud and proud voice demanding our rights.”

Margaret Cho, who wove her comedy and politics into a message of solidarity and protest, wrapped up the rally. She showed her support for the LGBT community and her opposition to the Bush administration

and its proposed bigoted constitutional amendment. Protesters were prompted to cheer “Margaret for president.”

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence joined the rally. They performed an “Exorcism to drive hate out of the White House.” Organizers from Marriage Equality California also supported the rally.

—Keith Pavlik

HOUSTON

Houstonians rallied at City Hall May 17 to declare their determination to struggle until same-sex marriages can take place in Texas. A rainbow of families, couples, members of the LGBT communities and allies came out to celebrate. They listened to civil rights activists, children of same-sex couples, progressive ministers and righteous gospel music.

High school senior Marla Dukler, the first student in Texas to sue a school district for not approving a Gay-Straight Alliance at her high school, drew cheers. She spoke about that victory, and her vow to graduate, go to law school and eventually come back to get married in Houston.

Gay activist Ray Hill and transgender activist Phyllis Frye—with decades of activism under their belts—were joined on stage by a new generation of activists. They included Kelley and Michelle, a lesbian couple, with their three children, and a young Chicano activist who spoke to those gathered in English and in Spanish.

Sue Null of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) received wild cheers when she demanded that her gay children be given the same rights that her straight children have.

—Gloria Rubac

‘Don’t tax students, tax the rich’

On May 18, 400 students at the University of California-San Diego walked out of class and demonstrated against state budget cuts in education. The protest organizers felt that students’ voices were being ignored during the state budget debates.

Students marched through the rural campus, blocking intersections along the way. At the climax of the march the students blocked a major intersection at the entrance to the university area. They chanted, “Stop the cuts!” and “Don’t tax students! Tax the rich!” Many students feel the planned tuition hike is the same as a tax.

After about 30 minutes of blocking the intersection, the San Diego Police declared the students an unlawful assembly. Seven protesters sitting in the intersection refused to move and were arrested.

Earlier protests this year called on university administrators and politicians to back the students’ demands of no cuts in education funding. Yet these demands were ignored. University administrators bargained a deal with the governor to cut \$1.5 billion from education rather than the original \$2 billion in hopes of quelling protests.

The students, however, are not satisfied with a smaller but still draconian cut in education spending. They want no cuts in education. With the reduction of enrollment by 20,000 students into the California State University system serious damage has already been done.

The student organizers vowed they will continue to organize against the oppressive budget cuts until their voices are heard.

—Pete Reilly



Cleveland

WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

LOS ANGELES

While thousands of same-sex couples in Massachusetts spent the weekend renting tuxes and making plans to cross the threshold of history, LGBT pride swept through Silverlake in Los Angeles on May 15.

Hundreds of people—lesbian and gay, bi and straight, drag queens and transsexuals, individuals and families of all ages and nationalities—marched down Sunset Drive to Santa Monica Blvd. with rainbow flags flying. They stopped traffic and left the streets covered with pink chalk demanding equality for LGBT communities.

The demonstration was organized by the Coalition for Equal Marriage Rights, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and the California Freedom to Marry Coalition.

Speakers advocated for the Permanent Partner Immigration Act to eliminate double standards for bi-national same-sex couples and denounced Bush's proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriage.

—Page Getz

CHICAGO

On May 17, more than 300 people gathered outside the Cook County building that also houses the Mayor's office. The demonstration, part of a series of actions across the country organized by Don't Amend, was under the auspices of the local organization Equal Marriage Now.

Several demonstrators sat in the office of County Clerk David Orr to protest his refusal to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The following day several demonstrators returned to continue their protest and face arrest to challenge Orr.

—Bill Massey

SEATTLE

Hundreds of LGBT people and supporters came out to Seattle Central Community College to celebrate same-sex marriage in Massachusetts and to demand an end to bigotry, discrimination and racism.

Co-sponsored by Don't Amend and Seattle ANSWER, the program was a mix of prominent community leaders and militant fiery oration. Some of the loudest approval from the youthful crowd came from calls to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Kaz Susat, a trans member of Seattle ANSWER and co-chair of the rally, explained that a colonial occupation needs racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry. "The U.S. military needs 'don't ask, don't tell,' because it needs anti-gay bigotry. What a great tool it is for convincing hesitant GIs to risk their lives. What a great tool it is in subjugating an occupied people, as the pictures from Abu Ghraib show so clearly."

Ed Murry, an openly gay state representative from Seattle's historically lesbian and gay Capital Hill neighborhood, called for people to march on the state capitol.

Steve Williamson, executive secretary of the King County Labor Council, announced the passage of a resolution supporting same-sex marriage. He plans to take the resolution to the state AFL-CIO convention in August. Sarah Luthens from Pride at Work and Carlos Marentes of the Comité Pro-Amnistia General y Justicia Social also brought solidarity from labor.

Chrystos, a Native two-spirit warrior, gave a moving account of her recent marriage in San Francisco. The Rev. Gwen Hall, pastor of the Sojourner Truth Fellowship Church, challenged communities of faith to stand up for justice.

Other speakers included Kamala Ellis of People's Coalition for Justice; Marsha Botzer, Founder of Ingersoll Gender Center; and Mike McAfoose of the LGBT Community Center.

—Jane Cutter



PHOTO: DON SERRIBUTO

HOUSTON

PHOTO: DON SERRIBUTO



SAN FRANCISCO



CLEVELAND

WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Same-sex marriage a victory for all

Continued from page 1

San Francisco, Portland, Ore., New Paltz, N.Y., and elsewhere. Thousands of LGBT activists and their supporters rallied outside the Massachusetts Statehouse while legislators deliberated constitutional codification of discrimination.

In this atmosphere of struggle, several right-wing legal attacks on the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling failed. And on May 14, the U.S. Supreme Court refused without comment a last-ditch effort to block the Massachusetts decision.

Three days later, Massachusetts became one of only seven jurisdictions in the world to grant same-sex marriage, joining Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and three Canadian provinces.

A right-wing mobilization on May 17 fizzled. In Boston, only about 15 anti-gay protesters stood with signs near City Hall, vastly outnumbered by same-sex marriage supporters.

Unable to block the start of same-sex marriages on May 17, Republican Gov. Mitt Romney fought to keep local clerks of court from licensing out-of-state same-sex couples. He is trying to apply a racist 1913 state law that was written to hamper people of different "races" from marrying. That anti-miscegenation statute prohibits Massachusetts authorizing a marriage that would be illegal in the couple's home state.

Romney ordered clerks in towns across the state to refuse to issue marriage licenses to out-of-state couple, threatening to prosecute any officials who refused to comply.

However towns such as Worcester, Provincetown and Somerville defied

Romney's order, issuing licenses to all who applied.

John Sullivan and Chris McCary, from Anniston, Ala., were among the couples that married in Massachusetts on May 17. The couple intends to take the fight for recognition of their marriage to their home state. Same-sex marriages are not recognized in Alabama. And in 2002, Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore made headlines when he denied a lesbian mother custody of her children.

Moore cited "the power of the state ...[which] carries the power of the sword, that is, the power to prohibit conduct with physical penalties, such as confinement and even execution. It must use that power to prevent the subversion of children toward this lifestyle...." (Workers World, March 14, 2002)

Expanding the struggle

"The legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts is a hard-won legal right," stressed Leslie Feinberg, a leader in the LGBT movement who helped organize solidarity around the country with Massachusetts on May 17. "And with that victory, we as a movement that is battling the state on every front need to fight to expand the rights of all."

She pointed out that a thoughtful discussion of the movement for equal marriage access is underway within LGBT communities across the U.S. about how the state and employers might try to twist the authorization of marriage to limit resources or benefits.

For example, the demand for domestic partner benefits, fueled by the AIDS epidemic, gained new ground in recent

decades. Many employers have been forced to end a two-tiered benefits package that denied health care and other bread-and-butter benefits to unmarried partners of workers.

One couple, Lisa McDonnell and Julia Dunbar, told reporters this week that they decided to marry in Massachusetts on May 17 because they believed Dunbar's employer was considering discontinuation of health benefits for domestic partners, which would then go only to legally married couples.

And at an April panel discussion and community forum, "Love & Marriage: Bush Style," at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in New York City, many speakers pointed to the current disparities in economic benefits between married couples and single people, and that particularly LGBT communities of color and the most oppressed sectors of the movement are also concerned with a spectrum of problems ranging from health care to immigration rights.

Speakers also warned about being conscious that the state has historically "regulated" and brutally repressed lesbian, gay and bi sexualities and trans lives.

Feinberg concluded, "The win for same-sex marriage in Massachusetts opens up a set of economic benefits previously denied to same-sex couples. Now it will take a broad and diverse struggle, held together with the glue of unity against oppression, of all who are fighting for economic and social justice to defend what's already been fought for and won, and to expand the rights and benefits of all working and oppressed people." □

As 1 million Cubans march Fidel Castro stands up to Bush's threat

Following are excerpts from a talk by Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz at a protest of over 1 million people in Havana on May 14:

Mr. George W. Bush: the million Cubans who are gathered here today to march past your Interests Section is just a small part of a valiant and heroic people who would like to be here with us. ...

You completely ignore that no force in the world could drag a dignified, proud people, which has withstood 45 years of hostility, blockade and aggression from the most powerful nation on earth, onto the streets like a flock of animals each one with rope around their neck. ...

In the world that you seek to impose on us today there is not the slightest notion of ethics, credibility, standards of justice, humanitarian feelings, nor of the elementary principles of solidarity and generosity.

Billions of human beings live in inhuman conditions starving, without enough food, medicine, clothes, shoes or shelter. ... You have only to ask your assistants for precise data on the tens of thousands of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, bombers, smart long-range missiles, battleships and aircraft carriers, conventional and non-conventional weapons in your arsenals, which are enough to wipe out all life of the planet. ...

Neither you nor anyone else would ever

be able to sleep again. Neither would your allies, who are trying to emulate your military build-up. ...

You cannot speak of the environment because you are completely ignorant of the fact that the human race is in danger of disappearing. You label a tyranny the economic and political system that has guided the Cuban people to higher levels of literacy, knowledge and culture than those in the most developed countries in the world. The same that has reduced infant mortality to a rate lower than that of the United States and whose population is provided with all health care and education services and with other extremely important social and human services free of charge.

This, Mr. Bush, is one of the few countries in this hemisphere where not once in 45 years has there been a single case of torture, a single death squad, a single extra judicial execution or a single ruler who has become a millionaire through having held power.

You lack the moral authority to speak of Cuba, a dignified country, which has withstood 45 years of a brutal blockade, economic war and terrorist attacks that have cost thousands of lives and tens of billions of dollars in economic losses. ...

You lack the moral right to speak of terrorism because you are surrounded by a bunch of murderers who have caused the

1 million Cubans march past U.S. interest section in Havana.

death of thousands of Cubans through terrorist methods. ...

You have no right whatsoever, except for that of brute force, to intervene in Cuba's affairs and, whenever the fancy takes you, to proclaim the transition from one system to another and to take measures to make this happen.

This people can be exterminated — it's as well you know this — or wiped off the face of the earth, but it cannot be subjugated nor put once again into the humiliating position of a United States neocolony.

Whereas you kill countless people with your indiscriminate, preemptive surprise attacks, Cuba saves the lives of hundreds of thousands of children, mothers, old and sick people all over the world.

The only things you know about Cuba are the lies that spill forth from the ravenous mouths of the corrupt and insatiable mob of former Batista supporters and their descendants who are experts in electoral fraud and capable of electing president of the United States someone who did not obtain enough votes to claim victory.

Human beings are not aware of nor can



they be aware of freedom in a regime of inequality like the one you represent. No one is born equal in the United States. In the Black and Latin ghettos, and on the reservations for the Natives who once inhabited that land but were exterminated, there is no other equality but that of being poor and excluded.

Our people, educated in solidarity and internationalism, do not hate the American people nor do they want to see young white, Black, Native American, mestizo or Latin soldiers from that country die, young people driven by unemployment to enlist in the military to be sent to any corner of the world in traitorous, preemptive attacks or in wars of conquest.

The unbelievable torture applied to prisoners in Iraq has rendered the world speechless. ...

Since you have decided that the die is cast ... my only regret is that I would not even see your face because in that case you would be thousands of miles away while I shall be in the frontline to die fighting in defense of my homeland. □

Haitian reality under occupation

No normality, little food, heavy repression

By G. Dunkel

April 5—The de facto "government" that took over Haiti after the U.S. ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is pretending that normality is being reestablished—that schools are open, food is being distributed, justice is being done.

No major demonstrations are taking place, but this is because there has been bloody repression of those demanding Aristide's return. And while the schools are open, many students are staying home and the situation is still extremely tense.

On the international level, CARICOM—15 Caribbean nations united in a free-trade zone—refuses to recognize the new government. This decision was strenuously opposed by the United States, which called the prime ministers of the CARICOM countries on their personal cell phones just before the vote was taken. Venezuela, however, heartily endorsed the CARICOM decision.

The African Union announced that it has "decided to undertake immediate consultation with both CARICOM and eventually the United Nations in order to discuss the conditions for a quick return to constitutional democracy" in Haiti. Aristide's ouster, they said, "sets a dangerous precedent for duly elected persons." The AU represents 53 African nations.

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, many parents in poor neighborhoods are keeping their children at home because of fears generated by the 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew that from time to time is filled with gunfire. (Haïti-Progrès, March 31)

This curfew makes life very difficult when illness or other emergencies hit at



U.S. occupiers shown with Haitian prisoner.

night. When Louis Balmir, with his friend Marcel Lucmane, went looking for some asthma medicine for his son during curfew on March 20, they ran into an ambush by U.S. Marines, who opened fire on their car without warning. Lucmane was shot once, but Balmir was shot at least seven times. He wants to sue but doesn't know where to begin.

Outside the capital, where the Marines and the French Foreign Legion enforce what they call "order," the country is ruled by rebels and gang leaders, armed and trained by U.S. Special Forces.

Gérard Latortue, who was made prime minister after the U.S. forced Aristide out of the country, has frozen Aristide's party,

Fanmi Lavalas, out of any government posts and has even kept out those who have been touted by the U.S. media as the "democratic opposition." At the same time, he has praised the death-squad leaders who shot their way into the country as "liberation fighters." Latortue spent almost all his adult life outside Haiti and is a retired UN bureaucrat. He was plucked out of a comfortable retirement in Boca Raton, Florida.

Perhaps indicating the direction he wants to go, Latortue appointed retired Gen. Herard Abraham as interior minister in charge of the police. Abraham openly supports the re-establishment of the Haitian Army, which has a long history

of repressing the people.

Bernard Gousse, another appointee who is now called Justice Minister, told Reuters on April 2, "The justice system is not very healthy. ... It will take some months to rebuild. You can see the derelict situation in which the police is, the justice system, even the buildings."

Gousse has appeared at public functions with Louis-Jodel Chamblain and Jean-Pierre Baptiste—both convicted in a Haitian court of participating in a mass murder in Raboteau—and with other leaders of the armed uprising against Aristide who are wanted on drug-related charges. The beefed-up police force he envisions won't be arresting them.

Secretary of State Colin Powell made a one-day visit to Haiti on April 5, supposedly to discuss the need to bring "stability" and international aid. His visit is basically an admission that the situation in Haiti is not stable and that Latortue's public embrace of mass murderers and drug dealers is creating political problems for the Bush administration.

Dominic de Villepin, France's foreign minister, may also visit Haiti soon. It is obvious that France and the United States have come to some kind of deal on Haiti that protects France's considerable interests in the Caribbean and Latin America, while the United States gets help in its second occupation of Haiti in the past decade.

The occupation of Haiti by imperialist troops continues. More and more Haitians—like the contingents that marched in the March 20 demonstrations against war and occupation in the United States—are seeing that their struggle against neocolonial occupation is part of a worldwide struggle. □

IRAQ OCCUPATION

Four-star war criminals blame enlistees

By Deirdre Griswold

With more revelations coming out every day on the atrocious nature of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and support mounting in Iraq and elsewhere for the resistance, criticism of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's conduct of the operation grows ever sharper in the corporate media and sections of the capitalist political establishment. Moreover, that criticism is edging more and more toward including President George W. Bush as not just a dupe of Rumsfeld but as a co-conspirator in dragooning the U.S. public into the war on false pretenses.

However, the split within the ruling class over how to effectively keep Iraq under U.S. domination has not yet crossed the threshold where any significant faction is calling for the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

On the contrary, the loyal opposition grouped around soon-to-be-candidate John Kerry has staked out a position for itself that emphasizes sending more troops to Iraq on the spurious argument that controlling that country and the region are essential for U.S. "national security." And the establishment critics, Democrats and Republicans, studiously avoid attacking the giant oil companies or the military-industrial-banking complex, which have worked behind the scenes shaping the aggressive foreign policy carried out by the White House and the Pentagon.

Missile kills 45 at wedding party

On May 19, the news broke that a missile fired from a U.S. helicopter in western Iraq had decimated a wedding party, killing at least 45 Iraqis—15 of them children. The Associated Press said it had "obtained videotape showing a truck containing bodies of those allegedly killed. Most of the bodies were wrapped in blankets and other cloths, but the footage showed at least eight uncovered, bloody bodies, several of them children. One child was headless."

This incident is bound to increase mass hatred for the occupiers, already white-hot after over a year of indiscriminate massacres, the siege of Falluja, of Sadr City in Baghdad and of other heavily populated areas, the massive sweeps and roundups of civilians, and the systematic beating, torture and humiliation of thousands of Iraqis held prisoner in U.S. concentration camps.

The growing anger has created a mass base for the Iraqi resistance, which has continued to develop throughout the country. On May 17, a bombing attack near the occupation headquarters in Baghdad killed the head of the Iraqi Governing Council, Izzadine Saleem. The IGC is a body completely appointed by the U.S. occupiers, and the resistance considers its members legitimate targets as collaborators. Another eight people were killed in the bombing and 14 wounded, including two U.S. troops.

As of May 18, 787 U.S. service members had died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defense. Thousands more have been wounded or sent out of Iraq because of illness.

U.S. forces have kept up attacks on the militia supporting Shiite cleric Muktada al-Sadr in cities south of Baghdad, espe-

cially in the cities of Najaf and Karbala that house mosques and shrines sacred to Shiite Muslims.

The resistance has developed so rapidly that Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz, one of the key architects of the aggression against Iraq, testified to this on May 18. Speaking before a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Wolfowitz admitted that the Pentagon had underestimated its enemy, and said U.S. troops would have to stay in Iraq for an indeterminate period.

Wolfowitz attributed the resistance to "the resilience of the regime" led by Saddam Hussein—a regime that the Bush administration earlier claimed to have crushed. Yet the forces around al-Sadr, who are putting up such a determined defense against U.S. assaults, were opponents of the Saddam Hussein government. The truth is that only a small layer of the Iraqi population are collaborating with the U.S. occupation. The majority want the U.S. out.

On May 8, for the first time, various elements opposing the occupation met in Baghdad at the first Iraqi National

Conference. Accounts of this highly significant event vary, but between 500 and 2,000 people attended. A report from the INC itself says the meeting was endorsed by many Iraqi political and social organizations—including those of lay Arabs and Kurds, nationalists, Ba'athists, Communists as well as by social and religious organizations of all beliefs.

The INC's final declaration said it arrived at a "unified Iraqi position that reaffirms the rejection of the occupation, support for the resistance and the non-recognition of illegitimate institutions created by the Coalition Provisional Authority."

Torture exposures grow

The Rumsfeld-Bush attempt to limit the fallout from the wide exposure of U.S. tortures in Iraq by blaming a few rank-and-file troops has failed. More has come out implicating higher officers. Perhaps even more important, the troops themselves have begun to spread the truth about the entire conduct of the war against Iraqis.

In an interview with the Sacramento Bee, published on May 16, Staff Sgt.

Jimmy Massey, a 12-year Marine veteran, told how his disgust over killing and watching Marines kill innocent civilians in Iraq had led him to resist orders and finally to leave the military. Speaking of his unit's attacks on Iraqi vehicles at a checkpoint, Massey described the event that pushed him over the edge:

"Every car that we lit up we were expecting ammunition to go off. But we never heard any. Well, this particular vehicle we didn't destroy completely, and one gentleman looked up at me and said: 'Why did you kill my brother? We didn't do anything wrong.' That hit me like a ton of bricks."

That was only one of many incidents Massey described. Finally, when he could take no more, he had this exchange with his lieutenant:

"He asked me something and I said that with the killing of civilians and the depleted uranium we're leaving over here, we're not going to have to worry about terrorists. He didn't like that. He got up and stormed off. And I knew right then and there that my career was over. I was talking to my commanding officer." □



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

Sat. June 5

Washington, DC

Gather 12 noon • White House March on the Pentagon

Int'l Day of Emergency Protests:

U.S. OUT OF IRAQ Bring the Troops Home Now

- All Foreign Troops OUT of Iraq – End the torture, the killing, the occupation

**Volunteers
Needed!**

**Buses from across
the U.S.!**

- U.S. Hands Off Haiti, Korea, Afghanistan, 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 & Immigrant 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

Kerry and unemployment

Most progressive people know that President George W. Bush and his entire administration have been cutting down the working class since day one in office and haven't stopped. The only question left is what the workers can expect from his Democratic Party opponent for the presidency, Sen. John Kerry.

While Kerry was gallivanting around the country campaigning and sounding off about how much he will do for the workers, a critical vote came up in the Senate with serious consequences for a section of the working class. It involved extending unemployment benefits for 1.5 million workers who had run out of jobless benefits since Dec. 31, 2003. The Republican majority had been stonewalling the amendment for months.

The measure needed 60 votes to win. It got 59. Kerry was absent. He was the only senator who didn't show up to vote.

The presidential candidate knew how difficult it had been to get this vote to the Senate floor. He also knew that the vote would be a cliffhanger.

The amendment was tacked on to a 900-page bill providing \$170 billion in new tax breaks for just about every big business imaginable, from Rust Belt manufacturers to cruise-ship operators to Nascar race tracks. For months, big-business lobbyists for the pharmaceutical and railroad companies, oil and gas producers, and giant timber corporations pressured relentlessly to get this legislation through. These well-heeled lobbyists even helped write the legisla-

tion. It had Bush's backing; you can be sure he found millions of dollars pouring into his election coffers to get it passed. It passed easily by a bipartisan vote of 92 to five.

Contrast this giveaway to the rich with a million and a half workers who desperately need a modest extension to help carry them over in these tough times. If Kerry weren't so anxious to prove his reliability to the bosses, there's no way he could have absented himself from such a decisive vote.

Unemployment insurance was never a handout. It was earned by the workers' sweat and sacrifices. The only requirements were looking for work and registering with an unemployment office. It was the struggles of the 1930s led by unemployment councils that originally got the unemployment insurance law passed.

Kerry has made it clear that it is past time to revive those heroic days of struggles and victories. These are desperate times for a significant section of the working class. Fifteen million workers are unemployed, underemployed or have given up on looking for work. The minimum wage is stuck at a starvation level of \$5.15 an hour.

There is a lesson in this defeat of unemployment benefits extension and the easy cruise through the Senate of the billion-dollar tax relief for corporate America. The interests of our multinational working class can only be defended and advanced on the streets, not through putting faith in either of the big-business candidates. □

Wealthy enclave to host G-8

Continued from page 3

managers, the Hercules plant is scheduled for maintenance work during the week of the summit. So it will not be fouling the air with the usual overpowering odor.

Repressive measures challenged

Under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security, Draconian measures to repress any opposition to the G-8 Summit have been implemented by local and county governments in Brunswick and Savannah.

Ordinances were enacted that require organizers of any public gathering to get millions of dollars in insurance, and to pay for police services. Other provisions make it illegal to stand on a public sidewalk with a sign.

Legal action brought by the American Civil Liberties Union has forced local officials to back off on many of the most egregious violations of free speech and assembly rights. However, some protest organizers have already lost their jobs. Police intimidation has prevented the rental of privately owned facilities. And the local media have stirred up reactionary elements by labeling G-8 protesters as "terrorists" or "anarchists."

Statewide, police forces have been trained in the crowd control methods employed in Miami during FTAA protests last November. Israeli "counter-terrorism" trainers led a number of the classes.

In Miami at the FTAA protests, police arrested hundreds. They gassed, clubbed and fired rubber bullets at thousands.

Despite the government's intense efforts to deny visibility to any protest, local activists, joined by progressive groups around the state, have planned a number of activities for Brunswick and Savannah during the G-8 Summit.

For example, a Fair World Fair, with exhibits, information tables, children's activities, speakers and cultural performances, is being set up in Brunswick.

In Savannah, a permit has been issued for Forsyth Park in the downtown area for June 8-10. A March for Peace and Civil Liberties will be held on June 8, starting at the Civil Rights Museum at 10 a.m.

Bush is scheduled to deliver an assessment of the summit's accomplishments at a June 10 news conference. His appearance in Savannah is sure to galvanize large numbers to come to Forsyth Park from 4 to 7 p.m.

For a complete list of activities, visit www.g8carnival.org. □

Chauvinist BJP group unseated in India vote

By Greg Butterfield

To the shock and awe of the Indian and U.S. ruling classes, India's poor and workers swept the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party from power in national elections held May 13 in the world's second most populous country. Now it appears that the Congress Party, the traditional bourgeois-nationalist party, will form a government with the support of the left.

Congress won 217 seats out of 543 total in the Lok Sabha, or lower house of parliament. The BJP took just 185. Neither party has the majority needed to form a government without outside support.

Political pundits and media commentators East and West had expected the BJP to coast to an easy victory thanks to the country's highly touted high-tech economic boom. BJP Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee actually called early elections based on this imagined position of strength.

But the high-tech boom, which has generated enormous profits for bosses in India and on Wall Street, has only touched a thin layer of wealthy and highly skilled Indians. For the vast majority, the onrush of capitalist globalization has meant more unemployment, more lost farms, and deeper poverty.

The masses also registered their rejection of privatization, poverty and Hindu chauvinism by handing the Left Front parties their biggest electoral gains ever. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) won 43 seats in parliament, the Communist Party of India 10, the Revolutionary Socialist Party three, and the Forward Bloc three. Single-seat wins by two other parties and an independent brought the Left Front's total to 62.

The Left Front agreed to support Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi for prime minister. However, after debate the coalition decided not to formally join her government, concerned that this would leave the BJP and other right-wing forces as the only opposition voice. (NDTV, May 17)

Then, on May 18, Gandhi reportedly withdrew and named former Economic Minister Manmohan Singh as the likely new prime minister. The move caused consternation among rank-and-file Congress members. Singh was elevated to appease national and international business interests that feared Gandhi would be too accommodating to pressure from the left. Singh was the original architect of India's privatization scheme. (Reuters, May 18)

There has been enormous pressure on the left to unite with Congress since the BJP took power in 1999. To many in India the BJP is an expression of extreme Hindu nationalism that shares many traits with fascism. The party and its supporters have been implicated in pogroms against Muslims in the north and west of India and in Kashmir, home to a long-lived independence movement.

In 2002 in Gujarat, some 2,000 Muslims died in a pogrom. According to the Association of Parents of Disappeared People in Kashmir, more than 2,500 people were killed in 2003 in clashes with pro-government forces. In the last 18 months there have been 54 deaths in custody. (UK Guardian, May 14)



Indian workers celebrate strong election results for left-wing parties.

The BJP's rise in the 1990s was seen as a threat to India's existence as a secular country. Moreover, the BJP regime quickly became a darling of Washington—speeding up privatization, lowering barriers to foreign investment, and accommodating to U.S. foreign policy. With the anti-Muslim thrust of the "war on terror," the Bush administration did nothing to stop Vajpayee's buildup of nuclear weapons against Pakistan and Kashmir as well as People's China.

Many Indians criticized the BJP government for not doing more to oppose the U.S./British invasion and occupation of Iraq, and for backing the Israeli apartheid state in its war against the Palestinian people.

Congress started privatization

In her campaign, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi promised to make economic reforms more equitable to the poor; to strengthen India's participation in the Non-Aligned Movement; and to curb the worst repressive excesses of the state against Kashmir, Muslim communities, and left movements. She promised to stay the course in peace negotiations with neighboring nuclear power, Pakistan.

Privatization and pro-globalization policies didn't start with BJP, however. They began under earlier Congress-led governments when Gandhi, whose late husband was prime minister, was already a party leader. Repression in Kashmir, hostile relations with Pakistan and China, and acquiescence to U.S. pressure are all legacies of past Congress governments.

In that sense, India's political situation can be likened to that of the United States, where many execrable policies took root under the Democratic Clinton administration, then accelerated and worsened under Republican Bush. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry has at best promised to blunt them a little bit.

Even before being tapped for prime minister, Singh assured bosses that any Congress government would stay the course on pro-business economic reforms after the election results spurred steep declines in the Indian stock market May 14 and May 17. (Reuters, May 17)

The electoral-oriented left parties say that staying outside a government that is nonetheless dependent on the Left Front for its existence will help them push Congress to make more concessions to India's hundreds of millions of poor people, and to slow down privatization and imperialist penetration.

It remains to be seen if communist and progressive forces inside and outside parliament can mobilize the shift in mass sentiment demonstrated by the election in a more militant direction for real economic and social change. □

At commemoration for student martyrs, S. Koreans demand:

'No Korean troops to Iraq!'

By Deirdre Griswold
Gwangju, South Korea

Gum-Nam Street here in Gwangju, the fifth-largest city in South Korea, was packed as far as the eye could see on May 17. Tens of thousands of people rallied in honor of those slain by the army in the infamous incident known as the Gwangju Massacre.

This street in downtown Gwangju is where the South Korean Army shot down the first of 2,000 martyred insurgents in 1980. The troops had been ordered to suppress an uprising against the military dictatorship of Gen. Chun Doo Hwan.

Then as now, the South Korean armed forces were under the ultimate command of the U.S. military, which has occupied South Korea since 1945. U.S. forces were put on alert in 1980, ready to back up the South Korean troops if the uprising could not be quelled.

Gwangju is a city known for its heroic resistance to foreign occupation. It had seen many uprisings during the 35 years that Japan had made Korea its colony. After Japan was defeated, U.S. troops became the new foreign occupiers of South Korea.

The 1980 struggle began with a police attack on Chonnam University, a center of pro-independence agitation and culture. A Citizens' Army was then hastily formed—and was able to hold several downtown government buildings for a week before being crushed.

Today at the martyrs' cemetery on the outskirts of the city, many graves are decorated with photos of the young men and women who gave their lives in this struggle.



PHOTO: KOREA TRUTH COMMISSION

From left, Yoomi Jeong and Deirdre Griswold at Prosecution Rally on U.S. war crimes.

Today, the people's movement has grown so strong in South Korea that the commemoration of the uprising and massacre has official sanction. Political leaders visit the graves of the massacred rebels and pay homage to their memory.

'Don't send Korean troops to Iraq!'

This year, the annual commemoration had a sharp focus. The event was called the Gwangju-Cholla Emergency People's Action Against the South Korean Troop Deployment to Iraq.

A huge mural showing a helmeted George Bush presiding over war atrocities towered over the stage. Speakers and cultural groups hit hard at U.S. military aggression and occupation—in Korea and in Iraq.

The young people cheered as one energetic rock group sang what has become a pop song: "F*** the USA."

The South Korean government agreed earlier this year, under U.S. pressure, to send 3,000 troops to Iraq. But the population is against it. There have been new parliamentary elections since the promise was made, and the results were a clear shift to the left. The conservatives lost heavily and, for the first time, candidates from the Korean Democratic Labor Party, many of them seasoned activists from the labor, women's and democracy movements, were elected to parliament.

The KDLP is now demanding a reconsideration of the troops decision. The population in South Korea knows all about the revelations of U.S. torture and humiliation of Iraqi prisoners that have recently surfaced, and public opinion has turned even more sharply against the war. Several recent incidents in which drunken U.S. soldiers have attacked Koreans on the street only add to the anger.

At the rally, Yoomi Jeong and Deirdre Griswold delivered a solidarity message from the U.S. anti-war group ANSWER that underscored the importance of this struggle to keep South Korean troops out

of the Iraq war.

Older people were also present at the rally. They can remember the days of bloody repression after U.S. troops divided Korea and set up a dictatorship in the south.

In a juice shop on Gum-Nam Street, a woman sought out this reporter to tell her story. Yoon Jong Soon was a little girl when her father, Yoon Yoon Ki, was taken away by police in 1950, shortly after the start of the Korean War. He was a teacher who had fought for Korea's independence from Japan. When the family finally found him, she said, his lips and ears had been "torn apart" and his dead body had numerous stab wounds.

Yoon remembered her father as someone who would give his shoes to the poor and come home barefoot. He destroyed a shrine the Japanese rulers had built to themselves in Busan.

After Japan surrendered, the United States took over the role of colonial occupier. Her father, still a strong nationalist, joined the anti-U.S. struggle. She feels this is why he was singled out by the dictatorship's secret police.

In recent years, thousands of people who had suppressed similar personal histories have begun to speak out about the real role of the United States in Korea. The Korea Truth Commission sent teams of investigators, many of them young students with cameras, video cameras and tape recorders, to take down the stories of many of these victims of U.S. crimes against civilians—before, during and after the 1950-53 war.

It organized tribunals in a number of cities, including New York. And, during the May 17 events in Gwangju, the KTC held a Prosecution Rally attended by victims of U.S. crimes as well as several former long-term political prisoners who spent decades in jail because of their opposition to the U.S. occupation.

Since the days of the Chun dictatorship, there has been a sea change in South Korea. The great majority want the U.S. forces out of their country. And they want to reunify with North Korea, which is constantly vilified and demonized by Washington.

At the same time that the Pentagon is threatening North Korea, however, it is talking about moving 4,000 of its troops now stationed in South Korea to bolster the occupation of Iraq. Just a year ago, the United States was still talking about being able to fight two wars at the same time. That seems a long time ago now, as the resistance to imperialism in both Iraq and Korea are stretching U.S. forces thin. □

Huntington's newest enemy: Mexicans

Continued from page 2
talked about.

Hundreds if not thousands of immigrants die every year crossing the U.S.-Mexican border. And President George W. Bush is making sure that crossing gets harder.

The Department of Homeland Security obtained \$10 million for the Arizona Border Control Initiative. This includes 200 new border patrol agents, 350 helicopters and an unknown number of aircraft to patrol the most remote parts of the border.

This will only lead to increased deaths, immigrant advocates concur.

The Public Policy Institute of California reports that these measures will force workers to go to more remote areas that are even more dangerous. PPIC states that the number of drowned immigrants rose from 48 in 1994 to 92 in 2000. Deaths rose from nine to 135 in the same time period.

At least 151 immigrants died in the Arizona desert last year.

The Bush administration and Congress have renewed their focus on undocumented immigration. Earlier this year Bush proposed major changes in immigration law that amounted to a guest-worker program. That is, foreigners would be allowed to come in and work legally, but would then have to return. There would be no amnesty and more repression.

This apparently is not enough for Huntington.

Huntington would like to distance recent immigrants from the immigrants of the past waves. He would like to stir up divisions between immigrants and the African American people. He would like white workers to rally around his New Nativism to protect "American Christian values." He would like all immigrants to speak English.

But Huntington's view will not prevail.

What is on the horizon for this country is a renewed level of class struggle. Immigrants are bound to take up some of the most righteous class struggles not seen in a long time. They have already begun.

It will be in the fine tradition of immigrants before them, contrary to Huntington's revisionist history. Just like the Jewish, Italian and all South and Eastern European immigrants at the turn of the last century, today's immigrants will fight for their desperately needed rights.

Their struggle has the potential to rock the system to its core. And that is exactly why Huntington and his likes are promoting an anti-immigrant panic.

What is the best answer to Huntington's anti-immigrant tirade?

Solidarity.

Organizing a movement of every single nationality, with U.S.- and foreign-born workers, documented and undocumented, young and old, women and men, gay and straight. And that movement must be against the war at home as well as abroad in order to prevail. □



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Gwangju rally opposes sending Korean troops to Iraq.

Torturas por Estados Unidos: ¿Son la excepción a la regla?

Por Sara Flounders

Las horripilantes imágenes de tortura, degradación y la humillación de los prisioneros iraquíes están siendo descritas como una aberración, una excepción o el resultado de un mal entrenamiento.

Más y más el ejército, el gobierno y los medios noticieros capitalistas le aseguran al pueblo que estos actos extremos son cometidos por sólo unas cuantas manzanas podridas y que son repudiados universalmente. Estos crímenes serán erradicados y se les dará fin, dicen ellos, por medio de investigaciones militares, audiencias congresionales o hasta por una comisión especial.

Repentinamente el papel de la prensa después del 11 de septiembre se olvidó. Esta instigó un clima de racismo y hasta instigó la tortura como parte necesaria para la “guerra contra el terrorismo.” Jonathan Alter, principal editor de la revista Newsweek ayudó a abrir una campaña pública con un comentario titulado, “Es hora de Pensar sobre la Tortura,” publicado el 5 de noviembre del 2001. Las cadenas CNN, Fox News, el New York Times, el Wall Street Journal y otros se unieron al tema.

Cualquier estudio de las guerras de Estados Unidos en el pasado o el presente, o una mirada al interior de sus prisiones hoy, mostrará que la prisión de Abu Ghraib en Irak no es una aberración. Esta representa una política sistemática y con claro propósito. La fuerza extrema, incluyendo la tortura se usa para controlar un imperio que ha sido creado a través de la creciente pobreza de millones de personas.

Los Estados Unidos es un país fundado sobre el uso sistemático y omnipresente de la tortura. ¿De qué otra forma pudo haber sido forzada la esclavitud de millones de africanos, o el genocidio contra los indígenas para quitarles sus tierras? Marcando y castigando con látigos a los africanos y las recompensas pagadas por el cuero cabelludo de indígenas fueron actos de terror organizados por el estado y bendecidos por la religión. Este nivel de extrema brutalidad contra pueblos enteros solo puede llevarse a cabo por la propagación expresa de las formas más perversas de racismo y prejuicios, para tratar de enmascarar la enormidad de los crímenes cometidos.

El ejército de los Estados Unidos ha escrito manuales y libros sobre el uso de la tortura. Mantiene escuelas, como la Escuela de las Américas, para entrenar unidades paramilitares y escuadrones de muerte de todo el mundo sobre las maneras más sofisticadas de tortura individual y asesinatos selectivos.

No se debe olvidar que el Pentágono tiene un arsenal de armas que tortura a poblaciones enteras, como las bombas tipo racimo (cluster), Napalm y las bombas de fósforo.

Los ejemplos siguientes son sólo unos que han recibido cobertura esporádica de prensa.

Afganistán: la masacre en Mazar-I-Sharif

Fotografías gráficas han aparecido en

los principales periódicos de los Estados Unidos de prisioneros afganos al desnudo, amarrados, amordazados, con los ojos vendados al igual que sus oídos para privarles de sus sentidos. Fotografías y testimonios similares fueron presentados en el juicio de John Walker Lindh, el ciudadano estadounidense capturado en Afganistán y enjuiciado en California. Las fotografías mostraron a Lindh amarrado al desnudo en una camilla de hospital, vendado de boca y ojos. Él describió cómo fue metido en un vagón de carga por dos o tres días sin calefacción, luz o agua, junto a cientos de otros prisioneros.

En Afganistán miles de prisioneros talibanes que se entregaron en noviembre del 2001 también fueron encerrados en vagones de carga y dejados intencionalmente sin agua ni aire para cocinarles al sol, según los reportes de Médicos por los Derechos Humanos. El productor de películas escocés, Jaime Doran, viajó a Afganistán a comienzos del 2002 e hizo una película basada sobre el reporte titulada: “Masacre en Mazar.” La película documentó el papel jugado por las tropas estadounidenses y los agentes de la CIA en la tortura y muerte de hasta 3.000 hombres en Mazar-i-Sharif. Las tropas de Estados Unidos supervisaban la operación y dirigían la base. Este documental fue mostrado al Parlamento Europeo. Este hizo que se formularan cargos de crímenes de guerra contra los comandantes de los Estados Unidos.

La revista Newsweek quiso borrar esta atrocidad con un titular el 26 de agosto del 2002, llamado, “El Convoy de Muerte de Afganistán.” El artículo presentó fotografías gráficas y testimonios sobre los miles de personas que fueron dejadas morir de asfixia y deshidratación encerradas en contenedores de metal y sus cadáveres tirados en fosas comunes. Sin embargo, toda la culpa fue dirigida a la Alianza del Norte de Afganistán. Este exoneró a las fuerzas estadounidenses, que se describieron como abrumadas lo cual les ofuscó su supervisión y su comando.

Guantánamo: Campo Rayo-X

En el Campo Rayo-X en la base de Guantánamo, Cuba, más de 600 prisioneros han estado detenidos por más de dos años. Los oficiales estadounidenses han afirmado que ellos no están comprometidos por los tratados de la Convención de Ginebra sobre el trato de los prisioneros de guerra y están libres de escrutinio. El grupo del Secretario de la Defensa, Donald Rumsfeld, ha creado una nueva categoría: “combatiente enemigo.”

Los prisioneros no tienen derecho alguno. No pueden hablar con abogados, contactar sus familias o siquiera saber los cargos contra ellos. Algunos están en total aislamiento. Unos pocos prisioneros con ciudadanía británica o australiana han sido liberados. Ellos han descrito torturas sistemáticas y abusos, aún de prisioneros ancianos y de jóvenes de tan sólo 14 años.

A principios de septiembre de 2003 un equipo de la prisión de Guantánamo encabezado por el comandante del Campamento Rayo-X, Gen. May. Geoffrey

Millar, fue a la cárcel de Abu Ghraib en Irak para ayudar a la comandancia allá a desarrollar procedimientos. Entre las recomendaciones, según el reporte sobre la tortura recientemente publicado por el Gen. Antonio Taguba del Ejército de los EE.UU., fue que los guardias de la policía militar funcionen como “facilitadores” para las interrogaciones.

Haití: fosas comunes y Marineros de EE.UU.

El golpe de estado organizado por los EE.UU. en Haití y el secuestro del presidente elegido democráticamente, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, ha resultado en atrocidades similares a las de Irak y Afganistán.

Una delegación del Gremio Nacional de Abogados, (NLG por las siglas en inglés) visitó varias ciudades en Haití desde el 29 de marzo hasta el 5 de abril. Reportó haber encontrado fosas comunes cerca de Puerto Príncipe y filmó un lugar donde algunos cadáveres parcialmente carbonizados estaban siendo consumidos por puercos. La delegación sacó fotos de cráneos y otros huesos humanos, algunos todavía enredados en ropas o con zapatos o zapatillas cercanas. También confirmaron que están llegando muchos cadáveres al depósito con las manos atadas por detrás y con bolsas sobre las cabezas. El director del depósito de cadáveres admitió que se habían “depositado y enterrado” 800 cadáveres, una cifra extraordinariamente alta.

La delegación de abogados y otra delegación reciente de sindicalistas y miembros de la comunidad haitiana reportaron que soldados de los EE.UU. han estado aterrorizando a vecindarios enteros con redadas y detenciones masivas. Actualmente hay aproximadamente 3.600 marineros EEUU, franceses y canadienses ocupando Haití. El resumen del reporte del NLG declara que “la delegación encontró evidencias contundentes que las víctimas de las amenazas y de la violencia han sido partidarios del gobierno elegido del Presidente Aristide y del Partido Fanmi Lavalas”. Muchos se están escondiendo en las montañas o en Puerto Príncipe; otros han sido golpeados o asesinados. Muchas de sus casas han sido destruidas selectivamente, en la mayoría de los casos, por incendios provocados.

Escuela de tortura

La Escuela de las Américas (SOA) es una escuela operada por el Ejército de los EE.UU. actualmente ubicada en Fort Benning, Georgia, que ha entrenado oficiales de países latinoamericanos por muchos años en el control y la destrucción de movimientos sociales populares. Los egresados han estado involucrados consistentemente en los peores abusos de derechos humanos. En el 1996 el Pentágono se vio forzado a publicar el manual de enseñanza empleado en la escuela, y difundido por la escuela a través de Latinoamérica, donde explicaba cómo se utiliza la tortura, la extorsión y las ejecuciones. Muchos de los oficiales que asistieron a la SOA se volvieron dictadores, líderes de escuadrones de muerte, y responsables de las peores atrocidades

en la región.

Una campaña internacional para cerrar al centro de entrenamiento, liderado por el “School of the Americas Watch”, resultó en que el Pentágono cambiara el nombre de la escuela al “Instituto del Hemisferio Occidental por la Cooperación en la Seguridad”.

Vietnam: lo que dijo Kerry entonces

El aspirante presidencial John Kerry ha estado intentando alejarse del testimonio sobre la tortura y el terror hecho por los EE.UU. en Vietnam que dio el 22 de abril de 1971 -hace 33 años- a una audiencia del Comité del Senado de Relaciones Extranjeras. Resumiendo la evidencia recopilada por Veteranos de Vietnam en Contra de la Guerra y la Investigación de Soldados Invernales en Detroit, Kerry dijo a los senadores:

“Quiero hablar, en representación de todos los veteranos, y decir que hace algunos meses en Detroit, organizamos una investigación en la cual más de 150 veteranos honorablemente licenciados y muchos altamente condecorados testificaron sobre crímenes de guerra cometidos en el Sureste de Asia, que no fueron incidentes aislados sino crímenes cometidos cotidianamente con pleno conocimiento de oficiales a todos niveles de comandancia. ...

“Ellos contaron las historias de cómo personalmente habían violado, cortado las orejas y cabezas, conectado cables de teléfono portátiles a los genitales humanos dejando pasar la corriente, cortado miembros, estallado cuerpos, disparado a civiles escogidos al azar, reducido pueblos a escombros a la manera de Gengis Kan, baleado ganado y perros como diversión, envenenado comestibles almacenados, y finalmente arruinado el campo del Sur de Vietnam además de la ruina normal de la guerra, y la muy particular que resulta de la práctica de bombardear este país”.

La ocupación es tortura

Todas las guerras de conquista y ocupación colonial de los EE.UU. han sido conducidas de la misma manera, ya sea en las Filipinas entre 1898 y 1913 o en Corea de 1950 a 1953.

Los EE.UU. en Vietnam, los franceses en Vietnam y Argelia. Los británicos en Malasia, la India, Kenya o Irlanda. Los alemanes Nazis en Rusia y los Balcanes. El régimen de apartheid en Sudáfrica. Israel en Palestina. Todos aprendieron que hasta las formas más extremas de tortura no derrotan la lucha, solo profundizan la resistencia y el odio de parte de los oprimidos.

Todo Irak hoy está siendo torturado por una ocupación racista y brutal. Pero audiencias, comisiones y hasta la dimisión de Rumsfeld no van a acabar con la brutalidad. La única manera de acabar con esto es de acabar con la ocupación. Esto es algo que la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos jamás hará por su voluntad. Pero sí es lo que puede hacer un movimiento global movilizad, masivo, y disgustado por la tortura y la brutalidad. □