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As Fahrenheit 9/11 fever grips U.S.

**Bremer passes control
of Iraq to Negroponte**

By Deirdre Griswold

L. Paul Bremer III, the president's pro-consul, has slipped away from Iraq after a hastily staged "handover of sovereignty" ceremony in a secret bunker two days ahead of schedule. But he leaves behind 140,000—and growing—U.S. troops, plus what will be the largest U.S. Embassy in the world, headed by Ambassador John Negroponte.

After the torture scandals, the exposures of profiteering by Vice President Dick Cheney's close friends at Halliburton, the growing war-weariness among troops whose tours of duty are being extended, and now the swing of public opinion inside the United States against the war and occupation in an election year, are the empire builders who run this country finally going to find a way out of the disaster they have created and allow the Iraqi people to pick up the pieces and rebuild their country?

Certainly the administration is scrambling to "Iraqize" the occupation, just as Richard Nixon announced he would "Vietnamize" that horrible imperialist war after taking office in 1969. It took four more years, however, and horrendous casualties among the Vietnamese people, as well as the deaths of 15,000 more U.S. troops, before the bulk of U.S. forces were withdrawn from Vietnam. And it was two additional years before the last helicopter took off from the U.S. Embassy building in 1975, even as the victorious socialist forces were entering Saigon to a cheering populace.

This transfer of the image of authority in Iraq is even thinner than Nixon's was. The ceremony in which Bremer crowned Ayad Allawi as "interim prime minister" betrayed the utter dependence of this small group of exiles-turned-puppets on U.S. military muscle. The Iraqi people weren't informed of the event until after Bremer had left the country. It was held in

utter secrecy and two days early because the actors feared they would be literally blown up by the powerful resistance that now seems to be everywhere in Iraq. Needless to say, there were no celebrations in the streets.

It was the most perfunctory and phony "transfer of authority" in living memory.

And no wonder. The latest poll had shown that only 2 percent of Iraqis supported the U.S. occupation headed by Bremer—the so-called Coalition Provisional Authority. And who took that poll? The Coalition Provisional Authority itself. (Washington Post, June 29)

There is speculation in the media that the new "government" in Iraq may impose martial law. That would allow it to carry out mass arrests, detentions, military assaults, and so on against those it deems sympathetic to the resistance. But who will really be doing all this? U.S. troops will provide the bulk of the force and vio-

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Protest phony 'transfer of authority'

In the week leading up to June 30, protesters around the world denounced the so-called transfer of authority in Iraq as nothing but a charade. One such demonstration, shown here, was held outside Madison Square Garden in New York, where the Republican National Convention will take place at the end of August. The protest, called by New York ANSWER, not only demanded that the U.S. get out of Iraq and other occupied areas, but also that the city grant permits to the many protests planned during the RNC.

—Story and photo by Deirdre Griswold

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HIP HOP CONVENTION: left politics and art

By Anita Grey
Newark, N.J.

The first Hip Hop Political Convention took place in Newark, N.J., June 16-19 at Essex County College. Close to 3,000 young people attended the conference, traveling from 25 cities.

Participants, all part of the Hip Hop generation, collectively wrote a people's agenda using urban Hip Hop art, music and dance culture as a political tool, and electoral politics as a vehicle, to advance the Hip Hop political goals.

People who registered 50 people to vote were chosen as delegates, who then wrote and voted on the five-point agenda.

The agenda included issues of education with equal funding for all schools; economic justice; an end of taxation without representation; an end to gentrification and for more public, low-cost housing; full employment and reparations; an eradication of mandatory minimum sentencing and for a civilian review board with independent prosecutor; free universal health care, funding of mental health treatment, and an increase in HIV/AIDS funding; a human rights call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a people of color anti-terrorism bill that will abolish terrorism by the government against all nationally oppressed peoples.

Workshops on criminal justice, urban policy, women's issues, education, health and using the media were held. There was also a conversation between the

hip hop and civil rights generations. And the convention featured films on police brutality and abuse of day labourers.

Discussion groups were filled to capacity as young people planned out a strategy of how to move their agenda forward. The workshop on political organizing extended half an hour past its time because the discussion became intense with audience participation.

Poets, DJs and rappers as well as Hip Hop politicians like New York City Councilperson Charles Barron attended. Barron, a former Black Panther and now a 2005 New York mayoral candidate, bought the convention to its feet on June 19 when he spoke of adding a third column of "none of the above" alongside the Democratic and Republican tickets on the November ballot.

Barron said that if the "none of the above" column has more votes than the Republican or Democratic candidate, then the elections should be redone.

Hip Hop activist and organizer of poor Black and Latin@ voters, Newark Deputy Mayor Ras Baraka, also attended the conference. Chuck D from the Public Enemy rap group also spoke and was one of the main conference organizers.

During the conference, Military Park was filled with music as cultural artists Rah Digga, Dead Prez, Tench and Movement in Motion took over the park. The organizers will continue the Hip Hop Convention website and build toward local organizing for the next convention in Chicago in 2006. □

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1,000 hotel workers rally on eve of merger to form UNITE HERE

By Steven Ceci
Washington, D.C.

In a display of solidarity and determination, over 1,000 hotel workers and their supporters marched and rallied in downtown Washington, D.C., on June 24.

"Without you, the hotels are nothing but a pile of bricks and mortar," said Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees President Bruce Raynor, addressing the festive rally in Farragut Square.

UNITE and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees union will merge into one of the nation's biggest unions next month, bringing increased clout to contract negotiations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington and elsewhere. "Today's rally is just the beginning!" promised Local 25 Secretary-Treasurer John Boardman.

The Washington contract expires on Sept. 15. Local 25 will need to build a broad coalition of labor, community and religious support for the hotel workers' struggle to guarantee better wages and benefits, and respect and dignity on the job.



WPHOTO: STEVEN CECI

HERE members with community supporters rally in Washington, D.C.

Several other unions were there to show solidarity. They included the State, County and Municipal Workers; Food and Commercial Workers; Service Employees; Operating Engineers; Electrical Workers; as well as the D.C. Building Trades Council.

The march and rally was notable for the strong participation of women immigrants from countries of Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. They held picket signs in over 10 different languages expressing the need for a just and fair contract. □

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 E-mail: editor@workers.org
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 Vol. 46, No. 27 • July 8, 2004
 Closing date: June 30, 2004

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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 wnews-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.



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After racist beating, speakout says

'Unite to fight police brutality'

By John Parker
Los Angeles

It was a room full of anger—righteous anger that reminded this writer of past police killings and beatings that inspired such emotion.

But this time the emotion was being channeled by speakers and the participants into action and a common determination to not go gently into the night—but to fight like warriors for justice against yet another racist beating of a Black man by Los Angeles police.

On June 28 Faith United Methodist Church hosted a speak-out featuring the Rev. Al Sharpton to take up the latest case of police brutality. It had occurred in Compton on June 23.

Police repeatedly kicked Stanley Miller, a 36-year-old Black man, and beat him with a metal flashlight. As in the Rodney King and Donovan Jackson beatings, the incident was captured on videotape, this time by cameras aboard news helicopters from KABC Channel 7 and KTTV Channel 11. The videotape was broadcast throughout the day on local TV stations.

Sharpton, the first speaker, called for unity among Black leaders in Los Angeles. He urged that people push for more restrictive legislation directed at the police.

A representative of the International Action Center, himself a victim of racist police abuse, warned at the speak-out of the city, state and federal government's typical attempts at discouraging militant action. He was well received when he announced an immediate action by the IAC with various community leaders and activists at police headquarters July 2.

Mollie Bell, a layperson at the church, chaired the speak-out.

This latest assault against the community started with a 30-minute car chase in Compton after Miller ran a stoplight and

was found to be driving a stolen car, police claim.

Caught on video—again

The tape shows an unarmed Miller appearing to surrender after running a short distance, then raising his arms and starting to kneel down. Two cops then grab Miller and push him to the ground.

A third cop comes up and kicks Miller in the head, then strikes him 11 times with a flashlight. On the tape it looks like he is striking Miller's head with the metal flashlight.

Police Chief William Bratton, in an attempt to keep the lid on the incident, took the unusual step of refusing to release the names of the officers involved. This advice came from the city attorney's office.

Often, once the public finds out who the offending officers are, many stories come to light from victims whom those same officers abused in the past—which begs the question of why those cops were allowed to remain on the force.

Bratton got away with this strategy for only one day, however. He received public criticism for hiding the cops' identities. On June 25 Bratton released the names.

The eight police at the scene were placed on desk duty. Three are being investigated for "excessive use of force."

John Hatfield, a seven-year veteran of the police department, delivered the blows to Miller.

The cops who grabbed and pushed Miller to the ground were identified as Phillip Watson and David Hale. Sgt. Angela McGee and Officers Peter Bueno, Todd Behrens and Andrew Moody were also identified. They have all been cops for between six and 16 years.

As top cop under former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Bratton orchestrated a new level of racist police brutality against innocent victims, including the

fatal choking of young Latino Anthony Baez and the killing of African immigrant Amadou Diallo, who was shot 41 times. Instead of being fired for these atrocities on his watch, Bratton was later awarded the job of Los Angeles police chief.

Many in the oppressed communities feel ever more threatened.

The Los Angeles Times quoted Everett Brumfield, employed as a general laborer at the First AME Church, saying he is often harassed. "The police are always on the edge, you know? It's pistols at your head and get on the floor."

At the June 28 meeting, speaker after speaker recounted personal experiences of police brutality against either themselves or loved ones, citing some incidents that ended near death.

Bratton's flashlight bluff

Bratton has excused himself from this embarrassment to his leadership by claiming he's new to it all here in Los Angeles.

He said he planned to review the department's policy of allowing officers to strike suspects with flashlights. He said the authorized use of a flashlight on resistant suspects was new to him and needs to be re-evaluated.

However, Bratton has been in charge of the Los Angeles Police Department since October 2002.

Department policy states that officers are permitted to use "distraction blows" with flashlights to gain the compliance of aggressive or combative suspects. They can strike suspects on the arm and shoulder, but not the head.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Officer Hatfield told police investigators he administered distraction blows to the arm and shoulder blades—not the head—and that he stopped hitting Miller once the handcuffs were on. Hatfield also claimed he kicked and then beat the suspect

because another officer yelled that he had a gun.

Metal flashlights, however, are a known hazard. The Times reported that Merrick Bobb, a special counsel for the county supervisors on issues concerning the sheriff's department, warned that flashlights cause greater injuries than batons.

The use of metal flashlights as weapons has been going on for years. In 1996, another cop was videotaped hitting a man in the head with a flashlight outside a hospital. The city of Los Angeles was forced to pay \$160,000 to settle his case. In 1999, another cop allegedly struck a man several times in the rib cage with a flashlight while he was seated in the back seat of a patrol car.

Neither officer was prosecuted.

If Bratton is to be believed, it means he has not studied any Los Angeles history regarding lethal force. His statements suggest that this is the first time a "flashlight incident" ever happened on his watch.

Many observers find it hard to believe that this type of police brutality only occurs under bright lights and on videotape. At the speak-out, the Rev. Charles Blake of West Angeles Church said that if one event was captured on videotape, then many more happen out of sight.

Several participants at the speak-out reminded the audience that these incidents have occurred over and over with the same results, encouraging further police abuse. Inaction is not an option, they said, and the community's best defense against the LAPD is a renewed commitment to unity and militancy.

The July 2 action at Chief Bratton's headquarters will be an important step toward that goal.

The writer is Workers World Party's candidate for president of the United States. □

Justice for Stanley Miller

Call to action against LAPD

Following are excerpts from a call to action by the Los Angeles International Action Center in solidarity with the Black community to help end police terror.

In view of the latest publicized beating of yet another Black person, this time 36-year-old Stanley Miller, by the Los Angeles Police Department, this is a call for a coordinated action to keep the pressure on the police, mayor, governor and federal government and show these bodies that the Black community and its allies in this country will not tolerate any further police terror, which has become normal policy.

The LAPD has increased the frequency of terrorism and beatings against the Black community since the Rodney King verdict in 1992. Tyisha Miller, Margaret Mitchell, Donovan Jackson are just some of the Black victims of police brutality who made the headlines. Many more have not. Black people, especially youth, are routinely harassed and insulted by the LAPD's violence.

Unfortunately, after a blatant display of racist terror by the police has been exposed, like clockwork, the state and local governments put into motion the machinery of "lullification." They pick and

choose who they will negotiate with and who will be anointed as the most fit community leaders to work with—"fit" meaning those who will discourage militant action and protest.

And, like clockwork, the Justice Department will send its community control overseers posing as civil rights advocates to assure the family, friends and allies of the latest victim that justice will be forthcoming. Then, the stall begins and with that stall, anger turns into hopelessness, action into despair and exhaustion. Three or four weeks later militant action is no longer feasible since a demand for justice has turned into nothing more than a whimpering plea to the powers that be.

Stanley Miller, whose victimization by the police on June 23 was videotaped and shown throughout the day on local channels, had surrendered. He was not resisting when Officer John Hatfield, a seven-year department veteran, kicked Miller in the head, then landed 11 potentially fatal blows to Miller's upper body and perhaps his head. Nothing Miller did before he surrendered could possibly justify that psychotic rage, yet time and time again that same type of reckless endangerment by armed police against the lives of oppressed peoples is witnessed in the

communities of Watts, South Central, Compton and East Los Angeles.

In fact, it is almost exclusively reserved for those communities, with police who are well armed and display contempt and hatred for the people there. The slightest altercation could be fatal.

This is not a police force that protects. This is an occupying army. Miller's type of encounter with the police under the cover of isolated and dark streets does not usually get exposed but for a chance recording on videotape; however, for Black and Latin@ people, this occurrence is all too familiar. It is yet another example of racism in its deadliest form.

The LAPD presents a clear and present danger to the lives of especially Black and Latin@ people here in Los Angeles. Meekness and apathy in the face of brutal attacks against these communities invites further abuse and even death to the people living there. What is clear is that militant demonstrations under the leadership of these communities with uncompromising solidarity from the progressive movement must be built. But it must not be an action solely for the purpose of headlines for a day. Equally important is its capacity to build a united network of organizations and activists dedicated to fighting



Stanley Miller

police and state terror against the Black and Latin@ communities here.

This Friday at the Parker Center could be a significant contribution towards that type of action. The International Action Center is organizing a press conference and rally at 12 noon on July 2 with representatives from labor, anti-war, civil rights and community organizations to make a stand and speak in solidarity with leading Black organizations and activists—all dedicated to sincerely fighting police brutality and its root causes.

In unity there is strength and protection from those who would harm our loved ones. A more humane world is not possible unless each one of us feels secure and safe from harm and hunger. The time is now.

Initial signers:

International Black Coalition for Peace and Justice, Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti, West Papuan Network, International Action Center, Latinos Against the War, Bayan □

AFSCME convention votes to 'bring troops home now'

By Sharon Black
Anaheim, Calif.

Some 6,000 people participated in the 36th international convention of AFSCME—the State, County and Municipal Employees union—in Anaheim, Calif., June 19-25. About 3,000 were delegates from local and district AFSCME councils. AFSCME Puerto Rico's participation increased dramatically, from two to 40 delegates.

The meeting, demonstrations nearby, and resolutions against the war in Iraq reflected a growing militancy among the rank and file of the public workers' union.

As with the Service Employees union's convention in San Francisco earlier in June, the AFSCME gathering passed a resolution calling for U.S. troops to get out of Iraq.

The final resolution involved a struggle over wording with some of the union leadership, which supports John Kerry's presidential campaign. The union's resolutions committee had watered down an earlier anti-war resolution, changing the demand to "bring the troops home as soon as possible" instead of "now."

Later, Brenda Stokely, president of District Council 1707 representing day-care workers in New York City, gave an impassioned call from the conference floor to amend this wording. She expressed the workers' sentiments when she urged, "Bring the troops home now!"

The delegates cheered and applauded her call. And when the resolution came to the floor for a vote, these same delegates overwhelmingly passed the amendment to make the wording "bring the troops home now."

People in the "Union and Community Campaign to Bring the Troops Home Now" distributed a special petition and flier repeating this demand. AFSCME convention participants scooped up these fliers.

The issue of the war is of burning importance to workers. Their children are



AFSCME delegates demonstrate in California June 23.

WWPHOTO: SHARON BLACK

on the front lines.

Union's support for Kerry contradicts anti-war sentiment

Despite the strong anti-war sentiment, AFSCME's official position is support for John Kerry.

Kerry spoke at the convention on June 24. He called for a stronger military. He has vowed to increase the number of troops in Iraq.

Yet the AFL-CIO's top leadership is throwing all its efforts and resources into the Kerry campaign.

This stands in stark contrast to what labor really needs: a resurgence of action that gets right in the bosses' faces. Labor needs unity that will challenge the capitalists. It needs a program that is politically independent of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Kerry doesn't exactly have a strong pro-labor record. Just recently, even though he presents himself as labor's candidate, Kerry missed an important Senate vote on extending unemployment benefits for thousands of jobless and desperate workers. Had he been there the amendment would have passed.

At the convention, the AFSCME delegates approved a \$9 union dues increase. In itself this could be fine—but the increase is meant primarily to support the Democratic Party and the Kerry election campaign.

One delegate from Detroit bravely took the microphone to oppose the dues increase, asserting that the union's strategy of relying on the elections is wrong. The delegate suggested that the money would be better used for strengthening AFSCME locals, on organizing, and on building bigger demonstrations about union issues.

While this opposition to the dues increase was clearly a minority view, AFSCME staffers have expressed worry that the dues increase could hurt organizing efforts.

The hoopla around Kerry also forced the tabling of many other progressive resolutions. The Million Worker March, a national rank-and-file effort to organize a mass labor march on Washington for Oct. 17, had gathered a number of supporters.

Clarence Thomas from the International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 and others had come to the con-

ference to organize for this effort. Caucus meetings and a local church meeting in Anaheim helped to build support.

Unfortunately, the actual floor vote on supporting the march was scuttled. Nevertheless, march organizers felt they had succeeded in meeting many like-minded labor unionists.

Secretary-Treasurer Bill Lucy continues role

During the elections of union officers, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Lucy stunned the membership when he declined nomination for re-election, citing health problems. Lucy has long been one of the labor movement's leaders most closely associated with the Black struggle for civil rights. He traces his roots to the Memphis strike of sanitation workers that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was supporting when he was assassinated. Lucy also fought to oppose South African apartheid. He is president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

The conference floor broke out in standing ovations of support for Lucy, with delegates demanding that he stay on as secretary-treasurer. In the end, Lucy agreed to continue in his role. Both he and Gerald McEntee, AFSCME president, were unanimously re-elected.

The most dynamic part of the convention was the pre-organizing conference. There, workers from California, Missouri, Maryland and many other states talked about their efforts to unionize. On June 23 hundreds of AFSCME delegates and supporters jumped on buses to travel to the nearby California University Medical System to demand contract rights for poorly paid hospital workers who face racism on the job.

Domestic workers, day-care providers, hospital workers, bus drivers and campus workers are the most exciting layer of AFSCME workers who are leading the new organizing drives. Most are women and most are African American, Latin@ and Asian. □

People rise up against immigration raids

By Adrian Garcia
Los Angeles

As California's Border Patrol was conducting a racist campaign of raids specifically targeting Latino communities, hundreds of undocumented workers, members of immigrant-rights organizations, churches and anti-war groups took to the streets of Los Angeles June 26 to demand an immediate end to the raids.

Local news station KCAL reported that between June 1 and June 16 approximately 7,000 undocumented workers had been detained and/or deported. Immigrant families find themselves in a state of terror. People are keeping their kids away from school, opting not to go to work and staying away from shopping centers for fear of being rounded up.

"Bush racista, eres terrorista" ("Racist Bush, you are a terrorist") reverberated through the militant crowd marching down Broadway Blvd. to the approval of the predominantly Latin@ onlookers, some of whom joined the march.

Organizers of the day's event—Latino Movement USA, Hermandad Mexicana and the ANSWER coalition—called for a cessation of the raids, amnesty for all

Los Angeles,
June 26. Solidarity
with immigrants.

WWPHOTO: J. LA RIVA

undocumented workers and their right to obtain driver's licenses.

Sako Sefiani, an organizer for the International Action Center and a Workers World Party member, classified the recent raids as "racial profiling, pure and simple." Sefiani made the connection between the war against working people at home and the U.S. imperialist campaign against working people abroad.

"The people of Falluja [Iraq] fought back against U.S. occupation, and we must unite and give our solidarity to the Iraqi resistance, immigrants who face round-ups and to Black people, who face police beatings in this country," proclaimed Sefiani.

Hwan Sa Kim of Korean Americans for



Peace and Justice spoke about the need to fight for the rights of all immigrants who find themselves under attack.

Muna Coobtee of the Free Palestine Alliance addressed the relentless and illegal assault against the people of Palestine by the state of Israel and presented the similarities in the treatment of immigrants in this country with the treatment of Palestinians in their occupied homeland.

Juan Jose Gutierrez, coordinator of Latino Movement USA, urged people to stay involved in the struggle. He asked the crowd to be part of the 10th-anniversary

demonstration commemorating the historic struggle against the reactionary Proposition 187 that was aimed at preventing undocumented immigrants from receiving medical care and schooling.

Another militant demonstration of 5,000 protestors marched against the Border Patrol's raids in the working class neighborhood of Maywood, Calif., June 27. These protests send a clear message to the bosses in Washington that the people will unite and take their struggle to the streets until justice for all workers and oppressed people is achieved. □

Kerry, Bush & the Reagan legacy

By Fred Goldstein

It is best to approach the Kerry-Bush struggle from the perspective of the last quarter of a century of capitalist politics in the United States. This period has been consistently characterized by intensified military buildup and aggression abroad and an across-the-board attack on the economic, social and political rights of the masses at home. This has been true through eight years of Democratic administrations—10 if you count the last two years of Jimmy Carter—and 15 years of Republican administrations.

Leaving Carter aside for the moment, this sharp shift to the right-wing orientation of the last quarter century began with the Reagan administration. This orientation was not merely the product of a right-wing politician and his cohorts. It found fertile soil in the ruling class under very specific historic conditions of crisis at home and abroad in the latter half of the 1970s.

The Reagan administration came to office six years after the U.S. effort to conquer Vietnam collapsed. In the period of 1974 to 1979, the Portuguese colonialists were driven out of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and revolutions took place in Ethiopia, South Yemen, Nicaragua, Grenada, Iran and Afghanistan. The Palestine Liberation Organization was growing in strength. There were insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala. Cuban troops using Soviet-supplied equipment defeated the attempt by the apartheid regime of South Africa to overthrow the Angolan revolution.

The strength and prestige of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, which was making economic and military strides, was growing world-wide. And the sphere of U.S. imperialist influence was contracting.

At home, the industrial-technological infrastructure of the U.S. ruling class was outmoded and in need of restructuring. European and Japanese capital were outstripping the bosses here. Capitalist overproduction resulted in falling profit margins. Economic stagnation, high interest rates and inflation were plaguing the capitalist economy.

The U.S. ruling class was faced with a choice of adapting to new world conditions or launching a gigantic counter-attack on the workers and oppressed at home and abroad. This was the class basis for the triumph of Reaganism.

Reagan's task was to prepare for military adventure abroad; to push back the USSR, the socialist camp and the national liberation movements; to overturn all the remaining economic, social and political concessions won by the workers' struggles during the Roosevelt period; and to take back the gains of the Black people and all the oppressed nationalities won during the 1950s and 1960s and of women, lesbians, gays, bi and trans people during the 1970s.

This aggressive orientation arose out of the predatory need of the capitalist class to rescue its position as the dominant exploiter of the world. This orientation has not changed since and has been pursued by every administration, Democrat and Republican, since then.

Under Reagan the role of the capitalist state as the guarantor of private property and exploitation shifted from that of combining oppression with class and social compromise to an all-out frontal assault by the state upon all previous concessions

won in the struggle.

Reagan and George W. Bush

The George W. Bush administration, like the Reagan administration of 1981, sought to open up a full-scale right-wing offensive at home and abroad. Just as Carter prepared the way for Reagan by carrying out a vacillating policy dominated by concession after concession to the right wing and the military, including a plan for a \$1-trillion military buildup, so Clinton prepared the way for Bush with the same types of concessions on the military front, health care, welfare and much more.

When Bush arrived on the scene in January 2001, the Clinton-Gore regime had already waged a brutal air war against Yugoslavia, bombing hospitals, factories and numerous civilian installations. It had bombed Iraq and, under pressure from the right wing, moved to have regime change written into policy in a congressional resolution. Clinton had carried out eight years of brutal sanctions and bombings in the so-called no-fly zones in Iraq, had sent missiles into Afghanistan and the Sudan, and increased the military budget.

The Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz grouping took over with the overriding goal of demonstrating the capability of the U.S. military to establish absolute dominance over the world. Its immediate goal was to roll back the smaller, independent nations that had liberated themselves from imperialism and then to move on to the larger nations, such as China.

After various limited starts—such as bombing Iraq, violating China's air space with fighter planes, pulling out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty signed with the former USSR, and so on—they seized upon the Sept. 11 disaster to open up a war against Afghanistan and then quickly moved on to Iraq.

Aside from all their tactical and diplomatic blunders, which in the long run are secondary, they came up against a fundamental factor that could not be overcome, even by all the "right" military and diplomatic moves. This factor is the collective will of the Iraqi people to resist colonial occupation and a takeover of their country by imperialism.

Because of the Iraqi people's resistance, the Bush administration's war in Iraq turned out to be a disastrous adventure. Not only did this war fail to demonstrate the ability of the Pentagon and Wall Street to dominate the world, it showed the

severe limitations of the mighty superpower. When it had to put troops on the ground to expand its empire against even a small, poor nation with a vastly inferior military—but a nation whose people are trained in the use of arms, technically skilled and fiercely anti-imperialist—U.S. imperialism showed its weakness.

What was supposed to be an intimidating show of strength, which would easily secure the second-largest supply of oil reserves in the world for the giant oil monopolies and give Washington a strategic stranglehold on the center of the Middle East, has turned into the first major setback to the forward advance of U.S. imperialism since the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

The entire ruling class in the U.S. backed the war, overcoming their misgivings about the dangerous "unilateralism" of the Bush group. This class also bought the idea that the U.S. would be greeted as "liberators." All the more recent criticisms by the outraged media, which were embedded with the Pentagon during the war and were its biggest cheerleaders, are a reflection of splits in the ruling class because they are facing disaster in Iraq. They cannot get over the dizzying discrepancy between their imperial world ambitions and their inability to secure Baghdad or Falluja after 14 months of bloody occupation.

Having aroused the largest anti-war demonstrations in history during the pre-war period, the Bush administration now faces an even broader and deeper anti-war, anti-occupation sentiment at home. The mounting casualty figures, the torture scandals, the bumbling, the miscalculations have become daily grist for the media mill because the ruling class, and especially a large part of its brain trust and political advisory establishment, are thoroughly disillusioned and in a state of consternation about the prospect of being unable to secure Iraq for U.S. imperialism. A defeat in Iraq would not only be an immediate material loss for the ruling class, but would be an inestimable strategic setback that would greatly encourage the anti-imperialist struggle worldwide.

Kerry's political identity

These divisions within the ruling class and the endless second-guessing and Monday-morning quarterbacking are going on in the context of a presidential election campaign and have led to no end of confusion and difficulty for the masses, who are increasingly disturbed about the war, the casualties and the scandals. The

masses want to put an end to it all.

John Kerry is running on the Democratic Party ticket and is desperately trying to establish a political identity separate from Bush. The one phrase that would do that clearly and decisively would be: "Bring the troops home." Yet his position on the war is the exact opposite. His position is "stay the course" and send 40,000 more troops.

His arguments with Bush over the war are over past policies exclusively. There are no basic differences going forward.

Kerry's strategic objective of "staying the course" in Iraq is indistinguishable from the objectives of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, the military, the oil companies and U.S. big business in general. His criticisms are of an imperialist nature through and through. The Democratic Party leadership is thoroughly committed to trying to save the situation there.

At the moment, John Kerry is trying desperately to sound like a friend of the masses of workers, the poor, the elderly and those suffering from the pro-big business policies of George W. Bush. While he is very short on substance, Kerry is hinting that he will reverse the economic situation of the people, which is deteriorating on all fronts.

This position is as fraudulent coming from Kerry as it was when it came from Bill Clinton, the previous Democratic Party president—who promised a jobs program and health care for all and instead destroyed welfare, destroyed the health care system, balanced the budget on the backs of the people, and betrayed every promise he made or progressive position that he hinted at during his campaign.

Reagan's historic role was to reverse the decline of U.S. imperialism abroad and to overturn the gains won through historic struggles at home. Bush hoped to follow in his footsteps by riding roughshod over the right of sovereignty, self-determination and self-defense of liberated peoples and by deepening the attacks upon the domestic political, social and economic rights of the masses.

The Iraqi people have struck a blow against the ambitions of Washington and the Pentagon for global dominance. The people at home can win back all the concessions taken from them by the ruling class, its capitalist parties and its state, not by siding with one bourgeois candidate or another, but by reviving the methods of mass, militant organized struggle that brought about the concessions in the first place. □

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Dyke March against racism

This year's San Francisco Dyke March, celebrating its 12th anniversary with the theme of "Uprooting Racism," brought out more than 50,000 lesbians, transgender activists and their supporters on June 26.

According to march organizers, "This year's march is one of the largest anti-racist marches in the history of San Francisco."

The anti-racist, anti-war campaign of LeiLani Dowell, a Workers World Party member running for Congress on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket, was well received throughout the march that wound its way through San Francisco from Dolores Park to the Castro District.

—Judy Greenspan

Mistrial in transgender murder case sparks protest

By LeiLani Dowell
San Francisco

On June 22 an emergency rally was held in the Castro District of San Francisco to protest the declaration of a mistrial in the case of three men charged with murdering Gwen Araujo.

Araujo was a 17-year-old transgender woman who lived with her mother in the small town of Newark, Calif., 30 miles from San Francisco. She came out to her family as transgender at the age of 14, and chose the name "Gwen" in honor of one of her favorite musical artists, Gwen Stefani of No Doubt. She dreamed of moving to Hollywood and becoming a professional makeup artist.

On Oct. 3, 2002, Araujo was brutally beaten and strangled to death by three men she had previously had sexual relations with, after they discovered at a party that she was a transgender woman.

During the three-month-long trial, the prosecution presented evidence that the three men—Jason Cazares, Michael Magidson and Jose Merel—discussed scenarios of murder weeks before the killing. Yet the defense used a bigotry-excusing "trans panic" defense to call for a manslaughter charge.

The judge called a mistrial after jurors, while all agreeing on a charge higher than manslaughter, became deadlocked on whether to convict or acquit the men on first-degree murder.

Because the jurors could not decide on first- or second-degree murder, they were not allowed to consider added hate-crime charges, which add four years to any prison sentence. California is one of only five states that include gender identity as a category for hate crimes.

Signs at the June 22 rally read, "We will not forget" and "Justice for Gwen." Speakers recalled the trial of Dan White 25 years ago.

White was acquitted of murdering San Francisco's first openly gay city supervisor, Harvey Milk, and Mayor George Moscone, under the now-famous "Twinkie defense."

White's acquittal resulted in the "White Night Riots"—four days of angry LGBT rebellion in the city during which the community rose up, attacking City Hall, setting fire to police cars and battling cops.

The June 22 protesters vowed to continue fighting violence against the LGBT

community. Murders of trans people, particularly trans women of color, have been on a drastic rise since 2002, with 39 murders documented in the year 2003.

This message of resistance was taken to the following Pride weekend in San Francisco, which is being called one of the most politically charged Pride celebrations in this city in years. On June 25, San Francisco began its pride weekend with its first annual Trans March. The next day, the annual Dyke March was held under the banner of "Uprooting Racism." The June 27 LGBT Pride Parade was themed "Out 4 Justice." Originally focused on the right of same-sex couples to marry, organizers changed the focus to honor the life of Gwen Araujo and demand justice for her murder.

Gwen Araujo's mother, Sylvia Guerrero, spoke from a cell phone to the June 22 rally. She expressed her shock and devastation at the ruling, saying: "I want to take up the positive, the chance at a new trial, a new jury, and hopefully the case will now be presented as a transgender murder and a hate crime. We all know this was a hate crime, and had Gwen not been transgender, she would be here with us today. ..."

"I am very proud to be her mother, because she continues to touch so many lives around the world."

Court will reconvene on July 30 to set a date for a new trial, which is not expected to be until next year. □



WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

New York Pride March.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Teresa Gutierrez, WWP vice presidential candidate, at Pride march in NYC.

HOUSTON

Anti-war message strong

Houston ANSWER and the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement joined forces for a very well received anti-war and anti-racism entry in this city's huge nighttime Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Pride parade on June 26.

The contingent was led by a beautiful banner featuring a glittering triangle. It read, "Come out against war and racism," "No pride in occupation," and "Money to fight AIDS, not wars." A pick-up truck followed, decorated with multiple signs and carrying activists.

More banners in the contingent read, "Bring the troops home now" in both

Spanish and English, and "From Texas death row to Iraq: End prison torture!"

These banners drew cheers and solidarity shouts and waves from the huge crowds who came out to celebrate during a well-timed break in weeks of heavy rain. Many spectators came out to necklace marchers in the multinational contingent with Mardi Gras beads. Some onlookers joined in with the group.

When the speaker on the sound system compared the Stonewall rebels with the resistance fighters in Iraq today, the crowd roared in agreement.

—Gloria Rubac

NEW YORK

'Fight for socialism & LGBT liberation'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
New York

John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell led a dynamic Workers World Party contingent in New York City's annual Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans Pride March on June 27. Parker and Gutierrez are WWP's candidates for president and vice president of the United States. Dowell is a Workers World Party member running on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket for Congress in the 8th District of California, which includes San Francisco.

Organizers estimate that 1.5 million people marched the long route from the Upper East Side into Greenwich Village and down Christopher Street, past the site of the Stonewall Rebellion that ignited the modern U.S. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender liberation movements in 1969. This year's celebration marked the 35th anniversary of the night that gay and lesbian combatants, including transgender African American, Latina and white homeless youths, fought back against police brutality during a raid on the Stonewall Bar.

Behind a Workers World banner with their names and the call to "Fight for Socialism and LGBT Liberation," the candidates advanced through streets lined with tens of thousands of spectators. They were met with enthusiastic applause, cheers, and whistles of approval along the early route, and with huge roars of excitement as they entered the Village.

Parker was the only presidential candidate to march in the parade. In a statement of solidarity to the march, the candidates said: "We are longtime fighters in the struggle for LGBT liberation—two of us as lesbians, and the other as an ally who has fought together, shoulder to shoulder with LGBT people for his entire political life. We are also workers, people of color, supporters of the labor movement, anti-war and anti-imperialist activists."

The candidates praised the hard-won victories of the last year: the U.S. Supreme Court's Lawrence decision decriminalizing lesbian and gay lives, and the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage.

And they laid out their vision for a socialist future: "We want more than the lifting of legal penalties and social stigmas. We want a future where LGBT people and all people have free health care and free education, free day care and elder care, affordable housing and jobs—and vacations! We want a society with equality for all—socialism."

No pride in war

Marchers in Workers World's contingent carried signs demanding same-sex marriage rights and an end to violence against LGBT people, as well as an end to U.S. imperialist wars and freedom for political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Marchers chanted, "U.S. out of our bedrooms! U.S. out of Iraq!" and, "Money for AIDS, not for war, same-sex marriage is what we're for!" One WWP banner featured a rainbow flag and the call to "Unite to Fight for Liberation." Other groups marching with the contingent included the International Action Center and the People's Video Network.

Behind the steel barricades along the streets, onlooker Natasha McHugh said: "I definitely believe an anti-war group belongs at Pride. The U.S. does not need to be at war. There are a lot of issues in this country that need to be fixed. But the war



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

New York, June 27. WWP candidates on banner, starting second from left: LeiLani Dowell, Teresa Gutierrez, John Parker.

is about U.S. interests in that region." McHugh, from Puerto Rico, said, "I am the straight daughter of a lesbian mother, here to stand up for her today."

LeiLani Dowell stressed the candidates' connections to LGBT issues: "We're celebrating Pride 2004 as born from a movement of struggle, and we're here to continue that struggle. The capitalist candidates are not here. They are against same-sex marriage. And they have said nothing about the violence against LGBT people. We are here to stop that violence, to stop police brutality, and to honor the lives of those who have died in the struggle."

Voting for the struggle

Leading the march were the Veterans of Stonewall, together with longtime activists. As always, the broad range of organizations in the march showed how the LGBT liberation struggle has expanded into a mass movement. Just a few of the hundreds of groups participating were the African Ancestral Lesbians, Gay Asian Pacific Island Men of New York, the Brazilian Rainbow Group, Latino Gay Men of New York, the Minority Task Force on AIDS, the Butch/Femme Society, and the Lesbian Herstory Archives.

In this year's march, political organizations, usually placed far back in the line, were moved to third in the order. At the head was a large "Kerry for President" Democratic group. Other people wore stickers picturing a dead elephant, expressing opposition to the Republican National Convention, coming to New York City in late August.

But the waves of applause and cheers that greeted Parker and Gutierrez revealed that people were hungry for struggle in a year dominated by Bush and Kerry's capitalist election politics.

All along the line of march, the candidates worked the mikes, introducing themselves, explaining the purpose of

their socialist election campaign, and calling on the people to "join us," as presidential candidate John Parker called out.

It amounted to a miles-long rally as the WWP contingent drew waves of cheers and applause from the crowds lining the streets. Excitement built as the thousands greeted Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell and their message of struggle.

Parker said: "We represent the working people, not the Halliburtons, the Enrons, the big companies. Where is the money going in this country? For the war on Iraq! The people need that money to get what we all need. And we in Workers World are here in the struggle for health care, against AIDS, and to stop this war. Bush won't stop this war, Kerry won't stop this war. Only the movement can stop the war."

As the marchers turned into Christopher Street, vice-presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez appealed to the thick crowds, mostly young people of color: "Every four years, some rich white man wants to take your vote, so he can take your sisters and brothers and send them to war. It's time that someone who looks

like me, and who looks like you, is president and vice president. Bush and Kerry are for the war. They don't care about unemployment, the environment, LGBT rights or women's rights.

"Our ticket is a Black man and a Latina lesbian. Don't you think it's time that people who work for a living run this country?"

Onlookers greeted her remarks with uproarious applause, shouts and raised fists. Kema Mack, a 26-year-old African American lesbian from Harlem who was attending the march with a group of friends, called out: "She's telling the truth! She's telling what's really going on in this country!"

Gutierrez continued: "If we were elected one of the first things we would do is make same-sex marriage legal! I'm a Latina lesbian and I don't want to wait one more day for this basic right. Vote with your heads and your hearts, and support us as candidates who believe it's time for a revolutionary movement in this country. We're not saying we're going to run so we can win. But if we can win you to the struggle, then we have won." □

BEDFORD-STUYVESANT

First Pride action

"An unprecedented celebration of Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Trans Pride took place June 26 in the predominantly African American and Latin@ neighborhood of Bedford Stuyvesant," Pat Chin told Workers World. Chin, a longtime activist, is a member of the International Action Center and Bedford-Stuyvesant Coalition for Peace.

She described the march as "accompanied by a lively marching band. The parade included many male-to-female transgender people, and advanced down the main avenue and wound through the neighborhoods."

Chin remarked that this was the first time in her memory that such an event had taken place.

—Minnie Bruce Pratt

Ireland, Turkey

Mass protests greet Bush at NATO summit

By John Catalinotto

The Bush administration faced potential setbacks on two levels at the NATO summit in Istanbul, Turkey, June 28-29: mass protests in the streets and lukewarm support from imperialist rivals in the alliance.

The mass mood against the U.S. occupation of Iraq was first made clear on June 25 in Dublin, Ireland. There, over 10,000 demonstrators, many wearing Bush masks, protested the U.S. president's visit.

Rallying under the "Stop Bush Campaign" banner, the crowd waved signs denouncing Bush as a warmonger. In particular, they called for an end to U.S. military flights through Dublin's Shannon Airport, a refueling point and layover for thousands of U.S. troops each month.

One group of 2,000 protesters tried to get closer to the castle where George W. Bush was meeting European leaders. Though police and military held them miles away from Bush, they still managed to delay his news conference by holding up reporters for an hour.

In Turkey, the demonstrators were determined not to let 23,000 police and troops stop them from waging an effective protest demanding an end to the occupation of neighboring Iraq. Already on June 26 several cities saw protest actions, from Diyarbakir in Turkish Kurdistan, to the capital, Ankara, where police attacked 5,000 NATO opponents with tear gas and clubs.

Solidarity protests took place the same day in London; Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart and Berlin, Germany; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Vienna, Austria; Paris and Strassbourg, France.

Istanbul's 15 million residents are split by the Bosphorus strait into a European and Asian half. Police refused to let the protest march in the European half, where the

NATO summit was being held. On June 27, some 50,000 people marched in the Asian part of Istanbul. The Alliance Against NATO and Bush—a coalition including labor union confederations, the Turkish Communist Party, the Freedom and Solidarity Party, and other communist and anarchist groups—called the action.

The Berlin Daily Junge Welt of June 27 quoted Sami Evren, chair of the Public Service Workers of Turkey, telling the crowd, "Today Istanbul is the center of anti-imperialism."

The crowd carried banners reading, "Yankees go home," "This is our country," and "United States murderers, leave the Middle East."

Protesters burned an effigy of the U.S. president. They wore anti-Bush and anti-NATO T-shirts.

As the NATO summit opened the following day, some 2,000 demonstrators bravely challenged thousands of police armed with tanks, as Turkish gunboats plied the Bosphorus and helicopters and warplanes crisscrossed Istanbul's skies.

Police launched heavy tear-gas attacks on the protesters.

Uneasy alliance

The NATO meeting did underwrite the new Iraqi government and authorize additional NATO troops for Afghanistan. But help for the United States in Iraq will have its limitations.



Istanbul

The main continental European powers, France and Germany, had opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq last year. While the U.S. bombs were dropped on Iraqis, U.S. imperialism's monopoly control of Iraq's oil resources also threatened French and German economic interests. This could be seen when the occupation regime effectively cut French and German companies out of oil and construction contracts in Iraq.

Then reality struck. The Iraqi resistance showed that unilateral U.S. rule of Iraq is impossible. This forced Bush to seek international support for a failed occupation. Bush's original plan for the summit was to ask NATO to send troops to support the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. When this was headed for failure, Bush pulled back.

France's President Jacques Chirac made this coldly clear on June 28. "I do not believe it is the purpose of NATO to be in or intervene in Iraq," he told journalists at Istanbul's military museum. "I believe there would be tremendous negative consequences of this." Chirac also attacked Bush for urging that the European Union admit Turkey as a member, calling this not

part of Bush's "domain."

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Spanish Prime Minister Juan Zapatero also made it clear they would not be sending troops to Iraq. It has become apparent that after U.S. imperialism attempted to cut out French and German interests completely, the European imperialists are not so quick to pull the U.S. irons out of the fire.

Even Bush's scaled-down request for NATO trainers of Iraqi security forces got only limited backing, though France, Germany and Spain did offer to train Iraqis outside Iraq.

Bush is trying to put a happy face on these results, as relations inside NATO have also become an issue in the U.S. national election. Democrat John Kerry claims he could get more help from the Europeans with the Iraq occupation.

"Today's papers are filled with stories about how angry these countries are at the way they've been treated by this administration," Kerry said on June 28. "It may well be that it takes a new president to be able to reestablish the relationships that we've had in the past."

The anti-imperialist demonstrators in Istanbul made it clear they had no confidence in either the U.S. or Western European imperialists. One big banner read, "Imperialism and NATO are the biggest enemies of peace." □

Korean airline unions won't transport troops to Iraq

By Deirdre Griswold

Organized workers in South Korea are solidly opposed to their government's sending any troops to bolster the U.S. occupation of Iraq. And they are doing something about it.

On June 24 the unions representing flight attendants, pilots and airport employees announced they would refuse to transport either troops or equipment to Iraq. They are part of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which has led the militant labor struggles of the past decade.

In announcing the decision, KCTU President Lee Soo-ho said that union leaders had also discussed a general strike to stop the deployment, but failed to reach a conclusion. "The means of struggle is flexible, along with changes to the situation," said Lee.

Back in February, when the South Korean parliament was still dominated by conservative parties, it had yielded to U.S. pressure and voted to immediately send 600 South Korean troops to Iraq and to deploy 3,000 more this summer.

But in April President Roh Moo-hyun, who is an establishment liberal and former labor lawyer, weathered an impeachment attempt by the reactionary parties. Parliamentary elections at that time resulted in a major shift to the left, leaving his new Uri Party with a clear parliamentary majority.

The people expected Roh and the new parliament would act on their demand to cancel the deployment. But he did not, and now the people are angry.

However, the Korean Democratic Labor Party—a left opposition party that draws strength from both the unions and the movement to get U.S. troops out of Korea, and which for the first time gained parliamentary seats in the April election—has been making cancellation of the deployment a major demand.

When a Korean translator, Kim Sun-il, was killed recently in Iraq, the population back home responded with even greater anger at their government's policies. The vigils and marches that followed stressed the demand to end the violence by getting out of Iraq.

These demonstrations had a similar

character to those in Spain in March after more than 200 people, most of them workers, were killed and 1,500 injured in the horrific bombing of four commuter trains in Madrid. The people blamed the attacks on the U.S. war and occupation, and on their government for being part of it. Three days later, the center-right government of Jose Maria Aznar, one of Washington's few European allies in Iraq, lost the election. His successor, social democrat Juan Zapatero, quickly announced he would bring the Spanish troops home.

For over half a century, U.S. imperialism, which has occupied South Korea with tens of thousands of troops ever since World War II, was able to pretty much tell compliant governments there what to do, in both domestic and foreign policy. But public opinion has changed enormously in recent years. Millions of South Koreans have risked repression and been active in progressive movements—of workers, students, immigrants and a broad cross-section who want the United States to sign a peace treaty with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north, end the

military occupation of the south, and allow the Korean people from both societies to work toward the reunification of their nation.

Inside the U.S. capitalist establishment, there are quite a few who fear that the Bush administration's obsession with Iraq has only further weakened the position of the class of U.S. multi-billionaires in other parts of the world, such as Korea. They have been arguing in various forums—such as think-tank conferences, op-ed columns and television commentaries—for more threats and pressure on the DPRK.

U.S. workers, however, have nothing to fear from the growing progressive movement in South Korea. On the contrary, the airline unions there, by refusing to cooperate in sending troops to Iraq, will weaken this horrible occupation, thus saving the lives of Iraqis and young Korean and U.S. workers.

Unions here should reach out in solidarity to their Korean sisters and brothers and say no to the bosses of Halliburton, Bechtel, ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco and the other billionaire corporations behind the war. □

As Fahrenheit 9/11 fever grips U.S.

Bremer passes control of Iraq to Negroponte

Continued from page 1

lence to be used. Fareed Zakaria wrote in the Washington Post commentary cited above that "for the immediate future, most counterinsurgency operations will remain largely American affairs."

The U.S. Army has just announced that it will recall to active duty some 5,600 reservists who had already completed their time in the service but still have a "reserve obligation."

Wrote the New York Times on June 29: "The Army is so stretched for manpower that in April it broke a promise to some active-duty units, including the 1st Armored Division, that they would not have to serve more than 12 months in Iraq. It also has extended the tours of other units, including some in Afghanistan. ...

"The Pentagon had hoped to reduce its troop levels in Iraq to about 105,000 this spring, but because of increasingly effective and deadly resistance the level has risen to about 140,000.

"Military officials have said they may need to stay at that level for at least another year or two, a commitment of forces that could not be maintained by the active force alone."

On the civilian side, the person calling the shots in Iraq will be John Negroponte, the new U.S. ambassador. The web site of the Maryknolls, a progressive Catholic order that was deeply involved in supporting social justice movements in Central America, has this to say about his tenure as Ambassador to Honduras in the 1980s:

"John Negroponte deliberately falsified State Department human rights reports throughout his time in Honduras. U.S. missionaries and many people of faith and conscience were murdered by the CIA-trained Honduran Battalion 3-16, which Negroponte at best overlooked and at worst oversaw. ...

"The New York Times credits John Negroponte with 'carrying out the covert strategy of the Reagan administration to crush the Sandinista government in Nicaragua' during his tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Honduras from 1981 and 1985. He oversaw the growth of military aid to Honduras from \$4 million to \$77.4 million a year. ... Other documents uncovered a scheme of Negroponte and then-Vice President George Bush to funnel Contra aid

money through the Honduran government.

"In addition to his work with the Nicaraguan Contra army, Negroponte helped conceal from Congress the murder, kidnapping and torture abuses of a CIA-equipped and -trained Honduran military unit, Battalion 3-16. ...

"Sister Laetitia Bordes went on a fact-finding delegation to Honduras in May 1982 to investigate the whereabouts of 32 Salvadoran nuns and women of faith who fled to Honduras in 1981 after Archbishop Oscar Romero's assassination. Negroponte claimed the embassy knew nothing, but in 1996, Negroponte's predecessor Jack Binns reported that the women had been captured, tortured, and then crammed into helicopters from which they were tossed to their deaths."

With Negroponte's track record, the U.S. role in atrocities may become more covert than in the recent prison scandals, but it will not be less brutal.

Mass anti-war sentiment not reflected by Kerry

It has become common knowledge in political circles, and expressed even in the capitalist media, that the Iraq war was the creation of an ideological grouping of neo-conservatives in the Bush administration long committed to bringing Iraq under U.S. domination, and that they used every type of deception to put across their agenda. What once was revealed only by speakers at mass demonstrations opposing the war can now be heard from political commentators of all stripes.

Now the phenomenal success of Michael Moore's documentary film "Fahrenheit 9/11," from the moment it opened in theaters across the U.S., shows that this truth is being embraced by the great mass of the population. That the film, which shows the terrible suffering of both Iraqis and U.S. troops, has shown to packed houses not only in large cities but in places like Fayetteville, N.C., the home of Fort Bragg, must have the military brass very worried about what is going on in the minds of those it thinks of as the bottom of the chain of command.

Even with all these signs of continually growing mass opposition to the occupation, however, the position of both the Democratic and Republican parties continues to be that withdrawal from Iraq is "unthinkable."

In a statement responding to Bremer's "transfer of power," presidential candidate John Kerry said on June 29, "I believe it is critical that the president get real support, not resolutions, not words, but real support of sufficient personnel, troops and money, to assist in the training of security forces in order to be able to guarantee a rapid real transition, and most importantly, in order to be able to provide adequate security on the ground."

Nevertheless, Kerry is seen as some sort of alternative to Bush by a large part of the progressive movement, even though there is little enthusiasm for him. His wife, Teresa Heinz-Kerry, is a billionaire and heir to the Heinz ketchup fortune. If Kerry becomes president, his family will be the richest ever to occupy the White House.

According to National Public Radio on June 23, Kerry has actually raised more money for his campaign this calendar year than Bush—\$123 million to Bush's \$82 million. This shows a shift of big money behind his bid for the presidency.

Many members of the ruling class in this country now view Bush as having botched things terribly for them, and they want a president who can achieve their imperialist ends without alienating 95 percent of the world's people. They hope they have found such a person in Kerry.

But illusions on both sides about what the election will bring will have a hard landing after Election Day.

There will still be huge numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The struggle of the Iraqi resistance to unseat the puppet government and expel the foreign armies will continue and probably grow stronger. Scandals over missing U.S. funds for Iraq reconstruction—like the \$20 billion now unaccounted for—will go on as social programs back home keep getting cut back to pay for the huge Pentagon bill.

What thwarted the Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld/Wolfowitz plan for a neat, high-tech victory in Iraq was the human factor—the refusal of the Iraqi people to lose the sovereignty they won through their long anti-colonial struggle, plus the rise of a worldwide anti-war movement that put millions in the streets. The hopes for a real end to the occupation continue to rest on the independent, militant resistance of the masses of people. □

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

A colony by any other name



With a change of name, amid pomp and ceremony, the group formerly known as the Iraq Governing Council has announced the naming of almost all of its members (20 out of 22, at last count) to the new Interim Government of Iraq.

With the oil minister notably among the first appointed, the U.S. government went out of its way to point to the supposed "independence" of the group, by their selection of a guy who wasn't the U.S. favorite to lead as president of the Interim government.

Lost in this "appointment," however, is the fact that all of the people in the interim government, just as the IGC itself, were themselves appointed by the U.S. Overlord of Iraq, L. Paul Bremer.

Are they independent?

They are independent, if only of the Iraqi people they are supposed to "represent." They depend, however, on the U.S. imperial army for their very lives.

Two members of the IGC have been slain in the past several months, and few of them feel safe enough to mingle with the people they claim to govern. Ghazi al-Yawer, the president-select of the interim government, and his fellow ministers are about as safe among their people as Hamid Karzai, the U.S.-selected president of Afghanistan, is outside of the capital of Kabul (which is to say, not at all).

The fact of the matter is, one may change the name of a thing, but not change its essence. As the great English playwright, William Shakespeare asked: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose; By any other name would smell as sweet." Call it the Iraq Governing Council; or the Iraq Interim Government; isn't it still a puppet government, under the thumb and whim of the Americans? If not Bremer, then an assorted bunch of U.S. generals; if not them, then the U.S. ambassador. They call the shots.

How can any alleged government be "independent" when its territory is overrun by a foreign army, almost 150,000 strong, over which it exercises no authority whatsoever?

This is a puppet government, an occupation government, as false, as illegitimate as the Vichy regime over Paris under the boots of the Nazis during the Second World War.

The United States didn't go to Iraq to "establish democracy." It hasn't "established democracy" in Dade, Seminole or Alachua Counties in Florida. It hasn't "established democracy" in its colony of Puerto Rico, where these so-called "citizens" cannot vote in national general elections, and have a "representative" in the U.S. House who cannot vote on the floor! It hasn't "established" a single true democracy in over a century in Latin America, having instead supported the most brutal and savage dictatorships known to man or woman.

The United States is in Iraq because beneath its roiling sands, in the belly of the nation, lie dark, viscous pools of petroleum. It's all about crude, y'all—black gold, "Texas tea," that is—oil.

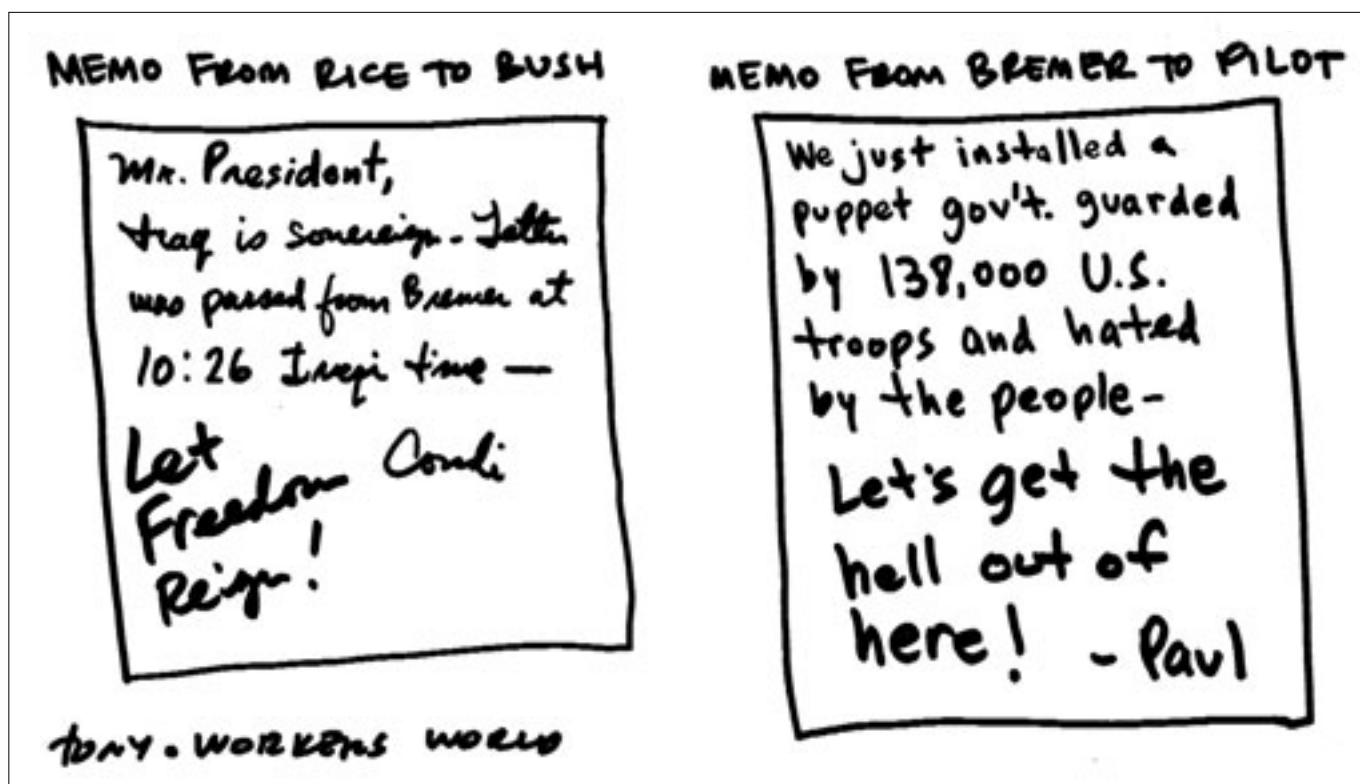
That's what it's all about. That's all it's ever been about.

The Interim Government serves not at the pleasure of the Iraqi people, but at the behest of the U.S. Empire. They can be as easily dismissed as former favorite Ahmed Chalabi's stipend from the CIA was removed. The Iraqis will be under the automatic M-16s of helmeted, camouflaged Americans for some time to come.

The United States will stage manage the upcoming elections, much as the Bush Regime stage managed those here, to insure the outcome they desire.

Let us remember the words of a "senior U.S. official" to their former puppet, Chalabi: "We can bring the full force of U.S. power to bear against him. ... He should not forget that," the official added. (Washington Post, weekend edition, May 31-June 6).

That message was not for Chalabi alone, but for all on the strings of the Puppet Masters. □





Bush & NATO

The Bush gang has been so arrogant in wielding unilateral U.S. military power in Iraq that Bush's request for help from NATO might falsely look like a step toward peace. That would be a gross misunderstanding of NATO's role. NATO is no international organization of "peacekeepers." It's a military alliance led by the U.S. and the older colonial powers in Europe, aimed at the workers and oppressed nations.

The U.S. founded NATO in 1949 to keep socialist revolution away from Western Europe and to threaten the Soviet Union. It also guaranteed a leading role for U.S. foreign policy with regard to its European allies. The NATO structure had U.S. officers at the top, and the weaker imperialist powers in Western Europe subordinated their individual interests to the confrontation with the socialist camp.

As long as the USSR and the Warsaw Pact existed, NATO made no military attacks. It couldn't. But NATO plans formed the basis for the pro-fascist coup of Greek colonels in 1967. NATO agents worked with the militarists and fascists in Italy to sow terror in the 1970s. NATO armies threatened to intervene against the Portuguese revolution in 1974-1975 should the workers there attempt to seize power.

The collapse of the USSR in 1989-1991 left the U.S. with a problem regarding NATO. U.S. strategists wanted to take this anti-Soviet pact and turn it into a weapon for intervention in Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. This would leave the U.S. in the driver's seat regarding military intervention, but would enlist the British, French, German and other imperialist rivals in the ground armies taking casualties.

The first major area of intervention was the Balkans. With reliance on U.S. air power, NATO made its first military intervention in the post-Soviet period against the people of Yugoslavia, bombing civilian targets mercilessly for 78 days in 1999 on NATO's 50th anniversary. It proved once more that NATO was a pact of predatory powers, aimed at oppressing and exploiting the vast majority of the world's people. At the end of that war, it was fitting and symbolic that the major powers carved up Serbia's Kosovo province, sharing the spoils just as the 19th-century colonial powers did when they carved up Africa.

The Bush gang's adventure in Iraq went a step beyond NATO. It was an attempt to plunder a country without sharing the spoils with U.S. rivals. Bush's failure in Iraq has forced the U.S. ruling class to look back toward NATO, whether Bush or Kerry is in the White House next year.

The Milosevic case

With NATO likely to continue as a major focus of U.S. foreign policy, it would be a good time for the progressive movement here to pay attention to the case against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague. After three years in an old Nazi prison and a parade of 300 prosecution witnesses who proved nothing against him, Milosevic is opening his defense case in July. Even during the last two years of cross-examinations of prosecution witnesses, Milosevic managed to expose NATO's aggression. His defense will likely expose to the world NATO's own war crimes in the Balkans. □

Behind Pentagon lies about the Balkans war

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Gender & sexuality in czarist Russia

By Leslie Feinberg

Lenin's Bolshevik Party abolished the czarist anti-gay law and legalized abortion less than eight weeks after the October 1917 Revolution. The Soviet leadership under Stalin retreated from those revolutionary positions by re-criminalizing homosexuality in 1933-34 and abortion in 1936.

Neither of these actions reflects the policies or psychologies of individuals, but of deep economic changes going on in Soviet society and their impact on the family. The question of same-sex love and the role of women in what became the Soviet Union has a long and complex past that can't be examined in isolation from the class struggle as a whole.

Much of the scrutiny of this particular aspect of history has been by researchers and academics who are hostile to the Russian Revolution and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics it forged. Anti-communism not only taints their work, in too many cases the discrediting of socialist revolution is the actual foundation of their analysis.

Working-class communist intellectuals—particularly those from the former socialist-bloc countries—who examine the question of sexuality, gender and sex in this vast region within the context of the class struggle, without glossing over any of the weaknesses or mistakes of the revolution, will make a vital contribution to the socialist movement.

As ancient as humanity

As with every other inhabited land mass on the planet, the extended region that was to become the Soviet Union seems to have encompassed same-sex love and gender/sex variance during early times. Sexual variance is found not just in the history of one nationality or one class.

British archeologist Timothy Taylor identified what he believed was evidence of what today is called transgender, as well as women warriors, in pre-class Iron Age graves in southern Russia. "I think I have identified females who moved into a male sphere as well as men who cross-dressed," he wrote. ("She-Men," British Daily Telegraph, Feb. 13, 1995)

Historian Dan Healy stated in his book "Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia" that: "The popular, everyday (bytovoe) sexual patterns and practices of the mass of Russians were marked by pagan survivals (orgies, non-reproductive sex acts), which Russian Orthodoxy, with its incomparably weak institutions and priesthood, had been incapable of eradicating."

Healy explained, "Rural and lower-class Russians possessed an array of terms to describe individuals who appeared or behaved like members of the opposite sex. They associated this gender marginality with hermaphroditism observed in domesticated animals, linking social qualities with the familiar phenomenon of physical sexual indeterminacy."

For example, Healy noted that "The lexicographer Vladimir Dal, who gathered his material between the 1830s and 1850s in central Russia, found that the manly woman was known as muzhlanka, muzhlatka, borodulia, suparen, and razmuzhliche. Dal reported that his informants defined these women as 'resembling a man in their appearance, movements, voice, et cetera,' or 'by structure, by body formation'; they might even approach the condition of a 'hermaphrodite-woman' (germafrodit-zhena).

"The lexicographer found an analogous

vocabulary describing the feminine male. In addition, Dal reported that the verb devulitsia was used of men who 'luxuriate, take women's habits, manners.'"

None of the words used to describe "manly" females were insults; some of the terms for feminine males were.

The stamp of feudalism on sexuality

In an essay about Russia and same-sex love, Simon Karlinsky observed, "There is a considerable body of evidence that prior to the Westernizing reforms of Peter the Great (at the beginning of the 18th century) male homosexuality was widespread and tolerated in all strata of Russian society. This is attested by foreign travelers and also by the sermons and denunciations by Russian Orthodox churchmen of the 16th and 17th centuries who repeatedly complained about the prevalence of homosexuality." ("Hidden from History," NAL Books: 1989)

Sexuality between men took place within every economic class in imperial Russia—even the tsar, Peter "the Great," was said to "dabble in bisexuality on occasion." (Karlinsky)

Of course, men of all classes who had sex with other men might still have believed that what they were doing was "sinful."

And the sex that took place between men in the owning classes and laborers, termed "gentlemen's mischief," cannot be characterized as consensual sex, even when physical violence was not directly involved as coercion. Some 52 million human beings, enslaved as serfs in czarist Russia, had no rights as far as the landowners were concerned.

Serfdom was formally abolished in 1861 as part of the Great Reforms under Alexander II. But the peasantry, the preponderant class in czarist Russia, still lived under the boot heel of patriarchal semi-feudalism.

Codifying state repression

Revolutionary ferment in Western Europe in the second half of the 18th century, which brought the bourgeoisie to power in France and elsewhere, also brought challenges to the absolute monarchy in Russia. Other Western influence, however, had brought repressive laws in its wake earlier in the century. German military advisers to Peter the Great had drafted a Military Legal Code in 1706, based on a Swedish military edict, that penalized consensual sex between males. The punishment was burning at the stake.

This law was broadened in the Military Code of 1716. The legislation of 1706 and 1716 applied to soldiers on active duty.

"Criminalization of male homosexual behavior for the whole of Russian society came with the promulgation of a new Legal Code drafted in 1832," Karlinsky wrote, "during the reign of the most brutal of the Romanovs, Nicholas I. This code did not retain the military legislation of Peter the Great, but was instead patterned on the criminal codes that existed at the time in various German principalities, especially that of Wurtemberg, which it copied."

But industrialization in Russia in the 1880s and 1890s—and the urbanization it brought with it—set swift economic changes in motion.

As large numbers of peasants—mostly men, but some women, too—left their villages and farms to come to the cities in search of paying jobs, the old feudal social structure of the family, sexuality and gender/sex expression they brought with them was transformed, as well.

Next: *Capitalism creates same-sex subcultures; 1917 revolution seeks to liberate them.*

Lesbian ♦ gay ♦ bi
and trans
PRIDE
SERIES
PART
6

COLOMBIA

International visitors show solidarity with workers

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
Bogotá, Colombia

From June 20 to June 26, some 60 delegates from Brazil, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, the Basque Country, Germany, Ireland, Britain and the United States participated in an International Caravan to Save the Lives of Colombian Workers.

This timely event was of extremely critical assistance to the beleaguered progressive movement in Colombia, whose government is dutifully advancing at lightning speed Washington's plans for the region. To conform to the ambitions of U.S. corporations, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez has put into place a terrorist state of repression using new laws and provisions, some of them unconstitutional under the 1991 Colombian Constitution.

Even though the Free Trade Area of the Americas is not yet in effect, a privatization process is rapidly sweeping the country. As a result the majority of the population is denied health care, education and vital basic services.

Some 63 percent of the people of Colombia live in poverty—25 percent in abject misery.

Natural resources like oil are being transferred to multinational corporations, mostly U.S.-based. The development of foreign-owned mega-projects in different regions of the country brings forced displacement of thousands of Afro-descendants, Indigenous and peasants.

Paramilitaries at the service of the

Colombian state and U.S. corporations routinely harass and threaten, and in extreme cases massacre these peoples.

The only obstacle to these corporate interests is the determined and courageous struggle—both armed and unarmed—that the Colombian people are waging. Under these conditions, it is no surprise that Washington is backing Colombia's militarization to suppress this resistance.

Throughout the packed agenda of visits and meetings, delegates confirmed the human rights violations that labor unionists and social organizations have charged for a long time.

In order to cover the agenda of visits to governmental departments and regions of the country, the international delegation divided into smaller groups. In the capital, Bogotá, delegates met with the vice prosecutor, the vice minister of social protection and the embassies of the countries whose citizens were on the caravan. This included the United States Embassy.

The caravan's main sponsoring organization is the Colombian Coca-Cola workers' union, SINALTRAINAL, which had also requested meetings with other governmental departments. These included the presidency of the republic, the interior department, the public defender and the procuraduría. Both the president's office and interior ministry refused to grant a meeting—the former stating that since the subject was labor that the visitors should approach the labor department.

SINALTRAINAL also requested a

Solidarity visitor stopped at Colombian army checkpoint.

WW PHOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

meeting with Coca-Cola FEMSA; the company initially rejected, but later it agreed to meet on June 28. Coca-Cola is known for its harsh union-busting activities, including violence against workers trying to organize, and the union has been waging what it calls a "Stop Killer Coke Campaign."

Participants gathered a wealth of information through meetings both in Bogotá and other regions with organizations representing youth, women, Indigenous, Afro-descendants, human rights advocates, political movements and of course trade unions.

The delegation organized by the U.S.-based International Action Center met in the Buen Pastor Women's Prison with several women political prisoners, including the well-known Indigenous and peasant leader Luz Perly Córdoba.

Smaller groups of delegates traveled to Arauca, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga-Barrancabermeja, Cali and Medellín, where they met with different social organizations and trade union representatives.

Back in Bogotá, the caravanistas, together with the sponsoring organizations, met throughout one day to evaluate the visits and plan a course of action. In



general, their proposals reflect the urgency of the situation. They are meant to expose the grave situation as widely as possible in the international community. A goal is to make other governments and international labor organizations aware of and responsible for actions on behalf of the Colombian people.

Some of the proposals by the international delegates were:

Continue exposing the critical situation in Colombia, demanding an end to the support of the Colombian government and insisting on respect of human rights.

Coordinate international activities including the July 22 International Day of Action against Coca-Cola and a week of actions against this and other multinational companies.

Publicize the three international labor organizations' S.O.S. scheduled for September 2004, and the institutionalization of the caravan as a permanent body that can accompany the process of resistance in Colombia. □

U.S. groups to defy blockade of Cuba

By John Catalinotto

A coalition of activists from IFCO/Pastors for Peace, African Awareness Association and the Venceremos Brigade will unite on July 19 to once more defy the U.S. blockade of Cuba. It will happen on their return from a trip to the revolutionary island. All the delegations will re-enter the U.S. on that date, some from Mexico and some from Canada.

Among those going on the trip are Workers World Party members Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell, both candidates for office in the upcoming elections in the United States. Gutierrez is the WWP candidate for vice president, has visited Cuba many times, and has been a leader for decades in organizing solidarity for Revolutionary Cuba within the United States.

In the recent past Gutierrez has played a leading role in organizing support for the Cuban 5 political prisoners. These are Cubans convicted for alleged espionage activities in the United States. The five prisoners explain that what they were really doing was tracking the activities of the terrorist anti-Castro organizations in southern Florida that have been responsible for the murders of hundreds of Cubans.

LeiLani Dowell is a candidate for U.S. Congress in California's 8th District, which includes most of San Francisco. She is a WWP member running on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket, who is also taking part in this trip with the Venceremos Brigade.

Dowell said, "The Venceremos Brigade has been challenging the travel ban to Cuba since 1969. This year is especially important due to heightened restrictions



Teresa Gutierrez



LeiLani Dowell

that the Bush administration has placed against those wanting to travel to Cuba. The travel ban is part and parcel of a greater offensive against Cuba by the Bush administration. It even restricts the visits of family members here to their relatives in Cuba, allowing them only once every three years.

"We want to take part in defending the sovereignty of Cuba. While the Bush administration claims to be bringing freedom to peoples across the globe, he's attacking Cuba—a society where the people have free health care, there is virtually no illiteracy, housing is very inexpensive and education is free," said Dowell.

None of the delegations will apply to the U.S. government for permission to visit Cuba. All will join to openly reject the travel ban as they cross the border back into the United States, either into Texas or New York state. The delegations are preparing to leave from the U.S. on July 3. Approximately 200 people, all U.S. citizens, are taking part.

"We are running election campaigns this year," said Dowell, "to show everyone that there is an alternative to the capitalist system as well as to the capitalist political parties. By going to Cuba, we have an opportunity to see that alternative in a living, breathing society."

"When we come back and I get back campaigning, I'll be able to speak with first-hand experience about Cuba and how socialism works there," Dowell said.

Solidarity with Cuban 5

In Cuba the delegations will meet with the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). They will visit some of the neighborhood Committees to Defend the Revolution and various organizations representing youths, labor, women and other mass organizations. On July 17 they will attend an anti-imperialist rally in Havana.

WWP's vice presidential candidate Gutierrez said she expected that "we will

learn while in Cuba how much the Cuban people support the Cuban 5. From what we have seen in the past, these five people trapped in U.S. prisons are heroes to over 11 million Cubans. At our campaign meetings and other rallies we will have a great opportunity to continue to publicize the case of the Cuban 5. We plan to double our efforts to free these heroes."

Gutierrez added that it would be "important to use the election campaign speaking engagements to bring up the battle against the travel ban and build solidarity with the Cuban people and educate the U.S. population about the advantages to the workers brought by socialism in Cuba." □

Defend the Latin American medical school students!

Following is a message from IFCO/Pastors for Peace.

The new Treasury Department regulations about Cuba travel threaten the legal status of the U.S. students at the Latin American School of Medicine.

Please join us right now in defending the students!

Our friends and allies in the Congressional Black Caucus and other members of Congress have been putting some serious pressure on the Bush administration to protect the LASM students' right to study in Cuba on full scholarship.

We understand that the possibility of a special exemption that will apply to the students at the Latin American School of Medicine is currently under consideration—which is why we need you to call as

soon as possible.

Call Kevin Whitaker, director, Cuba Desk, State Department: 202-647-9272; and Richard Newcomb, director, Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Treasury Department: 202-266-2510.

Insist that the students (present and future) in the scholarship program at the Latin American School of Medicine be given a special exemption from the Cuba travel restrictions, so that they can continue studying, become physicians, and return home to serve as doctors in their communities.

Keep calling—send it out to your friends and email lists. Let them know we care about freedom to travel and freedom to study!

For more information, visit www.ifconews.org. □

IPROLETARIOS Y OPRIMIDOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!

MUNDO OBRERO

Apoye la Campaña Electoral del Partido Mundo Obrero

¿No es tiempo ya que los trabajadores hablen por sí mismos?

Cada cuatro años vemos la misma historia repetirse.

Políticos multimillonarios patrocinados por el gran capital empresarial posan como amigos de la clase trabajadora.

Pero después de las elecciones, no importa quién gane, los resultados son los mismos: más guerra, más ataques a los sindicatos, más racismo y fanatismo, más privatizaciones para la clase trabajadora y para los pobres.

Elegir entre los Republicanos y los Demócratas es elegir entre un malo u otro peor.

Ciertamente cuando salen a flote los intereses de los trabajadores y los oprimidos a nivel mundial, la respuesta no es votar por Bush, autor de la sangrienta

guerra y ocupación de Irak, ni tampoco votar por Kerry, quien quiere elevar la cifra de tropas en Irak y declara que “El fracaso no es una opción”.

El partido Workers World / Mundo Obrero tiene también candidaturas en las elecciones. Estamos aquí para arremeter contra las elecciones. Y para esto tenemos grandes candidatos— John Parker para presidente y Teresa Gutiérrez para vicepresidenta.

Gente de color. Trabajadores. Activistas en contra de la guerra. Y luchadores por la clase trabajadora desde antaño.

Nuestra meta es alcanzar a decenas de miles de gente con un mensaje que no escucharían en otra parte: Traigan las tropas a casa ahora. Un cambio social real sólo puede suceder a través de la lucha de

clases, no con elecciones. Los trabajadores necesitamos nuestro propio partido que represente nuestros propios intereses. Unidos en solidaridad podremos organizarnos en un movimiento independiente para así luchar por una sociedad que anteponga las necesidades de la gente antes de la ganancia y la conquista global.

Nosotros sabemos que muchos trabajadores están ansiosos de escuchar este mensaje. L@s candidat@s están list@s para recorrer el país, para unirse a manifestaciones, visitar centros comunitarios, sindicatos y escuelas. Pero necesitan tu ayuda.

Los gastos de viaje, impresión de literatura, entrar a las urnas de votación— todo esto cuesta mucho dinero. Las personas que van a las galas que cuestan

\$10,000—por persona para Bush y Kerry no van a contribuir a la campaña Parker-Gutiérrez. Así que por favor done generosamente.

Pero hay más cosas que ustedes pueden hacer. Ayude a Workers World / Mundo Obrero a entrar a las urnas o a conseguir estatus de candidatura en su estado.

Organice una fiesta para recaudar fondos o una reunión de encuentro con los candidatos.

Consigan volantes y carteles. Envíen correo electrónico a sus amigos.

Empleos. Igualdad. Socialismo. No más guerras.

Corra la voz. No importa quién gane el 3 de noviembre, usted habrá ayudado al avance de un movimiento para un mundo mejor. □

Reagan y la lucha de hoy entre Kerry y Bush

Por Fred Goldstein

Introducción de una serie

Para poder poner la lucha electoral entre el candidato Demócrata Kerry y el Republicano Bush en perspectiva es indispensable un análisis del desarrollo de Reagan y lo que significó para la orientación de la clase gobernante y todo el establecimiento político. Sus consecuencias están operando hoy, tanto en la clase gobernante como dentro del movimiento popular.

Para grandes sectores del movimiento progresista, laboral y de derechos civiles, el Partido Demócrata se ha considerado como el partido de las concesiones, el partido que dará algo a las masas populares— el partido que podrá equilibrar los intereses de las grandes empresas con los intereses de los obreros, los pobres, la gente de color, las mujeres, la comunidad gay, l@s inmigrantes y de todos los que sufren bajo el sistema opresivo capitalista. El Partido Republicano es el partido de las grandes empresas, el partido que arrebató los logros, el partido de la reacción y la represión.

La lógica política de este análisis es que, no importa cuán malos sean los demócratas, para poder lograr concesiones uno tiene que votar por ellos como manera de poder lograr una módica seguridad contra las grandes empresas, el complejo militar industrial y la reacción política.

Pero la historia actual de la política estadounidense en el siglo pasado no muestra esto del todo. Las concesiones han resultado sólo de la lucha, cuando la clase gob-

ernante ha sido forzada por la lucha de los trabajadores, de los africano-americanos y del movimiento de derechos civiles, por el avance de los movimientos de liberación y del campo socialista.

Las concesiones han sido arrancadas de ambos partidos en tiempos de lucha y también han sido retomadas por ambos partidos en tiempos de reacción política cuando la clase gobernante, la clase capitalista explotadora está en la ofensiva y es capaz de forzar a los obreros y oprimidos.

El hecho de que el Partido Demócrata ha estado en la gobernación en los tiempos de concesiones como durante el período de Franklin Roosevelt durante los años treinta, cuando el movimiento laboral dio grandes pasos, o durante la presidencia de Lyndon Johnson cuando los derechos civiles fueron finalmente concedidos por la clase gobernante un siglo después de la esclavitud, es un reflejo no de la buena naturaleza del Partido Demócrata, sino de la división del trabajo dentro de la política capitalista.

El papel histórico de los demócratas ha sido el de regir, desviar y aplacar las luchas de las masas populares cuando esta amenaza la estabilidad social y la fundación del sistema capitalista.

El Partido Demócrata ha asumido este papel desde la década de los años treinta, porque desde entonces su base principal ha estado en la clase obrera, entre los africano-americanos y la clase media progresista. Este obtuvo su reputación durante la era del Nuevo Tratado, cuando la clase obrera en los Estados Unidos, bajo el impacto de la Gran Depresión, estaba en etapa pre-revolucionaria y produjo heroicas batallas de clase. Roosevelt llevó a

cabo su misión de salvar al capitalismo concediendo las reformas progresistas.

En tal sentido, el Partido Demócrata es comparable a una versión más tímida de los partidos social demócratas de Europa que salieron al escenario después de la Revolución Bolchevique. Fueron un instrumento de la clase capitalista para evitar revoluciones socialistas inminentes capturando el movimiento de la clase trabajadora con demagogia socialista y desviarlo hacia las fronteras controladas del sistema capitalista.

Como fueron ganadas las concesiones

Desde los años 1930, se ha propagado el mito de que el Partido Demócrata es una institución progresista que las masas deben considerar como una solución parcial a sus problemas. Pero la verdad es todo lo contrario. Es la lucha de las masas la que ha llevado a cualquier mejoría en la vida cotidiana bajo el sistema fanático, sexista y racista de explotación capitalista. El Partido Demócrata se volvió útil para la clase dominante durante los tiempos de inquietud social, por su capacidad de coartar, limitar y entonces asumir el crédito de las concesiones ganadas con sangre y sacrificio.

El punto clave es que la capacidad de obtener concesiones, o la capacidad de la clase dominante de rescindir las concesiones no es una cuestión de cuál partido está gobernando. Depende del resultado de la lucha, ya sea cuando el pueblo se levanta en contra de la clase dominante, o la clase dominante toma la ofensiva en contra de las masas, o cuando hay un equilibrio temporal.

Roosevelt hizo concesiones a los trabajadores, pero luego rescindió todo lo que pudo con el pretexto de preparación para la guerra. Eisenhower, un Republicano, durante los años más intensos de la Guerra Fría fue forzado a enviar tropas a Little Rock en el estado de Arkansas para frenar a los racistas que intentaban obstaculizar la desarticulación del sistema de segregación racial. Lo hizo porque la clase dominante temía el posible impacto de un movimiento por los derechos civiles que había comenzado en medio de un movimiento mundial de descolonización en África, Asia y el Medio Oriente.

Richard Nixon, quien asumió la presidencia en los momentos más intensos de las luchas de los años 1960, fue forzado a aceptar el decreto judicial reconociendo el derecho al aborto y la acción afirmativa; firmó el tratado de paz con Vietnam, e hizo varias concesiones económicas a los pobres.

La clase capitalista, a la cual pertenecen los medios de comunicación y domina completamente los partidos políticos, las ramas de la legislatura, ejecutiva, y judicial por virtud de ser dueño de los medios de producción y de las instituciones financieras, puede obligar hasta los políticos más reaccionarios a hacer concesiones cuando teme por la estabilidad de su sistema.

También puede obligar a los políticos que intentan mantener una apariencia progresista a hacer decisiones más reaccionarias cuando los patrones sienten que lo pueden hacer con impunidad o se encuentran en una crisis desesperada y tienen que tomar la ofensiva en contra de los trabajadores y de los oprimidos tanto aquí como en el exterior. La destrucción del sistema de “Welfare” por parte de Bill Clinton es un ejemplo.

Es en esta perspectiva que debemos entender el origen del Reaganismo y su relevancia a las luchas de hoy.

Próxima parte: La crisis del imperialismo que produjo el momento de Reagan.

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