

## MUNDO OBRERO

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Obreros de hoteles  
logran nuevo contrato  
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# While bogged down in Iraq White House threatens new aggression

## Bush's 'freedom' speech: billions for war, cutbacks for the people

By Fred Goldstein

The most notable aspect of President George W. Bush's inaugural speech was the extraordinary contradiction between the high-blown imperial, triumphalist rhetoric about bringing "freedom" to the entire world, and the utter disaster for U.S. imperialism, mired down now for two years in a colonial war in Iraq. This elaboration of the neoconservative Bush Doctrine has pundits and policy makers scratching their heads in light of the utter failure of the first phase of the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war, enunciated after Sept. 11, 2001.

It is said that Bush used the word "free" or "freedom" 27 times in a 20-minute speech and never mentioned the word Iraq, or any other country for that matter. The core of his new doctrine was enunciated early on in the talk: "We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world ...."

Of course when Bush talks of "freedom" he is talking about the "freedom" of U.S. corporations, banks, agribusiness, oil companies and the Pentagon to operate "freely" and dominate the trade, production, finance and military of countries around the world. Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Halliburton and Exxon seek only one kind of freedom—freedom to make profit.

One school of thought about Bush's speech is that it was an attempt to retroactively find a new justification for the war in

Iraq, since all the other explanations—weapons of mass destruction, links to terrorism, acquisition of nuclear arms—were proved false.

Given the fact that more than 100,000 Iraqis have been killed, more than 1,400 U.S. troops have died and tens of thousands have been either wounded or suffer mental trauma; the country is in a shambles; a forced, sham election is in crisis; and the resistance to the U.S. occupation is growing wider and deeper every day, it is little wonder that Bush would want to change the subject to "freedom around the world."

In fact the speech, full of generalities, braggadocio and threats, can be viewed as the reflection of a crisis within the Bush administration—a crisis of stalled forward momentum in its design for world conquest that was boldly and arrogantly outlined before the war in Iraq. "Regime change" and "preemptive war" were the watchwords of the Bush group until the Iraq resistance forced a change, not only in rhetoric, but at least temporarily, in practice.

The Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz cabal won the election and the neocons have retained their position of dominance in the administration. They have affirmed their intentions to establish a new empire. But by the end of March, as everyone in the establishment knows, 230,000 new troops will have been sent to Iraq and Afghanistan, and there will be no more troops left. (New York Times, Jan. 25)

Furthermore, the morale in the military is sinking as more and more troops question the war; resentment against "stop-loss"

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# Post-WWII Europe: Struggle for decriminalization

By Leslie Feinberg

In the "Cold War" following World War II, imperialist ideologues sought to make capitalist democracy synonymous with "freedom" and the workers' states out to be "totalitarian."

In fact both were based on the dictatorship of one economic class over another. However, the class character of the two social systems was the opposite.

The capitalist state brutally upheld the social relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. East Germany (GDR) and the Soviet Union (USSR)—while not the pinnacle of workers' democracy that is possible in a socialist society—were based on liberating the working class from the exploitation and oppression of capitalist rule.

As this series has demonstrated, at the same time that the U.S., Britain and West Germany were excoriating East Germany as despotic, workers there enjoyed jobs, free health care and education, rent that could not exceed 10 percent of their income, vacations. And the advances made towards lesbian and gay liberation far surpassed anything that had been wrested by struggle under capitalism.

What was life like for gay men and lesbian women in other capitalist countries in Europe and in England during and after WWII?

An extensive historical exhibition at the Art Academe in Berlin in the summer of 1997 provided some important historical details. The art exhibit, co-sponsored by the Schwules Museum, was entitled, "Goodbye to Berlin? 100 Years of Gay Liberation." A limitation of the exhibit is that it did not incorporate the role of lesbians in the century of struggle.

This following information was provided in the published curator's notes.

## France

With the rise of German fascism, Paris supplanted Berlin as the European gay center—that is, until Nazi troops goose-stepped into Paris.

"The end of the Third Republic in the late thirties was accompanied by social and political struggles. The Spanish Civil War and the Popular Front in France forced homosexuals to take a stand either on the right or left."

While the southern part of France was unoccupied, the northern region, including Paris, was under the rule of German Nazi forces. The quisling Vichy government, led by Marshall Pétain, collaborated with German fascism.

"One group of homosexuals took up opposition to Pétain and any form of collaboration with the Germans, joining the resistance movement. A second group, including André Gide and Giraudoux, waited. A third group collaborated. Once again, homosexuals were represented on both sides of oppressors and victims, collaborators and resisters."

In 1940, Pétain's regime instituted the Code Penal, which included statute 334, making homosexual behavior punishable by imprisonment.

"Although most of the laws initiated by the Vichy government were rescinded when the Nazi regime was defeated, this clause was maintained under a new name, [Statute] 331, paragraph 3, and was enforced throughout France."

Homosexuality between consenting adults had been legal in the country since the Napoleonic Code was introduced in 1804. That code, following the French bourgeois revolution, formally removed the anti-gay vestige of feudal law. It was the first time in Europe that a criminal code

omitted consensual same-sex relations.

"In the course of the 19th century, Holland, Italy and several Swiss cantons adopted the revolutionary French penal code. The prosecution and persecution of 'pederasts' continued, however, in the scope of police disciplinary powers under which alleged offenses could still be pursued."

The end of German fascist occupation did not lead to gay and lesbian liberation in France.

In 1960, while transgender was celebrated entertainment in the Paris Variétés performances, the repressive De Gaulle government beefed up penalties for homosexuals.

## Switzerland

Some gays who fled the rise of fascism in Germany emigrated to Basel and Zurich, Switzerland.

"There have been initiatives for organizing homosexuals in German-speaking Switzerland since 1922. After several failed attempts in Zurich and Lucern, the Schweizerische Freundschaftsbewegung (Swiss Friendship Movement) was founded in 1931 with the decisive participation of lesbian women in Zurich and Basel."

Together with the Damenclub Amicitia and the Excentric-Club Zürich, they published the first Swiss magazine for homosexuals. The first issue of the "Friendship Banner" was published in January 1932. Beginning in 1941, women took a less active role and the group became an exclusively male organization which called itself Liga für Menschenrechte.

"During World War II, when the Nazis destroyed the beginnings of a gay movement in occupied Czechoslovakia and Holland, the Zurich-based group was the only worldwide organization that could preserve the idea of homosexual emancipation.

Although the legal restriction against homosexuality had been formally lifted in Switzerland in 1942, anti-homosexual campaigns continued. The leader of the Swiss Homosexual Movement, Karl Meyer—known by the nom de guerre "Rolf"—advocated "unobtrusive behavior" in public.

The gay group called the Reading Circle (Der Kreis) survived the war. "In 1945 Zurich's Reading Circle (Der Kreis) had an unbroken 13-year history which served as a model for other countries in the immediate post-war years. The group's magazine, Le Cercle, had an international focus."

After the war, the The Circle held regular meetings which drew members from many counties. "In order to protect themselves from police action, only subscribers to the magazine who were above 20 years old and had valid identity cards were allowed into the meetings. Members also had to vouch for any guests they had brought."

Near the end of the 1950s, the meetings ended altogether after the magazine "Tat" (Action) complained that The Circle was allowed to meet on state property.

## England

The curators note, "The sexual openness that existed in England during the Second World War was pushed back in the years immediately afterwards.

"The gay spies Guy Burgess and Donald MacLean defected to the Soviet Union in 1951, events which became the subject of intense investigation by a press that had few limits."

And the case of Lord Montague of Beaulieu, charged with having had sex with working-class youths, exploded into another media-fueled scandal.

Calls to clamp down on the "increasing threat" of

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## WW CALENDAR

### BOSTON

**Sat., Feb. 5**

New England Human Rights Organization for Haiti Presents: "An Evening in Solidarity with the People of Haiti" Supported by: Fanmi Lavalas; International Action Center, MLK Bolivarian Circle of Boston, Women's Fightback Network, FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), Haitkaah Social Justice Center, Iraq War Veterans Tour. Donation: 5:30 p.m. At USWA Local 8751 Boston School Bus Drivers, 25 Colgate Rd., Roslindale For info (781) 956-7417 or nehroh@hotmail.com.

### LOS ANGELES

**Sat., Feb. 5**

Fourm: End War & Occupation in Iraq, Haiti & Palestine, featuring former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Sponsored by Interntional Action Center, media sponsor KPFF. At the Bullocks Wilshire Bldg, 2nd floor, 1050 Wilshire Blvd, 4pm. Call for information and to make reservatons. (323) 936-7266.

### NEW YORK

**Fri., Feb. 4**

Workers World Party meeting: Hear Fred Goldstein, WW contributing editor, on how the fraudulent Iraq election under occupation will deepen the crisis for imperialism, and Monica Moorehead, WW managing editor, on developments in the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

### SAN FRANCISCO

**Sat., Feb. 12**

Black History Month forum. Building a united struggle against Bushism. Featured speakers: Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 executive board and co-chair, Million Worker March Comm.; Monica Moorehead, WW newspaper managing editor, Millions for Mumia coordinator; Henry Clark, exec. dir., West County Toxics Coalition. Sponsored by Workers World Party. Donation at the door. 4 p.m. At African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton St. (between Webster & Buchanan). For info (415) 561-9752.

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## S.F. Roe V. Wade commemoration

# Thousands confront anti-choice bigots

By Brenda Sandburg  
San Francisco

More than 6,000 people marched through San Francisco on the 32nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, to show they would not allow the landmark ruling to be overturned.

The Jan. 22 march took a dramatic turn as many of the demonstrators confronted an anti-abortion protest that followed the pro-choice group down the Embarcadero, a street that runs along the waterfront to Fisherman's Wharf, about 30 minutes later.

Pro-choice activists, including many young women, blocked the right-wing group of about 2,000 as they marched through the main street of Fisherman's Wharf. A few women sat in their path while others held a barricade of hangers across the street. Ribbons were woven through the hangers—a symbol of the horrific, deadly back-alley abortions that took place when the procedure was illegal—forming the words “Do you remember?”

Police helped the right-wing group, leading them down one street to another

and forming a barricade to keep the pro-choice protesters from them. But the pro-choice activists cut through alleys and shopping plazas to march alongside them with spirited chants of “Not the church, not the state—women will decide our fate” and “Stand up, get down, San Francisco's a pro-choice town.”

A group dubbed “Walk for Life West Coast” called for the counter-demonstration in San Francisco, particularly because the city is a pro-choice bastion. Feminists for Life of America was one of the right-wing organizations in the group, whose signs dominated their march.

The anti-abortion group marched in silence carrying black signs saying, “Women deserve better than abortion.” Activists turned the slogan back on them, chanting, “Women deserve better, women deserve choice.” Police finally escorted the right-wing group to the end of Van Ness Street, where they took a footpath into Ft. Mason to Marina Green.

The San Francisco Area Pro-Choice Coalition called the rally and march to



WW PHOTO: BRENDA SANDBURG

Thousands rally Jan. 22 to proclaim: 'Stand up, get down, San Francisco's a pro-choice town!'

commemorate Roe v. Wade. Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, one of the leading organizers in the coalition, estimated the crowd at more than 6,000 and said it outnumbered the anti-choice group by more than 3 to 1.

This year's anniversary is particularly significant since President George W. Bush could have the chance to change the makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court and eliminate the current pro-choice majority.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution commemorating Jan. 22 as Stand Up for Choice Day.

The pro-choice rally featured city offi-

cials, including Mayor Gavin Newsom. People gathered on Market Street, many carrying green balloons with the words “Pro-choice.” They then marched down Market Street to the Embarcadero and through Fisherman's Wharf to Aquatic Park.

The atmosphere was celebratory as people of all ages walked the long route. Two bands—the Brass Liberation Orchestra and the Musicians Action Group—played together along the route. In their most moving number, they played the anthem of the African National Congress, Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika. □

## Denver Anti-Columbus Day

# Protesters continue legal battle

By Larry Hales  
Denver

On Jan. 24, the Transform Columbus Day defendants won—seemingly won—a battle. It must be made clear what the decision not to prosecute the remaining 230 defendants means.

Jurors acquitted eight defendants, stating that they were impassioned by the defendants' testimony and political motivations for peacefully blocking the Columbus Day parade on Oct. 9. (Read

Oct. 21, 2004 WW issue at workers.org)

Though this seems like a victory, the city refused to take a moral stance and declare that the celebration of Christopher Columbus is a form of a hate crime. History attests to the murderous rape and enslavement of Indigenous people—and Columbus' 1492 voyage to the “New World” helped to set in motion one of the greatest acts of genocide ever.

Instead, Denver City Attorney Cole Finegan announced that his office began work on Jan. 24 to draft ordinances mod-

eled upon the state laws that make it illegal to disrupt a lawful assembly and to obstruct a highway or a passageway: “We hope that these new ordinances will better protect the First Amendment rights of both parade participants and protesters.”

Finegan released the following statement: “In the past several days, different Denver County judges ruled that Denver's loitering ordinance cannot be used to prosecute the protesters that deliberately disrupted the Columbus Day parade last October. Those judges also granted the protesters' legal motions to suppress evidence that would have aided the prosecution's case. Those rulings resulted in the dismissal of several cases prior to trial.

“Today, another Denver County judge ruled that the City cannot prosecute pur-

suant to the loitering ordinance. The judge also has agreed to allow legal motions to suppress evidence beneficial to the City's case and has scheduled trial dates at least two months into the future.

“Based upon these decisions and the jury decision last Thursday to acquit eight of the defendants despite our strong belief that we proved our case, I have concluded that our office should not continue these prosecutions. After reviewing the facts and the rulings to date, and knowing that the facts will be substantially the same in each case, I do not believe that we have a reasonable likelihood of conviction.

“Accordingly, I will direct our prosecutors to dismiss the remaining cases.”

*The writer was one of the 230 protesters arrested.*

## Struggle for decriminalization

*Continued from page 2*

homosexuality led to the establishment of a government commission in 1954.

Three years later the commission recommended decriminalizing homosexuality between consenting adult males.

It took another decade before the law was changed.

### Demand for decriminalization

“The need for international contacts and exchange was very strong after the experiences in the Nazi period,” the curators conclude. “In particular, the International Committee for Sexual Equality (ICSE), which had been founded in Amsterdam shortly after the end of the war, made efforts to create an international network of newly formed gay movements.”

Interdisciplinary conferences focusing on homosexuality took place in Amsterdam in 1951, Frankfurt on the Main in 1952, Amsterdam in 1953, Paris in 1955 and Brussels in 1958.

“The newest research results were presented by doctors, psychologists, lawyers, sociologists and staff from various homophile organizations in Europe and America.

“In addition, demands for worldwide decriminalization of consenting homosex-

uality were formulated, individual cases of homosexual discrimination were denounced, and new strategies in the fight for legal equality were decided upon.”

The Swiss “Circle” continued to hold influence. It played a role in creating an international connection. Editor Karl Meyer (Rolf) maintained contacts with homophile groups in France, Germany, Scandinavia and Holland.

In addition to poetry and short stories, The Circle reported on activities of homosexual organizations around the world.

“It created not only a singular forum for the most recent discussions about the theme of homosexuality, but also contributed greatly to the international exchanges within homosexual movements.”

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the trilingual magazine even reached the shores of the United States, where a ferocious storm of anti-gay state repression was reaching hurricane proportions.

*Next: McCarthyite witch hunt.*

*Feinberg spoke at the Berlin Art Academy in July 1997, an event sponsored by the Spinnboden—the German lesbian archive. The event was part of the 100th anniversary of the start of the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement.*

## San Francisco Board demands:

# 'New trial for Mumia'

*The following resolution was approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on Jan. 11:*

Whereas, Mumia Abu-Jamal, an award-winning African American journalist, author of nine books and internationally known social critic and opponent of the death penalty, has been on Pennsylvania's death row for the past 22 years, and,

Whereas, Amnesty International has pointed to serious flaws in the conduct of his 1982 trial that raise critical constitutional issues that demand a new trial for Mr. Jamal, and,

Whereas, among the issues that Amnesty International raised are: suppression of critical evidence pointing to Mr. Jamal's innocence, the illegal exclusion of African American jurors, the denial of the right to self-representation and the intimidation of witnesses, and,

Whereas, prominent organizations

including the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, the Episcopal Church of the United States, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the European Parliament, the San Francisco Labor Council, the Detroit City Council, the National Lawyers Guild, the ILWU, AFSCME and SEIU national unions and many others, have called for justice and a new trial for Mr. Jamal, and,

Whereas, San Francisco's former Mayor Willie Lewis Brown Jr. declared Aug. 16, 1997, as “Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal Day in San Francisco,”

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors affirm its support for justice and a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and,

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be communicated to the Governor's office of the State of Pennsylvania for his information. □

## Happy New Year!

# Interest rates, deficits and inflation grow

By Milt Neidenberg

It began not with a bang, but a whimper.

Since the beginning of 2005, the New York Stock Exchange, NASDAQ, and the Standard and Poors 500 have been sliding and slipping and bouncing around. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has finished in the red for four straight weeks and the blue chip average is down 390.02 points for January.

For the first time since 1977, the Dow Jones and S&P 500 opened a new year with three down weeks. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

Wall Street optimists were predicting good things for 2005: a continuing rising stock market, economic expansion, and productivity growth stimulated by a cheap dollar and low interest rates.

Instead, a gloomy reality is setting in as prices rise for oil, food, housing, transportation and other commodities. Trade and budget deficits continue to spike at alarming rates. Consumer spending is slowing precipitously as inflation takes hold.

These trends are sowing seeds of uncertainty and confusion within the ruling class.

### What's going on?

Underlying their doubts are factions within the ruling class who have differing views about the direction of the imperial superpower, wracked by humongous debt aggravated by military spending and the Iraq occupation.

This is not a case of Republican versus Democrat, but involves powerful players in the inner circle of high finance. Alan Greenspan, chairperson of the Federal Reserve Board (FRB), who paints a rosy picture, and Timothy F. Geithner, president of the influential Federal Reserve Bank of New York, a pessimist, are a reflection of the divisions.

Geithner warned that the current account deficit has reached "an unprecedented scale and the financial community is ill-prepared for unexpected shocks and possible adverse outcomes in an uncertain world." (New York Times, Jan. 23)

Both hold commanding positions in the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), which makes decisions that can trigger dramatic changes in the global economy. The FOMC controls the monetary policy affecting short-term, long-term and foreign exchange rates. By manipulating interest rates, they influence the rate of profit, employment, production, and the price of goods and services.

Both try to steer a steady course for the monopoly capitalist/imperialist system. Having a different mind-set among top leaders is troubling to the stock exchanges.

The stock exchanges must be viewed more broadly as they tend to concentrate all industry, agriculture, commerce and the means of production in the hands of stock exchange operators.

These operators encompass the heads of the transnational banks, corporate tycoons, the FRB, the heads of commodity exchanges and government agencies like the Securities Exchange Commission.

The U.S. State Department is also involved. Even before her confirmation as secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice appointed Robert Zoellick as her second-in-command. For the last four years, Zoellick has been Bush's key trade representative. He pushed, threatened, coerced and bribed foreign trade ministers to secure trade agreements to solve the huge U.S. imperialist foreign trade imbalance—a must if they are to maintain superpower world domination.

According to data released in November, the U.S. trade deficit reached another record high. At \$60.29 billion, it eclipsed the previous high set in October when it stood at a record \$56 billion. "November's record reading raises doubts that drop in dollar can cure problems," read the Wall Street Journal's Jan. 13 headline.

The article states: "Today's release ... continues to confound the 'experts' who have predicted that a weaker dollar would be the cure for America's exploding trade imbalance. ... The more the dollar falls, the higher the deficit goes."

This is not the script Alan Greenspan crafted for Wall Street and Corporate America. The devalued dollar was calculated to increase exports, cut the gap in the unfavorable balance of trade and reduce the current deficit accounts.

Following the end of the 2001 recession, Greenspan kept interest rates very low—below 1 percent—for almost three years to stimulate the economy. His policy unleashed a loose money policy, leading to an unprecedented increase in cheap and accessible paper money. The result was a binge of borrowing and spending (i.e., speculation) that swallowed 85 percent of the economy and the current debt crisis of monumental proportions.

The trade deficit is expected to exceed \$600 billion—nearly 6 percent of the U.S. economy—and climbing. The federal budget deficit is nearing \$500 billion. This will devastate state and local governments.

To finance current account deficits with the rest of the world—primarily China and Japan—the U.S. has to import \$2.6 billion a day. China has accumulated more than \$140 billion in dollar reserves, but due to high-risk U.S. debt, it holds only \$16 billion in Treasury notes. Further reductions are looming.

China, along with other lenders, wants the FRB to raise interest rates much higher—a trend that will likely lead the Bush administration to plot a dangerous anti-China campaign.

Greenspan admitted that foreign claims on the U.S. were now equal to an unprecedented 25 percent of the annual Gross Domestic Product. The GDP is the value of all goods and services produced.

### Higher rates, inflation or both

Greenspan has begun to try to reverse this unmanageable crisis by tightening monetary policy. He recently raised interest rates five times to a level of 2.5 percent, but to no avail as the deficits grow. Greenspan signaled Wall Street and the Bush administration that he will continue to raise rates when the FRB meets in early February.

Each rise in interest rates discour-

ages Wall Street and Corporate America from investing capital. But to the workers and oppressed, it means higher prices for the necessities of life, cuts in wages and benefits and higher unemployment.

The Consumer Price Index has climbed 3.6 percent annually. Last year saw the biggest increase in 14 years. The Producer Price Index fell in December, but had a 4.1 percent increase for the year—the biggest gain in 14 years.

A Jan. 15 New York Times headline, "Tea leaves and dollars: investors read 'em and weep," clearly expresses the dilemma and the confusion within Wall Street and Corporate America. Perplexed by these trends, the article implies investors may be better off seeking out the nearest fortune teller. Trillions of dollars ride on the trends in interest rates (speculation).

All price inflation is a symptom of instability. Currency manipulation is a symptom of the inherent instability of the capitalist system as a whole. Price inflation is due to the centralization of monopoly capitalism and the means of production in fewer and fewer hands. Monopoly capitalism is rigging the price structure to guarantee profits and investments.

Overproduction and underconsumption is out of control. Greenspan and the FOMC are trying to treat the symptoms.

### Between the lip and the cup

Bush's imperialist objectives will demand more sacrifices from the multinational workers. The strategy continues to be the Wal-Martization of the international labor movement and oppressed communities.

His most immediate objective is to take the security out of the Social Security Act of 1935, which was legislated in response to heroic strikes and struggles in that decade. So was the progressive social welfare benefit, Aid to Families With Dependent Children—also won by the masses and destroyed under former Democratic President Bill Clinton.

There are signs of resistance growing among the workers and oppressed peoples.

Bush's drive to privatize Social Security is arousing a broad opposition, including labor, oppressed communities, seniors, and the progressive and anti-war movements.

A recent threat by hotel workers in Washington to strike during the Bush inauguration led to a splendid contract.

The formula for success is a strategy of struggle and timing. Hit the ruling class and their puppets in Washington at the appropriate times. But it requires preparation and organizing. That's what the Million Workers March movement did last Oct. 17, when thousands presented a vision of an independent, class-wide movement that ties together the issues of U.S. imperialism's endless wars of occupation with the war at home.

The time is ripe for a political strike against the Bush administration that would bring hundreds of thousands of workers, their unions, and the oppressed communities to Washington, similar to what is now happening in France, Germany, Italy and Britain. □

ON THE  
PICKET LINE  
by Sue Davis

## Bus drivers win raises

Drivers and maintenance workers at two independent bus companies in Brooklyn and Queens, N.Y., negotiated a contract on Jan. 19, ending their 10-day walkout. They won \$1,000 per driver on ratification of the deal, plus a retroactive three-percent raise covering last year. Also at stake were better health-care benefits and assurances that the workers will retain seniority when the two bus lines are taken over by the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

The Jan. 20 New York Times speculated that, after months of refusing to negotiate with the workers, billionaire Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg responded to an "election-year backlash" from angry commuters.

## Calif. nurses picket

More than 1,500 nurses picketed Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Jan. 18 to protest his decision to delay changing the nurse-to-patient ratio in medical-surgical units. Mandated by a law passed in 1999, the ratio was to drop this year from 1-6 to 1-5. The governor postponed implementing the law "out of concern for the financial hardship [that] would create for the industry." (San Jose Mercury-News, Jan. 19)

But Esther Blau, veteran of 24 years as a nurse at Marin General Hospital, told the Mercury-News that "the delay would degrade the quality of care in California hospitals." Obviously, profits, not patient care, were Schwarzenegger's only concern.

The California Nurses Association, which organized the rally, filed a lawsuit last month challenging the delay.

## Day care workers demand contract

Last June nearly 8,000 day care workers at 350 centers subsidized by New York City held a three-day strike. They serve 34,000 children of low-income working parents. They haven't had a contract in four years or a raise since April 2000. Members of District Council 1707 of the Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees union have protested monthly at City Hall ever since as part of their campaign for a fair contract.

The city has offered the workers, mostly women of color, a five-percent raise over three years. But it refuses to grant a nine-percent raise that other city workers received from 2001 to 2003. Raglan George, executive director of the union, told the Jan. 18 New York Times that the teachers, teaching assistants, cooks, maintenance and clerical workers "feel unappreciated."

All too true. Day care teachers with master's degrees and years of experience are paid about \$34,000 a year, while comparable teachers in the federally-funded Head Start program are paid about \$45,000 and public school teachers with comparable degrees and experience earn more than \$70,000.

Mayor Bloomberg wants the city to spend hundreds of millions on a football stadium but can't cough up the bucks needed to care for poor kids. Something is terribly wrong with this picture.

## More unions pass anti-war resolutions

On Jan. 7 the California Federation of Teachers passed a resolution calling on "the National AFL-CIO to demand an immediate end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the return of U.S. troops to their homes and families, and the reordering of national priorities toward peace and meeting human needs." The resolution will be submitted to the California Labor Federation and the American Federation of Teachers for immediate adoption.

On Jan. 12 Service Employees Local 715 in the San Francisco Bay Area passed a resolution calling for troops out now and for the AFL-CIO to take a stand against the war.

# CIVIL-RIGHTS ACTIVIST

## JAMES FORMAN

By LeiLani Dowell

On Jan. 10, the world lost a longtime fighter for civil rights when James Forman died at age 76 after a battle with colon cancer.

Forman was born in Chicago in 1928. He lived in Mississippi with his grandparents before returning to Chicago and selling the Chicago Defender, a Black newspaper, as a youth. He graduated from Englewood High School in 1947 and served in the Air Force in Okinawa during the Korean War. He would later describe the U.S. military as "a dehumanizing machine which destroys thought and creativity in order to preserve the economic system and political myths of the United States."

In 1952, he began studying at the University of Southern California. One day in 1953, he stepped outside of a library where he was studying for an examination and was stopped by police. Forman was falsely accused of a robbery, thrown in jail and beaten. The shock and indignation of this incident caused Forman to suffer a mental breakdown. After spending time in a hospital in Los Angeles, he returned to Chicago.

In 1958, Forman went to Little Rock, Ark., on assignment with the Defender to report on the integration of Central High School. In 1960, he supported the strug-

gle of sharecroppers in Fayette County, Tenn., where 700 families had been evicted from their homes for registering to vote.

Forman became the executive secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1961, and remained in that post for five years. Under Forman's leadership, SNCC evolved as the more radical of the major civil-rights organizations of the time, which included the Congress Of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

During his tenure, Forman pushed for staff education programs on Marxism and Black nationalism. He worked to build working relationships between Black people in the United States and revolutionaries in other countries.

Forman sent scores of organizers into the Deep South on Black voter registration drives and Freedom Rides. He was beaten, harassed and jailed on several occasions.

Forman's study of the writings of W.E.B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James and Karl Marx, combined with his practical experience, focused his theory and action. He wrote, "Accumulating experience with Southern 'law and order' were turning me into a full-fledged revolutionary."

In 1964, SNCC, along with the Mississippian Council of Federated Organizations, helped organize Freedom Summer, a voter registration drive which successfully registered 1,600 Black people by the end of the fall. The murders of three Freedom Summer volunteers by the KKK—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner—sparked an upsurge in national support for the civil-rights movement and forced Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. (See Jan. 20, 2005, Workers World for more on this case.)

Forman left SNCC in 1966. He served briefly as minister of foreign affairs with the Black Panther Party, traveled to Africa, and returned to serve as president of the Unemployment and Poverty Action Committee. He helped to organize the Black Economic Development Conference in Detroit in 1969.

That same year, Forman became a visible advocate for reparations when he interrupted services at New York's Riverside Church to demand \$500 million from white churches for their participation in the U.S. slave trade. The church later agreed to give a percentage of its income



1928-2005

annually to anti-poverty efforts.

Forman remained an activist up to his death. Last year, despite his illness, he traveled to Boston to participate in a "Tea Party," demonstrating against the non-voting status of Washington, D.C., residents.

Forman published several books, including "Self-Determination: An Examination of the Question and Its Application to the African-American People" and "The Making of Black Revolutionaries."

D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton said of Forman, "Americans may not know Jim's name as a household word, but if they look around them at the racial change in our country, then they will know Jim by his work." □



# ROBERT F. WILLIAMS

## & armed self-determination

By Larry Hales

Robert F. Williams is often ignored in the sparse sections of recorded history dealing with the struggle of Black people in this country for basic human rights. A similar argument can be made for others who came before Williams.

Williams is ignored by bourgeois historians because of his militant approach to dealing with the racist violence against Black people. He advocated the right of armed self-determination for Black people against the Ku Klux Klan and even the police that supported them. Yet he was not the first to argue for armed self-determination.

In fact, the call for Black people to defend themselves against racist violence goes as far back as the days of U.S. slavery. And it comes as no surprise that the demand to end slavery came from a certain section of the U.S. ruling class out of fear, not remorse. The fear came from the rising threat of a southern-wide slave rebellion and the potential of uniting with Native people and poor whites who would support such a rebellion.

John Brown is looked to as a seminal figure in the armed struggle to end slavery and win rights for Black people. A true sense of the man has been and continues to be obscured. Often, textbooks paint him as a bushy bearded, wild-eyed old man. Despite this distortion, his acts of bravery and righteousness are greatly admired by Black people to this day and rightfully so.

Rarely ever mentioned in U.S. history are the Black militants that joined John Brown at the Harper's Ferry raid. One of the nine Black men that participated in the 1859 raid was Osborne P. Anderson. He survived the raid and wrote a narrative on this revolutionary attempt to arm the slaves, entitled "A Voice From Harper's Ferry."

Three larger planned rebellions preceded the Harper's Ferry action. One was planned by an enslaved man named Gabriel Proesser in 1800. His plan was foiled by an informant and he and his co-conspirators were executed in Virginia.

In the same year an uprising was led by Charles Deslondes, a slave in Louisiana. He was able to mobilize hundreds of slaves that understood infantry tactics as they challenged the U.S. Army. Deslondes was eventually captured and also executed.

In 1822 Denmark Vesey, a free Black man, had drawn up a plan with a large number of enslaved and free Black people, to march on Charleston, S.C., bearing arms. They were betrayed and Vesey and 34 others were hanged.

Nat Turner led the most well-known slave rebellion. The Turner rebellion led to the killings of over 50 slavemasters in Southampton, Va. This act cemented in the slaveholders' minds that they were not safe, so long as they held other human beings in bondage.

History, too, frequently depicts Black people as being docile and of not having participated in acts of securing freedom. The rebellions, the work stoppages, the many escapes and everyday acts of defiance are lost in the telling.

Robert Williams is just one militant example of this.

### Never back down

Prior to World War II, millions of Black people migrated from the South to the North to get jobs in factories and escape the lynchings and beatings of the KKK.

When the U.S. entered World War II in 1941, women entered the workforce in greater numbers than any other time as white male workers went to fight overseas. With Black people and women being integrated into the workforce in unpre-

cedented numbers, this war helped to socialize U.S. industry. But the overall racist and sexist political climate did not change because of capitalist relations.

Robert Williams joined the army during this war. Much of his enlistment was spent with him being in "trouble" because he was a defiant man. He refused to conform and become the "boy" that a white-dominated society wanted to make him, especially the military. After leaving the military in 1946, he returned to Monroe, N.C., with a heightened political awareness.

In that same year, Williams took part in a militant act that set the tone for the rest of his life. He, along with 40 other Black men, pointed their rifles at KKK members that came to take away the body of a Black man who had been executed for killing a white man in a fight.

In the late 1950s, Williams became president of the Monroe NAACP chapter, which organized armed resistance to the KKK. He veered away from the major civil-rights leaders due to his understanding of the reactionary mindset of groups like the KKK and the racist police. He knew that if the racists saw that Black people would fight back, their resolve would melt away.

The nonviolence stance of the time had its place, but oppressed people also had the right to defend themselves from racist terror. Williams had a keen understanding of this, just as Malcolm X did.

The men that Williams had organized were highly disciplined and never used their arms for offensive purposes, but rather to defend their families, neighborhoods and nonviolent demonstrators from racist attacks.



Williams and FBI wanted poster.

### BLACK HISTORY



In the early 1960s, Williams fled the U.S. to avoid trumped-up kidnapping charges. He was whisked from Canada by Cuban authorities, who provided him political asylum. He developed a friendship with President Fidel Castro. Prior to his being forced into exile, Williams had visited Cuba as a member of the U.S.-based Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

He remained in Cuba until 1965 and then moved to Beijing, China, with his family. He returned to the U.S. in 1969. The trumped up kidnapping charges had been dropped. Williams passed away in 1996.

Robert Williams inspired the militant Black revolutionaries of the 1960s with his pamphlet, "Negroes With Guns," which advocated armed self-determination for Black people. Like the Black heroes that advocated for a revolution to throw off the shackles of slavery in this country, Williams was a militant, shining example of the righteous tendency that has and can develop in opposition to the reactionary nature of the moneyed and racist class who try to smother the desire for freedom and justice. □



## LOS ANGELES

# Contempt for Bush mobilizes thousands

Opposition to the pro-war regime in Washington, D.C., was not diminished by long distance on Inauguration Day, judging by the massive outpouring of anti-war activists in Los Angeles on Jan. 20. A crowd of some 10,000 militant demonstrators blocked Wilshire Boulevard in front of the Westwood Federal Building. The throng of marchers then walked a mile through the glitzy Westwood district and back to the federal building. The four-and-a-half-hour protest sponsored by the ANSWER coalition was loud and youthful, with significant numbers of high school and college students.

Chican@s, women's groups, the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the International Action Center and Not In Our Name also participated in the protest. Disabled Vietnam war veteran Ron Kovic said at the rally, "The war against terror has turned into a war of terror." Adrian Garcia of the IAC told the crowd, "If the other pro-war candidate, John Kerry, had been elected, we would still be here protesting the war!"

—by Jim McMahan

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA



## SAN DIEGO

# Bush's coronation unites anti-war movement

By Ruth Vela and Bob McCubbin  
San Diego

Three separate initiatives in response to President George W. Bush's inauguration eventually consolidated into one powerful, united protest in San Diego on Jan. 20.

The first event, a rally called by the Peace and Justice Coalition, was held in front of Horton Plaza. The anti-war crowd of over 500 people occupied both sides of Broadway and inspired almost non-stop beeping of car horns by supportive passing motorists.

Huge banners reading "Bush Is a War Criminal!" and "U.S. Troops: Out Now!" were held by members of the International Action Center and San Diego FIST—Fight Imperialism Stand Together.

After the rally, the protesters marched through the downtown tourist area in one of the loudest demonstrations ever. Responding to a call by the Ground Zero Players, many people had brought metal pots, pans, spoons and other implements to replicate Argentinean protests called cacerolazos. An incredible din was created by the collective banging.

The culminating event was a march called by the Organic Collective. This march, led by young people, was successful, for a while, in outmaneuvering police attempts to stop it.

A FIST leader commenting on the last event said: "At one point, when we were blocked by the cops as we marched toward them, they shone really bright lights at all of us, forcing us to turn

around and face another group of oncoming cops and traffic.

"But it was no problem! The entire march simply switched around. The back became the front, and we marched straight into the cops and stopped traffic. Onlookers and participants alike laughed out loud as the cops were forced to back up their patrol cars after we marched through.

"The march continued and finally, inevitably, was surrounded. We were corralled for about half an hour before the restless protesters began to demand we be allowed to return to our starting point in front of the NBC Building. And, for the second time in one night, the people pushed back the pigs and reclaimed the streets." □

## SEATTLE

# Students kick out recruiters, stage walkouts

A multinational group of students at the Seattle Central Community College was successful in kicking military recruiters off of the campus on Jan. 20. They reportedly tore up printed Army materials, as well.

Several hundred other students walked out of their classes at a number of colleges and universities throughout Seattle as part of a protest across the country against Bush's inauguration.

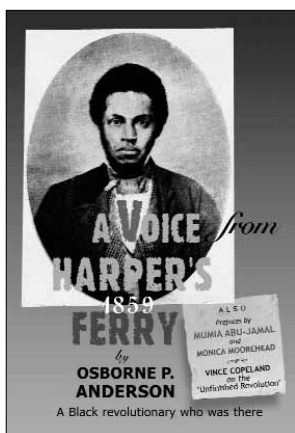
—Monica Moorehead



## A VOICE from HARPER'S FERRY 1859

By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. Anderson was the only Black combatant to survive the raid and to write about it. His account of this turning point in the struggle against slavery—an armed attack by Black and white volunteers on a citadel of the South—refutes those who try to minimize the role of African American people in fighting for their freedom. With an essay on 'The Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland and new prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead.

128 pp, photographs. World View Forum, 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl., N.Y., N.Y. 10011  
\$18 (15% discount at [www.leftbooks.com](http://www.leftbooks.com))



# Bush threatens aggression

Continued from page 1

orders increases and Washington shows no sign of being able to assemble a puppet army in Iraq.

Under these conditions, with the regime determined to make good on its imperial promises in the face of the enormous setback in Iraq, the tendency to adventurism grows stronger. The ruling class itself is not sure where the Bush of regime is going next.

## Iran in the cross hairs

Seymour Hersh, journalist for The New Yorker magazine, has lifted the lid on the atmosphere inside the administration in the Jan. 24 edition. Hersh has exceptionally good sources within the upper echelons of the CIA, the military and the civilian establishment. He was the journalist who first revealed the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War. He broke the news about the secret intelligence unit in the Pentagon under Douglas Feith and he broke the Abu Ghraib torture scandal along with Dan Rather (Rest In Peace) of CBS.

According to Hersh, the Bush administration has not reconsidered its policy in the Middle East. It views the election as approval of the war in Iraq and "It has reaffirmed the position of the neoconservatives in the Pentagon's civilian leadership who advocated the invasion, including Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Douglas Feith, the Undersecretary for Policy.

"According to a former high-level intelligence official," wrote Hersh, "Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff shortly after the election and told them, in essence, that the naysayers had been heard and the American people did not accept their message. Rumsfeld added that America was committed to staying in Iraq and that there would be no second-guessing."

Hersh said that in his interviews, "I was repeatedly told that the next strategic tar-

get was Iran.

"Everyone is saying, 'You can't be serious about targeting Iran. Look at Iraq,' the former intelligence official told me.

"But they say, 'We've got some lessons learned—not militarily, but how we did it politically.'"

Hersh revealed that the Pentagon has actually ordered a revision in its plans for a ground invasion of Iran.

"The administration has been conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran at least since last summer. Much of the focus is on the accumulation of intelligence and targeting information on Iranian nuclear, chemical and missile sites, both declared and suspected. The goal is to identify and isolate three dozen, and perhaps more, such targets that could be destroyed by precision strikes and short-term commando raids. 'The civilians in the Pentagon want to go into Iran and destroy as much of the military infrastructure as possible,' the government consultant with close ties to the Pentagon told me."

## What they mean by 'ending tyranny'

The contrast between the Bush-neocon wish list of "regime change," a phrase judiciously omitted but nevertheless still a central goal, and the Pentagon's inability to control Iraq with 150,000 troops on the ground, was highlighted during Condoleezza Rice's confirmation testimony.

Rice, the former Bush national security adviser who has been appointed to replace Colin Powell as the secretary of state, however, gave a pre-inaugural message to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during her confirmation hearings which filled in some Bush specifics on fighting "tyranny in our world."

In Bush's speech he declared: "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending

Continued on page 8

## Jan. 20 protests show

# 'Bush has no mandate'

By Monica Moorehead  
Washington, D.C.

Even though the political center of the United States was on virtual lock-down, tens of thousands of protesters still managed to take to the sidewalks and streets here Jan. 20 to protest the second inauguration of President George W. Bush.

The local police and various federal agencies—including the U.S. military and Secret Service—did everything possible to try to discourage protesters from lining the route of the inauguration parade along Pennsylvania Avenue. For many people, it took hours to get through checkpoints.

The parade was a nauseating attempt to show the world that Bush and his cronies had been given an electoral mandate to carry out four more years of imperialist aggression worldwide and cutbacks in living standards at home. But the hatred and contempt that so many people have for Bush came shining through as people rallied, marched and turned their backs.

The presidential motorcade of limousines with dark, mirrored windows was accompanied down the street by a massive show of police. As the presidential entourage carrying Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and other war criminals passed

by, activists loudly booed and chanted, and waved their placards and banners.

Thousands of anti-Bush protesters had begun to gather during the bitterly cold early morning of Jan. 20 to go through various security checkpoints. No backpacks or large bags were allowed. Most people were asked to open up their coats and were physically patted down.

Metal barricades were erected to make it even more difficult for protesters to get to their destination after leaving the checkpoints.

Activists kept vigilant along Pennsylvania Avenue for several hours before and after Bush's inauguration. The ANSWER coalition had won an important legal victory to have the right to rally at 4th Street and Pennsylvania. That allowed thousands of people to hear speakers such as former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, AFSCME District Council 1707 President Brenda Stokely, John Boyd of the National Association of Black Farmers, U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, Kim Ives of Haiti Progres newspaper, and ANSWER steering committee members.

The D.C. Anti-War Network organized a rally at Malcolm X Park. This was followed by a march of thousands of people, mainly young, to Lafayette Park against

Bush's doctrine of endless war and racism. Militant youths lead a breakaway march that police brutally attacked with pepper spray, clubs and tasers.

Members of the youth and student group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—carried banners in both marches. They chanted their support for Palestine and other struggles of oppressed peoples.

The International Action Center had organized transportation to the protests from New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Raleigh, N.C., Richmond, Va., and other cities.

The IAC, along with the Million Worker March committee and others, has helped initiate the Troops Out Now Coalition to organize for a major protest in Central Park set for March 19, the second anniversary of the war on Iraq. On Jan. 20 in D.C. many people were holding posters that read "Troops Out Now—March 19—Central Park!" and "End the occupation now—Iraq, Palestine & everywhere."

### Bush opposed elsewhere Jan. 20

For those activists unable to travel to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20, there were other counter-inaugural protests around the country.



Police spray pepper gas on protesters.

"Ten thousand people took to the streets of San Francisco in a spirited march protesting the Bush program on the day of George W. Bush's second inauguration," stated an ANSWER news release. ANSWER organized another protest of thousands in Los Angeles.

A "Bush Has No Mandate" march, rally and ball took place in Atlanta. Hundreds of people marched from the CNN headquarters building to the State Capitol. They included a number of high school students who walked out of their classes in protest.

According to the Independent Media website, Jan. 20 protests took place in Philadelphia, Las Vegas, New Orleans, Milwaukee, Santa Cruz, Calif., Tucson, Ariz., Austin, Texas, Syracuse, N.Y., Portland, Ore., and other cities. □



## Strong FIST contingent

# Anti-war youth take to the streets

By David Hoskins  
Washington, D.C.

Tens of thousands of anti-war activists gathered here on Jan. 20 for counter-inaugural demonstrations protesting ceremonies marking George W. Bush's second term in office. People from all walks of life came to vent their anger and frustration at the imperial war abroad and domestic assaults on the working class and oppressed.

Youths in particular hit the streets in full force in a militant show of resistance to the continued occupation of Iraq.

Washington was under a virtual lock-down as more than 6,000 police and 2,500 military personnel were deployed to intimidate and harass the growing crowds of protesters.

It was within this context that a strong delegation from the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—joined with hundreds of other young peo-

ple to reclaim Pennsylvania Avenue for the people.

FIST members from Boston, New York City, Providence, Raleigh and Charleston fought to successfully tear down the fence erected along Pennsylvania Avenue to protect Bush from the crowds gathered to disrupt the inauguration.

Police in full riot gear responded with tear gas and pepper spray as the protesters fought back, continuing to forcibly remove portions of the steel fence.

This battle with the police sent a powerful message: young people will not sit idly by as their friends and classmates are recruited into a war for oil profits.

Jan. 20 marked the day that radical youths, including members of FIST, launched a preemptive strike against the second term of the Bush administration and the

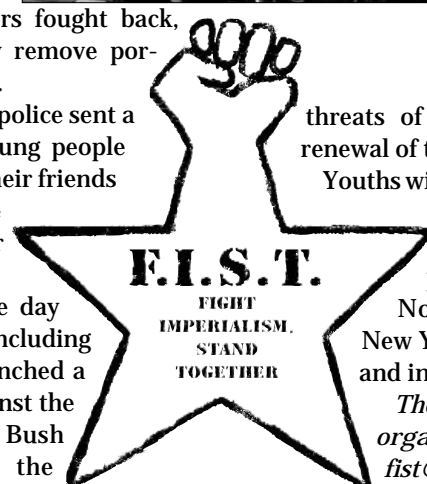
threats of endless war and the renewal of the military draft.

Youths will continue this struggle on March 19 as FIST mobilizes to participate in the Troops Out Now demonstration in New York City's Central Park and in other cities.

The writer is a FIST organizer. Contact FIST at [fist@workers.org](mailto:fist@workers.org)



PHOTOS: DANTE STROBINO





## Resistance intensifies as Iraqis say:

# 'We need water & oil, not sham elections'

By Greg Butterfield

As President George W. Bush took the oath of office Jan. 20, a new round of bomb attacks rocked U.S., British and collaborationist targets in Baghdad, Basra and other Iraqi cities. Attacks have continued daily. On Jan. 24, a bomb exploded outside the Baghdad party headquarters of Interim "Prime Minister" Ayad Allawi.

The message was loud and clear: The popular resistance is strong, it is growing, and it is not going away, regardless of Bush's reelection or the outcome of the Jan. 30 sham elections organized by the occupation forces. Armed resistance continues despite all Pentagon efforts to crush it.

Meanwhile, an attack on a Shi'ite Muslim mosque in Baghdad Jan. 21 is being viewed with suspicion by many Iraqis. The attack was reported as the work of resistance forces in the Western media, but some see it as an attempt to divide Shi'ite and Sunni opponents of the occupation on the eve of the elections.

People throughout Iraq are sick and tired of the U.S.-led occupation that has brought ever-deepening desperation to the population. They want all the foreign troops to get out now—just as the troops themselves are desperate to go home.

Maj. Gen. Muhammad Abdullah al-Shahwani, director of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, quoted in the Jan. 8 edition of Newsweek, admitted that the resistance forces may number as many as 200,000 and have the sympathy of the population.

Meanwhile, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll released Jan. 24, some 55 percent of those surveyed in the U.S. said "the war in Iraq was not worth fighting." A USA Today-CNN poll found that 52 percent said the war was a "mistake."

### 'Electricity, not elections'

Electricity. Water. Gasoline. Safe hospitals. These are some of the basic needs Iraqis are demanding from officials of the U.S.-appointed puppet government, even as Allawi and Bush try to sell the Jan. 30 elections as a genuine exercise in democracy.

The U.S. "shock and awe" invasion in March 2003 devastated Iraq's infrastructure, already damaged by more than a decade of U.S./United Nations sanctions. Today the country's electrical grid functions less than half the time.

"Along with other problems—oil and electricity—I feel like I'm living in another



Anti-war activists march in Porto Alegre, Jan. 26, above.  
U.S. Army on a mission preparing for upcoming elections in Baghdad, Jan. 24, left.

world," Baghdad cab driver Ali told the Associated Press Jan. 22. "Instead of being caught up with the elections, I'm busy with these problems." Ali slept in his car overnight to gain a place in line at a gas station.

Extreme fuel shortages are now common in Iraq, one of the world's leading oil exporters.

Starting Jan. 16, daily demonstrations of hundreds were held in Baghdad, Kut, Amarah, Karbala and other cities, outside the offices of the Oil "Ministry." Protesters, organized by Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's group, demanded that more fuel be made available for Iraqis.

A popular slogan at the protests was, "We don't want elections, we want electricity." (Washington Post, Jan. 24)

"The government has given nothing to the Iraqi people, and all the political parties say yes to the Americans," said Nizar Khanjar, an al-Sadr supporter. Al-Sadr's militia fought extended battles with U.S. forces last April and August. Khanjar concluded, "The elections are useless. They will do nothing for us."

On Jan. 23, Reuters reported that most Baghdad residents had gone without regular access to water for a week. Officials have offered no explanation.

Some 16 Iraqis were killed and dozens injured when a fire broke out in a Nasiriya hospital Jan. 23. Patients had to jump from high floors to escape. According to the French Press Agency, the fire, caused by a short circuit, spread because the hospital had no fire extinguishers.

The U.S. spends \$6 billion a month on the occupation. Yet almost two years after the invasion, conditions for the Iraqi people continue to deteriorate, with often deadly results.

Where is the money going? Right now,

much of it is being pumped into the Jan. 30 elections—an increasingly desperate effort to legitimize the occupation in the world's eyes.

### 'Elections are a sham'

During the week leading up to the elections, the Pentagon (with Allawi as its public face) is heightening repression. The country's borders and the Baghdad airport will be closed. The barely functioning cell-phone grid will be shut down. Any driver on the roads without government authorization will be subject to execution.

It is widely reported that polling sites will be kept secret until the last minute. Who will be responsible for notifying potential voters, and how they will be notified, is unclear.

Every polling site is to have three levels of military "defense": a visible presence of Iraqi police and troops, with a squad of U.S. troops out of sight nearby in case of emergencies. However, a report of election preparations on the CNBC cable network Jan. 22 showed U.S. troops practicing frisking voters outside a polling tent.

It is hard to imagine a situation less conducive to "free and fair" elections.

No international observers will be monitoring the elections, the Washington Post reported Jan. 22. While the Carter Center and the U.S. Congress cited "security concerns," Giulietto Chiesa, a member of the European Parliament from Italy, was more forthright. "Any attempt to present the elections as valid is an attempt to fool the world," Chiesa said.

The armed Iraqi resistance forces had denounced the elections as a sham. They have pointed out that there can be no legitimate elections under a brutal foreign occupation.

Many above-ground political organizations are openly opposed to the elections, which they characterize as both rushed and unduly influenced by Washington.

The level of hostility to those viewed as U.S. collaborators is so great that most declared candidates are said to be in hiding.

One group that is running candidates is the Shi'ite movement led by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Last year Sistani's followers held mass protests against the occupation and the U.S. plan for elections. However, they later agreed to participate in the elections.

With a low turnout expected, and al-Sistani's supporters seen as the only candidates with any degree of independence from Washington, they are projected to be the biggest vote-getters Jan. 30, barring a rigged vote.

The U.S. is relying not only on intimidation, but behind the scenes manipulation to influence the outcome.

Harith Al-Dhari, leader of the Muslim Scholars Association, an anti-occupation group based in Baghdad, told Egypt's Al-Ahram Weekly about a meeting held at the request of U.S. Charges d'Affaires John Negroponte. Negroponte, along with military and civilian officials, tried to sway the MSA to withdraw its opposition to the elections.

"We explained that the U.S. forces' violence and tyranny against the Iraqi people and their destruction of our cities from Najaf to Falluja, were responsible for this dire situation," said Al-Dhari. "In addition, the Iraqis do not feel that these elections will lead to the fulfillment of their main demand, which is the end of the U.S. occupation. ..."

"The opposition to the elections is a national, not a denominational or sectarian, movement," he added. □

## White House

*Continued from page 6*  
tyranny in our world."

This was coordinated with Rice's formulations in her testimony to a Senate committee considering her nomination: "To be sure, in our world there remain outposts of tyranny, and America stands with oppressed people on every continent, in Cuba, and Burma [Myanmar], and North Korea, and Iran, and Belarus, and Zimbabwe." (Associated Press, Jan. 21)

"Ending tyranny," if you put Bush's rhetoric together with Rice's testimony, adds up to overthrowing socialist Cuba and giving the island back to the U.S. sugar companies and hotel owners who ruled Cuba before the revolution of 1959. Or overthrowing the Iranian government and taking back 90 billion barrels of oil reserves which the Iranian people nationalized after the U.S. had stolen it through a CIA-backed coup in 1953.

It means overthrowing the socialist government of North Korea, which fought a revolution and suffered 5 million deaths in the U.S.-led Korean War of 1950-1953 in order to defend its freedom from colonialism and capitalism.

In Zimbabwe Bush's goal is to overthrow President Robert Mugabe because he is trying to take back 90 percent of the agricultural land from the tiny minority of 4,000 white, former colonial farmers who ruled the country before the national liberation struggle took power.



Iraqi men arrested in roundups during days leading up to elections.



# Iran in Washington's cross hairs

By Sako Sefiani

In the Jan. 24 New Yorker magazine, Seymour Hersh reported that the United States has been conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran to find potential targets for attack, ostensibly to destroy installations used in a clandestine nuclear weapons program. Neither the Pentagon nor the White House denied the report, although the Pentagon claimed it was "riddled with errors and inaccuracies."

After being sworn in on Jan. 20, President George W. Bush admonished what he called "the rulers of outlaw regimes." Bush said, "We will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary."

Although he put the issue in terms of the U.S. defending itself and its friends—which in the Middle East is generally understood to mean Israel—clearly what Bush wants in that vital and oil-rich region is nuclear monopoly and extortion.

After its "success" at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, U.S. imperialism saw in nuclear weapons a potential tool to dominate the world. That hope was lost when the Soviet Union tested its own atomic bomb in 1949.

Nevertheless, the U.S. rulers have been able to maintain a nuclear monopoly in the Middle East for decades. Israel was given the technology, the know-how and the materials to develop and maintain over 200 nuclear bombs in blatant contradiction to all nuclear non-proliferation proclamations signed by the U.S.

Recently, Israel acquired U.S. submarines capable of launching nuclear bombs with enough range to reach Iran.

The Islamic regime in Tehran has been on Washington's hit list since the 1979 revolution that ousted the Shah, a valued U.S. puppet. With the gross imbalance of nuclear power, it is Iran—not Israel or the U.S.—that needs to worry about its defense.

Even if Iran were to successfully develop the handful of nuclear weapons it is alleged to be working on, it would still be no match for Israel's hundreds of bombs. But it could act as a deterrent to make Tel Aviv think twice before using its nukes. And this is what is unacceptable to Washington.

## Suppressing national liberation

On Jan. 20, Vice President Dick Cheney said that Iran was at the top of the administration's list of world trouble spots. He expressed concern that Israel "might well decide to act first, and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards."

While this sounds like an invitation to Israel to go ahead and bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, the fact is that Israel does not have an independent foreign policy. It is almost like Cheney encouraging Texas to send troops to Iraq. If Washington wants Israel to do it, it does not require a public proclamation.

It is the U.S. that will decide whether such an attack is militarily, logistically and politically possible or not. Israel is the implementer, not the initiator.

Some attribute the new threats against Iran to the Israeli lobby in Washington. But this is an incorrect view. U.S. imperialism maintains the Zionist state, not because of the Israeli lobby, but because its strategy of total hegemony in the region coincides with the Zionist program.

National liberation movements by their very nature go against imperialist domination and tyranny. Modern imperialism survives through enslaving nations, just as the European colonial powers enslaved Africa, Asia and the Americas before the struggle for liberation swept through them.

The U.S. cannot afford to allow national liberation movements to succeed in toppling its domination, and this is where the

Zionist state comes in. Suppression of the liberation movements of the Middle East has always been the top priority of Israel's ruling class.

In a region with the world's largest oil reserves, where the masses lived under colonial domination for decades, no country with an indigenous population could have made as reliable a junior partner to imperialism as Israel—a colonial settler state with residents imported from Europe and the U.S.

This has worked too well for U.S. imperialism to let go of. Washington understands that it cannot hold together the puppet regimes throughout the Arab world forever. And that makes Israel evermore important to the U.S. ruling class.

## Behind the threats

Although one cannot completely rule out military attacks against Iran, the military option is not yet being given the go-ahead in Washington. This is largely due to the mess the U.S. finds itself in Iraq.

Bush and Cheney's threats are largely intended for the European imperialist rivals. Their reasoning goes something like this: If you don't punish Iran through sanctions, then we may unleash Israel and "let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards."

Last Nov. 7, France, Germany and Britain negotiated an agreement with Iran to stave off an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommendation of sanctions before the United Nations Security Council.

A resolution passed by the IAEA Nov. 29 authorized agency head Mohamed El Baradei to monitor Iran's commitment to freezing uranium enrichment activities. Such enrichment can produce either low grade fuel for nuclear reactors or the raw material for atomic weapons.

The Associated Press reported Jan. 5

that the IAEA found no firm evidence to challenge Iranian assertions that its military is not involved in nuclear activities.

Chief U.S. delegate Jackie Sanders then claimed there were more than a dozen "open questions" about Iran's nuclear intentions, despite the agency's nearly two-year investigation. "This makes it clear that the IAEA cannot... offer the necessary assurances that Iran is not attempting to produce nuclear material for weapons," Sanders said.

Senior U.S. officials blame El Baradei for the IAEA's refusal to recommend sanctions, AP reported, suggesting he is too soft on Iran and that Washington will oppose his bid this year for a third term as agency head.

As part of U.S. efforts to oust El Baradei, his telephone conversations were bugged.

## Killer sanctions

If Iran resists U.S. demands, Cheney said, the next step will be to seek international sanctions through the UN Security Council, like the ones that had such devastating results for the people in neighboring Iraq.

During 12 years of genocidal sanctions on Iraq, spearheaded by the first Bush and Clinton administrations, between 1.5 million and 2 million people perished, most of them children.

Washington may not be planning a military action now, but it intends to weaken Iran enough to make that option more palatable and plausible—by weakening the country's defenses and fueling dissent. Bush Jr. wants to repeat the "success" of sanctions in Iraq.

Washington has calculated that sanctions are the cheapest form of aggression, politically and financially, at this time. The U.S. rulers are bargaining that if they can pacify Iran's neighbors, Afghanistan and Iraq, through brutal occupations, the task of dominating Iran will be made easier. □

## threatens new aggression

The threats to Belarus and Myanmar—which Rice arrogantly referred to by its British colonial name "Burma"—were attacks on two regimes which refuse to cede their sovereignty to Washington.

In fact, that is what all the various so-called "outposts of tyranny" have in common—defending their state sovereignty against imperialism.

Rice also attacked the government of Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, calling it a "negative influence," attacking its relations with Cuba, and saying that Chávez was elected democratically but rules by "undemocratic means."

Rice means by "undemocratic means" that Chávez is supported by the popular masses, the poor and the downtrodden of Venezuela, particularly by the indigenous population. They showed their support by forcing the reversal of a decidedly undemocratic coup d'état in April 2002 that had been sponsored and supported by the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy and CIA in league with the Venezuelan oligarchy.

## No butter, just guns

Bush's inaugural speech had nothing to offer the masses in the way of any concessions on the domestic arena. "In America's ideal of freedom, citizens find the dignity and security of economic independence, instead of laboring on the edge of subsistence. This is the broader definition of lib-

erty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act and the GI Bill of Rights. And now we will extend this vision by reforming great institutions to serve the needs of our time."

But just days after his inauguration, Bush announced that he was going to ask for another \$80 billion for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. This will bring to \$280 billion the official cost of the war, which is on top of the current Pentagon annual budget of over \$400 billion.

This money is being used to wipe out the freedom of the Iraqi people by forcing them to live under a brutal occupation.

And this money is another attack on freedom—the freedom of the workers and the oppressed people in this country to have decent housing, schools, medical care, day care and basic social services. For that is where the money for military aggression will come from. It certainly will not come from the rich, if Bush has his way. Because along with the \$80 billion more for the Pentagon, Bush is planning to privatize Social Security and to make permanent hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthy.

This colonial adventure is bringing greater and greater hardship to the people. The cities are cutting services as federal funds are taken away. The stock market is prospering while millions are losing their healthcare. Medicaid is in a crisis. Drugs are unaffordable. Homelessness is

increasing. The poverty level has risen by 3 million, to 35 million, under Bush. And by every social indicator the disparity between Black and white is growing. Officially, 45 million people have no health insurance and the number is growing.

Considering the general suffering of the population and the disaffection of the soldiers who come back home to lost jobs, are wounded and unable to support their families or are just unable to function, there is a smoldering social crisis in the U.S. waiting to boil over. At the same time, Bush, the Democratic Party, and the billionaires who support them have their eyes fixated on new spheres of plunder and exploitation.

The anti-war movement must be vigilant in preparing for any new military adventurist aggression, which the Bush

administration is prone to. And at the same time it must reach out to the working class and the oppressed to merge the struggle against economic and social injustice with the struggle against imperialist war.

A challenge from below is the only way to stop the war and win concessions.

Vladimir Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, once said that imperialism is a colossus with feet of clay. By that he meant that the militarists and the exploiters will be rendered powerless if the working class down below decides it will not obey and strikes out to chart its own destiny, free of war and capitalist exploitation. That is what is on the order of the day in this country. What is needed is to build the movement dedicated to that aim. □

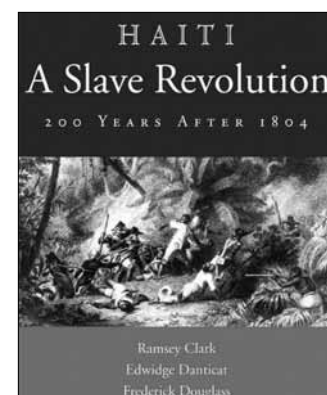
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## Who is Harvard's president?

**H**arvard University President Lawrence Summers just gave a speech to a group of scientists at a conference on "women and minorities in the science and engineering workforce." Summers said that women lack the "natural abilities" of men in math and science.

Summers is not a qualified scholar on the subject. He is not a scientist, a mathematician or an engineer. In fact, he has not demonstrated any interest in the subject of women in science or math or any other area of scholarship at all.

The dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Washington, Denise Denton, one of the participants in the conference on "women and minorities in science," is an expert on the subject. Denton told the Boston Globe, "Here was this economist lecturing pompously to this room full of the country's most accomplished scholars on women's issues in science and engineering, and he kept saying things we had refuted in the first half of the day."

Was this a mere slip of the tongue or a misunderstanding as was suggested by Summers in his half dozen or more "clarifications" that came after a storm of outrage met his remarks?

Of course, Summers' comments on women cannot be taken out of the context of the reactionary political climate engendered by the Bush White House. Science is routinely dismissed as opinion, evolution is denied, funding for essential research is being cut in favor of military projects, and stem cell research is blocked for extremist religious reasons. And this is a time when all scientists are having their funds cut and their work reduced or eliminated.

Summers' remarks were no mistake, however. Last year while he was the university's president, women were offered only four of the 32 tenured jobs offered at Harvard.

Summers is a mercenary, a hit man for big business and Wall Street. Summers was for several years the chief economist at the World Bank.

On Dec. 12, 1991, as a World Bank vice president, Summers wrote a memo that was later leaked to some environmentalists. In it he wrote, "Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging MORE migration of the dirty industries to the Less Developed Countries?" The "dirty industries" are those that poison the environment. Summers' memo continues, "I think that the economic logic behind dumping a

load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable."

When this memo became public, Brazil's Secretary of the Environment Jose Lutzenburger wrote back to Summers: "Your reasoning is perfectly logical but totally insane. ... Your thoughts [provide] a concrete example of the unbelievable alienation, reductionist thinking, social ruthlessness and the arrogant ignorance of many conventional 'economists' concerning the nature of the world we live in. ... If the World Bank keeps you as vice president it will lose all credibility. To me it would confirm what I often said ... the best thing that could happen would be for the Bank to disappear." ([www.whirled-bank.org](http://www.whirled-bank.org))

Shortly after this response, Lutzenburger was fired from his job. Summers got promoted; he became a top economic adviser to Bill Clinton, and eventually became the U.S. Treasury Secretary. This kind of economic thinking and policy was a hallmark of the Clinton administration, which gutted the welfare system and began cutting all social programs that had been won by struggles from the days of the Great Depression of the 1930s to the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. That process has only been accelerated by the Bush administration.

When Clinton left the White House, Summers went to Harvard. His first "hit" there was on Harvard's distinguished African American studies department—the only department that Summers reportedly refused to pay a courtesy visit to when he began his job as president. Summers publicly attacked the department and in particular Cornel West. Dr. West, an internationally respected scholar, at the time held the honor of being a University Professor, a position of the highest rank held by only 17 of the university's 1,500 faculty members.

Soon four of the top African American scholars left Harvard: West, K. Anthony Appiah, Lawrence Bobo and Marcyliena Morgan.

Summers is a hit man all right. He's also a liberal Democrat, part of the Democratic Party leadership. Now there's another reason why we say that only independent political action—independent of the Democrats as well as the Republicans—can effectively fight racism, sexism and other forms of oppression in this country. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

## The water wars

The recent visions of the tsunami rushing, raging, tearing through the Asian coasts has given us all some interesting insights into the truly stunning, and indeed awesome power of water, and how nature's fury is virtually boundless when unleashed.

Yet there is another watery war that is being waged, that may affect the lives of millions, but it garners neither the concern, nor really the attention of the world's media. The electronic media, especially, thrives on drama and conflict, and seeks pictures and stories which reflect these features.

It also affirms the positions of the privileged, as opposed to the plight of the poor, and powerless. Yet all across the globe, in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—and even here—in North America—people are living under the very real threat of the corporatization of water and water systems. The waters of the earth, which have been, since the dawn of human civilization, for the collective usage of the community, are fast becoming just another commodity—something to sell. If you can afford it, cool. If not, tough.

Michael Stark, a senior executive at US Filter, a subsidiary of the multinational corporation, Vivendi, put it this way: "Water is a critical and necessary ingredient to the daily life of every human being, and it is also an equally powerful ingredient for powerful manufacturing companies." (Lake)

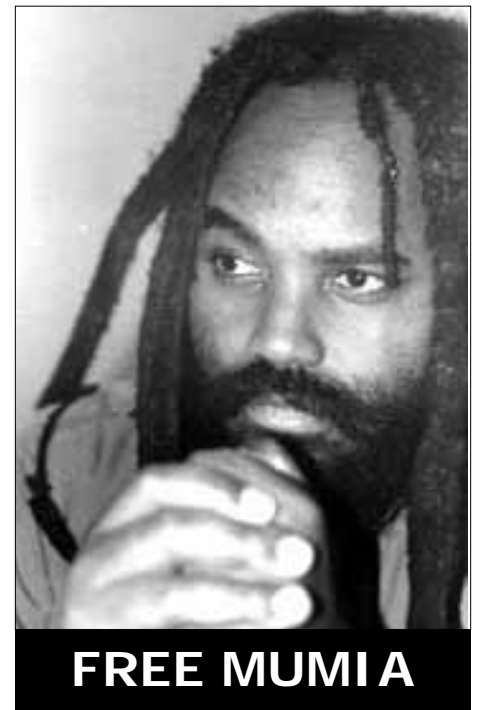
Veronica Lake, a Michigan-based environmental activist, has noted that corporations acquire the world's water by three major methods: a.) by "water mining" the underground aquifers, or deep sources of many of the world's streams or rivers; b.) by leasing state and government water systems and collecting revenues; and c.) by "managing" city water systems.

In short, there's money in water, and where money is, there too are corporations, trying to get paid.

That's the dark, unforeseen and treacherous side of the globalization movement among western governments and corporations.

That's also what privatization really means—taking the common inheritance of nature, and making it into someone else's private property.

In South Africa, this movement has resulted in more misery for the poor. Indeed, cholera rates are higher now there, than in the days of apartheid. It's often the result of tough austerity measures imposed by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, where gov-



FREE MUMIA

ernments are privatizing essential services, and the costs of living now means the right to buy water, to live.

Nor is this merely a story for the distant Third World.

In Detroit, Michigan, today, some 40,000 people on the southwest side have had their water shut off for non-payment. In many older buildings, water isn't just the stuff that's supposed to run through faucets; it also provides steam heat through old radiators. So no water means, no heat. In Detroit.

Scholars say that the next world wars will be fought, not for oil, but for water, for it is infinitely more precious.

Thankfully, people, all over the world, in South Africa, in Plachimada, India, in Bolivia, in Brazil, in France, Ghana, and Canada, are fighting both their sell-out governments and the corporations for the human right of free access to water.

Those of you who have read my earlier pieces may remember my piece on the Bolivian water wars in a place called Cochabamba.

There, a popular group calling itself La Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y la Vida (Defense Committee in Defense of Water and Life), organized the poor, the homeless, the street walkers, and everyone they could to oppose the corporatization of their water. They ran out the Bechtel corporation. It must spread.

Or else water will become as rare as gold; and as expensive.

Source: Veronica Lake, 'Corporations Corner Market on Life, Offer Buy-Back: The New World War: Water,' 'Against the Current,' 108, Jan.-Feb. 2004, 26-31.

For news on the campaign to Free Mumia go to [www.Mumia.org](http://www.Mumia.org) or [www.Million4Mumia.org](http://www.Million4Mumia.org)

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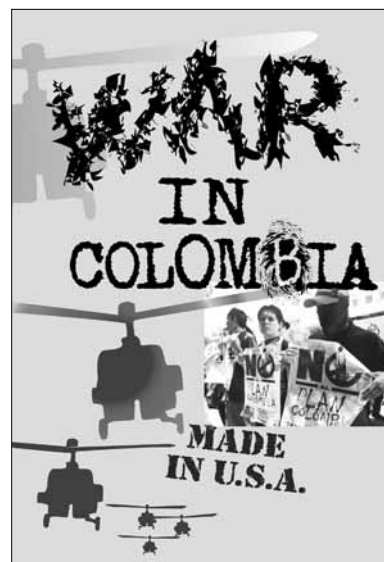
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# Cuban leader to Workers World meeting: Revolution perseveres, improves

By Teresa Gutierrez  
New York

"Men dream of a woman that no longer exists. Women dream of a man that does not yet exist."

These are some of the profound words of wisdom spoken by Alicia González, the International Relations representative of the Federation of Cuban Women at a Workers World Party meeting on Jan. 21 in New York.

The FMC representative stirred the crowd in part because of her tremendous devotion to the Cuban Revolution.

The information González shared spoke once again to why the Cuban Revolution has had such a profound impact on the world. Despite 45 years of U.S. aggression against the island—including the longest economic blockade in U.S. history as well as armed acts of terrorism—the Cuban Revolution continues to stand firm.

Not only does it stand firm—it perseveres in building and improving on its socialist society despite U.S. hostility.

In early January, for example, Cuba's government reported that it had attained the lowest infant mortality ever in its history. It is in fact one of the lowest in the world.

Cuba reported that it currently has an infant mortality rate of 5.8 per thousand live births. In some of the provinces on the island, such as Sancti Spiritus, the rate is an amazing 3.3, the lowest ever in that province.

Such statistics were noted in a Jan. 12 opinion piece in the New York Times.

Columnist Nicholas D. Kristof wrote: "Here's a wrenching fact: If the U.S. had an infant mortality rate as good as Cuba's, we would save an additional 2,212 American babies a year.

"According to the '2005 State of the World's Children', published by UNICEF", he continued, "the United States finished 2004 with an infant mortality rate of 7. According to the latest CIA World Factbook, Cuba is one of 41 countries that have better infant mortality rates than the U.S.

"Even more troubling, the rate in the U.S. has worsened recently. In every year since 1958, America's infant mortality rate improved, or at least held steady. But in 2002, it got worse.

"America's children are at greater risk than they've been in for at least a decade," said Dr. Irwin Redlener at Columbia University and president of the Children's Health Fund.

"The rising rate of infant mortality is an early warning that we're headed in the wrong direction, with no relief in sight."

## U.S.: Outpost of tyranny

The contrast in the trends of infant mortality between the United States and Cuba is one more example of the superiority of Cuba's socialist system versus the United States' capitalist system.

In Cuba, all the wealth produced by the workers is used to defend and improve life. The nation's doctors, for example, have established the 120 Club, where the goal is to increase people's life span to 120 years.

In the United States, just the opposite trend is occurring. Speed-up on the job,

the loss of health care, a lifestyle with tremendous stress and alienation all lead to a shortened life span.

González from the FMC gave other examples that show the dramatic difference between the two countries.

According to González, Cuban President Fidel Castro recently said that there could be societies with no jails.

In the United States, on the other hand, more money goes to build jails than to build schools or hospitals. More money is spent on locking up Black and Latino youths than on job training or university education.

González reported that at a recent Congress of the Young Communist League of Cuba (UJC), UJC leaders invited some prisoners out of the jails to discuss the problems in society that drove youths to behavior resulting in jail time.

In order to reverse a trend of sending youths to jail, these leaders thoughtfully addressed the problem. One of the prisoners who addressed the Congress, González reported, is in fact now a director in programs for youth.

The FMC leader also reported other moving statistics: 100 percent of Cuba's children attend school, 86 percent of the women belong to the Federation of Cuban Women, each teacher in Cuba has only 20 students per classroom and in primary schools it is 15 per teacher. More universities are being built in local provinces to deepen education in the society.

In December, González said, Cuba carried out Bastión 2004, a military exercise. The goal of the exercise was to practice in case of a U.S. military invasion against Cuba. Bastión 2004 is another example of how Cuba's government genuinely prepares the population for any situation. As in natural disasters, Cuba has a highly sophisticated system of organization.

A military invasion of Cuba by the



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Alicia Gonzalez at Jan. 21 Workers World meeting.

United States is not a farfetched idea. The Bush administration is quite capable of carrying out such a mind-boggling act.

Indeed, on Jan. 21, according to the Associated Press, Condoleezza Rice, about to be confirmed as secretary of state, named Cuba an "outpost of tyranny requiring close U.S. attention, along with Myanmar, Belarus and Zimbabwe."

U.S.-Cuba relations have deteriorated a great deal under the Bush administration, which has tightened trade and travel regulations and announced a plan for a "democratic Cuba."

González thanked everyone at the Jan. 21 meeting not only for the Party's ongoing defense of Cuba, but for its work to free the Cuban Five being held in U.S. prisons. The meeting set the tone to build for the important New York premier of "Mission Against Terror," a new documentary film released from Cuba and slated to be in New York on Feb. 3. For more information on that premiere, call the New York Committee to Free the Cuban 5 at (212) 633-6646. □

## France: strike wave!

By G. Dunkel

French workers in the public sector held a series of one-day warning strikes beginning Jan. 17 and going to Jan 20. It was the biggest strike wave in two years.

What worried the French capitalist class even more, according to newspapers like Le Figaro that reflect its views, is that 65 percent of the public supported the strikers' demands.

The unions want an end to privatizations and layoffs, no attacks on the 35-hour work week that French unions won a few years ago, pay raises, and maintenance of the current health-care system and current retirement plans.

Teachers in particular are very worried about a complete revamping of the education system, which the parliament is scheduled to consider in February.

Postal workers walked out first, because

they are now going to face competition from private firms under European Union regulations. Then surgeons stopped all but emergency operations.

The trains were the hardest hit. Only one out of four high-speed trains, and one out of three suburban commuter trains, ran.

Air traffic controllers and different groups of Air France workers also held job actions.

Gas and electricity workers marched through Paris on Jan. 1.

Bernard Thibault, secretary general of the CGT, announced that all the public-sector unions had agreed to call a national demonstration for Feb. 5. He said they would work hard to get the private sector to join the demonstration. "If you get paid the minimum wage by the state, or the minimum wage by a private employer, it doesn't make any difference when you go shopping," Thibault said. □

## Mission Against Terror

A new documentary film from Cuba

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*Mission Against Terror* is a critically acclaimed film that debuted at Havana's 26th Festival of New Latin American Cinema in December.

The film raises the thought provoking question: why are people who fight terrorism imprisoned in prisons throughout this country while known terrorists are allowed to walk the streets of Miami freely?

The film follows the case of five Cubans who are currently serving long sentences in U.S. jails for trying to prevent terrorists from killing innocent people in Cuba and the U.S. The film also depicts the long history of violence against innocent Cubans by extreme right-wing groups based in Miami that are supported by the U.S. government.

The film's producer Bernie Dwyer, an award-winning Irish filmmaker and Radio Habana correspondent, is accompanying the film on its nation-wide tour will be available for Q&A after the screening.



Gerardo Hernández



Rene González



Antonio Guerrero



Ramón Labarino



Fernando González

## Venezuelan president:

# U.S. behind kidnapping of Colombian rebel

By LeiLani Dowell

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has threatened to freeze diplomatic relations with Colombia in the face of the Dec. 13 kidnapping of Rodrigo Granda, a leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), from Caracas. Chavez further accused the United States of planning the event.

Thousands in Venezuela rallied in sup-

port of their president over the Jan. 22-23 weekend. They marched for seven miles to the Palacio Miraflores, the presidential headquarters.

According to Prensa Latina, representatives of all social organizations were present to support the Chavez government's position with regard to the kidnapping.

At the rally, Chavez denounced the violation of national sovereignty and told the crowd that Colombia has yet to offer an excuse or apology to Caracas for the incident. It involved Colombian security forces and several Venezuelan army officers, who Chavez charged were bribed by Colombian officials. The Venezuelan officers have since been arrested.

With regard to the participation of the United States, Chavez said: "This provocation came from Washington. It is the latest attempt by the imperialists ... to ruin our relations with Colombia." (Winston-Salem Journal, N.C.)

Venezuela is Colombia's second-biggest trade partner, with an annual exchange of over \$2 billion in goods and products. Since the provocation, traffic of gasoline and food across the border has been halted, as have projects to build an international bridge, transoceanic gas pipeline and a road. □

## Trabajadores de hoteles logran acuerdo por amenaza de huelga durante Inauguración presidencial

# Amenaza de huelga triunfa

Por Sharon Black  
Washington, D.C.

Poco después de las seis de la tarde del 14 de enero, ciento de trabajadores de hoteles miembros del sindicato UNITE-HERE Local 25, dieron un salto de alegría abrazándose uno al otro declarando victoria después de sesenta horas de tensas negociaciones en el Templo Masónico Prince may en Washington, D.C.

Un mar de obreros jubilante salieron a la calle a continuar la celebración. La gerencia del Hotel acordó de eliminar de sus demandas la división del sistema de salud para nuevo empleados y de aumentar los pagos en efectivo que empleados hacen a sus doctores por sus servicios. Bajo este acuerdo la gerencia aceptó aumentar \$50 centavos anuales a los salarios por los tres próximos años de contrato. Las contribuciones de la gerencia a las cuentas de jubilaciones aumentará aproximadamente en un 20% por el período de contrato.

Una serie de cambios en las reglas de trabajo dará a muchos trabajadores quienes antes han sido excluidos pago por el tiempo que queden momentáneamente sin trabajo. Algunas reglas como colocar avisos en los idiomas de los diferentes trabajadores, les protegerá de abusos. La gerencia también cedió en su rehuso de comenzar el contrato retroactivamente desde el pasado mes septiembre del 2004.

En septiembre del 2004, el 94% de los 3,800 trabajadores de hoteles habían votado por una huelga sobre estas demandas, y en particular la división del sistema de salud y los incrementos a los pagos en efectivos a los doctores. Las negociaciones han sido turbulentas. Los empresarios se han alejado de las secciones en muchas ocasiones y largos períodos de tiempo pasaron sin negociar.

La lucha de los obreros de hoteles en el Distrito de Columbia no estuvo aislada. Esta fue parte de una lucha nacional que incluyó a los obreros del mismo servicio en San Francisco, quienes también luchaban por demandas similares al igual que en Los Angeles, quienes han estado y continúan en una batalla por un contrato sindical.

El sindicato UNITE-HERE visto a esta batalla como una lucha crítica y anteriormente luchó por contratos bianuales nacionales coordinados. Como la huelga de los Trabajadores de Comercio y Alimentos, la lucha de los obreros de hoteles se ha convertido en un punto de enfoque nacionalmente para los trabajadores y el movimiento sindical.

Los obreros votarán a comienzos de esta semana. Según todas las indicaciones del

acuerdo alcanzado esta noche será aprobado y se le considera una victoria para los obreros. En las últimas horas del acuerdo, el auditorio del Prince Hall, se había convertido un escenario para aquellos obreros—generalmente ignorados y marginados—quienes trabajan en los hoteles de lujo de los capitalismo estadounidense.

Las trabajadoras que limpian las recámaras para los ricos; los botones que cargan con las pesadas maletas; los sirvientes y trabajadores de los alimentos; el equipo de limpieza general y los recepcionistas, y todos los otros obreros que mantienen funcionando al hotel llenaron el auditorio, observando y escuchando a las negociaciones del contrato que se llevaba a cabo entre los representante del sindicato y los propietarios de los hoteles.

Los que atestiguaron las negociaciones que ocurrieron el 14 de enero no pudieron evitar un sentido de regocijo mientras que cambió el rumbo de las pláticas, por lo menos un poco, contra los ricos y poderosos.

Los patronos hoteleros y sus representantes se sentaron enfrentando al comité de negociaciones del sindicato, encabezado por John Boardman, el secretario—tesorero del sindicato UNITE-HERE Local 25, y Peter Ward del UNITE-HERE de la Ciudad de Nueva York. Cada uno presentó propuestas y contra propuestas mientras que trabajadores observaban.

### Gerencia siente fuerza de trabajadores

Cuando los gerentes hoteleros salieron

del salón para celebrar reuniones apartes, tuvieron un aspecto muy incómodo, apretando las facciones como si estuvieran preocupado que iban a volver en el blanco de ira justificada. Ellos sintieron la fuerza de los 600 trabajadores que se juntaron para escuchar durante todo el día. Los trabajadores estuvieron entrando continuamente de los piquetes que habían sido establecidos rodeando los 14 hoteles afectados. Otros trabajadores vinieron después de terminar con sus turnos.

Durante los días anteriores protestas y líneas de piquetes habían sido conducidas simultáneamente en hoteles distintos. Miles de volantes habían sido repartidas en las comunidades. El sindicato comenzó una campaña de preparación para una huelga que iba a comenzar el día 15 de enero, haciendo una conexión al día de cumpleaños del Dr. Martin Luther King, hijo, y utilizando la inauguración del Presidente Bush el día 20 de enero y la amenaza de una huelga como apalancamiento en las negociaciones.

El Rev. Graylan Hagler, el nuevo capelán de la Local 25 y un destacado líder de la comunidad y del movimiento en contra de la guerra, ayudó a movilizar el apoyo de la comunidad. En piquetes fuera de un hotel en la parte céntrica de la ciudad, mientras que siguieron las negociaciones, el proclamó a los trabajadores, "La comunidad los apoya. Partidarios desde Washington y Baltimore están preparados para unirse a ustedes para apoderarse de los hoteles durante la inauguración de Bush el 20 de enero".

Trabajadores abrazan y vitorean a Hagler dondequiera que hace una intervención. Ellos lo ven como un aliado fuerte e importante.

Dentro del salón, ellos observando no podían evitar notar los aspectos tensos y el paso rígido de los gerentes mientras que pasaron por el salón. Casi todos los patronos son blancos, mientras que los trabajadores en su mayoría son africanos—americanos e inmigrantes del Caribe, México, Centroamérica, África y Asia. La mitad de ellos son mujeres.

Uno de los trabajadores lo expresó mejor cuando destacó desde el auditorio y gritó, "El tipo ese fue el más mal intencionados de todos, nos trataron como basura". Ese trabajador se sintió claramente regocijado que habían cambiado el rumbo de las negociaciones. Fue como acusar a un criminal, sino esta vez fueron los trabajadores que lo hicieron.

Un artículo que salió en el Washington Post el 15

de enero escrito por Neil Irwin y Amy Joyce reporta algo de esto, pero oculta el papel jugado por los trabajadores y su lucha.

El artículo del post cita a Bruce Raynor, presidente general del sindicato nacional UNITE-HERE, que dice, "La única cosa de que me arrepiento en cuanto a esto [el acuerdo] es que no tenemos una manera de avergonzar a esta administración [refiere a la inauguración de Bush]. Ellos merecen ser humillado por los trabajadores. Ellos son la administración más anti-trabajador en la historia de este país."

Por supuesto, no hay ninguna garantía que la cita del Post sea fiel. Pero cada sindicalista astuto sabe a que el artículo se está refiriendo que Raynor o estaba distanciándose de estas negociaciones o estaba sin poder, lo que es absurdo.

Aún más a la médula del asunto es cómo el Washington Post implica que los intereses de los trabajadores y los patronos de los hoteles son lo mismo, o por lo menos, no son contradictorios. Trata de convencer al lector que la preocupación más grande que tenían los trabajadores fue la cantidad de pago de horas extras que hubieron perdido durante la inauguración si hubiera sucedido la huelga.

Ningún trabajador quisiera disminuir la importancia del pago de Horas extras, especialmente para trabajadores que tienen tantito. Pero lo que el Washington Post no quiere revelar es que los trabajadores de los hoteles estaban listos a luchar, y que a la clase capitalista le importaba mucho que una huelga durante la inauguración hubiera podido hacer daño a la administración de Bush y a toda su clase.

Este conflicto hubiera podido empezar una lucha más amplia, y eso le asustó no solo a los dueños de los hoteles — que necesitan ganar mucho de sus ingresos del año durante de esta estación — sino que les asustó a todos los banqueros y patronos. Tal lucha, dirigida por los más oprimidos, hubiera forjado la unidad en el movimiento laboral. Hubiera podido proveer la chispa para enfrentarse a los ataques más grandes contra la clase trabajadora y los sindicatos, especialmente durante este período de guerra capitalista.

Los trabajadores de los hoteles y sus partidarios estaban listos para llevar a cabo la lucha. No se puede ignorar la potencia de llevar esta lucha a las puertas de la Casa Blanca. Fue la posibilidad de un conflicto más amplio de que tenían miedo los patronos.

Hay que felicitar a los líderes, organizadores y a la administración, y especialmente a los trabajadores, de UNITE-HERE Local 25.

Ellos merecen este acuerdo y mucho más. Cada trabajador/a progresista va a observar de cerca esta lucha y va a estar listo para otras batallas. La lucha de los trabajadores de los hoteles, como la Marcha de un Millón Trabajadores el otoño pasado, son testimonio de una militancia creciente en una gran parte de la clase trabajadora. □

