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## As Bush starts second term

# Pentagon unable to subdue Iraq

## Time for anti-war movement to redouble efforts

By John Catalinotto

Gary Luck, a retired four-star general, is leading a Pentagon team to Iraq to propose new ways for the United States to avoid an impending defeat there. With less than three weeks to the Jan. 30 colonial election, the media here have speculated on everything from removing U.S. troops to setting up death squads of U.S. Special Forces and Iraqi mercenaries.

Gen. Luck's project itself is an admission that the original Pentagon plan has been a disaster. Called "shock and awe" and drafted by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, that plan to smash the old Iraqi state and quickly set up an occupation regime was supposed to allow a small U.S. military force to then rule over a submissive Iraqi population.

Perhaps when U.S. troops first overran Baghdad in April 2003, some section of Iraqi society believed that stability and economic development would sweeten the bitter U.S. rule over their country. Instead there has been a complete collapse of the existing infrastructure of Iraqi life. No jobs, no safe drinking water, no medicines and no human rights, and sewage running in the streets.

As a Jan. 7 report by Dahr Jamail put it, "In the dark humor that has become so popular in Baghdad these days, one recently released Abu Ghraib detainee I interviewed said, 'The Americans brought electricity to my ass before they brought it to my house!'" (dahrjamailliraq.com) Jamail is an independent reporter who spent seven months in Iraq in 2004.

Now even the Pentagon establishment realizes that no self-respecting sector of Iraqi society will collaborate with U.S. rule.

But don't expect the occupation's failure to automatically lead to its early end. During the U.S. war on Vietnam, the January 1968 Tet Offensive by the National Liberation Front showed that the United States had alienated the bulk of Vietnam's popula-

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tion. Still, it took five more bloody years before Washington pulled out its troops, during which time millions of lives were lost. The Vietnamese finally fully liberated their country in 1975.

As of now no Iraqi assault has been as dramatic as the Tet Offensive. But each day brings new proof of the resistance's strength. Typically, several U.S. soldiers or marines are killed, along with even more local puppet police and troops.

On Jan. 10, the deputy police chief of Baghdad was assassinated. Two U.S. troops were killed that day, too, when a roadside blast destroyed their armored vehicle.

Explaining Luck's mission to assess the situation in Iraq, President George W. Bush said on Jan. 7, "Ultimately the success in Iraq is going to be the willingness of the Iraqi citizens to fight for their own freedom."

You could argue that this is exactly what hundreds of thousands of Iraqis are already doing—alongside the resistance.

The current U.S. plan is to keep its troop strength at 150,000 after the Jan. 30 election, or 30,000 greater than the original plan. But the Pentagon planners know this won't work. They want to go on the offensive. And they are leaking some of the options to the media.

### 'The Salvador option'

One U.S. tactic under discussion is "the Salvador option," reported in a Jan. 8 Newsweek article. In leaking the story,

*Continued on page 6*

## U.S. TROOPS...

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**SATURDAY MARCH 19**  
Central Park  
New York City

# JAN. 19 ARTISTS AGAINST WAR & RACISM

By Pam Parker  
Washington, D.C.

A pre-Counter Inaugural Protest/hip-hop fundraiser will take place at the Cada Vez, 1428 U street NW, in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 19. Proceeds will benefit Empower DC and the People's Video Network's Youth Camp. Artists from Chicago, New York City, Baltimore, and D.C. are scheduled to perform in what they're calling a protest from the stage.

"This concert is in an effort to link local, national and global human-rights issues and say no to the war in Iraq as well as 'get amped' in preparation for the Jan. 20 Counter Inaugural march the next day," says Spirit, one of the concert organizers.

"We are using every opportunity to take a stand against this administration's actions and stand in solidarity with people who have been oppressed by them. That includes Palestinians, Iraqis, and other oppressed peoples including those in this country. We want to spread the word and raise consciousness," said Jaime Roundtree of Primemeridian, one of the featured performers.

Other performers include Bomani, Head Roc, Princess of Controversy, Komplex, DJ Undadog, and Hicoup & Hassan.

These artists urge everyone to join them in D.C. for the counter-inaugural protests to unite against war, racism, oppression of women and for a better world. These artists believe that money should be used for education, health care, jobs and the environment, not for war.

Empower DC is based in Washington, D.C. It is a grassroots organization that advocates for affordable housing and child care, tenant rights, and inclusive zoning practices. The PVN Youth Camp is a video collective founded in New York City that teaches videography to young people and assigns them to "shoots" that test their skills and expand their cultural horizons. This summer's trip for these youths is to Egypt!

The cost of admission is \$10, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Join hip-hop culture at its best on Jan. 19!

*The writer is a well-known singer and organizer who will be performing on Jan. 19.*

*This week ...*



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**LOS ANGELES**

**Fri., Jan. 14**  
 Tsunami, U.S. guilty of criminal neglect? Also update on U.S. war/occupation of Iraq. Sponsored by IAC. 7:30 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd. #203.

**Sat., Jan. 22**

Workers World meeting: John Parker on developing perspectives for the struggle for socialism. 4 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd., #203. For info (323) 936-1416.

**Fri., Jan. 28**

Screening of "Chavez, Venezuela

and the New Latin America," a new film by Aleida Guevara. Sponsored by International Action Center 7:30 p.m. At 5274 W. Pico Blvd., #203. For info 323-936-7266

**SAN DIEGO**

**Fri., Jan. 14**

IAC activist Carl Muhammad will speak on the contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the struggles against militarism and racism. At 3930 Oregon Street #230.

**Sat., Jan. 15**

Martin Luther King, Jr., march with the IAC contingent. 10 a.m. at the County Administration Bldg on Harbor Drive.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**Thu., Jan. 20**

Protest at Bush inauguration. For more information, including buses, contact the International Action Center at (212) 633-6646 or www.iacenter.org.

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## Forty years later

# Arrest made in civil rights murders

By LeiLani Dowell

On Jan. 6, Edgar Ray Killen was arrested for the 1964 murder of three civil-rights activists in Philadelphia, Miss. The arrest of Killen, a 79-year-old Klansman and preacher, marks the first murder charge since the hate crime was committed some 40 years ago.

The U.S. government was well aware of who committed these murders and other acts of terrorism during the civil-rights era. At the time, the Lyndon Johnson administration wanted to maintain class peace with the local and state-wide white segregationist governments.

The main reason this murder charge is being taken up now has more to do with attempts to clean up the United States' tarnished image worldwide concerning racism than with seeking any real justice for the victims and their survivors.

On June 21, 1964, a caravan consisting of a police car and two carloads of Klans-

men chased down James Chaney, a Black 21-year-old from Mississippi; Andrew Goodman, a white 21-year-old from Queens, N.Y.; and Michael Schwerner, a white 24-year-old from Brooklyn, N.Y. All three were shot and killed. Chaney was also savagely beaten.

In 1964, the Mississippian Council of Federated Organizations along with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee had organized Freedom Summer. The main goal was to register Black voters in Mississippi. At the time only 6 percent of the Black population was registered to vote in the state.

The 15th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1870, guarantees the right to vote for all citizens regardless of race. Despite this, by 1964 Black people continued to be disenfranchised in the South through a number of tactics, including poll taxes, literacy tests and threats against employment.

The three victims were on their first

assignment for Freedom Summer—investigating a church burning in Philadelphia, Miss.—when they were stopped and arrested by Neshoba County Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price. Investigators say Price then called Killen and held the men in custody for several hours, long enough for Killen to organize the party of Klansmen that committed the murders.

Of the three victims, Schwerner had been marked for death by the imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan for his efforts to register Black voters as well as for organizing a boycott of a white-owned store until it hired a Black person.

Eighteen white men, including Killen, were brought to trial in 1967 on outrageously modest charges of “violating the civil rights” of the three men. Only seven were convicted. None served more than six years in prison.

Killen was released after one juror on the all-white jury blocked a guilty verdict, saying that she could never convict a



Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman

preacher. Now he is one of eight suspects still alive. It is expected that more arrests will be made in the case.

It is ironic that the first murder charge in the case comes on the heels of massive voter disenfranchisement, particularly of Black people, in the 2004 and 2000 presidential elections. In 1965, outrage at the murders sparked an upsurge in national support for the civil-rights movement. In addition, by the end of Freedom Summer, which was extended through the fall, 17,000 Black people had attempted to vote, with 1,600 successfully registered.

The massive struggle of activists on the ground coupled with public outrage also forced Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which included prohibition of literacy tests and the use of federal examiners to conduct voter registration. □

## Braceros fight for overdue justice

By Ruth Vela  
Tijuana, Mexico

Since 1848, when the United States stole almost half of Mexico, working-class Mexicans have suffered the abuses of the U.S. ruling class as well as those of the Mexican ruling class. But they have not suffered in silence. Countless Mexican workers have stood up to demand basic necessities for themselves and their families, the right to self-determination, and retribution for the injustices they have suffered.

The Dec. 10-12 Cuba/North America Labor Conference in Tijuana, Mexico, helped bring to light one group's battle for payments long overdue. Gathered outside the conference hotel Dec. 11 were 50 members of Braceros Pro A, a group that fights for money owed to them by the Mexican government.

Braceros are Mexican nationals who were recruited to work in the western United States on a temporary basis during the mid-1940s. Thanks to World War II, U.S. business was booming. But with so many young U.S. workers being sent to fight, there was a labor shortage.

Mexican workers, who had been deported en masse during the Great Depression, were once again in demand.

The Bracero Program began in July 1943. It lasted for 22 years.

The government-sponsored agreement specified that the U.S. farmer was responsible for providing housing, transportation and work, while the bracero himself was responsible for the expenses of health insurance, Mexican social security and food.

The reality was that wages were low, the living situations deplorable, and the working conditions inhuman for Mexican workers.

The U.S. government and the growers regularly disregarded stipulated standards for health, wage levels and working hours. The situation benefited the growers enormously as the program flourished.

Approximately one-quarter million Mexicans, all of them male, were employed as

braceros before the expiration of the program. When the guest worker program was scheduled to end in 1951, the program was revitalized with new legislation, this time with concerns for the workers on behalf of the Mexican government supposedly taken into consideration.

According to Braceros Pro A, during the time the program existed the Mexican government, with the help of Wells Fargo Bank, deducted and held 10 percent of each worker's paycheck, with the promise to return this money upon the bracero's return to Mexico. But although the braceros rejoined their families in Mexico after the termination of the program, they've never gotten back the money that was withheld.

In the past 40 years, three different attempts have been made to get the Mexican government to return this money to the surviving braceros and their families. The first two attempts were unsuccessful, but the struggle continues.

Two weeks before the Tijuana conference, braceros marched on the home of President Vicente Fox in Mexico City, demanding a decision be made in their interests. That decision was to be rendered on Dec. 15. However, an announcement regarding the government's decision has not been made.

But, as the braceros explained to those attending the Cuba/North America Labor Conference when they were invited to address the assembly, they have vowed to return to the president's home to demand what they are owed—armed, if need be.

*UPDATE: Since this was written, the workers have won government recognition of their demands. The disbursement schedule for the long-withheld money is still pending.*



**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

*the people's hero*

On Jan. 15, 2005, the great civil-rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have turned 76, had not an assassin's bullet tragically cut him down on April 4, 1968.

Since 1986, his birthday has been commemorated in the United States as a federal holiday on the third Monday of January—as a result of public pressure put on the right-wing Reagan administration.

During the latter part of his young life, Dr. King criticized the cost of the Vietnam war and lack of government funding to eradicate grinding poverty. He was scheduled to march in support of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., when he was assassinated.

If he were alive today, one could argue that he would have been in the forefront of the massive demonstrations against the Iraq war along with supporting the recent Oct. 17 Million Worker March.

Workers World Party salutes the tremendous sacrifice that Dr. King and others like him have made to the struggle for the liberation of poor and oppressed peoples here and worldwide.

—Monica Moorehead



# Airline unions need workers' control, not bankruptcy

By Milt Neidenberg

The crisis in the airline industry has reached gigantic proportions, threatening the livelihoods of about half a million workers. Captains of the industry, tied to various factions on Wall Street, are gung-ho to cut wages, pensions and health care to protect their obscene corporate benefits.

The airlines have been cash cows for the big banks and other financial institutions on Wall Street. A number of airlines have been driven into bankruptcy by mismanagement—United Air Lines, the second biggest airline in the country, US Airways and a number of smaller companies.

Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase—recently merged with credit-card giant Bank One—and General Electric dug their financial hooks into the bankrupt airlines by lending them huge amounts of money to buy and/or lease additional aircraft. Now the industry is in crisis because of overcapacity and thousands of the planes bought on loans sit idle, warehoused in the Mojave Desert.

Continental Airlines has warned that it could face bankruptcy if it doesn't win \$500 million in wage and benefit concessions by February. Delta, the third biggest airline, is cutting flight attendant crews and eliminating 7,000 jobs.

It is part of a restructuring plan that follows a decision to reduce Delta's most expensive fares by 50 percent to compete with the anti-union, cheap-labor regional carriers like Jet Blue and Southwest.

Delta is on the verge of declaring bankruptcy in this ongoing crisis of brutal capitalist competition and downsizing. It is a replay of the self-destruct syndrome in the steel industry that wiped out tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and benefits in the 1980s.

To make matters worse, the Bush administration, the Air Transportation Stabilization Board, and the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation are players in the anti-union mix. The secretary of labor has announced a series of changes in how the pensions are funded.

The PBGC, a government-owned insurance corporation, is in financial trouble,

deep in debt, and under-funded. It has posted a deficit of \$23.3 billion, which is double the previous year.

Information about how many workers have lost their pensions or seen them shrunk hasn't been made available. Wall Street and the White House are demanding the Wal-Martization of the airline industry workforce.

The objective is to tear up union contracts, cut wages, and slash pensions and health benefits. Working conditions have become more barbaric for the crews who service the planes on the ground as well as in the air. This is especially true for those workers who are trapped by an airline bankruptcy.

Since December 2002, United Air Lines has been in bankruptcy. It has received concessions from the unions, approved by the bankruptcy judge, totaling over \$2.5 billion. Retirees have lost their health benefits.

Now UAL is seeking another \$725 million in cuts from the workers. The Flight Attendants/Communications Workers union is about to vote on a pact that would cost these workers another \$138 million annually.

UAL also seeks \$100 million in concessions from the mechanics. And the bosses have threatened to cancel the pensions of all workers in the four UAL unions.

Recently, UAL made a deal with the Pilots' union that involved a 14-percent wage cut and restructuring pensions for a future stake in the company. Judge Eugene Wedoff, the bankruptcy judge, rejected the deal, in part, because it required that all UAL union pension plans be restructured as well. That would mean that the PBGC would have to pick up the pension payments.

The other reason for the judge's ruling was that the future stake for the Pilots' union included \$550 million in notes convertible to stock once the carrier emerges from bankruptcy. Were they afraid that this deal would open the door for the Pilots' union to own a piece of UAL? It wasn't too long ago that all the UAL unions owned over 50 percent of the airline through an Employee Stock Ownership

Plan. They lost their investments in bankruptcy court.

It wouldn't have had to end that way if the unions had exerted their rights to legitimate ownership. ESOPs create an illusion, enticing workers to believe they have a stake in the operations of a corporation. In fact, ESOPs are a stock manipulation fraud.

## Who should control the airlines?

How can the hemorrhaging of jobs, wages and benefits at UAL be stopped? The airline's rank and file workers are beginning to fight back.

Recently, the UAL Flight Attendants union organized a march on Washington. Big contingents of flight attendants from other airlines were also well represented. In addition, other workers present included members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and other marine trade and seafarer unions.

At the conclusion of the rally, they marched in front of the White House on the way to Freedom Plaza. They chanted, "CHAOS! CHAOS!" The acronym stands for "Create Havoc Around Our System."

Flight attendants are discussing whether to call a one-day strike, a shorter one, or delay a scheduled UAL flight.

During the December holidays when passenger travel was at its peak, a wave of rank-and-file absenteeism shook up a few of the airlines, particularly US Airways and Delta. Sick-out calls and other absenteeism forced the airlines to cancel many flights and left thousands of passengers huddled in airport lounges.

The airlines have created such tensions and work loads for the workers that inconvenience to passengers is the inevitable consequence. The public must be educated about who is responsible.

A campaign for worker control of the airlines could be a start in building this perspective.

The airline unions need to initiate the campaign with agitation and street activity. The key to the struggle is for the labor movement to get behind the campaign to take ownership out of the hands of the bankrupt airlines.

Ownership for the airline workers, particularly those who are being victimized by bankruptcy court, is a valid demand. UAL and US Airways are no longer the owners of the property. Legally, they are a debtor that has been granted possession by a trustee appointed by the bankruptcy court.

The banks and other financial institutions, in collusion with the court, claim that they have provided lines of credit and cash that enable the airlines to operate, and are therefore first in line as the principal creditors. Not true.

The UAL and the US Airways unions are the principal creditors. They keep the airlines flying with their labor power and skills. Pensions owed to them alone amount to billions of dollars, far outstripping any investments by the banks and vendors.

Saving pensions and restoring other wages and benefits can be accomplished if the unions assert their right as the principal creditor, declare themselves to be the trustees and run the airlines. This is a tall order but it is possible if a plan of action is forthcoming.

Flight attendants have overwhelmingly authorized a strike. Whether they strike or not, they should raise the slogan "workers' control, not bankruptcy" and begin agitation to take over the bankrupt airlines for as long as necessary to protect their assets and restore their losses.

Workers' control was a significant development in some European countries after World War II. (See High Tech, Low Pay, by Sam Marcy, p. 171.)

The AFL-CIO is now debating how to strengthen and reorganize the labor movement. The Service Employees union has put forward a 10-point program in this spirit. The Communications Workers, the parent union of the UAL flight attendants, has brought forth other proposals to achieve the same objectives.

What is needed is not a wordy debate that can only stir up tensions among the affiliates, but bold action. The airline workers, particularly those in bankruptcy court, are sending a message: They are ready to struggle. The right of ownership should be on the front burner. □

# Capitalist greed made chlorine disaster inevitable

By Stephen Millies

Nine workers have died so far because of the Jan. 6 train crash in Graniteville, S.C. All were killed because profits are more important to Norfolk Southern's management than human life.

Locomotive engineer Chris Seely only had a few seconds to react when he realized a switch was lined the wrong way. The engineer put his freight train into "emergency," resulting in a sudden application of the air brakes.

But it was too late.

The 42-car-long train crashed into cars parked at the Avondale Mills siding, releasing deadly chlorine gas from a ruptured tank car.

Over 5,000 people had to be evacuated from the city.

Seely was crushed to death. Eight people died from inhaling chlorine.

In a more populated location, the death toll could have been 800 or 8,000.

Everybody knows President George W. Bush lied about "weapons of mass

destruction" in Iraq. There weren't any. But tens of thousands of tank cars carry deadly chemicals like chlorine through U.S. cities every day.

Chlorine was used in chemical weapons during World War I. Yet this toxic stuff is absolutely vital for water and sewage treatment.

For 13 years the U.S. government forbade Iraq from importing chlorine. The resulting water-borne diseases, along with malnutrition, killed an estimated 500,000 Iraqi children. Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush should all be indicted for war crimes.

## Signals cost money, cut profits, save lives

Seely was barreling along at 45 miles per hour, which is within railroad speed limits. That's 66 feet per second. He had no warning the switch was reversed.

He was operating in what railroaders call "dark territory," a stretch of track without signal protection.

The only thing this three-person crew

had to protect themselves was a "track warrant," indicating the track was clear and all switches were properly lined. At 2:40 a.m. the engineer wasn't able to discern the barely illuminated target on a hand-operated switch in time.

Track warrants might be acceptable on a branch line only serving a single mine or grain elevator. But this line was used by five trains a day.

Six of the victims were textile workers employed at the Avondale Mills. Another five Avondale workers had been killed Nov. 10 when their car was hit by a Norfolk Southern train at a nearby grade crossing.

The Aiken County Council wanted to put a 25 miles per hour speed limit on a 10-mile portion of this railroad line in response. "No way," replied Warren Flatau of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Where are all the opponents of "big government"—by which these right wingers mean civil rights, safety regulations, etc.—when it comes to this real trampling of local authority?

It was the 14th collision at this crossing

since 1979, although the first fatal one. Like the other railroad crossings in Graniteville, it was only equipped with flashing warning lights. Crossing arms cost money, too.

South Carolina's Department of Transportation judged this crossing to be in the top 1 percent in the state needing protection. But it refused to install crossing arms, claiming the price tag would total \$500,000 when necessary street changes were added to the cost.

Five workers had to die instead. This is the same state government that showered BMW with millions of dollars to build an auto plant.

But why should the state shell any money out when Norfolk Southern made over \$1 billion in 2003? Along with CSX, Norfolk Southern monopolizes rail transportation in the eastern United States. With assets of \$20 billion, its 21,500 miles of track run in 22 states from New Jersey to Louisiana and Florida to Illinois.

Eight years ago Norfolk Southern was willing to spend \$9 billion to buy Conrail

## Thirty-two years after Roe vs. Wade

# Fight for women's reproductive rights continues

By Sue Davis

On Jan. 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion with the Roe vs. Wade decision. Thirty-two years later, women's right to choose abortion and all reproductive rights—from birth control to sex education—is threatened.

Emboldened by his outrageously misnamed "moral values" victory, President George W. Bush accelerated his anti-woman agenda with a vengeance. Only three weeks after the election, the Bush administration launched a sneak attack by attaching a totally unrelated amendment exempting hospitals, insurance companies and doctors from giving women information about abortion to the 2005 Omnibus Spending Bill.

On Dec. 13, Bush announced his appointment of former Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt as secretary of Health and Human Services. "I am strongly pro-life and anti-abortion," Leavitt said in 1993, asserting that he wanted Utah to have "the toughest abortion law" in the country.

Accordingly, laws were passed requiring "counseling" using anti-abortion publications and a mandatory, medically unnecessary 24-hour waiting period before a woman could obtain an abortion. "Unborn children" were included in Utah's homicide statute. (Feminist Wire Newsbrief, Dec. 15)

As head of HHS, Leavitt will oversee a \$573 billion annual budget that is, at least for now, bigger than the Pentagon's.

### More anti-abortion agenda to come

Several bills limiting abortion rights are planned in Congress. One would ban federal family planning funds for any non-hospital health-care facility that provides abortion services. (kaisernetwork.org). This is how Bush intends to fulfill his campaign promise to cut the deficit in half.

Another would ban transporting minors across state lines to escape parental consent laws. And a third would require abortion providers to notify women seeking abortions at or after 20 weeks of gestation when a fetus can feel pain.

*Continued from page 4*

outright. Yet it plans to spend only \$23 million for communications, signals and electrical equipment in 2005.

Graniteville was founded by William Gregg, a pioneer Southern industrialist who believed slavery was "sanctioned by the Bible." Back in 1934 members of United Textile Workers Local 1754 were evicted from company-owned dwellings there during the general textile strike that swept the South.

One of the major legal cases that helped open up Southern textile mills to Black workers was Graniteville Company v. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. (Graniteville was later bought by Avondale Mills.)

The banks and big stockholders who control Norfolk Southern should waive their right to run this essential utility. Railroad workers and the rest of the working class need to take over this outfit that's too cheap to install life-saving signals.

*The writer is a railroad tower operator at Amtrak and a member of Transportation Communications International Union District 1402.*

But attacking abortion is just a drop in Bush's anti-reproductive-rights bucket. His agenda, rooted in fundamentalist religious dogma, opposes birth control and contraceptive information, even in the case of rape, and promotes abstinence-only sex education.

Last May the Bush-appointed Food and Drug Administration overrode the recommendations of medical and scientific groups that support over-the-counter access to the morning-after pill for women 16 and older who have unprotected sex or are victims of sexual assault. After a challenge to its ruling, the FDA is again considering easing the rules. Its decision is due Jan. 20.

A study published Jan. 5 by the American Medical Association counters a right-wing argument against making the medication nonprescription. A survey of more than 2,000 women in California showed that "easy access to emergency contraception does not promote risky sexual behavior." (womensnews.com, Jan. 5)

But scientific findings like these don't matter to the Bush administration. As a parting shot, the John Ashcroft-led Justice Department issued new guidelines for sexual assault treatment that omit any mention of emergency contraception. Unless women already know this information, they won't be able to stop unwanted pregnancies.

One of the most insidious and alarmingly widespread attacks on reproductive rights is Bush's promotion of abstinence-

only sex education in all 50 states.

Starting with the Reagan administration, the federal government has put \$1 billion into abstinence-only programs, with \$135 million allotted for 2005.

"Abstinence-only" programs do not provide science-based education about sexuality, including discussion of sexual orientation.

Instead they push total abstinence from sex before marriage. They provide such glaring misinformation as "condoms fail half the time," "condoms don't prevent sexually transmitted diseases," and "taking birth control pills make you 10 times more susceptible to death."

The abstinence-only plan isn't working. Advocates for Youth estimates that approximately 45.6 percent of high school youth and 79.5 percent of college-age youths are sexually active. No wonder about 900,000 women 19 years or younger get pregnant accidentally each year, giving the United States the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the developed world. That's six times higher than France and 15 times higher than Japan.

And with limits on education about condom use for disease prevention, North American youths are contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, faster than any other age group, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Misinformation also affects young people emotionally and psychologically—especially lesbian, gay, bi and trans youths who are confronted with an oppressive,

biased society.

Dealing with sexuality is never easy for anyone, but abstinence-only misinformation makes it unnecessarily difficult, dangerously unhealthy and potentially life-threatening.

When Bush addresses an anti-choice rally on Jan. 22, he will probably say, as in years past, that he stands for "a culture of life." The war against Iraq, with more than 1,300 deaths of U.S. soldiers and more than 100,000 deaths of Iraqi children, women and men, is glaring proof that Bush's support for life is 100 percent demagoguery.

With the possibility of a vacancy on the Supreme Court in the near future, groups like NARAL ProChoice America, the National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood, which organized the million-plus rally for reproductive rights last April, are gearing up to counter an anti-abortion Bush appointee.

However, Bush's agenda to end the current five to four Supreme Court split in favor of abortion rights may not proceed according to his plan and that of his reactionary religious following. A Nov. 29 poll conducted by the Associated Press showed that 59 percent of respondents said they would prefer a Supreme Court justice who would uphold Roe vs. Wade.

Voting to uphold and strengthen Roe vs. Wade is not enough—it will take organizing massive demonstrations all around the country to oppose outlawing abortion and to expand women's reproductive rights. □

## Remembering Shirley Chisholm

By Gloria Verdieu

In 1968 Shirley Anita Chisholm, fighter for minority rights, was the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress. Born Shirley Anita St. Hill, she was the only Black woman to seek a major party's presidential nomination, winning 152 delegates in 1972.

She died on Jan. 1 at age 80 in Ormond Beach, Fla.

Her parents, Charles St. Hill and Ruby St. Hill, were Caribbean immigrants. Her father was from British Guyana; her mother was from Barbados. Shirley St. Hill was born Nov. 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, N.Y. At age 3 she was sent to Barbados to live with her grandmother. She went to elementary school in that British school system. She returned to New York seven years later, attended public schools in Brooklyn, graduated from Girls High School, enrolled in Brooklyn College, majored in sociology and earned a B.A. in 1946.

After many rejections, Chisholm got a job at a daycare center in Harlem. While teaching nursery school, she studied elementary education at Columbia University and earned an M.A. in 1953. In 1953 she was director of a childcare center, in 1959 an educational consultant, and New York State Assemblywoman representing a Brooklyn District in 1964.

Chisholm and her husband were active in many community and local political organizations that included the NAACP. In 1960, she started the Democratic Unity Club, which was instrumental in mobilizing the Black and Latino vote. She also helped to form the Bedford-Stuyvesant Political League.

While in the New York State Assembly she proposed a bill to provide state aid to

daycare centers and voted to increase funding for schools on a per-pupil basis.

In her first term in Congress, Chisholm hired an all-female staff and spoke out for civil rights, women's rights, and rights for the poor and underprivileged. She fought and won support needed to extend the minimum wage to domestic workers. She opposed weapons development and the war in Vietnam.

She was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the founder of the National Women's Political Caucus. She supported the Equal Rights Amendment and legal abortion throughout her congressional career.

Chisholm often criticized the Congress as being too clubby and unresponsive. In her book "Unbought and Unbossed," she wrote: "Our representative democracy is not working because the Congress that is supposed to represent the voters does not respond to their needs. I believe the chief reason for this is that it is ruled by a small group of old men."

On Jan. 25, 1972, when Chisholm announced her candidacy for president, she stood before the cameras and said: "I am not a candidate of any political bosses or special interests. I am the candidate of the people."

Chisholm served as an advisor for the Rev. Jessie Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns, which picked up where she left off. Jackson called Chisholm "a woman of great courage."

Chisholm once announced: "Women in this country must become revolutionaries.



Shirley Chisholm, 1971

We must refuse to accept the old, the traditional roles and stereotypes."

She scared the Democratic Party establishment, including the most prominent liberals, by accepting the endorsement of the Black Panther Party. She had to file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission in order to participate in a televised debate with white male presidential candidates George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey.

Chisholm was given few opportunities to prove herself in a campaign where all the other contenders were white men. She knew that the Democratic Party was not ready for a candidate who promised to reshape society based on real equality and justice.

She observed: "There is little place in the political scheme of things for an independent, creative personality, for a fighter. Anyone who takes that role must pay a price."

Chisholm was an inspiration. Rep. Barbara Lee, the only member of the House to openly oppose the Bush push for a blank check for a military response after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, campaigned for Shirley Chisholm in 1972. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones said, "If there were no Shirley Chisholm there would be no Stephanie Tubbs Jones."

The Democratic Party was not ready then and it is certainly not ready now. When asked how she would like to be remembered, Chisholm commented, "I'd like them to say that Shirley Chisholm had guts." □

# Thousands to converge on DC to protest inauguration

By Heather Cottin

President George W. Bush will face a sea of protesters from all over the country when he is inaugurated Jan. 20.

"It is important from the first day of his second term of office to show continuing resistance to the criminal war in Iraq," said Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center in New York.

"On the East Coast, from Boston to New York to Philadelphia, and in the South, the IAC is organizing buses and vans to take people to Washington to oppose Bush's thoroughly racist domestic policy. We are going to D.C. to protest the drastic slashing of social programs while money has gone to feed the U.S. war machine."

Permits for the demonstration were granted last year to the International ANSWER coalition. Protesters will gather under a heavy police presence at Fourth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue on the north side of the parade route. Organizers suggest people arrive by 9 a.m. to be on the route.

Across the country, from as far away as the Midwest, groups are organizing buses to bring protesters to the counter-inauguration. This includes ANSWER as well as the IAC, United for Peace and Justice, which is organizing the D.C. Anti-war Network (DAWN), and an ad-hoc group, "Turn Your Back on Bush."

## Bush is a war criminal

Walter Williams, a representative of the New York Iraq War Crimes Tribunal and "People Judge Bush" said, "We are going to Washington on Jan. 20 to stress the fact that Bush is guilty of war crimes in Iraq."

On Aug. 26 at the New York Iraq War Crimes Tribunal, the Bush administration was found guilty of crimes against humanity.

Bush's inauguration has been called "the most expensive, most security-obsessed event in the history of Washington, D.C." (British Observer, Jan. 9)

Of the private donations, the London Times commented, "Some restraint has been imposed: a \$250,000 cap has been placed on single donations, to avoid the appearance of greed and brazen corporate influence." (Dec. 16)

In keeping with this restraint, accommodations offered to Bush's pals will include four nights at the Mandarin Oriental for \$200,000. The price tag includes a 24-hour butler, a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce or Humvee, daily champagne and caviar, and a flight to the hotel in a private jet.

Or inaugural celebrants can pay \$1,300 to go to the Black Tie and Boots Ball organized by Bush supporters in his home state of Texas. (London Times, Dec. 16)

Children in Washington, D.C., mostly Black and Latin@, face cutbacks in

schools, health services and daycare programs that amount to over \$680 million, according to Costofwar.com—while \$5.5 billion a month is spent to occupy Iraq. Meanwhile, the Bush administration will spend over \$40 million for the concerts, balls, parades and galas celebrating the inauguration of a war criminal.

The "centerpiece" of the inauguration festivities will be the "Commander-in-Chief's Ball," which will focus on Bush's design for the day, "Military Service." The theme for inauguration week, Washington's equivalent of the Oscars, will be "celebrating freedom, honoring service."

There are those who denounce these celebrations, urging that they be "toned down, as they were during the two world wars," when inaugural parties were cancelled. Bush's decision to intensify the partying has been criticized as "poor taste for a nation fighting a bloody war." (Observer, Jan. 9)

Nothing doing. The Bush bashes are going forward. The \$40 million price of the celebrations doesn't even include the costly security extravaganza.

It will be the most heavily guarded presidential inauguration in history. The U.S. government will use the latest technologies from a state-of-the-art command center in Virginia.

"This is the Super Bowl for us," said FBI Supervisory Special Agent James W. Rice



II. "Everyone on every team is dressed up and playing in the game. ... Every piece of technology that exists will be a part of this."

Rice oversees the National Capital Response Squad, which will monitor the event.

Protest organizers refuse to be daunted by any of this. Thousands of people who want a government that provides money for jobs, health care, education, social security, libraries, parks—all the things that make life livable—will converge on the capital to say no to this president and his racist bloody war.

The IAC urges people to "cut school, call in sick and join with the thousands who will be in the streets of D.C. on Jan. 20." □

## Pentagon unable to subdue Iraq

Continued from page 1

Pentagon insiders had to admit that in the 1980s the United States set up death squads in El Salvador to fight against a popular guerrilla movement. These death squads, which slaughtered thousands of people, focused on labor organizers, students and community organizers.

Newsweek wrote, "Last November's operation in Falluja, most analysts agree, succeeded less in breaking 'the back' of the insurgency—as Marine Gen. John Sattler optimistically declared at the time—than in spreading it out."

Following the Salvador model, "one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria, according to military insiders familiar with the discussions."

Newsweek discusses rivalry between the CIA and the Pentagon over just which agency would take the responsibility for organizing this gang of murderers. It writes that U.S. Special Forces will likely make raids into Syria, while Iraqi commandos will operate in Iraq.

According to the article, "the interim government of Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is said to be among the most forthright proponents of the Salvador option." Allawi himself was a CIA "asset" for years. He carried out terrorist bombings in Iraq before the U.S. invasion.

Allawi's National Intelligence Service director, Maj. Gen. Muhammad Abdullah al-Shahwani, has argued lately that the resistance forces number as many as 200,000 and that the population is sympathetic to them. He suggests punishing the people.

"The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving to the ter-

rorists," al-Shahwani said. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation."

Washington has never officially acknowledged its role in setting up the El Salvador death squads, although the Newsweek story treats it as common knowledge. It is useful to keep this in mind as the Bush administration considers this new program and other crimes against the Iraqi people. Even though Newsweek quotes al-Shahwani, nothing happens without the Pentagon's initiative.

## Coalition less willing

As the Iraqi resistance grows, the "coalition" that Washington arm-twisted into sending troops to Iraq is shrinking. The latest country to defect is Ukraine, which has had the fourth-largest contingent in Iraq. Ukraine is stepping up the withdrawal of its 1,650 troops there.

On Jan. 10 Leonid Kuchma, the outgoing president of Ukraine, ordered his foreign and defense ministries to develop a plan for withdrawing the troops within six months. The day before, eight Ukrainian soldiers had been killed in an explosion at an ammunition dump, possibly from a resistance attack.

"The situation in Iraq has deteriorated, and as a consequence we lost our men," Acting Defense Minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk told the Interfax news agency after meeting with Kuchma. He added that the withdrawal could begin as early as March.

Even though the new Ukraine president, Viktor Yushchenko, is pro-Western, he too has announced intent to pull Ukraine's troops out of Iraq. The U.S. government is now trying to pressure him to reverse this course. It is obvious that the Ukrainian people, no matter who they supported in the recent election, want no part of the Iraq occupation.

The British government, on the other



Iraqi resistance in Falluja, May 2004.

hand, announced it would send an additional 400 troops to Iraq. Responsibility for the occupation is focusing on the two major imperialist powers, no longer on any sort of international force.

## Withdrawal?

This narrowing support, both internationally and within Iraq, is forcing the Pentagon to think the unthinkable. Along with escalated slaughter of the Iraqi people, the Pentagon is discussing an exit strategy.

"Three weeks before the election in Iraq, conversation has started bubbling up in Congress, in the Pentagon and some days even in the White House about when and how American forces might begin to disengage in Iraq," the New York Times wrote on Jan. 10.

Within the U.S. ruling-class establishment, some are weighing the \$6-billion-a-month cost, exhaustion of the Reserves and National Guard, difficulties in finding new recruits and getting non-commissioned officers to re-enlist—and are deciding that the United States has to find a way out.

Brent Scowcroft, a national security adviser in the 1989-1992 administration of President George H.W. Bush, is arguing that Bush junior should tell the European allies that the United States may have to

pull out and that Iraq may "collapse." It is a desperate attempt to get support from the rest of the imperialist powers to continue the occupation while reducing the U.S. presence.

## Signs of mass opposition

No one aiming to end the criminal occupation of Iraq can expect this debate within the ruling class to lead to a rapid withdrawal. Nor are the Iraqi guerrillas likely to win a strategic victory over the heavily armed U.S. forces.

A big question, though, is whether the U.S. population will turn decisively against the war and join the struggle to end it. A sign of this development has come from an unlikely source: the position two Republican representatives in Congress have taken, questioning the war's progress.

U.S. Rep. Howard Coble, from Greensboro, N.C., and James A. Leach of Iowa have both raised the possibility of a pull-out. Both had earlier supported Bush and the war. Now their position is more anti-war than was Democrat John Kerry's during the election campaign.

Coble has a reputation of being "in touch with" his constituents' attitude—that is, he can be demagogic. It means his voters oppose the war.

The debate is still within the limits set

# 22 Army reservists refuse Iraq duty

By Dustin Langley

"I am ashamed to be associated with this mess, and I certainly did not join the Army to kill women, children and old men. I just don't see how these innocent people could be a threat to the Constitution of the United States. An American soldier should not be ashamed of what they do," said Sgt. Kevin Benderman of the U.S. Army.

Benderman has said that he will refuse to deploy to Iraq as ordered. A 40-year old veteran who has received many awards, including four Good Conduct Medals, Benderman was deployed in Iraq from March to September of 2003. During that time, he says, "elements of

my unit were instructed by a captain to fire on children throwing rocks at us."

He said that he realized that "the people that we are fighting now are for the most part people like you and me, people that are defending themselves against a superior military force and fighting to keep that which is rightfully theirs." He has also said the Iraqi people have the right to choose their own form of government, "just like we did in America after the revolution."

Benderman, who first entered the Army in 1987, has applied for a conscientious objector discharge. A decision on his application is still pending.

Benderman is not alone in his objection to the war. Twenty-two soldiers in

his unit have refused to deploy to Iraq. Seventeen have gone AWOL (Absent Without Official Leave). Two have attempted suicide.

Discontent and low morale are becoming so widespread throughout the armed forces, especially the reserves, that even top officers are getting worried. In a recent memo, Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly criticized repeated "stop loss" orders, decisions extending reservists' tours in war zones, and calling reservists to active duty after they had returned to civilian life.

Helmly wrote that these policies have pushed the Army Reserve to the point that it is "in grave danger of being unable to meet other operational requirements" and is "rapidly degenerating into a 'bro-

ken' force."

Meanwhile, soldiers in Iraq face daily attacks from a popular resistance that now numbers more than 200,000, according to the head of the Iraqi Intelligence Service. U.S. deaths in combat are approaching 1,400. As many as one in five returning troops suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The soldiers want to come home, and the Iraqi people clearly want them to leave. In a letter from Kevin Benderman and Monica Benderman to President George W. Bush, they outlined the only way to end the violence in Iraq: "Until America leaves Iraq to the Iraqis, and brings its soldiers home, freedom cannot begin to materialize for the Iraqi people." □

## A Palestinian view of the election

In a Jan. 10 interview with Amy Goodman of *Pacifica's Democracy Now!* program, Ali Abunimah of *Electronic Intifada* described the Palestinian people's reactions to the recent election there. The full text is available at [electronicintifada.net](http://electronicintifada.net).

I was talking to people in Palestine all day, and Gaza and the West Bank, [and] there were significant irregularities in many, many areas. The impression, I think, many Palestinians have is that the media, the U.S. government, the herd of international monitors who went over there to certify the victory decided in advance that the election had to be treated as good news, and they're not interested in what actually is happening to Palestinians both in the context of the election and the much bigger context of the continued Israeli assault.

Al-Harar Saturday published a lengthy report that while we're all looking at the election, Israel is quietly expanding its settlements throughout the occupied West Bank with the full approval of the United States, and in particular, of Condoleezza Rice, the incoming U.S. Secretary of State. So, the false optimism created by this victory for [Mahmoud] Abbas, all of the pundits who say this is a new dawn, a new opening for peace, really many Palestinians fear this is another setup so when the inevitable failure

brought about by Israeli intransigence occurs, this will be another opportunity to blame the Palestinians, and accuse them of missing an opportunity once again.

[M]ost Palestinians had not really heard of Mahmoud Abbas until George Bush anointed him the moderate leader. And understand—under Bush's pressure, Abbas was appointed as Palestinian prime minister a while back. So, you know, there was this juggernaut to have Abbas elected in Arafat's place. ...

[T]he pundits and the international peace process industry wants to remove this election from the context in which it's taking place, under the continued heel of Israel's military tyranny. [To] Palestinians whose homes are being demolished and land is being taken, the U.S. media is paying no attention whatsoever.

Many, many Palestinians that I talked to said there's an overwhelming mood that this election makes no difference to them, that they don't see that Mahmoud Abbas or anyone else elected has the power to change the reality that Israel has imposed on them. So, in that context, of course, there's going to be resistance, and Abbas can't ignore that. He can't just turn around and appeal to the Israeli and American audience and ignore the context in which his people are living.

So, he's going to be caught in a trap now where the Israelis and Americans are going to put impossible demands on him that while Israel continues to confiscate land, continues to build colonies, Abbas's job is going to be to carry out political assassinations of Palestinian resistance leaders on behalf of the occupation, to arrest Palestinians and put them in prison if they express any opposition or resistance to what Israel is doing. And if Abbas fails to do that, he is going to be called a terrorist.

Israel is going to use this as an excuse not to enter into any peace talks, and I think it's very significant, this report in Ha'aretz this past Saturday that is not getting any airing in the U.S., that the U.S. has explicitly approved Israel's plans for construction in 120 settlements across the occupied West Bank, and that the United States government is quietly working with Israel to delineate where this settlement construction is taking place. ...

According to Peace Now, the Israeli group that documents Israeli settlement activity, "The main building effort in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank is now focused on the area between the Green Line and the Separation Fence, and it is aimed at turning the fence into Israel's permanent border."

In other words, ... the apartheid wall, or

separation fence as Israelis call it, is really a land grab and with the U.S. support, Israel is rushing to completely colonize the area between the 1967 line and the apartheid wall and create facts on the ground that will leave Palestinians completely isolated in reservations. ... [M]any Palestinians, particularly those in the diaspora, millions of Palestinian refugees, have been absolutely excluded from this election, in contrast to Iraqis and Afghans who are being encouraged to participate, Palestinian refugees have been completely cut off from this process.

And it seems that the Americans, the EU, and as I have called it, the peace process industry see in Abbas someone who will be willing to compromise on fundamental Palestinian rights. And I think they're going to be very disap-

pointed because they're going to find out that simply putting a nice guy in a suit and sitting down with him doesn't change any of the basic realities of the conflict.

So, all of this optimistic talk of a window of opportunity is going to come to absolutely nothing, and the greater danger, of course, for Palestinians is that they're going to be blamed once again for the impasse. They're going to be told, look, we helped you with the election. Everyone supported you. Jimmy Carter came in. Senator Joseph Biden, all of these people flocked to the occupied territories to certify the election.

And when it fails, because of Israel's intransigence and continued colonization policies and violence, the Palestinians are going to be blamed. □

## Immigrant workers fight for benefits



Latina workers on picketline Jan. 11

"Immigrant employees don't have salary or health benefits that a union can bring ... They can be fired any day, any hour without explanation! There are no sick days, like union workers have. The bosses try to intimidate us with police ... and such at our picket lines!"

So says Brian Barraza of the Mexican American Workers' Association (AMAT). Standing alongside the Food and Commercial Workers union's pickets at Jefferson Market in New York, AMAT is working to support union organizing at the fancy food store.

Jose Luis Murillo, a Jefferson Market employee of 14 years, grew tired of working without overtime pay for his 60 hours a week, and without any benefits. These are standard conditions for many immigrant workers.

Murillo approached the union. When bosses learned this, Murillo found himself suddenly "laid off"—supposedly for economic reasons, yet others were soon hired and Murillo was not offered his job back.

As recent victories in New York have shown, the struggle for respect and union benefits for immigrant workers may be long and difficult. But bosses should know that they can't expect workers—at factories, restaurants, laundries, hotels, delis/groceries, driving taxicabs—to keep performing sweatshop labor and enduring racist exploitation without waging a struggle.

As Brian Barraza says: "They [immigrant workers] are here for everyone. If we don't work one day all over the USA, the country would collapse!"

—Story and photo by Anne Pruden

Continued from page 6

by what the ruling class allows to be thinkable. It is not in terms of the unthinkable: solidarity with the Iraqi people or support for Iraqi sovereignty.

This is all that can be expected in a situation where the rulers have such complete dominance of the media and of public debate. But it's a sign that the mass of the public is already disgusted with the war.

Here's another sign: In leaking news of their reassessment of the military situation, the Pentagon brass aren't even mentioning reinstating the military draft. There's no doubt this is being considered, but they know that even talking about it would stir up millions of young people who have not yet entered active political life.

The Jan. 20 counter-inaugural demonstrations in Washington and the anti-war movement's call for protests on March 19, including the mass regional rally in New York, will test the breadth and depth of this sentiment. Especially important is the attempt by the "Out Now!" coalition to link the fight against the war to the economic struggle at home and join the anti-war movement to the workers' struggles. □

## A testament to socialist planning

# Cuba leads world in managing disasters

By Fred Goldstein

The utter failure of the imperialists and the region's capitalist governments to warn the people of the Indian Ocean about the tsunami and to mitigate the chaos that reigned both during and after the devastation brings into bold relief the monumental accomplishments of socialist Cuba in the sphere of disaster management.

The capitalist propaganda machine has focused on the suffering of the people victimized by this disaster and has opened up a false debate over whether the tsunami was an act of god or an act of nature. The message is that, either way, this is fate and nothing could really be done to change things. Missing from the debate is the crucial question of how the catastrophic effects of this disaster could have been avoided.

The record of the Cuban government in preparing its population for hurricanes and other natural disasters so as to minimize the loss of human life gives the lie to religious mysticism and fatalistic thinking. It also stands as a practical example of how to reduce the needless loss of life.

Cuba has been cited by the United Nations, the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Society and other agencies and authorities who deal with the effects of natural disasters as the world model in disaster management, not only for underdeveloped countries but for all countries. Massive, humane evacuations of hundreds of thousands of people have been carried out within hours during hurricanes that reached high levels.

In 2001, when Hurricane Michelle, a level-4 storm, hit with sustained 125-mile-per-hour winds and widespread floods, more than 700,000 people were evacuated. Only five Cubans lost their lives in the storm, which killed 20 people in Central America.

### More dead in California than Cuba

It is noteworthy that prolonged rains in California have already killed almost twice as many people in a two-week period as the 16 who died in six major hurricanes in Cuba between 1996 and 2002. The Cuban method of education, preparation, warning and organized mass intervention during natural disasters is sorely missed right now in California.

In California, many people were killed by a mud slide in La Conchita after two weeks of rain. The same spot had suffered a similar mud slide 10 years ago. If the Cuban method had been applied in California, there would have been no loss of life.

An analysis of the Cuban method by Oxfam, a prestigious bourgeois British humanitarian organization that works in a variety of areas, led to the publication of a 68-page study in 2004 entitled, "Weathering the Storm: Lessons in Risk Reduction from Cuba." (oxfamamerica.org) This study praised the effectiveness of the Cuban system of centralized, planned organization based on mass participation that has saved many lives during natural disasters.

"Cuba is unusual in that its socio-economic development model and its disaster response policies combine to substantially reduce its population's vulnerability to hazards. Over the past 40 years, Cuba's socialist government has emphasized social and economic development, prioritizing an equitable distribution of resources, universal access to social services, and a narrower urban-rural development gap," says the report.

"Cubans are highly educated, with a



PHOTO: OXFAMAMERICA.ORG

**Cubans learn about disaster defense at an early age, including these children.**

strongly developed sense of solidarity and social cohesion, extensive experience in mobilization and highly organized through mass organizations, professional groups and political structures."

Cuba has a comprehensive National Civil Defense system which, the report says, "is as much a concept of organization as it is a system of measures and procedures." Its work is based on a national plan, formulated both from above and at the grass roots level, which relies on mass organizations such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), the Cuban Women's Federation, student groups, trade unions and the Association of Small Producers.

"In addition to specific assets for work on disasters," continues the report, "there is a political commitment at all levels of government to allocate all resources at hand for the preservation of life in emergencies. This allows the Cubans to make use of any and all available resources, such as using local schools as evacuation shelters, securing boats and buses for evacuation purposes, or tapping the ham radio association as a communications network." All other aspects of preparation are "secondary to the basic commitment of saving lives."

### Detailed planning at all levels

The national plan for disaster preparedness is refined and worked on every year, from the highest levels to the neighborhoods and block associations. The report carried the results of numerous interviews which revealed the results of detailed planning, organization and education.

"Regardless of their role, everyone was clearly aware of what measures and what procedures they needed to follow in case of a hurricane. They knew the stages of emergency warning, where to get information, how to secure their house, and where they would go for shelter if they needed to evacuate. A belief that the government would prioritize people's safety prevailed. The Cuban population clearly has developed a 'culture of safety.'"

Jose Castro, secretary of the Commission of Evacuation and Students in the Civil Defense of Cienfuegos, told Oxfam that "Any child in school can give you an explanation: how you prepare, what you do. Students, they know what you do ... how to gather things in the house and put them away ... shut off the water and electricity. All students, workers, campesinos get this training."

Basic to preparedness is what is called "community risk mapping." In fact, according to Oxfam, "it is the meticulous, ongoing risk mapping at the community level by community members that functions as the mortar in Cuba's wall of risk reduction."

A discussion with a representative of the Cuban Women's Federation in the district of Havana illustrated this point: "I am responsible for this part of the neighborhood. ... If a hurricane hits, I know that inside one multi-family unit is an old woman in a wheelchair, who is going to need help to leave. I have 11 single mothers on second and third floors of apartment buildings with children under two who will need more support to evacuate and special needs in the shelters. I have two pregnant women, one on that block and one on this one, who will need special attention."

Each year the plan is updated to include new information and an evaluation of past experience. "Beginning at the CDR level," said Jose Castro, "authorities update the plan in their neighborhood. The CDR members write down the houses that may be vulnerable in their census, including the name of the family and number of children. They note who goes where during an evacuation, who will need extra help, etc." The neighborhood plan then goes up to the municipal, provincial and national level to be integrated into the national plan.

### All public officials responsible for safety

Unlike in the United States, all public officials are charged with dealing with emergencies. "By law," says the report, "all heads of provincial and municipal governments are the provincial and municipal Civil Defense directors in charge of organizing, coordinating and monitoring all the work related to prevention, mitigation, emergency response and reconstruction in their area. ... This creates both a centralized decision-making process, which is key for emergency situations, alongside a decentralized implementation process, providing agility and adaptation equally necessary for effective emergency preparedness and response.

"In practice, the head of the Civil Defense in any given province or municipality is someone closely familiar with how government works in that province. It also means that the local groups are taking orders from someone familiar to them, not a stranger brought for the duration of the emergency. In the event of an emergency all heads of work places, hospitals, schools or businesses assume their responsibilities to direct their staff in carrying out civil defense measures."

All the organizational structures are mobilized to alert the population as a hurricane approaches. Meetings are called, plans reviewed, command centers are organized. "At the community level, the CDRs, mass organizations, family doctors, school directors, and heads of institutions" review emergency plans and check evacuation procedures, destinations and supplies.

In the evacuation phase: "If a person's house has a roof of tile, fiber-cement or thatch, they must move to a house of poured concrete. If those options have already been assigned in the neighborhood, the family is assigned to a group shelter and transport provided. Everything from cars to trucks to horse carts is mobilized for transport by the heads of the civil defense ... In order to evacuate people in high-risk areas, all necessary means of transport, such as helicopters and boats, are put at the service of Civil Defense rescue teams for this purpose.

"In Cuba," continues the report, "structures that run everyday life are the structures also used for implementing civil defense measures."

In other words, the revolutionary organization of the mass of workers and peasants in a socialist society puts the interests of the people first in all spheres of life; it naturally becomes the general framework within which it is possible to prepare effectively for natural disasters and minimize the loss of life.

### All despite U.S. blockade

Cuba is a relatively poor country, underdeveloped by centuries of Spanish colonialism, 60 years of U.S. imperialist control, and decades of a vicious economic blockade. Yet, it has surpassed the richest and most developed country in the world in the sphere of natural disaster management.

Had India, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other countries in the Indian Ocean region had socialist regimes that put the interests of the people at the forefront, day-in, day-out, as in socialist Cuba, they would have seized upon the scientific and technological technology to detect tsunamis that is already deployed in the Pacific Ocean and collectively either purchased or developed it themselves.

The greatest loss of life during the tsunami was in Banda Aceh in northern Sumatra, nearest the site of the undersea earthquake that triggered the waves. Capitalist television networks have recently carried footage of amateur video showing the tsunami hitting Banda Aceh. But first you saw people cleaning up from the earthquake, slowly and methodically for 25 minutes, completely oblivious of what was to follow—despite definite danger signs, like the sea receding.

An organized, educated, prepared population with the government fully behind it could have evacuated thousands of people, even at the site closest to the epicenter of the tsunami. Evacuation to safety in most areas involved moving people only a relatively short distance from the coast. This holds in even greater measure for the high-casualty areas further from the quake, such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and of course West Africa.

Tsunamis are not at all unknown in the Indian Ocean region. There have been three in Indonesia alone in the last 12 years.

A socialist government such as exists in Cuba would have been alert to all the warnings coming from the scientific community about the vulnerability of the region to tsunamis. And of course the population would have been thoroughly trained and organized to deal with typhoons and other natural disasters, so it would have had the means in place to deal with a tsunami.

Cuba, poor as it is, has worked virtual miracles of public safety despite all the obstacles put in its way by the blockade and the undying hostility of U.S. administrations for over four decades. Its struggle to overcome the effects of hurricanes and natural disasters by integrating its disaster mitigation work within the general framework of socialist planning and organization, despite its extreme material limitations, shows that in the natural world humanity can take increasing control over its destiny. But Cuba laid the groundwork by first expelling imperialism, overturning capitalism and taking control over the means of production and the resources of society so it could organize them to serve human need and not profit—that is, by carrying out the socialist revolution. □



## Why Indonesia is poor and dependent today

# The fascist 'tsunami' of 1965-66

By Deirdre Griswold

When the people of the 3,000 separate islands then called the Dutch East Indies united at the end of World War II and fought together to end colonial rule, the future seemed bright. Indonesia would emerge from 350 years of foreign domination as the world's sixth-largest country—the population today is around 210 million—with one-fifth of the world's marketable natural resources. It enjoyed a vibrant mix of many highly developed cultures.

That was half a century ago. What happened to keep Indonesia poor and dependent, saddled with a repressive military, exploited by transnational corporations, and seemingly unable to prevent the kind of chaos and destruction that has just accompanied the recent earthquake and tsunami?

People around the world are deeply saddened by the suffering there and want to know how to help. But to really help, everyone should know what happened in 1965-66 that has made it so hard for the Indonesians to help themselves.

You won't hear about it in the global corporate media. With all the coverage about Indonesia these days, there's been barely a word about that period, when the rivers were choked with bodies and the deaths mounted to a million—10 times the current death toll.

It wasn't a "natural" disaster. It was a fascist coup d'état. And Washington played the decisive role in making it happen.

It was during the Vietnam War. The leader of Indonesia's independence struggle, Sukarno, was an outspoken voice in the world for unity of the liberated colonies against imperialism. He was supported by Indonesia's Communist Party, the PKI, which had 3 million members and was influential in mass organizations of workers, farmers, students, women and

intellectuals that could mobilize 17 million more in progressive causes.

But it was an unstable situation. The Indonesian military brass represented a rising capitalist class as well as the landlords who oppressed the peasants. The military was supplied and trained by the U.S.

Moreover, the unity of the PKI, forged in the anti-colonial struggle, was being affected by the split in the world communist movement between China and the USSR.

### 'Rivers clogged with bodies'

In October 1965, the military took over. The generals claimed they were foiling a coup attempt by the communists. They then proceeded to arrest every leading member of the Sukarno government, and to put Sukarno himself under what amounted to house arrest. They beheaded the government they claimed to be saving.

By Dec. 17, 1965, Time magazine wrote that "Communists, red sympathizers and their families are being massacred by the thousands. Backlands army units are reported to have executed thousands of Communists after interrogation in remote jails. ... The killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a serious sanitation problem in East Java and Northern Sumatra where the humid air bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travelers from these areas tell of small rivers and streams that have been literally clogged with bodies."

Northern Sumatra is where the recent tsunami disaster hit the hardest.

For months, the death toll kept rising. The Guardian of Britain on April 7, 1966, wrote that "A consular official in Surabaya accepts a figure of 200,000 for Bali, which has a

population of 2 million. Estimates of the dead in Sumatra also range around 200,000 and a similar figure for Java is generally regarded on the low side."

Accounts in the Western press were meager. There were no grisly photos, no stories about who were these people being killed. Nothing but body counts and the implication that the killings were justified by the "attempted Communist coup."

### 'Washington careful not to claim credit'

Occasionally, a cynical political analyst speaking to the foreign policy establishment would say a bit more about what happened and why. James Reston wrote a column in the New York Times of June 19, 1966, called "A Gleam of Light in Asia":

"One of the most persistent complaints among officials in Washington is that our political troubles in Vietnam are not balanced adequately by reports in the press of the more hopeful political developments elsewhere in Asia.

"The savage transformation of Indonesia from a pro-Chinese policy under Sukarno to a defiantly anti-Communist policy under General Suharto is, of course, the most important of these developments. Washington is careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it.

"[I]t is doubtful if the coup would ever have been attempted without the American show of strength in Vietnam or been sustained without the clandestine aid it has received indirectly from here."

Ten years later, Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor, with the explicit blessing of President

Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Another 200,000 people were massacred by the Indonesian military in that small country over the next 25 years.

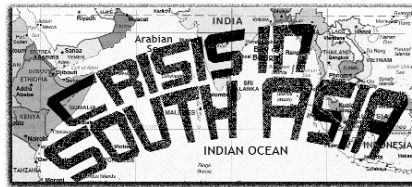
During this terrible period in the history of the region, U.S. and other imperialist corporations have made out in Indonesia like bandits. With the protection of the generals they helped install, they have sucked up its oil, ripped out its rain-forest hardwoods, dug up its valuable minerals and herded its young into sweatshops where they make shirts and sneakers and consumer electronics for starvation wages.

And, far from being able to keep their bloody role secret forever, U.S. operatives began bragging about it. Free-lance reporter Kathy Kadane got some of them to talk to her, and broke the news in several newspapers in May of 1990.

In an article entitled "Ex-agents say CIA compiled death lists for Indonesians," she wrote: "The U.S. government played a significant role in one of the worst massacres of the century by supplying the names of thousands of Communist Party leaders to the Indonesian army, which hunted down the leftists and killed them, former U.S. diplomats say. For the first time, U.S. officials acknowledge that in 1965 they systematically compiled comprehensive lists of Communist operatives, from top echelons down to village cadres."

If today the people of Aceh are wary of "aid" being brought in by U.S. soldiers and members of the Indonesian military, is it any wonder? If hatred of Washington continues to grow in this mostly Muslim country, should we be surprised?

Deirdre Griswold is author of "Indonesia: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century" and helped organize meetings and protests in the 1960s against the massacres.



## Environmental destruction opened the door for tsunami

By G. Dunkel

The development of the tourist industry turned the beaches of South Asia into glittering strands of white sand. It turned mangrove forests into ponds of brackish water for the exotic shrimp that tourists like to eat in exotic places.

And it made the poor people who live and work along these beaches much more vulnerable to tsunami surges.

In some places, the coral reefs that laid just offshore were destroyed to allow yachts and tour boats to sail wherever they wanted without risk. Sometimes the coral was turned into trinkets or decorations for the tourist trade.

Developers removed the mangrove forests—and even the sand dunes in some areas—from along the shore. In the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, a state in the southern part of India's east coast, sand dunes were removed as part of a beautification campaign. (The Press Trust of India, Jan. 1)

In the Muthupettai lagoon in the

Tiruvarur district, where a small tract of mangrove forests was left, the region did withstand the tsunami better.

What's so dangerous about these acts to "improve" the shoreline? Features like palms and mangrove forests, and even coral reefs, act like shock absorbers. They offer natural protection from tsunamis and storm surges. In particular, mangrove forests with their complicated roots bind the shore together, providing a shield against destructive waves.

The Maldives are an archipelago of 1,900 coral islands, stretching south from India's west coast. It is the lowest lying country in the world, with an average elevation of less than 3 feet above sea level. Yet only 80 people out of 300,000 died from the tsunami, Reuters reported Jan. 9.

Doug Masson, a senior researcher at Southampton University's Oceanography Centre in southern England, told the Jan. 8 Strait Times, "My feeling is that coral is what probably saved the majority of people in the Maldives." He thinks a coastal

Continued on page 11



Mangrove forests provide a buffer between sea and land.

## Warnings saved lives

A report from Channel NewsAsia make it clear that even spontaneous, individual warnings saved lives from the tsunami.

Vijayakumar Gunasekaran, the son of fishers from Nallavadu, a village in Pondicherry, on the eastern coast of India, lives in Singapore and was watching events unfold on Dec. 26.

He began to worry about his family living on the Indian coastline facing Aceh in Sumatra. He called home. His sister Muphqazhaqi answered and said seawater was seeping into their house.

He urged his sister, "Run out and shout the warning to others." Some villagers thought quickly and broke down the doors of the community center, which had a public address system used routinely to warn fishers about sea conditions.

The siren was sounded and the people evacuated.

Nallavadu is home to 500 families and about 3,600 people.

None of them died in the tsunami, even though 150 houses and 200 fishing boats were destroyed.

—G. Dunkel

### INDONESIA 1965

The second greatest crime of the century

By Deirdre Griswold

This book tells of the massacres following the October 1, 1965, military takeover that decimated the Indonesian left. It focuses on the role of Washington in providing essential clandestine support for the right-wing generals in that bloodbath.

www.workers.org/indonesia

## Torture in & by the U.S.

Historians Against the War have produced an on-line pamphlet on "Torture, American Style." (historiansagainstwar.org) It should be an eye-opener for those who, getting their information from the corporate media, think that the U.S. government has always stood for justice and fair play, and that recent revelations about torture of prisoners by U.S. authorities in Abu Ghraib, Afghanistan and Guantanamo are alarming departures.

The pamphlet contains detailed articles about the long history of U.S. torture in Nicaragua and the systematic employment of torture against the Vietnamese people. Many more examples could be added, of course. There is hardly a country in Central and South America that has not suffered at one time or another under U.S.-supported and -trained dictatorships that used torture routinely.

But the most pertinent article is called "The American Prison and the Normalization of Torture," by H. Bruce Franklin. For U.S. foreign policy is just an extension of domestic policy. Bush's nomination of Alberto Gonzales to head the Justice Department makes this crystal clear. If Gonzales becomes Attorney General, he will hold the highest law enforcement office in the land.

Gonzales comes from Texas and is a political protégé of George W. Bush, who as governor of the state okayed more executions than any other governor. The prisons in Texas are not meant to "correct" anyone. They are horrendous warehouses for the poor—especially African Americans and Latin@s—and rely on coercion of all kinds.

When the Abu Ghraib torture scandal broke, it showed that U.S. prisons

have been breeding grounds for the guards and interrogators who have abused, humiliated, injured and even killed those in their custody.

"The use of sex and sexual humiliation as torture in Abu Ghraib and the other American prisons in Iraq is endemic to the American prison," writes Franklin. "Photographs could be taken on any day in the American prison system that would match the photographs from Abu Ghraib that shocked the public. Indeed, actual pictures from prisons in America have shown worse atrocities than those pictures from the American prisons in Iraq."

What has shaken many liberal columnists about the Gonzales nomination is that, as White House counsel, he advised the Bush administration on how to call torture by another name, and took the position that the Geneva Conventions don't apply to prisoners that U.S. forces labeled "enemy combatants," just to get around the body of international law applying to prisoners of war. These writers hope to appeal to reason of the powers that be, pointing out how bad this makes the U.S. look around the world.

But it's not just a question of appearances. Imperialism won't be kinder and gentler if the Senate rejects Gonzales in favor of someone better able to put a good face on global exploitation. To end torture and the murder of innocent people, U.S. troops have to be withdrawn from Iraq, Afghanistan and everywhere. And the prison system, which is a bulwark of class and national oppression in the U.S., must be torn down. Jobs, housing, education—not jails! □

## Koreans emphasize defense

Two delegations of U.S. lawmakers, including Tom Lantos, have been visiting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Lantos, a right-wing Democrat from California, co-sponsored a bill passed by Congress last year that imposes new sanctions on the DPRK (North Korea).

For years the U.S. capitalist establishment, which decimated Korea in a terrible war in the 1950s and has kept over 30,000 troops in the southern half of that divided country ever since, has tried to force the leaders in the north to give up their socialist system. Imperialist strategists thought it would be easy once the Soviet Union collapsed. Indeed, that and a series of natural disasters, plus the death of Korea's legendary liberation leader, Kim Il Sung, created a period of severe hardship for the DPRK in the 1990s.

At the time of the Korean War, the imperialists were stunned by the heroic resistance of the Korean people and their devotion to their revolutionary leaders. Over a million U.S. troops employing tremendous firepower could not break their spirit. The war ended in a stalemate—but the U.S. has never signed a peace treaty and refuses to even discuss an end to its hostilities

against the DPRK.

Whatever threats and enticements the U.S. politicians are making now, the DPRK has made it clear that it will never compromise its security. On New Year's Day, the three main newspapers in Pyongyang, the north's capital, issued a joint editorial statement that emphasized the country's determination to continue giving a priority to defense while embarking on a scientific-technological revolution in agriculture and industry.

The DPRK is preparing for a year full of significant anniversaries: the 60th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese imperial rule as well as the formation of the DPRK's leading political force, the Workers' Party of Korea; the fifth anniversary of the historic summit in Pyongyang that issued the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration affirming the desire of the entire Korean people for reunification.

The Koreans will never forget their glorious history of resistance to foreign domination. The antiwar movement here must not forget Korea and should do all it can to get U.S. troops out of the south and end the perpetual war threat posed by Washington. □

## The fight against AIDS:

# Mandela leads the world again

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

On Jan. 6 Nelson Mandela, who has campaigned tirelessly against the AIDS epidemic since leaving office as president of South Africa, announced that his eldest son, Makgatho, had died of the disease that day in Johannesburg.

Mandela, revered in his country for his role in ending the brutal apartheid regime there, called a news conference to disclose his son's cause of death. In his statement, he emphasized the need to break through the shame associated with the epidemic: "Let us give publicity to HIV/AIDS and not hide it, because the only way to make it appear like a normal illness like TB, like cancer, is always to come out and say somebody has died because of HIV/AIDS, and people will stop regarding it as something extraordinary." (New York Times, Jan. 7)

By United Nations estimates, AIDS killed 2.5 million to 3.5 million people worldwide in 2003, while 1 million died of malaria and 2 million of tuberculosis—in total, 40 times the number of people who recently died in the tragic tsunami in Asia.

Currently one out of every five South Africans has AIDS or is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. (Newsday.com)

Mandela delivered his message in Xhosa, the most widespread indigenous language of South Africa. He said he wanted to encourage South Africans who did not understand English to reveal their HIV status in order to "turn the tide" of the disease. (allAfrica.com)

Other southern African leaders who have recently revealed family losses because of AIDS include Graça Machel of the Mozambican independence struggle, now married to Mandela; Mangosuthu Buthelexi, South African Home Affairs Minister; and former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda.

Over three-quarters of the world's HIV-infected people live in sub-Saharan Africa. (UN News)

### Genocidal U.S. policy

The concern of this South African leadership stands in stark contrast to the policies of recent U.S. presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, on AIDS prevention and treatment.

In 1999 the Democratic administration of President Bill Clinton supported giant transnational drug companies that went to court in South Africa to block that country's attempt to get lower prices on life-or-death HIV medication. Only months of demonstrations by AIDS activist groups like ACT UP, in the United States and in South Africa, stopped the companies'



Makgatho Mandela

plans to protect their profits regardless of how many lives would be lost.

In the summer of 2004 during the U.S. presidential campaign, AIDS activists linked their protests internationally, in the United States and South Africa, to rally against the Bush administration's AIDS policies. In July in Harrisburg, Pa., demonstrators chanted outside Republican state headquarters. Protester Aaron Boyle said, "Help is not getting to those who need it most, and it is essentially being used to fund Big Pharma." (Health News)

Five hundred militant protesters gathered at a parallel demonstration in Johannesburg, South Africa, organized by Treatment Action Campaign, an AIDS activist group in South Africa. According to the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project of Johannesburg, many wore red and white t-shirts that said "HIV Positive." (www.equality.org.za)

Mark Heywood, spokesperson for TAC, said, "The effect of the U.S. government's unlawful war in Iraq has been to divert international attention and resources away from global health and poverty."

The group's statement accused the U.S. government of sabotaging the world fight against AIDS by limiting access to inexpensive generic anti-AIDS drugs. TAC also denounced the Bush administration's "abstinence-only" policy in international AIDS grants, including suppressing sex education and denying access to family planning devices such as condoms.

### Impact on women

One direct result of these policies is an accelerating number of women's deaths from AIDS. In Africa, women make up almost 60 percent of those living with HIV, according to a report from the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. (boston.com)

In sub-Saharan Africa, in the 15-24 age group, more than three out of every four infections occur among women and girls. (Sapa-AFP, Nov. 30)

Peter Piot, executive director of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, said: "The face of AIDS is changing so rapidly. It shows we've got to put women at the heart of this response to AIDS." □

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## As anniversary of coup approaches

# Haitian regime can't mask its repression

By Pat Chin

Caribbean Community countries have once again refused to recognize the Washington-backed coup regime of interim Haitian Prime Minister Gerard Latortue. The latest rejection came despite intense pressure from the White House amid maneuvers aimed at justifying the ouster last Feb. 29 of the popularly elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and at legitimizing the puppet regime.

Jamaican Foreign Minister Keith Knight declared on Jan. 7 in Georgetown, Guyana, "When democracy returns to Haiti, then that nation will be admitted again to CARICOM."

Knight stressed, however, that voting alone won't be sufficient. "Democracy goes beyond elections," he said. He added, "It has to do with how people are able to participate in power, and we would not want to see discriminating practices in Haiti," alluding to the targeted political assassinations and reign of terror against Aristide's supporters and his Fanmi Lavalas party. (Xinhuanet, Jan. 9)

On Jan. 1 in Gonaives, when interim President Boniface Alexandre announced elections for later this year, a crowd of around 200 people heckled him, Gonaives Mayor Calixte Valentin and other speakers. They shouted at them to "get out." (AP, Jan. 1) Hundreds of people remain without food and shelter four months after

Tropical Storm Jeanne killed over 2,000 people and devastated the city.

Elections are being promoted even though Haiti remains occupied. Resistance is growing as violence, wrenching poverty, starvation and social chaos deepens.

The United Nations occupation forces, headed by Brazilian Gen. Augusto Heleno, have been complicit, working in the police, with ongoing attempts to crush the popular movement.

On Jan. 4, police reportedly killed six residents of Cite de Dieux, including a 16-year-old girl. Two people, including a 13-year-old girl, were also killed in Cite de l'Eternel. Police dressed in black and camouflage arrested several others. (Haitian Press Agency, Jan 4).

One day later, hundreds of Brazilian occupation troops and special units of the Haitian police stormed Bel Air in Port-au-Prince—another pro-Aristide neighborhood. They were met with gunfire. Five residents were reportedly killed and nine arrested.

"The UN cannot on the one hand say they are bringing security while on the other they claim to be assisting the police as they kill us, beat us and arrest us," said an unidentified Lavalas representative. "It is a contradiction they must resolve or there will never be peace. They must control the police and stop the killing. They must support us in releasing all the political prisoners filling our jails." (Haiti

Information Project, Jan. 7)

On Dec. 1, while U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was in Port-au-Prince delivering the latest Bush dictate to the puppet prime minister, inmates at the national penitentiary rebelled. Prison guards reportedly executed scores of detainees. Many more were wounded in what eyewitnesses described as a savage bloodbath that the coup regime is trying to cover up.

Haiti's prisons are bloated with pro-Aristide supporters, most of whom have not been charged with or convicted of a crime. Many have not even seen a judge.

Only 17 of the 1,100 detainees at the national penitentiary have been convicted of a crime, according to a report circulated by the Haitian Lawyers' Leadership Network.

As if things weren't bad enough, in late December 75 residents at the public hospital in Port-au-Prince went on strike to protest overdue pay. Sixty-five interns also joined the job action.

Prime Minister Latortue can't seem to find funds to pay doctors a mere \$145 per month. But his administration has started to dole out money to thousands of ex-soldiers who've demanded "back pay" in return, they say, for surrendering their U.S.-supplied arms.

U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters and 13 other progressive members of Congress fired off an angry letter to President George W. Bush on Jan. 7 demanding that he oppose this giveaway. "They are the same thugs and killers who attacked police stations, freed criminals from prisons and assisted in the coup d'etat that overthrew President Aristide last February," said the let-

ter. "Since then, they have murdered untold numbers of Lavalas party supporters, terrorized the Haitian population and demanded 10 years of back pay."

Aristide disbanded the military with wide popular support in 1995 after decades of the army's brutal repression of the masses and yet another attempted coup against his administration. This latest scheme, related in the long run to reconstituting the army, is projected to cost some \$29 million if fully carried out.

Widespread attacks against Aristide's supporters are calculated to silence all opposition to the coup regime—and to prevent Fanmi Lavalas, Haiti's most popular party, from running candidates in elections they would win, for this would undermine Washington's desire to install a puppet government more aligned with capitalist globalization.

Haiti's National Popular Party (PPN) issued a Dec. 27 statement denouncing the plans of the de facto government and occupation authorities. "The PPN ridiculed the notion that free and democratic elections could be held in the present context of foreign occupation, fierce crackdowns and near-universal hunger," reported the Dec. 29-Jan. 4 issue of Haiti Progress newspaper.

Were it not for the hundreds of doctors from socialist Cuba working in Haiti, health care—a vital service made even more necessary after both the coup and Tropical Storm Jeanne rained death and destruction on the Western Hemisphere's poorest country—would totally collapse.

What Haiti needs now more than ever is a socialist revolution. □

## Environmental destruction

Continued from page 9

buffer helped, but wasn't a guarantee.

"The [coral] reef broke up the tsunami and it traveled forward as a broken wave and so was far less deadly," Masson added.

### Struggle in India

In India, poor fishers are suffering because of the bourgeoisie that develops the Indian coast for its profit, and the transnational banks that supply financing.

The Rev. Tom Kocherry is an Indian activist priest who founded the National Fishworkers Forum. He who has worked against the globalization of Indian fishing for more than 30 years. Kocherry estimates that 800,000 people who relied on the sea are now not in their homes.

Seventy thousand houses have been destroyed. And tens of thousands of people have lost their boats, nets and other fishing equipment.

But the small-scale and generally poor Indian fishers have been under threat for years, Kocherry says, because trade liberalization policies imposed by the big imperialist powers have allowed foreign factory fishing fleets to deplete fishing stocks.

Coastal protection in India is nominally

regulated by the Coastal Regulation Zone provisions in the Environmental Protection Act, which state that at least 200 meters on the landward side of the high-tide line should be left free of development on beaches. However, big companies have flouted the EPA to create major developments that have destroyed much of the natural protection.

"There are vested interests trying to persuade the government to overturn the CRZ," according to Kocherry. "These areas should be protected by mangroves, as nature intended. But the ministries of tourism and industry are trying to overturn the act."

Xinhua, China's official news agency, ran a dispatch on Jan. 6, quoting Liang Guozhao, a research fellow with the Guangzhou institute of geography under the Guangdong Provincial Academy of Sciences. Liang told Xinhua "China's coastal regions need to safeguard their bulwarks and, in particular, restore their 'mangrove forests' that are known as coastal green belts."

The Chinese coastal provinces of Guangdong, Fujian and Hainan and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are all prone to typhoons and deadly storms. □

## PUERTO RICO

# Water workers end strike

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad

Workers at the government-run Aqueduct and Sewage Authority (AAA) in Puerto Rico went back to work on Dec. 27 after an 84-day strike. The strike was mainly over changes to the union's health care plan, which the government wanted to privatize.

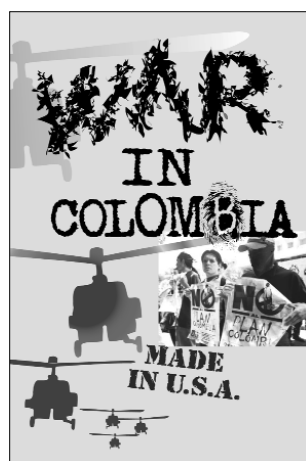
The 4,300 water workers represented by the Independent Authentic Union (UIA) had in the past won the best benefits of any union in Puerto Rico. During the strike, the government and the media carried out a daily attack on the union's leaders. FBI agents raided the union's offices and the homes of four union leaders. All the leaders were hauled into court on "tax evasion" charges. None of these charges have been proven.

The intense government and media campaign, however, failed to break the

solidarity of the workers. Only 60 returned to work. The union organized daily picket lines and followed with demonstrations on most days.

On Dec. 24, after an ultimatum to the workers to either begin work on Dec. 27 or be replaced, the AAA executive president and the bargaining unit for the UIA announced a settlement of the protracted strike.

On Dec. 26, the UIA membership ratified a \$91-million, 4-year contract. The UIA agreed to a reduction from 126 to 100 union staff members in the workplaces and will allow workers to choose a private health plan if they prefer. However, the union health plan remains in effect and the massive, coordinated government-media attack did not break the union. The workers won a \$100-per-month wage increase retroactive to the start of the new contract. □



## WAR IN COLOMBIA MADE IN U.S.A.

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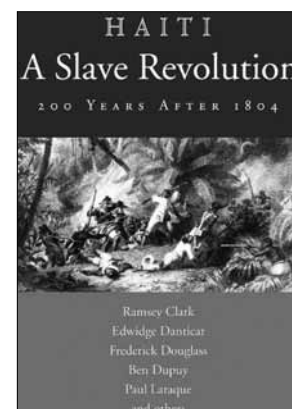
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## Líder rebelde colombiano extraditado a los EEUU

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

En un acto de conformidad a la voluntad de sus amos estadounidenses, el 31 de diciembre el gobierno colombiano de Álvaro Uribe Vélez entregó el miembro de la guerrilla Ricardo Palmera, al FBI para su extradición a los Estados Unidos.

Este acto sin precedente marca la primera vez que un importante miembro de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) ha sido extraditado a los Estados Unidos para su enjuiciamiento.

Palmera – mejor conocido por su seudónimo inspirado por Simón Bolívar “Simón Trinidad” — había sido detenido, o mejor dicho, secuestrado en Quito, Ecuador, el 2 de enero de 2004.

Había estado allí en una misión clandestina pedida por las FARC: encontrar un lugar conveniente para una reunión con el secretario general de las Naciones Unidas Kofi Annan y otras personalidades internacionales para facilitar una solución al retorno de los prisioneros de guerra de las FARC a través de un intercambio humanitario de prisioneros.

La captura de Trinidad fue realizada como una acción conjunta de la Interpol, la CIA y las fuerzas armadas colombianas y ecuatorianas. Evocaba la criminal y anti-comunista Operación Cóndor de los años 70.

Trinidad fue entonces extraditado a Colombia. Allí permaneció en prisión de máxima seguridad hasta el 31 de diciembre. Enfrentaba 100 cargos de terrorismo, secuestro, narcotráfico y rebelión que le garantizarían 81 meses en prisión, según su abogado en Colombia, Oscar Silva.

La transferencia de Trinidad de la cárcel de Boyacá a Bogotá fue un ejercicio extremadamente armado que duró tres horas llamado “Operación Libertad”. El ejército colombiano rodeó la prisión mientras cuatro helicópteros militares “Black Hawk”, incluyendo el asignado para él bautizado “Batman”, esperaban para el viaje al aeropuerto internacional El Dorado de la capital. Allí, todos los vuelos habían sido cancelados en preparación para la operación. En la pista, un avión “Gulf Stream-5” del gobierno de los EEUU estaba listo para llevarlo a Washington, D.C., en compañía del FBI.

Al entrar al avión, Trinidad gritó “¡Viva Bolívar!, ¡Bolívar vive! ¡Soldados, que vivan las FARC, Ejército del Pueblo!”.

Esa tarde en Washington fue llevado a la corte federal ante el juez Juan Facciola. Trinidad hará frente a los cargos de secuestro, terrorismo y narcotráfico el 9 de febrero.

La acusación de secuestro proviene del incidente en febrero de 2003 cuando las FARC dispararon contra un pequeño avión con tres agentes-contratistas estadounidenses que sobrevolaba el territorio controlado por la guerrilla en Caquetá, al sur del país. Estos contratistas son algunos de los muchos agentes militares enviados por los Estados Unidos a Colombia para luchar contra la insurgencia bajo el Plan Colombia. Los agentes, Thomas Howes,



Ricardo Palmera

Keith Stansell y Marc Gonsalves han estado retenidos por las FARC desde entonces.

La extradición de Trinidad a los Estados Unidos ocurrió luego de que el presidente Uribe le diera un ultimátum a las FARC. Sin posibilidad de negociación, él exigió unilateralmente que la insurgencia liberara a todos los cautivos el 30 de diciembre como única condición para la anulación de la orden de extradición.

### ‘¡Estoy en el lado de los progresistas!’

¿Quién es Trinidad? Su historia es significativa, porque ilustra las razones por

las que mucha gente joven se integra a la insurrección. Mientras que su procedencia difiere del de la abrumadora mayoría de l@s miembr@s de las FARC, sus razones de unirse al movimiento armado reflejan las esperanzas de much@s en Colombia.

Natural de Valledupar, en el noreste de Colombia, cercana a Venezuela, Trinidad era parte de una familia rica e influyente. Estudió en la universidad de Harvard y trabajó como un banquero y profesor, cooperando particularmente con el movimiento progresista campesino que era muy fuerte en el área.

En un conmovedor testimonio escrito por Imelda Cotes, amiga y socia política de Trinidad publicado en el reciente libro del antropólogo colombiano, Yezid Campos, “Memoria de los Silenciados, El Baile Rojo”, ella cuenta de forma muy vívida el peligroso ambiente en Valledupar a mediados de la década de los 80, tiempo de formación de la Unión Patriótica (UP).

La UP fue un intento de parte de las FARC y el Partido Comunista Colombiano de formar un partido político alternativo amplio que incluyera todos los sectores que habían sufrido bajo la dictadura

bipartidaria de Liberales y Conservadores, para lograr paz y justicia social. La vía principal de la UP sería desarmada y pacífica, por medio de la lucha electoral. Fue lanzada el 28 de mayo de 1985, como resultado de los acuerdos de paz entre las FARC y el presidente colombiano Belisario Betancourt. El gobierno se comprometió a respetar y garantizar la seguridad de los miembros de la UP, entre otras muchas otras promesas escritas.

En las primeras elecciones en que participó la UP, en el 1986, tuvo un éxito histórico: ganó cinco senadores, nueve representantes a la cámara, 14 diputados departamentales, 351 concejales y 23 alcaldes municipales. Sin embargo, mientras ocurría esta victoria, comenzaba también una campaña de terrorismo y aniquilación en su contra que sigue hoy en día.

Más de 3.500 miembr@s y simpatizantes fueron asesinad@s, much@s desaparecieron y much@s fueron forzad@s al exilio.

Daza Cotes narra las múltiples historias del incremento de amenazas y asesinatos por el Ejército Colombiano, las desapariciones y los exilios forzados – pero también habla sobre la ardiente resolución para continuar la lucha por la justicia y la verdadera democracia en Colombia. Escribe sobre las alternativas entre las cuales fueron forzad@s a escoger.

Una de las muchas historias es sobre Ricardo Palmera. Sobre él escribe “Yo creo que Valledupar no ha parido otro hombre más honrado y más digno que Ricardo Palmera Pineda”. Daza Cotes no compartía la idea de la lucha armada, pero explica que mientras ella y sus compañer@s, incluso Palmera, querían resolver pacíficamente los problemas de pobreza y desigualdad social que dieron base a la guerrilla, “la respuesta del establecimiento y de la clase dirigente fue violenta. La decisión fue asesinarnos a todos y callarnos por la vía de las armas”.

Ella concluye que “muchas gente decidió vincularse a la insurgencia porque no encontraba cómo hacer política por la vía legal y pacífica”. Después contó a un amigo: “Definitivamente no hay alternativa. Es cierto que en este país sólo es posible luchar por la vía armada. Entonces, nosotros no tenemos nada que hacer, no hay posibilidades para uno”.

Uno de los que decidió unirse a la insurgencia fue Simón Trinidad. En 2002, durante la época de negociaciones entre las FARC y el Presidente Andrés Pastrana, él dijo: “Opté por esta nueva vida en la guerrilla porque estoy al lado de las gentes progresistas que combaten al 10% de los propietarios que monopolizan el 90% de las tierras cultivables en Colombia. Para ellos me convertí en su enemigo.”

Muchos en Colombia, incluso parientes de los cautivos de las FARC, ven negativamente la extradición de Trinidad a los EEUU. Ellos temen que Uribe, como ha hecho antes, intente una solución militar y violenta a la situación de los rehenes durante la cual pueden salir lesionados, en vez de buscar una solución negociada. □

