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**WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER**  
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## Tip of the iceberg

# Enron shows depth of corporate greed

By Milt Neidenberg

In capitalist society, favorite sons often have to be thrown overboard as their ships of fortune sink.

Enron CEOs Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling, who had accumulated a huge treasure for themselves, have now been convicted of fraud and conspiracy after a four-month trial. However, unlike working-class defendants convicted of petty crimes, both remain free on bail, pending sentencing on Sept. 11. They were charged with creating complex accounting practices to cover up a mountain of debt, which showed up on their books as assets and profits.

Once viewed as the biggest corporate success story of the 1990s, Enron is now bankrupt and seen as a text-book tale of corporate malfeasance, manipulation and machination. In the stormy seas of imperialist high finance, however, this corporation represents only the tip of the iceberg.

Before the biggest scandal in the history of corporate criminal activity was exposed, Enron's well-trained management scammed billions from tens of thousands of shareholders and employees, as well as Wall Street banks and financial institutions.

Lay was convicted on all six counts, including four counts in

a separate bank fraud. Skilling was found guilty on 19 of 28 counts, including insider trading. Both men had used off-books partnerships to disguise Enron's debt. They lied to investors and employees about the company's financial crisis while selling their own company shares for tidy sums.

Enron's profits were based on paper trading rather than the real flow of actual money. Even after four and one half years of a special government investigation, "it is impossible to say what was real at Enron and what was smoke and mirrors." (Wall Street Journal, May 26)

Enron was permitted to show profits through means that were risky, volatile and speculative. It wasn't clear how much of Enron's profits came from outright financial manipulations and the use of derivative instruments.

This is still a very dangerous trend on Wall Street. Hedge funds representing trillions of dollars are traded each day in an unregulated market.

### Cover-up angers Wall Street

The corporation's collapse led to the downfall of the international accounting powerhouse of Arthur Andersen LLP, the

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WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

## Tribunal establishes responsibilities for atrocities in Haiti

By G. Dunkel  
Montreal

The Fourth International Tribunal on Haiti, like the three before it, aimed at exposing individual responsibility for the crimes committed in Haiti after the United States, France and Canada collectively coordinated the coup and kidnapping of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Feb. 29, 2004.

The tribunal's political point about the role of the United Nations as a front, a tool and a cover for these three big capitalist countries was sharpened by the fact that newly elected Haitian President René Préal has not been able to release the hundreds of political prisoners, almost all Aristide supporters, that the de-facto regime threw in jail. He hasn't even been able to denounce the agreement that Gérard Latortue, the president of Haiti imposed by the UN, made giving the UN's CIVPOL (Civilian Police) control of Haiti's national police (PNH) and prisons for the next two-and-a-half years.

Held in Montreal May 27 at the Université de Montréal, the tribunal was a success. Four hundred people, a strong majority of them from the Haitian community in Quebec, came, even though the Montreal cops had blocked off the whole neighborhood because an international bicycle race was using the roads. The tribunal had been widely promoted on French and Creole radio shows. Parts of the program were in French and Creole, but most was in English. Simultaneous translation from English to French was available.

Anthony Fenton, a journalist and researcher, presented Canada's role in "subverting and destroying democracy in Haiti and destabilizing its government" both before and after the coup-knapping of Aristide.

Ramsey Clark, former attorney general of the United States who led the Tribunal's Commission of Inquiry in Haiti last year, put the videotaped testimony into political and historical context. Clark pointed out that in 1804, when Haiti won its inde-

*Continued on page 7*

# Death row prisoner Howard Guidry

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

When an 18-year-old African American from Abbeville, La., named Howard Guidry was arrested in Houston on a murder charge in 1995, he was not given the kid glove treatment that Enron criminals Ken Lay and Jeff Skilling have received.

He was interrogated, berated, mistreated and called the racist "n" word. He was told exactly how lethal injections work, and that he was on a fast track for being executed if he did not confess to a capital murder he knew nothing about. He kept asking to call his mother and a lawyer but was not allowed to make a phone call.

Houston cops told him that his attorney wanted him to sign a confession in exchange for a 25-year prison sentence. He was shown statements from two people who said he had committed a murder for hire, and the cops said they would testify against him.

With no counsel, this scared young man did as he thought his attorney wanted him to do. He signed a confession.

His father, Alvin Guidry, was a truck driver who couldn't afford to post his son's bail. Ken Lay's family just posted a \$5 million bail for him.

Guidry didn't have well-known, high-powered lawyers like Lay's, but rather court-appointed attorneys. While awaiting sentencing, Guidry did not get three months to vacation in Vail, Colo., as Lay is now. He became another poor Black youth railroaded to death row after being found guilty. Unlike Lay and Skilling, however, Guidry was totally innocent.

The only evidence used to convict Guidry was the coerced confession and hearsay testimony from the suspected killer's girlfriend. Both pieces of evidence were thrown out in September 2003 by Federal Judge Vanessa Gilmore, who ordered Harris County in Houston to release or retry Guidry within 180 days.

The State of Texas appealed Gilmore's 2003 ruling, but it was upheld by the Fifth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals in New Orleans. This past spring, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case, letting Gilmore's ruling in favor of Guidry stand.

Yet Guidry is still waiting for the Houston district attorney to either retry or release him.

## Learning about revolution

During his decade on death row, Howard Guidry began to study with experienced activists like Emerson "Young Lion" Rudd, Ponchai "Kamau" Wilkerson and Harvey "Tee" Earvin. He joined the Panthers United for Revolutionary Education and was named its Minister of Defense.

In 1998, Guidry participated with six others in a failed escape from the Ellis Unit Prison outside of Huntsville, Texas. The body of one of the men, Martin Gurule, was

found in a river several days later.

In 1999 death row was moved from Huntsville to a super-maximum prison in Livingston. According to first-hand accounts, inmates suffer from total isolation and sensory deprivation, and as a result often lose their grip on reality. They live behind a solid steel door. There are no church services, no television and no work program. Food and medical care are inadequate. They go to recreation alone in a fenced area like a dog run.

The daily degradation, gassings, slammings, harassment and racist taunts destroy spirits and minds. Several have committed suicide. Some give up their appeals. Many are just too mentally ill to even function.

In early 2000, Guidry and another Panther, Ponchai "Kamau" Wilkerson, decided to take a guard hostage to call attention to the horrific conditions. They demanded to speak with community leaders.

Kofi Taharka, National Black United Front chair, Houston Chapter; Deloyd Parker, executive director of S.H.A.P.E. Center; and Njeri Shakur, Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement leader, met with Guidry and Wilkerson as well as Livingston's warden to discuss conditions. The hostage was safely released but conditions only slightly improved.

Six years later, the court has set a new trial for July 17. Guidry is appealing for support.

"I don't want my activism on death row to be used by the media to convict me before I ever get to court. I had good reason to attempt to escape. I had no faith in the justice system. I have seen my comrades executed who were innocent, like Shaka Sankofa and Odell Barnes," Guidry told Workers World. Wilkerson was also executed.

"When we took the guard hostage, we had no intention of hurting her. And we didn't. But we could not sit by and watch other men on the row be tortured by the isolation and begin to lose their minds. We knew we had to take drastic action. We did it for the 450 other men being tortured and forced to live like animals."

"I am charged with capital murder and I had nothing to do with this crime. I am innocent, and if justice is finally done, I will walk out of here!" Guidry said.

Like Malcolm X and George Jackson, Guidry has educated himself in prison. He is 30 years old now, and has studied history and revolutionary theory. He possesses courage and integrity.

Guidry's goal, if he wins his release, is to fight for change for all poor and oppressed people, not only in the criminal justice system but also in capitalist society in general.

Send letters of support to:  
Howard Guidry SPN # 01446317  
Harris County Jail, 701 N. San Jacinto St.  
Houston, TX 77002

(No cards, books, postcards, newspapers or magazines—but articles cut from papers or magazines, photos, and information off the Internet are okay.) □



Howard Guidry, above.

The snapshots below were taken with a cell phone, judging by the poor quality. We are using them despite the blurriness because they show the hard work and solidarity of those fighting to save Guidry's life.

Joyce Guidry, mother of the prisoner, below, joins supporters distributing literature about his unjust case at the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement table during the Pan African Culture Festival in the end of May.



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### FREEPORT, N.Y.

#### Tue., May 30

Forum: Can we unite on Immigrant Rights? Organized by the Freeport Community Worklink Center. Featuring Larry Holmes, Millions for Mumia; Charles Jenkins, TWU; Teresa Gutierrez,

Chicana organizer; Rev. Bill Brisotti, Church of the Miraculous Medal, Wyandanch; Unio de Jornaleros de Freeport. In cooperation with SOA Watch. 6:30 p.m. At Freeport Public Library, 144 W. Merrick Rd. For info phone 516-565-5377 (o), 516-582-2720 (m), or 516-223-8002.

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## LOS ANGELES

# Struggle continues to save South Central Farm

By Justino Jimenez  
Los Angeles

The sound of banging drums and chanting echoed off downtown Los Angeles buildings for a couple of blocks May 19. Many organizations, including members of Fight Imperialism Stand Together—FIST—gathered in front of the convention center to support a farm in South Central Los Angeles that came into existence 14 years ago as a concession by the city to the people of South Central after the Rodney King rebellions.

The 14-acre farm feeds 350 families. But three years ago the city council illegally sold it to a rich developer for \$5.1 million. The developer has now called on the Sheriff's Department to evict the families. The eviction could occur any time, since the deadline passed on May 24.

Although the farmers have come up with \$6 million to buy the land, almost \$1 million more than was paid for it, developer Ralph Horowitz is demanding an additional \$10 million. Just a few days earlier, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa had shocked the people of the farm by announcing that the city would not be able to come up with the \$5 million promised to help pay for the farm.

This announcement came only a couple days before the city council started talks on a plan to lure a professional football team to the city with a proposed \$800 million renovation of the L.A. Coliseum.

This reality fueled the spirited demonstration outside the convention center, where Mayor Villaraigosa was meeting with city advisers. The group of protesters eventually split into two—one being bussed to city hall to protest, the other marching as close as possible to where the mayor was



John Parker and Zack de la Rocha rally for South Central Farm in April.

PHOTO: JASPER YU



having his meeting.

Chants of "Save the farm!" could be heard loud and clear. Many youths came out to support and made sure they were well represented.

A group of young women had the message, "Don't turn your back on us Antonio," written on their backs.

Protesters caused a ruckus, clearly disrupting the meeting. There is no doubt Villaraigosa got the message that the community will not stand for such blatant disregard of the farm and the well-being of families who live and work there, not to mention the families that benefit from the many vegetables and other plants that are grown there.

Since May 24, farmers and supporters have maintained a 24-hour presence on the farm. They will refuse to leave when

the sheriffs arrive to evict them. They will continue organizing events in support of their struggle. Celebrities have joined the battle, with Joan Baez and Darryl Hannah also staying on the farm in solidarity.

No matter how you slice it, this is capitalism at its worst. Mayor Villaraigosa and the rest of the city council have no remorse. They are ready to sell off the biggest urban farm in the country to the highest bidder.

It now seems the farmers are being forced off their land to build a distribution center for Wal-Mart—the same company that's trying to kick people off their land in San Salvador Atenco, Mexico, leading to all kinds of violence, bloodshed, and oppression at the hands of the ruling class in that region. (see Workers World, May 23.)

Save the farm! Solidarity with the South Central farmers! □

## Domestic Workers United

# Demand passage of a bill of rights

By Imani Henry

At 6 a.m. on May 23, more than 80 New York City domestic workers and their supporters boarded buses and set out to Albany, the state capital, for the first Domestic Worker Advocacy Day.

Organized by Domestic Workers United, the vast majority of these activists are immigrant women of color—Caribbean, Asian, South Asian and Latina. DWU estimates that over 200,000 people work as nannies, housekeepers, elder companions, cleaners, babysitters, cooks and baby nurses inside private households in New York City.

The trip's main objective was to fight for a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. This is the first statewide legislative proposal drafted by and for domestic workers. It lays out a comprehensive set of protections and rights based on the unique conditions workers in private homes face.

More important, Domestic Workers United and their allies are fighting to tear up, once and for all, the roots of the racist and sexist exploitation of unpaid labor for both domestic and farm work wielded against people of color in the United States since the days of slavery.

"We know that the first domestic workers of color in this country were African-American," says Linda Abad, founder of Damayan Migrant Workers Association, which fights for the rights of Filipino/a domestic workers. "In the 1970s, women from the Third World began to fill those jobs. We know we aren't just fighting for the rights of immigrant women now, but against the legacy of slavery, colonization and U.S. imperialism that forced us to migrate here, and centuries of profit that has been made."

### Workplace conditions of domestic workers in NYC

According to a 1999 study by the Urban Institute, the average working-class family pays \$9,000 a year for child-care or day-care facilities that sometimes have several dozen children in their care.

Families with less income generally seek out what is left of city-funded day-care facilities.

Only 4 percent of New York City children, generally from two-parent households, have nannies.

A study compiled by Domestic Workers United and Data Center, "Home is Where the Work Is: Inside New York's Domestic Work Industry," was released May 19. It is based on surveying 574 domestic workers and conducting interviews with both workers and employers.

According to this study, 93 percent of domestic workers in New York are women, 99 percent are immigrants, and 76 percent do not have U.S. citizenship.

Debunking a very popular myth in the media, only a small percentage of domestic workers are white. The overwhelming majority of the workers—95 percent—are people of color.

Fifty-nine percent of New York's domestic workers are the primary income earners for their own families. Like other workers, domestic workers see themselves as part of an industry, with 32 percent working within the field for over 10 years and 45 percent staying with the same employer for at least two to five years.

Generally, domestic workers work 40 to 60 hours a week. Ninety percent report they receive no health insurance from their employers.

Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed were not paid for overtime hours worked. Only 13 percent are paid a living wage of \$13 or more an hour.

Eighteen percent make wages below the poverty line, ranging from the minimum wage of \$5.16 to \$8.97 per hour. Another 8 percent are paid less than the minimum wage. Twenty percent of those surveyed did not want to respond to the question of wages.

Along with low pay, many domestic workers endure humiliation and abuse at the hands of their employers.

In a radio interview with New York radio station WBAI, one DWU member

*Continued on page 5*

## CALIFORNIA

# High school exit exam: Racist & illegal!

By Judy Greenspan  
San Francisco

Some 47,000 high-school seniors had their hopes for June graduation dashed when a federal appeals court refused to schedule an early hearing on the fairness of California's high school exit exam.

While State Superintendent Jack O'Connell is elated with this "most welcome decision," thousands of second language learners, primarily Latin@, and under-served students from poor families will be not be able to walk the stage and receive their diplomas.

Students and their advocates have been mobilizing this year to challenge the California High School Exit Exam. A lawsuit filed by 10 West Contra Costa high-school students and their parents had been affirmed on May 12, when a federal judge granted a preliminary injunction suspending the exit exam for the 2006 graduating class.

Judge Robert Freedman said he was persuaded by the students' testimony that the exit exam discriminates against English-language learners and poor students. The judge went on to note, "There is evidence that shows that students in economically challenged communities have not had an equal opportunity to learn the materials tested on the exam."

Arturo Gonzalez, the students' attorney, added: "Many students in California have not been given a fair opportunity to learn the material. These are good kids who have worked hard for 13 years to pass their courses."

Californians for Justice had brought a second challenge to the exit exam, alleging that the state violated its own law by not studying alternatives to the exit exam. Unfortunately, the study was not completed in time to affect the first year

of the exit exam.

A Stanford study strongly proposed an alternative approach. In a report called the "Multiple Measures Approaches to High School Graduation," the School Redesign Network cited positive alternatives to exams that are used by several states including Oregon, Vermont, Washington and Maine. The Stanford group suggested implementing a program like a "Senior Year Demonstration" which would include and encourage a range of performance and thinking skills.

Students all over California were thrilled when the court ruled in their favor on May 12. However, true to its word, the state education office appealed to the California Supreme Court, which reinstated the exam. The First District Court of Appeal showed what side the court is on by refusing to set an expedited hearing. The appeals court instead set the hearing for July 25, guaranteeing that tens of thousands of students will not get their diplomas.

Of the nearly 47,000 seniors who failed the exam, at least 20,600 are designated as English learners. More than 28,300 are from poor families.

Students, parents and lawyers are continuing to mobilize to stop this latest injustice against Latin@, African American and poor students. Gonzalez, the students' attorney, stated that the "fight is not over." He and others believe that the exit exam is illegal, discriminatory and a violation of the students' constitutional rights.

According to Antonio Williams, a young writer for the Poor News Network, students were mobilized into the struggle and encouraged by the resistance to CAHSEE. He said, "As I, a young brother of color who failed the Exit Exam, watched resistance to the racist and classist Exit Exam, I don't feel like completely giving up." (www.poormagazine.org) □

# Workers have a property right to their jobs

From a talk given by Martha Grevatt, UAW member and organizer of *Pride At Work, AFL-CIO*, at the May 13-14 conference on "Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism" in New York City.

Delphi, the world's biggest auto-parts company, is using the bankruptcy courts to cut 25,000 jobs, drastically slash wages and benefits, and bust the United Auto Workers. Ford and GM plan to cut 30,000 and 35,000 jobs respectively.

What if the UAW took a cue from immigrant workers and shut down the whole auto industry?

The bosses have had the upper hand for too long. This latest wave of threatened layoffs continues a trend that began in the late 1980s, coinciding with the high-tech restructuring that continues to decimate jobs in manufacturing.

Delphi is continuing a pattern of union busting through bankruptcy, a pattern that also goes back to the late 1980s. Steel workers and airline workers can testify to its devastating effects.



Martha Grevatt

WWW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

However, a bankrupt company is legally no longer the owner, but a "debtor in possession." The largest creditor is the UAW, representing workers to whom Delphi has billions of dollars in pension obligations. Even from a legal standpoint, the workers have the right not only to strike but to seize the plants. Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy first raised this point in the 1980s. We popularized it by forming the grass-roots Job Is a Right Campaign, and we say again: Workers have a property right to their jobs.

The fight is sure to escalate, but we keep in mind that even the most thought out, most class-conscious strategies will fail if they are conducted in a vacuum. Auto workers

can reverse the backward trend if their struggle is part of a new class-wide movement, a movement without borders.

We have the absolute right to seize the means of production, not only to save our jobs but to save the planet. □

## ENRON greed is tip of iceberg

Continued from page 1

company's outside auditor, which admitted shredding piles of records. The bankruptcy also snared some of the country's largest financial institutions, including Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase and Merrill Lynch, costing them millions in litigation costs and regulatory fines.

Enron reflected the manipulative, unpredictable and volatile nature of the stock market. Before Enron went bankrupt, it had a market value of over \$60 billion.

In August 2000 its stock was selling at \$90 a share. A few days before Enron declared bankruptcy, its shares traded at one dollar.

For a while Lay and Skilling had convinced their shareholders and lenders that they were accumulating huge profits by delivering energy, natural gas and other physical commodities through future contracts, and providing financial and risk management services to customers around the world. Enron had corralled the energy market in electricity and natural gas—exploiting the California market during the 2000-2001 energy crisis in that state.

As Enron began unraveling, both men claimed the corporation was in excellent condition. However, in September 2001, a few months before Enron went belly-up, Skilling dumped 500,000 shares of the company for \$15 million, and Lay sold 1.8 million shares for more than \$101.3 million. Lay continued to draw an \$8.3 million salary and Skilling's salary and bonuses came to \$6.45 million.

After the bankruptcy, Lay sold three houses in Aspen, Colo., for \$20 million and three in Galveston, Tex., for amounts he didn't mention when he testified in court.

Enron, once the seventh-largest corporation in the U.S., abruptly filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Dec. 2, 2001. On that day, while Lay and Skilling were living in luxury, around 5,600 employees were fired, ordered to pack up their belongings within 30 minutes and hustled off the property. They lost \$2.1 billion in retirement savings alone.

### Political damage control

An axis of corporate power—primarily oil barons and banks—dominates the White House and infests all the institutions of government. Enron, during its lifetime, had bought off both capitalist parties.

In the four-year Justice Department investigation into Enron's criminal activities, a protective wall was built against any allegations that the White House was involved. Even the leading newspaper of big business has to admit that "Some of the big questions linger, seemingly beyond the reach of the trials. ... [N]one of the trials produced new pieces of evidence that could be termed 'smoking guns' despite the fact prosecutors had broad subpoena powers and access to Enron records and internal documents." (Wall Street Journal, May 26)

The truth is that the political elite, including President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, were enmeshed in Enron's fortunes up to their eyeballs. For decades, Enron was nurtured and coddled by powerful forces in both capitalist parties.

### You stroke me, I stroke you

The record is startling and crystal clear. Bush lied when he said that he first got to know Ken Lay in 1994. Lay financed Bush's race for Texas governor in 1978. (www.hereinreality.com) Cheney, former head of Halliburton, met six times with Enron executives while writing up energy policy that benefited Enron in 17 different ways. Cheney still refuses to tell Congress anything about those meetings.

Cheney also met with Lay during the California energy crisis. The day after the meeting he said the Bush administration would not support price caps on energy in California, a move that cost California consumers billions—and made billions for Enron.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales was appointed by Bush to head the Justice Department, which carried out the Enron investigation. Gonzales was formerly a partner in the powerful Houston law firm of Vinson & Elkins. Enron was their biggest client. Sources have revealed that "Vinson & Elkins may have briefed former partners [like Gonzales-M.N.] in advance on the findings of a top secret probe into Enron's shady business dealings." (San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 15, 2002)

Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White was an Enron executive for over 10 years. Robert Zoelick, the recently resigned deputy to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, sat on Enron's advisory council. Karl Rove, Bush's mastermind political adviser, owned up to \$250,000 worth of Enron stock, which he held until last June. Ken Lay sought out former Secretary of Commerce Don Evans and former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill for assistance.

Former President Bill Clinton also got into the act. He helped Ken Lay get a \$3 billion power plant project in India for Enron. Four days before the deal went through, Enron gave \$100,000 to the Democratic Party. The list goes on.

The Enron collapse raises issues far beyond the convictions of Lay, Skilling and their cronies. The political landscape is dominated by profit, plunder and greed. The roots behind Enron's collapse are deep and wide in the corrupt culture of finance capital.

There is fear among the ruling class that the Enrons of Wall Street are no longer the exception. Already wiped off the financial map are Worldcom, Tyco and Delphi, and the list is growing.

Is catastrophe waiting in the wings for General Motors and industry-related conglomerates? Will the quasi-independent Fannie Mae agency that offers housing mortgages be next? When will the Bush/Cheney cabal unravel? Don't touch the remote. □

## ON THE PICKETLINE

By Sue Davis

### Telecommunication workers vote to strike

Ninety-six percent of the nearly 2,900 workers at the business telecommunications company Avaya voted to strike if Communications Workers Local 7777 wasn't able to resolve issues of job security, outsourcing, wages and health benefits by May 27. The Electrical Workers represent another 600 Avaya workers.

Since the strike vote in mid-May, workers in major customer-service centers in Atlanta, Denver and Oklahoma City showed how they felt about Avaya's unacceptable health-care proposal by showing up at work one day with crutches and bandages and by staging loud, prolonged periods of sneezing and coughing during the work day. On another day, workers wore black from head to toe to mourn the loss of quality customer service due to Avaya's anti-union policies.

According to the Denver Business Journal, union and company representatives are continuing to negotiate, for now, past the May 27 deadline.

### Foster Farms workers back to table

Negotiations between Foster Farms and the 2,400 workers at the poultry giant's plant in Livingston, Calif., resumed May 24, after a U.S. district court forced the company back to the table. The workers have been fighting over a year for a wage increase and a contract clause requiring workers to either join the union or pay dues.

Last September Foster Farms refused to negotiate when the two unions representing the workers, the League of Independent Workers of the San Joaquin Valley and the Machinists, merged. Though Foster claimed that the merger was illegal, the court disagreed, forcing Foster Farms back to the table.

Hundreds of workers staged a series of short strikes in October and November 2005 to protest Foster Farms' failure to negotiate.

But Foster Farms hasn't gotten the message. "We came in with 16 proposals," union representative Herman Howell told the Merced Sun-Star on May 25. "And we got 16 'nos.'" Two more days of talks in June are scheduled.

### Univ. of Oregon grad students win contract

On May 2, graduate teaching fellows at the University of Oregon won a two-year contract that provides 10 percent higher wages, lower fees and extended health care.

"We teach 30 percent of the classes and we're only receiving 15 percent of the pay," Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation organizer David Cecil told the May 26 Oregon Daily Emerald. In fact, a GTFF study showed that the 1,301 GTFs earn 13 percent less than the average teaching assistant.

"We're very, very much a source of cheap, contingent labor for the university," said Courtney Smith, incoming GTFF president. "So it's hard to have them realize what we actually contribute to the university and not just be treated as kids on scholarship. [GTFs] who work really hard are not getting what they deserve, but [now they'll get] a little more at least."

The struggle for workers' rights at all universities continues!

### Striking mechanics rally

Mechanics, cleaners and custodians, who've been on strike against Northwest Airlines since Aug. 20, rallied on strike day 280, May 26, in St. Paul, Minn., Detroit and other cities in a National Day of Support and Solidarity.

According to a news release from Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association Assistant National Director Steve MacFarlane: "All AMFA members from the seven represented carriers [were] called upon to participate in this day of unity. Northwest's executive management team is still leading a once proud and profitable company into the ground. They must be held accountable and shown to the flying public that they are not deserving of their patronage." (www.amfanat.org)

The purpose of the picket line and rally was to "bring the issues of the strike, outsourcing and safety back into the view of the national flying public." □

# Coal miners' militancy and consciousness

From a talk given by David Hoskins, a FIST organizer, at the May 13-14 conference on "Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism" in New York City.

The technological revolution transformed what was once a pivotal foundation of modern industrial capitalism by automating coal mines and revolutionizing production methods. In the early days the occupational hazards of mining were a defining characteristic of the work. Young boys and girls were sent into the dark and damp mines at an early age, where they either fell prey to mortal accidents or developed debilitating diseases such as rickets.

The harsh conditions they worked under gave rise to a spirit of militancy against the capitalists who owned the mines and the states that protected those capitalists. The hallmark of that militancy can be found in the West Virginia Coal Mine Wars of 1912 to 1921. Ten thousand miners, well disciplined and well armed, tied red handkerchiefs around their necks and battled a force of 1,500 police officers and private detectives hired by the coal companies. The battle ended a week later when 10,000 regular U.S. Army troops, aerial troops and chemical warfare troops brutally overpowered the miners.

As time went on a section of the United Mine Workers leadership would eventually

become complacent and seek compromise with the capitalists. As they did, a section of the workers would have their consciousness muddled. Rather than blame capitalists and their implementation of technology as the source of their job losses, some of them scapegoat immigrants.

There is one thing the ruling class fears more than anything: when workers begin to make connections between their struggles. That is, when miners, immigrant workers, the oppressed who suffered through hurricane Katrina all begin to see the ruling class—and not each other—as the problem.

For a period many coal miners began to be perceived as a so-called labor aristocracy. But if a worker ever forgets who he or she is, the ruling class will be the first to remind them.

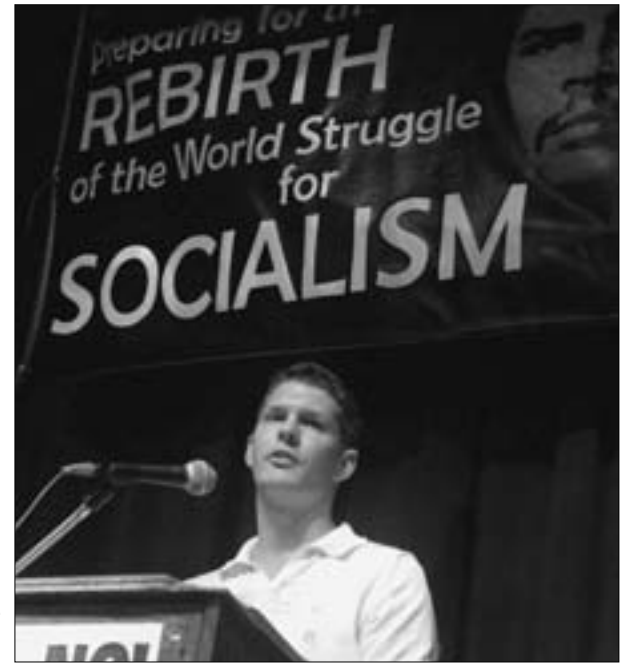
And so on Jan. 2 of this year an underground explosion in a mine in Sago West Virginia trapped 13 coal miners. The blast killed one instantly. Twelve others died slowly from carbon monoxide poisoning. One other barely made it out with his life.

At a meeting in a small church in Sago, W.Va., exhausted miners, righteously angry at the capitalists responsible for their fellow workers' deaths, issued calls to arm themselves and exact justice against the company officials.

For an instant they were conscious of their common interests as workers. It is

our job as revolutionaries to find that spark of realization, that revolutionary impulse in every worker and oppressed individual and to develop it into its historic potential for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. □

David Hoskins  
WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN



## Neglect at Kentucky coal mine leads to deaths

On May 20 an explosion in a coal mine in Holmes Mill, Ky., killed five workers. The blast occurred around 1 a.m. as miners worked the late-night maintenance shift.

According to sole survivor Paul Ledford, four of the emergency air packs used by workers malfunctioned.

The mine had been cited for 254 Mine Safety and Health Administration violations since 2001.

The Holmes Mill incident is the latest in a string of coal mine disasters that have claimed more than 30 lives since the start

of 2006. Industry analysts and union officials have noticed that the increase in mine fatalities has roughly corresponded with a rise in coal prices nationally.

Joe Main, former safety director for the Mine Workers union, has said fatigue may have played a role in some of the accidents. With the increase in coal prices, many miners have been asked to work 20 and 30 hours of overtime a week as coal operators seek to extract a super surplus value from workers' labor at a time of increased market demand.

—David Hoskins

## Domestic Workers United

# Demand passage of a bill of rights

Continued from page 3

shared bad memories about her first job in the United States. She worked for a couple who had one daughter and two dogs; one of the dogs had cancer. She was required to dress in a full white nurse's uniform and was forced to push the child and the sick dog in a double stroller through the streets of New York.

While her employers threw lavish birthdays parties for the dogs and chauffeured the animals by limousines, they paid this worker only \$271 every two weeks.

Many domestic workers reported in the DWU study that after working long hours, they could not afford to pay their own bills. Forty percent said that they could not pay their monthly phone bill, 37 percent said they were unable to pay rent or mortgage, and 21 percent reported they sometimes or often did not have enough food to eat.

Meeting with a state senator's aide in Albany May 23, one woman shared a story of a domestic worker whose employer went away on vacation for two weeks, leaving her two small children at home. The employer left no food in the house nor money for food for the children, forcing the domestic worker to use her own meager wages to provide for the children. The domestic worker saved receipts but her employer refused to reimburse her.

### U.S. legacy of racism towards domestic workers

"I compare the domestic industry to the legacy of the slavery because if you remember times before, when the slaves were brought to this country, women were placed in the house and men were placed to work in fields with the rest of the women. The women were physically, sex-

ually and emotionally abused the by the masters. And that still exists to this day. And that's why I am a member of DWU: because I see this as reparations [for] women's visible labor, not only in the United States but around the world," Joyce Campbell, a leader of DWU, told WBAI radio.

Historically, the labor and workers' movements have been successful in wrangling concessions in the form of laws to obtain protections and standards in the work place. DWU's study outlines provisions in U.S. labor laws that exclude both farm and domestic workers from federal rights and protections.

"The NLRA [National Labor Relations Act] guarantees U.S. employees the right to organize, but specifically excludes domestic workers from its definition of 'employee.'

"The FLSA [Fair Labor Standards Act] sets a federal minimum wage rate, maximum hours, and overtime for employees in certain occupations. Until 1974, domestic workers were completely excluded, and today the Act still excludes from coverage 'casual' employees such as babysitters and 'companions' for the sick or elderly. Furthermore, live-in domestic workers, unlike most other employees in the U.S., cannot get overtime under FLSA.

"OSHA [Occupational Safety & Health Administration] regulations explicitly exclude domestic workers from the Act's protections '[a]s a matter of policy.'"

Even civil rights laws have excluded domestic workers. The study reports that although Title VII prohibits discrimination on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex, or national origin," this only applies only to employers with 15 or more employees. Thus, virtually every domestic worker in the United States is excluded

from Title VII's protections.

The study also showed that because the industry's work place is in private homes, physical, verbal and sexual abuse and other forms of degradations are rampant, with no way for workers to hold the employers accountable. One-third of domestic workers who face abuse identified race and immigration status as factors in the employers' actions.

### Domestic workers are fighting back!

In Caribbean patois, "Tell Dem Slavery Done!" is the slogan on the front of a Domestic Workers United T-shirt. Next to the slogan is the image of a Black woman with her fist in the air. On the back of the shirt, in big block letters, is a multinational list of organizations—Asian, Latina, South Asian, Caribbean, and more intertwined with words of multinational solidarity.

"When I came here and started to work and saw the great divide in terms of women of color, Third World women, whether we be Asian, whether we be Trinidadian, or whether we be Mexican, we are all women of color. We're oppressed, we work long hours, we are afraid to speak up," says Joyce Campbell. "I always wanted to belong to something that could radically change the way we are viewed on our jobs, the ways we are looked at and perceived. When I found DWU, I knew that there ain't no turning back for me. This is my struggle. This is my fight."

Founded in 2000, Domestic Workers United was initiated by the Women Workers Project of CAAAV-Organizing Asian Communities and Andolan Organizing South Asian Workers. Both are progressive grassroots groups based in New York. In the spring of 2000, domestic workers of each group began to reach out

to workers throughout the industry.

Through a series of meetings, hundreds of domestic workers, predominantly from the Caribbean, came forward and DWU was founded. Affiliate organizations of DWU include Damayan Migrant Workers Association, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Unity Housecleaners, CAAAV-Organizing Asian Communities and Andolan Organizing South Asian Workers.

An important allied organization has been Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, which launched a Shalom Bayit: Justice for Domestic Workers campaign to reach out to Jewish employers of domestic workers. Close to 25 synagogues in Manhattan and Brooklyn have engaged in a process of education, outreach, fundraising and political action in solidarity with Domestic Workers United.

In 2003, the New York City Council passed the first bill in the country to expand protections for domestic workers by requiring employers to inform employees in writing about duties and wages. The current Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights (A2804) has been in the New York State Senate for one year, and in the House Assembly for two.

"While the Bush administration is trying to further criminalize immigrants and push forward his guest worker bill, here are immigrant women workers fighting for justice," says Ai-jen Poo, an organizer for DWU and a staff member of CAAAV. "The winning of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights would mean a victory not just for domestic workers, but for all for workers fighting for a living wage and for dignity and respect on the job."

To support the passing of the Domestic Workers Bills of Rights (A2804), see [www.domesticworkersunited.org](http://www.domesticworkersunited.org) □

# Video games push imperialist propaganda as Poverty drops in Venezuela



By Larry Hales

Video-game makers Lucasarts and Pandemic have announced the sequel to the hugely popular "Mercenary" game. It will be titled "Mercenaries 2: World in Flames," and is to be based on fictional events unfolding in Venezuela.

The makers of "Mercenaries 2" describe the game as "an explosive open-world action game" in which "a power-hungry tyrant messes with Venezuela's oil supply, sparking an invasion that turns the country into a war zone."

The first "Mercenary" game was equally provocative. The action took place in a North Korea that was supposedly run by a "tyrant." In both games players run around as guns for hire, but with an agenda that fits the mold of what the imperialist powers deem as important to furthering "democracy" and the free flow of capital.

These games are not the first to openly state the U.S. imperialists' desires or aims. Tom Clancy, the war hawk historian, who

has written fictions on the U.S. intelligence services that detail his insider status as well as histories of the 82nd Airborne Division and other military outfits, has developed three different lines of games. One of them was "Ghost Recon: Island Thunder." Part of the game's write-up features this: "Cuba. Ripe with randy women, hairy men, some of the world's best cigars, rainforests, beaches, and a dictator who's managed to stay in power for a little over 40 years."

The racist, sexist disdain for the Cuban people is clear. Then the propaganda gets even more to the point: "In the near future, Fidel Castro is dead. Cuba has decided to hold free elections once again and move itself into the future and away from the long Communist rule. World authorities are asked to intervene and make sure that everything runs smoothly. While the world sits back and looks in on the events proceeding in Cuba, some startling discoveries are made that point to a group of rebels in the hills thought to be under the

control of drug dealers and bandits looking to disrupt the process and seize power for themselves, returning Cuba to a dictatorial state once again."

These are not esoteric games that reach the hands of a sparse population. The video-game industry has eclipsed the motion picture industry. Its 2003 profits totaled around \$10 billion.

These games, like other propaganda from capitalist media, constitute psychological warfare.

## Facts about Venezuela denied

The newest game is a major provocation on Venezuela, in a line that leads back to the 2001 coup attempt, which was openly funded by the United States, and the Venezuelan bosses' oil strike that followed.

There couldn't be a wider gap between the facts and the game's premise. Not only has Venezuelan President Chavez won election after election, but he has followed the mandate of workers and the poor in Venezuela. The Bolivarian Revolution has inspired workers and the oppressed around the world and has ignited the struggle for socialism.

Despite all the imperialist action and continuing threats against Venezuela, there have been great strides made. The Center for Economic and Policy Research recently released statistics showing a substantial drop in the poverty rate, based on cash income, in Venezuela.

According to the CEPR, 55 percent of Venezuelans lived in poverty in 1998, when Chavez was first elected. Today 11

percent less—44 percent—live in poverty. When the gains made in health care, nutrition and education are factored in, the number drops to 35 percent.

The United States, in contrast, has shown an increase in poverty rates and an increase in the number of people without medical coverage over the same years.

The difference is that the wealth of Venezuela is being used for the people and not to make the ruling class increasingly rich. The oligarchy that Venezuela once was is a thing of the past. Workers and the oppressed are becoming the rulers.

This fact scares Washington because of its global ramifications. The bourgeoisie in Venezuela is becoming less and less effective, and a military invasion by mercenaries from Colombia or anywhere else looks less and less like a viable option. Even a U.S. invasion would be risky, as 1.5 million Venezuelan men and women are being armed and trained to defend the country from an invasion.

Still, the fact that a popular video game is expressing outright the U.S. government's plans for Venezuela is no mere coincidence. It is another threat.

These types of games are dangerous on more than one level. Not only do they threaten the Bolivarian Revolution, but they act as youth recruiting tools. The military of late has been designing and marketing video games to attract youth to join its ranks. Though this game may not have been designed by the U.S. military, it is a propaganda piece aimed at disenfranchised youths who feel alienated and see no place to direct their ire. □

## Join the Travel Challenge to Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash

While the U.S. government crafts new restrictions on travel to Cuba, especially for "academics and religious groups," according to the May 19 Miami Herald, preparations are under way across North America to challenge the travel ban by spending a week or two seeing Cuba first hand.

For the past four years, since the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Treasury Department virtually eliminated any avenue for legal travel, organizers have mobilized every summer to apply the methods used by the African American communities in the U.S. Civil Rights movement.

As the Rev. Lucius Walker, executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, said at a conference on Cuba travel in New York in March 2005, "Nothing has been gained without a struggle." Things would be so different today, he stated, if Rosa Parks had continued to sit in the back of the bus. "If people refuse to obey the law, it cannot be enforced."

The 17th Pastors for Peace Friendship caravan will begin in Canada on June 17. Through 14 separate routes, the caravans will traverse all 48 contiguous states, stopping in 120 cities gathering humanitarian aid and support.

The 37th Venceremos Brigade leaves July 2 for two weeks of work in Cuba. Over the years, Brigadistas have harvested sugar cane, citrus and corn, built housing, painted and repaired buildings—working side by side with Cuban workers and students.

The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, as guest of the Cuban labor unions, visits work places and exchanges views with Cuban workers for a week.

On July 17, the VB and Labor Exchange will return from Cuba, marching across the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, N.Y., while Pastors for Peace crosses the Rio Grande border from Mexico into Texas. Supporters are encouraged to come to Buffalo to greet, support and celebrate with the returning traveler challengers.

Although Cuba travelers have received a variety of threatening letters from OFAC,

the organized travel challenges fight back collectively. No one who has stood firm against OFAC's letters and gone through the civil process has received a court date.

The U.S. government's ban on travel to Cuba is part of the 47-year-long blockade of that small island nation. In a secret report dated April 6, 1960, and declassified in 1991, a U.S. State Department official put the aim plainly: "Through frustration and discouragement based on dissatisfaction and economic difficulties ... to withhold funds and supplies to Cuba in order to cut real income thereby causing starvation, desperation and the overthrow of the government." ([www.cubavsbloqueo.cu](http://www.cubavsbloqueo.cu))

This imperialist intent to retake Cuba and destroy the socialist gains that have made Cuba the healthiest, best educated and most politically involved working class in the Americas is also outlined in great detail in the first report of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, submitted in 2004.

But increased U.S. governmental restrictions gave birth to their opposite: a broader demand to travel to Cuba. On May 20 Cuban Americans joined the travel challenge movement in a Miami demonstration, protesting restrictions that limit visits to once every three years by family members designated by the U.S. government.

The Emergency Coalition to Defend Educational Travel, with co-plaintiffs including 450 academics and students in 45 states, is suing the U.S. Treasury Department for impeding academic freedom. (<http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/05/26/cuba>)

The U.S. government has canceled licenses permitting churches to organize travel to Cuba. The bodies affected include the National Council of Churches, the American Baptist Churches USA and the Alliance of Baptists, and organizations such as the Presbyterian Church (USA), which now has a more restrictive license.

For more information on this year's travel challenges, visit Pastors for Peace at [www.pastorsforpeace.org](http://www.pastorsforpeace.org), email the Venceremos Brigade at [vbrigade@yahoo.com](mailto:vbrigade@yahoo.com), and email the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange at [laborexchange@aol.com](mailto:laborexchange@aol.com).

## Support first People's Alternative Summit

From a talk given by Vannia Lara, a Dominican organizer, at the May 13-14 conference on "Preparing for the Rebirth of the Global Struggle for Socialism" in New York City.

The U.S. is in the Dominican Republic right now, in Barahona, trying to do what they did in Vieques. We have been economically and culturally invaded, and are now being militarily invaded.

We were invaded in the past, in 1916 and in 1965, when we had the April Revolution that, along with a sector of the armed forces, was mostly fought by civilians. Even though there was only one gun per 20 Dominicans, we were about to defeat the right-wing section that had the coup d'etat against Bosch. And when we were about to take power, the U.S. Marines paid us a visit, and that's the end of that. We lost a lot of valuable Dominican lives.

The Organization of American States is having its general assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, June 4-6. We're working really hard on a counter-summit. We call it the first People's Alternative Summit.

We're going to be talking about bad governance, the crisis of globalization, the FTAA, the post-FTAA, the DR-CAFTA. And we're going to talk about the alternative, the ALBA, Mercosur, Petrocaribe, the TCB—the treaty that recently Morales, Chavez and Castro came together to make concrete.

We'll have camps for the three days, forums and workshops, and a big march on the fourth. We're inviting social activists, religious figures and representa-



Vannia Lara

WW PHOTO: LAL ROOHH

tives from progressive governments such as Cuba and Venezuela.

The congressional elections are going on right now in the Dominican Republic, and the crisis is awful. The health-care system is in a big crisis, and our children are in the streets. Haitian immigrants are being persecuted because of institutionalized xenophobia, because we are taught in school that we were invaded by the Haitians and that we became independent from them, not from Spain.

We'll also be talking about militarization. They say that the troops that are now in Barahona are leaving on the 30th of this month. We don't care, we want them out now.

We'll also be talking about human rights, the immigration issue here, and the immigration issue in the Dominican Republic, with the Haitian people.

We're trying to bring groups from all over Latin America and the U.S. I hope I see you in Santo Domingo.

For more information, visit <http://peoplesummit.tripod.com>.

## Colombian elections

# Left gains despite paramilitary terror

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Colombia, that suffering nation in Latin America that daily witnesses crimes by its paramilitary regime—massacres, indiscriminate detentions, disappearances and constant state repression—held presidential elections on May 28. Some 2.6 million people voted very clearly against the U.S.'s closest ally in the region, incumbent President Alvaro Uribe, in a vote that was also a rejection of neoliberalism and the U.S. free trade agreement.

Although Uribe won, allowing him a second term until 2010, for the first time in that country's history the left won second place in a national election. It is now established as the main opposition group, displacing the Liberal and Conservative parties, which for nearly a century have alternated in that nation's highest office.

A closer look at this election process shows that the unarmed, center-to-left movement—composed of trade unionists, human rights advocates, women, youth and student groups, Indigenous, peasants, Afrocolombians and other progressive forces—formed a coalition, the Alternative Democratic Pole (ADP). Sen. Carlos Gaviria, a law professor and former president of the Constitutional Tribunal, was their presidential candidate and received 22.04 percent of the vote against Uribe's 62.2 percent.

What was behind Uribe's much publicized "landslide victory"? First, a 55 percent abstention. The majority of the 26,731,700 eligible voters did not exercise that right, something not new in Colombia. In fact, when Uribe was first elected in 2002, absenteeism was around 54 percent.

### Climate of repression

Second, the Primero Colombia (Colombia First) coalition, Uribe's base after he left the Liberal Party, had the aid of paramilitaries who organized a reign of terror, particularly in places that had shown strong support for Gaviria's ADP. Colombians from the ADP reported that paramilitaries were threatening the residents of

some areas, as in Ciudad Bolivar, a very poor neighborhood in Bogotá.

Neima, an activist this writer met in Colombia, told WW: "Residents charged that members of paramilitary groups were going house to house, threatening that if even one vote went to the left, they would pay for it."

Several reports say that more than 10 activists from the ADP have been assassinated over the last few weeks.

In 2004 Uribe had initiated a process of negotiations to "demobilize" the AUC, a paramilitary group. Some 30,000 AUC members supposedly gave up their arms in a very publicized international media event in the small town of Santa Fe de Ralito. Paramilitary boss Salvatore Mancuso, well-known for masterminding countless crimes, shed crocodile tears in front of the cameras.

The government's negotiations with the AUC have been widely criticized for basically exonerating the crimes they have committed, giving the paramilitaries total impunity for horrendous assassinations and massacres. To these accusations, Uribe has responded by calling it the "cost of peace."

Now these "demobilized" paramilitaries have formed other organizations, among them the Autodefensas Nueva Generación (New Generation of Self Defense). Iván Cepeda Castro, from the Lawyers Collective Jose Alvear Restrepo (LCJAR), a human rights advocacy group, wrote in a Colombian magazine: "As an answer to the last column that I wrote ... I received an intimidating message from the General Staff of a group that calls itself the New Generation of Self-defense Farmers. They said that they are more active than ever and that they will use 'all means necessary' to obtain their aims."

According to Cepeda Castro, other threatening messages have been sent to LCJAR and to students and professors at the University of Antioquia.

In a May 23 report, Amnesty International still mentions the Colombian paramilitaries as a force the government should

take action against to prevent impunity.

In another May 23 report entitled "A turbid environment that the President could clear with just a few words," the Colombia Coordinating Committee in Europe and the U.S. says: "The recent declarations of the President of the Republic, of the Vice-president of the Republic and the High Commissioner for Peace encourage the occurrence of attacks against social leaders and human rights advocates; they polarize unnecessarily and dangerously the electoral debate, during the last weeks of campaign; and avoid their obligation to clearly talk about the support that the paramilitary groups frequently give to their reelection campaign."

But it is not just the paramilitaries that exert harassment and repression against the civilian population. On May 17, 11 days before the elections and several days after the beginning of a National Alternative Summit in La Maria in Cauca province, the Colombian army invaded this Indigenous settlement, which in 1999 had been declared a space for dialog and negotiation for civilian society.

The summit had been called by the Indigenous, peasant and Afrocolombian national movement in an effort to oppose the free trade agreement with the U.S. and Uribe's reelection, and also to demand thorough agrarian reform. The Colombian Army's response was to burn ranches, infrastructure and all the vehicles in the community. Indigenous leader Pero Pascue was assassinated. Some 60 people were injured and dozens disappeared and/or detained. Afterwards, the army destroyed everything that remained in the La Maria settlement. ([www.censat.org](http://www.censat.org))

Dubbed the "most peaceful" elections ever by the international commercial media, the Colombian election was held with the participation of more than 220,000 security forces, deployed to nearly 10,000 polling stations across the country.

### Not mentioned in Uribe's speech: FARC

Uribe, a lawyer trained at Harvard and

Oxford, has promised to crush the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). During his years in office, the Patriot Act and the Act of Democratic Security were passed—laws aimed against the armed insurgency but applied in general to any opposition to his dictatorial rule, armed or unarmed.

The FARC have not been destroyed. On the contrary, they have managed to adapt and respond to the government's aggression. As a result, Uribe, in his speech after the elections, did not even mention the armed insurgency.

One of the first to congratulate Uribe was U.S. President George W. Bush. White House spokeswoman Eryn Witcher said, "The president affirmed his strong support for Colombia in its continued battle against narco-terrorism, in moving forward on our free-trade agreement and in helping our democratic friends in the region."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also congratulated Uribe for his victory in "free, fair and secure elections," wishing him "even greater success" in the second term.

Rice said, "Our relationship with the government and people of Colombia is a particularly close one.... It is based on mutual agreement that open societies and free markets are the best ways to meet the needs and expectations of our people, and protect their fundamental rights and liberties."

The majority of Colombian people, more than 50 percent poor, may have a different view.

Colombia not only satisfies U.S. corporations' greed for profits from the substantial wealth of this South American nation but it also plays a crucial role in U.S. plans for hegemony in the region, particularly its efforts to destabilize the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. Colombia ranks third, after Israel and Egypt, in U.S. military aid.

But progressive people in Colombia, like Neima, see the election results as something that "gives us more strength to continue the struggle" and "will not stop our increasing hopes and dreams." □

## Tribunal establishes responsibilities for atrocities in Haiti

*Continued from page 1*

pendence from France—at such a high cost that perhaps half the Haitian people died in that struggle—the Haitian people only had to confront one world power. "Now the Haitian people must confront the whole world in the form of the United Nations, which is subservient to the United States."

Clark continued: "Unless there is accountability now, the same forces that killed Dessalines [the leader who declared Haiti independent] and removed Aristide twice, unless their individual agents are held responsible, Haiti will not obtain real independence and it is unclear how long the government put into power by this last election will last. Never doubt the importance of this commission and its role in supporting the Haitian people."

After Clark spoke some of the videotaped testimony that the Commission of Inquiry had gathered was presented.

A high point was the testimony of an old woman who lived in one of the houses that attachés burned in 2005 under the protection of CIVPOL. Attachés are freelancers

hired by members of the PNH to do their dirty work—killing and mutilating people—and let the PNH disclaim responsibility. When the attachés told her to lie down on the floor, she explained, "I knew they were going to disappear me. So I ran out the door and away."

Her testimony and that of others established that the UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti protected the PNH and its attachés when they attacked areas like Bel Air when

people were resisting. Two UN officers were directly responsible for atrocities; their cases will be referred to the International Court of Justice.

Brian Concannon, who was acting as the tribunal's juge d'instruction, a magistrate who examines the evidence in a criminal case under Haitian law, closed the session by examining the responsibility of Bernard Gousse. Gousse was justice minister when these atrocities were commit-

ted, and threw most of the political prisoners in jail.

While Gousse's general responsibility is clear, the only person in the United States who could testify on the details of his illegal acts, the Rev. Jean Juste, suffers from cancer and was not available. His deeds will be examined at another tribunal.

The next International Tribunal is scheduled for Port-au-Prince in September. □

## HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION

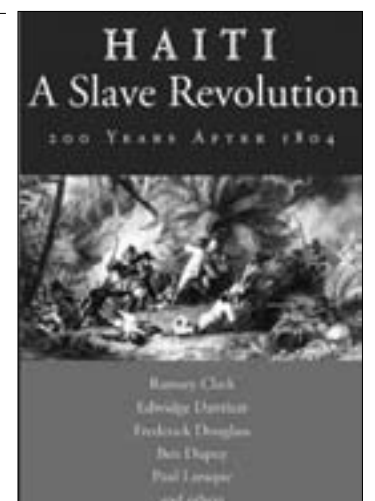
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## May 27 Pride march attacked

# What's behind anti-gay pogrom in Russia?

By Leslie Feinberg

The capitalist city administration of Moscow deployed massive police forces and worked hand-in-glove with the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, ultra-nationalists similar to the Ku Klux Klan, skinheads and other neo-fascists to violently crush the first Russian Pride march on May 27.

Some of the same ultra-rightist forces have also been responsible for a qualitative leap in racism and xenophobia in Russia that has resulted in at least 48 murders and scores of assaults over the last 18 months alone. These fascistic forces have targeted people of color, especially Africans and workers from the former Soviet Central Asian and Caucasus republics. Attacks on Roma, Latin American and Jewish people as well as communists are also rising.

U.S. white supremacist David Duke has made two recent trips to Russia and neo-Nazi organizing is on the rise there. Boris Mironoz, a former press secretary to Boris Yeltsin, wrote the preface to Duke's newest book. (Southern Poverty Law Center)

A decade and a half after counter-revolution overturned the Soviet Union, against the stated will of some 75 percent of Soviet citizens who voted not to dismantle the USSR, this is the vicious reality of the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

The Russian capitalists had hoped that, after counter-revolution toppled the Soviet Union, Russia's entry into the Council of Europe and the G7 summit would elevate them to the status of an imperialist superpower and peer of the U.S. and Europe.

Instead, the imperialists are siphoning oil and other natural resources from former Soviet republics, covertly supporting "regime change" to facilitate this theft of wealth, and establishing military bases in the region to encircle Russia.

As a result, Russian workers today are experiencing the kind of social dislocation that German workers and much of the middle class suffered after World War I when the Allied imperialists economically strangled Germany with the Versailles Treaty of 1918. The economic crisis paved the way for German fascism.

A segment of the Russian capitalist class is now whipping up ultra-nationalism and using the ancient weapon of scapegoating—divide-and-rule tactics—in order to divert the anger of the workers away from what capitalism has brought them: the loss of jobs, of low-cost rent, free health care and free education. The capitalist counter-revolution of a decade and a half ago has set a neo-fascist movement in motion in Russia.

### Caught between hammer and anvil

Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov has threatened that a May 27 Pride march "in any form" would be "resolutely quashed." Luzhkov has for a decade been the darling of oligarchs and billionaires who have made their fortune gentrifying the capital, while millions of former Soviet citizens struggle for economic existence.

On May 20, the Tverskoy district court of Moscow denied the Pride activists' appeal to march.

Leading Pride organizer Nikolai Alexeyev vowed that some kind of event

would still happen on that date. Pride organizers did not announce the type of action, or where or when it would take place, until a noon media conference on May 27 at the conclusion of an international gay conference held in Moscow, which began on May 25.

At that time, organizers announced to the assembled international and national media—including the London Times and the San Francisco Chronicle—that activists would attempt to lay a wreath of flowers on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Alexander Gardens, because it did not require any formal authorization by officials; public entry to the gardens is free. The goal, organizers stated, was to pay their respects "to the soldiers who fought against Nazism, the most homophobic ideology." (Pravda.ru, May 29)

Activists then planned to march to the city square facing the mayor's office.

But two hours before the media conference, a sea of thousands of riot police and military forces had already militarily occupied downtown Moscow. The city deployed 1,000 municipal police alone—one quarter of the Moscow force.

"[A]ccording to a representative of the Union of Orthodox Citizens," Pravda.ru reported May 27, "voluntary helpers for the police were also patrolling the streets, ready to phone 02 at any signs of 'gay' activity." Gangs of fascists ran through the streets towards the site of the action, hurling flares and detonating smoke bombs.

When Russian Pride activists and their international supporters arrived at the gardens around 2:30 p.m., they found the gates closed and rows of hundreds of riot police arrayed to bar their entry. Police quickly arrested Nikolai Alexeyev at the gates.

Pride demonstrators were confronted by a mob of some 100 reactionaries: skinheads, religious zealots waving Christian icons and crucifixes, right-wingers who sported St. George's cross—the flag of the Crusades—and ultra-nationalists. This modern-day pogrom even included men dressed in the parade uniforms of Cossacks—once the cavalry of the czar. These neo-fascist forces surrounded and chased Pride activists and supporters, punching and kicking them and throwing teargas canisters.

Wherever Pride demonstrators tried to reassemble downtown, they were trapped between the hammer of fascists and the anvil of police cordons.

Several dozen men screaming "Down with lesbians!" poured water over Pride activist Evgeniya Debryanskaya when she tried to argue with a homophobe. The Special Police grabbed her and dragged her off to the arrest van.

Police stood by, according to witnesses, as some 20 ultra-rightists beat and bloodied Volker Beck—a representative of the German Green party and a deputy in the German parliament—as he tried to speak to the media. The police arrested Beck. Pierre Serne, a man of color, and several other people were also reportedly beaten by the mob. A San Francisco Chronicle reporter trying to interview a participant was also kicked and punched.

Within hours, the police had arrested scores of Pride activists.

### Forces of reaction

Right-wing nationalists who scapegoat



Multinational demonstration April 8 against racist violence in St. Petersburg, Russia. Friends hold picture of slain 28-year-old Lamzar Samba from Senegal.

those identifying as lesbian and gay charge that these are distinctly Western-imposed political identities. They had dramatically stepped up attacks in the month before the May 25-27 Pride conference and scheduled May 27 march.

At 10 p.m. on April 30, a mob of some 100 reactionaries, young and old, from different Russian towns—including a skinhead photographed wearing a Nazi helmet—attacked a "gay" party at the Renaissance Event Club in the south of Moscow. The party was organized to build political support for the May 27 march before city administrators voted to bar it. Organizers had hoped about 1,000 people might attend.

But the neo-fascists arrived early, at 10 p.m. They threw bottles, rocks, eggs and threats at party-goers.

"Russian orthodox priests blessed skinhead protesters outside the venue," as they prepared to attack the club, reported GayNZ.com on May 29. The ultra-chauvinist organization Russian National Union also reportedly took part in the siege. At least one man who arrived at the party was reported beaten and others were reportedly hit with stones.

The next night—the evening of the international May Day workers' holiday—at least 100 skinheads and other neo-fascists blockaded the entrance of Moscow's most well-known gay club, the Three Monkeys, trapping all those inside. Police reportedly arrested about 39 of the neo-fascists. The club's owner, Ilya Abaturov, blamed city officials for the attack.

At least two club customers reported their car windows had been smashed and a young woman was injured by a group of older women, who beat her with religious icons and crucifixes. (Telegraph.co.uk, May 29)

### Cynical use of 'human rights'

The date of the May 27 Pride march was set to coincide with the 13th anniversary of the day that then-president Boris Yeltsin agreed to remove the anti-sodomy law. This was two years after the coup that overturned the former socialist Soviet Union. Yeltsin's move was hailed in the imperialist media as a sign that Russia was becoming a democracy.

However, Yeltsin's move to repeal the anti-gay law was reluctant. The European imperialists were saying they couldn't bring Russia into the Council of Europe without protests from domestic progressive movements in their own countries.

Nevertheless, some gay Russian activists were so thrilled with Yeltsin's rescinding of the law that they reportedly were on the barricades at the siege of parliament when the pro-U.S. president ordered tanks to open fire on the Russian White House, killing an unknown number of legislators. "Yeltsin's decrees were printed on the Xerox machines of the new gay organizations," says "The Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, Russian Gay History."

Even with the anti-gay legislation having been taken off the books, police continued to raid and shut down gay and lesbian offices, clubs and cafés. And homosexuality was still categorized as a mental illness until 1999.

Today the imperialist powers of Europe, for their own reasons, demanded that the Russian government allow the international conference and march to take place.

Moscow Pride was scheduled to happen one week after Russia assumed the presidency of the Council of Europe—an organization of European capitalist powers that predates the European Union. The timing of the Pride march was also on the eve of the G8 summit, which is being held this year in St. Petersburg.

Russian President Vladimir Putin remained silent on the banning of Moscow Pride. However, the fact that the May 25 opening Pride event—a lecture on Oscar Wilde—was held at the State Library of Foreign Literature was seen by many as a stamp of approval by the Russian government itself. (UKGayNews, May 26)

Were the neo-fascist attacks organized at the behest of a sector of the Russian ultra-nationalist bourgeoisie that wanted to embarrass Putin?

The imperialist giants are angry with Putin for their own reasons. After a string of mainly U.S.-engineered "regime changes" in former Soviet republics, Putin signed a law into effect in January that forces NGOs to reveal their sources of funding.

European organizations and individuals exerted a great deal of pressure on Russia to stop the violence and allow the May 25-27 conference and march to take place, including Secretary General Terry Davis of the Council of Europe; Jacques Lang, a member of France's National Assembly and a presidential hopeful; and the European Parliament's "Intergroup" on gay and lesbian rights.

European social-democratic politicians and activists, many of whom self-identify as gay and lesbian, traveled to



Moscow for the Pride events.

But at the same time, the imperialists—with U.S. finance capital in the lead—are economically exploiting and militarily encircling Russia and the former Soviet republics, and that helps create the conditions that exacerbate ultra-nationalism and czarist-type pogroms.

### 'Relatively few Russians'

The chauvinism exhibited by some of the European activists who took part in the Moscow Pride events runs counter to the kind of solidarity and sensitivity that the Russian movement needs and deserves.

For example, the response of Merlin Holland—grandchild of the late-19th-century Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde—to a terrible disruption of his May 25 opening lecture was so arrogant that it would certainly enrage even the most progressive Russians.

Holland's lecture about his grandfather—a feminine gay man jailed by the British—was interrupted by some 20 right-wingers, who threw eggs, released an irritant gas and demanded, in Russian, for the removal of gays from the country.

Holland responded, "It is such a pity that you cannot address us in English."

The next day, May 26, the international gay conference drew several hundred participants from some 20 countries, mostly European. It began at the Swissôtel, where a cup of coffee costs \$10 and a bottle of water at the bar runs \$12.

Scott Long gave an account of the May 26 conference proceedings. Long is director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights program of Human Rights Watch—an organization that exerts pressure on countries already in the cross-hairs of the major imperialist powers. Yet even he took note that most of the conference discussions took place in English or German. (Washington Blade Online, May 26)

Long described those gathered as: "Lots of people from abroad; relatively few Russians. ... And few of the voices proposing decisions are Russian."

Long quoted a pivotal speech by Peter Tatchell, head of the London-based OutRage!, which directs its political fire primarily at former colonies that have broken away from colonial and imperialist bondage—like Iran and Zimbabwe. Tatchell exhorted those in attendance to march the next day, proclaiming: "Your blood will become our rallying cry, the Russian movement's rallying cry."

Long added, "The entire discussion is being carried out in English now. The Russians present ... have gathered around a single translator; it allows things to proceed faster, but isolates most of them from participating."

The Russians finally met alone together for an hour. Many wanted to cancel the Pride march altogether. They took a vote. By a narrow margin, they decided to march.

Beyond the conference, the Russian gay movement also reportedly split over whether this was the right time to hold the march.

### Blame the imperialists!

Believe it or not, anti-communists are still blaming the current reactionary attacks in Russia on socialism.

Referring to the fact that Joseph Stalin recriminalized male homosexuality in 1933, Peter Tatchell declared, "Who does Luzhkov think he is? Joseph Stalin? Someone should remind the Mayor that the anti-gay Soviet Union is dead. ... These attempts by the Russian state to suppress Moscow Gay Pride are a throwback to the bad old days of czarist and communist totalitarianism." (pinknews.co.uk, May 29)

An anonymous gay Swiss politician from Geneva proclaimed after recent violence in Moscow: "It's as though Russia is

## Stonewall, June 28, 1969:

# Raid draws crowd and temperature rises

By Leslie Feinberg

The cops who raided the Stonewall bar on June 28, 1969, began letting some of the customers leave one at a time, a slow ordeal. Historian Martin Duberman reports that transgender Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera later told him that patrons were "released after their IDs had been checked and their attire deemed 'appropriate' to their gender—a process accompanied, as in Sylvia's case, by derisive, ugly police banter." (Stonewall)

The police cruisers parked outside the Stonewall Inn in the heart of Greenwich Village on that hot, muggy night began drawing a crowd. Many of those the police had released from the bar also chose to stay outside. As each person emerged from the Stonewall, the crowd outside cheered them. Some 200 had been inside that night.

Danny Garvin, who arrived at the Stonewall that night as the raid was already under way, estimated the early crowd on the pavement outside at 100-150.

Village Voice reporters Lucian Truscott and Howard Smith, who said they were working late-night hours at the newspaper's Seventh Avenue office, saw the police activity from the windows and hurried to the scene.

Their coverage of the crowd was not sympathetic, but it does reveal the gender expression, displays of defiance and sharp-edged in-your-face attitude of those who had been trapped inside the bar that night, and those who chose to remain and mass outside.

Truscott wrote; "Wrists were limp, hair was primped, and reactions to the applause were classic. 'I gave them the gay power bit, and they loved it, girls.'"

Smith described the crowd outside as "prancing high and jubilant."

Duberman and historian David Carter add more detail.

going back to Soviet times." (ukgaynews.org, May 27)

This red-baiting snips the arc of history out of its context so that anti-gay repression seems to begin with socialism and end with capitalism.

But national chauvinism, white supremacy, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and bigotry against same-sex love are ancient historical products of class-divided societies: slavery, feudalism and capitalism. Czar Peter the First penned the earliest anti-gay law in Russia. At that time, the economy was mostly feudal.

French, German and Swedish capital and industrial investment soon began exploiting the wealth of oil and coal resources, and labor, in and around Russia.

The left-wing Bolshevik Party, which in 1917 helped lead the first successful revolution to establish a long-term workers' state, had to grapple with that feudal and capitalist legacy.

Yet in the weeks after the workers and peasants seized power, one of the first acts by Lenin and the Bolsheviks was to abolish the anti-gay laws. The revolution extended greater rights regarding women, same-sex love, gender expression and sex-reassignment than any other government had in recorded history. (See Lavender & Red series, www.workers.org)

At that time, homosexuality was against

Carter wrote, "As one young man swished by the detective posted at the door, he tossed the classic come-on line at him: 'Hello there, fella!'" ("Stonewall: The riots that sparked the gay revolution")

"Some of the campier patrons," Duberman noted, "emerging one by one from the Stonewall to find an unexpected crowd, took the opportunity to strike their instant poses, starlet style, while the onlookers whistled and shouted their applause-meter ratings."

These were acts of courage in front of the police by those who knew that same-sex love was illegal in New York state—and every other state in the United States except Illinois. They knew that anyone not wearing three pieces of "gender appropriate" clothing was subject to arrest. And they knew that police beatings, rape and sexual humiliation—acts of torture—invariably followed arrest.

In 1969 these laws on the books were not abstract and long forgotten. They were actively prosecuted—and the crowd knew it. Police raids constantly threatened all lesbian/gay/trans social meeting places—from bars to cruising areas in the parks and along the piers.

In the last three weeks of June 1969 alone, the New York Police Department raided five popular gay bars. Cops shut down three of them for good: the Checkerboard, the Tele-Star and the Sewer. (Carter)

### 'This night was different'

Voice reporter Smith noticed, according to Carter, "that the police handled the exiting patrons roughly, now hurrying one out

quicker than he could comfortably move, now giving another a parting kick."

Onlooker Danny Garvin recalled the angry reaction: "It started getting ugly. You had attitude: 'Don't touch me!, which then would ignite the crowd: 'Go get 'em!' (Carter)

The crowd continued to swell. More and more people were being released from the Stonewall and staying. Word of the raid spread on the streets of the Village. Some onlookers called their friends from pay phones and told them what was happening. People who had planned to spend their evening at the Stonewall were still showing up.

Those massed outside the bar reportedly grew quiet as a police wagon pulled up and parked on the sidewalk in front of the Stonewall.

Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine ordered his police squad to load up the prisoners and take them to the Sixth Precinct Station. Pine later said: "This presumably should have been the end of the situation, because the raid was already over. Now, all we had to do was put them in the patrol wagon."

But, he added: "The crowd had grown to 10 times the size: it was really frightening.

"So many showed up immediately, it was as if a signal were given. And that was the unusual thing because usually, when we went to work, everybody disappeared. They were glad to get away. But this night was different. Instead of the homosexuals slinking off, they remained there, and their friends came, and it was a real meeting of homosexuals." (Carter)

Next: *All hell breaks loose.*

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PART 64

Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org). Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

the law in every state in the U.S. Even much later, after World War II, Washington carried out a domestic terror witch-hunt against lesbians and gays.

The Russian Revolution won no praise from the imperialists for creating these political freedoms. On the contrary, the imperialist powers tried to invade the new Soviet workers' state on 14 fronts, fueled an internal class war and tightened the economic noose around the impoverished country. That's what eventually wore down the revolution, resulting in the rise of a bureaucracy.

When the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement was being drowned in blood after Hitler's rise to power, the U.S. and Britain did not intervene. It was only after the Soviet Red Army had survived the sieges of Moscow and Leningrad and begun pushing back the German invading armies, turning the tide in World War II at a cost of 20 million Soviet lives, that the imperialist "democ-

racies" sent their armies into France and began to fight Hitler's troops. The imperialists hated Stalin not for his repression but for his role in the defense of the Soviet Union.

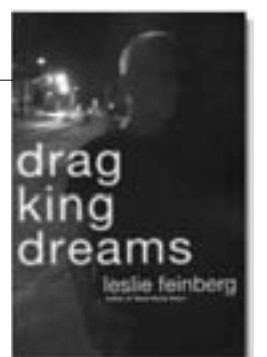
The exploiting ruling classes, especially in the imperialist countries, are not going to bring freedom to any of the oppressed. When they want to wring concessions from a government, however, they are adept at exploiting its weaknesses. The tremendous propaganda machine controlled by finance capital promises women's rights in Afghanistan, gay rights in Russia, and human rights in Iraq—but all to justify intervention on behalf of the profit "rights" of the oil companies and banks.

Progressive activists, especially from the imperialist countries, need to understand this if they are going to extend real solidarity to those who need it.

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## Afghani revolt exposes U.S. myth

Thousands of Afghans have demonstrated and protested in Kabul beginning May 28, throwing stones at U.S. and other foreigners and literally risking death. They were shot at and some actually killed following a fatal auto crash on May 29 involving U.S. military vehicles. The explosion of popular fury exposed a White House myth.

What the “accident” and ensuing revolt did was clear away the myth of political stability that Washington had created about its puppet government in Kabul.

No, the situation will not be resolved by fixing the brakes on U.S. trucks. No, the new NATO forces now scheduled to replace U.S. troops won’t make it all better. No, it won’t put things right if it is proved that U.S. troops didn’t fire until someone fired on them—which is doubtful, anyway. No, a few more jobs for the unemployed Afghani youths won’t win their hearts and minds.

Most of Afghanistan’s hungry 24 million people hate the U.S. occupation and a few crumbs won’t win them over.

This story didn’t begin on May 28. For decades U.S. imperialism has intervened in Afghanistan, always to the detriment of its people. Forget Washington’s current propaganda against “fundamentalist Islam” and local warlords. After a revolution there in 1978, Washington fed billions of dollars in cash and weapons to reactionary religious leaders and warlords in order to oust a progressive regime that had the audacity to educate women and promote rights for peasants. This prompted the anti-feudal government to call for Soviet help, but

they were no match for Washington’s proxy army.

After Soviet troops left and what remained of the 1978 revolution was wiped out in blood in the 1990s, Afghanistan was ruled by competing feudal lords. They were then ousted by the Pakistan-backed Taliban. In the beginning, Washington welcomed this change. However, the 2001 U.S. invasion, allegedly aimed at Osama bin-Laden’s al-Qaeda forces, pushed out the Taliban and led to the current situation.

The White House myth is that a democratically elected central government in Kabul legitimately runs the country but faces a “Taliban insurgency” led by “terrorists” in certain remote provinces, and that U.S. and NATO troops are assisting this government to control and finally defeat the “terrorists.”

The truth—and this is what the May 28 revolt helped clarify—is that feudal lords based on an opium trade facilitated by the U.S. run the various provinces, that the “Taliban insurgency” is developing into a national resistance movement against foreign occupation, and that most Afghans see the U.S. and NATO troops as a brutal, arrogant occupation force. Hamid Karzai, a former executive of the U.S. energy company Unocal, is supposed to be president of the whole country but is already being called “the mayor of Kabul.”

The Rumsfeld Pentagon thought that with “shock and awe”—the 21st-century version of “a few shots across the bow”—it could rule the world. It can’t even run Kabul, and May 28, 2006, will be seen as the turning point in making that clear. □



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

# The U.S. role in Darfur, Sudan

By Sara Flounders

What is fueling the campaign now sweeping the U.S. to “Stop Genocide in Darfur”? Campus organizations have suddenly begun organizing petitions, meetings and calls for divestment. A demonstration was held April 30 on the Mall in Washington, D.C., to “Save Darfur.”

Again and again it is said that “something” must be done. “Humanitarian forces” and “U.S. peacekeepers” must be deployed immediately to stop “ethnic cleansing.” UN troops or NATO forces must be used to stop “genocide.” The U.S. government has a “moral responsibility to prevent another Holocaust.”

Outrage is provoked by media stories of mass rapes and photos of desperate refugees. The charge is that tens of thousands of African people are being killed by Arab militias backed by the Sudanese government. Sudan is labeled as both a “terrorist state” and a “failed state.” Even at anti-war rallies, signs have been distributed proclaiming “Out of Iraq—Into Darfur.” Full-page ads in the New York Times have repeated the call.

Who is behind the campaign and what actions are they calling for?

Even a cursory look at the supporters of the campaign shows the prominent role of right-wing evangelical Christians and major Zionist groups to “Save Darfur.”

A Jerusalem Post article of April 27 headlined “U.S. Jews Leading Darfur Rally Planning” described the role of prominent Zionist organizations in organizing the April 30 rally. A full-page ad for the rally in the New York Times was signed by a number of Jewish organizations, including the UJA—Federation of NY and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

But it wasn’t just Zionist groups that called it. The rally was sponsored by a coalition of 164 organizations that included the National Association of Evangelicals, the World Evangelical Alliance and other religious groups that have been the strongest supporters of the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq. The Kansas-based evangelical group Sudan Sunrise helped arrange buses and speakers, did extensive fund raising and co-hosted a 600-person dinner.

This was hardly an anti-war or social justice rally. The organizers had a personal meeting with President George W. Bush just before the rally. He told them: “I welcome your participation. And I want to thank the organizers for being here.”

Originally the demonstration was projected to draw a turnout of more than 100,000. Media coverage generously reported “several thousands,” ranging from 5,000 to 7,000. The rally was overwhelming white. Despite sparse numbers, it got wide media coverage, focusing on celebrity speakers like Academy Award winner George Clooney. Top Democrats and Republicans gave it their blessing, including U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), House minority leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer and New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine. Corzine, by the way, spent \$62 million of his own money to get elected.

The corporate media gave this rally more prominence than either the anti-war rally of 300,000 in New York City on the day before or the millionfold demonstrations across the country for immigrant rights on the day after.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton, former Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Gen. Wesley Clark and British Prime Minister

Tony Blair have all argued in favor of intervention in Sudan.

These leading architects of imperialist policy often refer to another model when they call for this intervention: the successful “humanitarian” war on Yugoslavia that established a U.S./NATO administration over Kosovo after a massive bombing campaign.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington issued a “genocide alert”—the first such alert ever issued—and 35 evangelical Christian leaders signed a letter urging President Bush to send U.S. troops to stop genocide in Darfur. A special national curriculum for students was established to generate grassroots support for U.S. intervention.

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) have embraced the campaign. Liberal voices such as Amy Goodman of Democracy Now, Rabbi Michael Lerner of TIKKUN and Human Rights Watch have also pushed the campaign to “Save Darfur.”

### Diversion from Iraq debacle

The criminal invasion and massive bombing of Iraq, the destruction of its infrastructure that left the people without water or basic electricity, and the horrible photos of the U.S. military’s use of torture at Abu Ghraib prison created a world outcry. At its height, in September 2004, then Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell went to Sudan and announced to the world that the crime of the century—“a genocide”—was taking place there. The U.S. solution was to demand the United Nations impose sanctions on one of the poorest countries on earth and that U.S. troops be sent there as “peacekeepers.”

But the rest of the UN Security Council was unwilling to accept this view, the U.S. “evidence” or the proposed action.

The campaign against Sudan increased even as evidence was being brought forward that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was based on a total lie. The same media that had given credibility to the U.S. government’s claim that it was justified in invading Iraq because that country had “weapons of mass destruction” switched gears to report on “war crimes” by Arab forces in Sudan.

This Darfur campaign accomplishes several goals of U.S. imperialist policy. It further demonizes Arab and Muslim people. It diverts attention from the human rights catastrophe caused by the brutal U.S. war and occupation of Iraq, which has killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

It is also an attempt to deflect attention from the U.S. financing and support of Israel’s war on the Palestinian people.

Most important, it opens a new front in the determination of U.S. corporate power to control the entire region.

### U.S. interest in Sudan

Sudan is the largest country in Africa in area. It is strategically located on the Red Sea, immediately south of Egypt, and borders on seven other African countries. It is about the size of Western Europe but has a population of only 35 million people.

Darfur is the western region of Sudan. It is the size of France, with a population of just 6 million.

Newly discovered resources have made Sudan of great interest to U.S. corporations. It is believed to have oil reserves rivaling those of Saudi Arabia. It has large deposits of natural gas. In addition, it has one of the three largest deposits of high-purity uranium in the world, along with the fourth-largest deposits of copper.

Unlike Saudi Arabia, however, the

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## Iraq atrocities ignored in

# Bush & Blair's hollow words

By Greg Butterfield

There was no apology for Safa Younis. When U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair held a news conference in Washington May 25, they admitted for the first time to making "mistakes" and suffering "set-backs" in their more than three-year war of conquest in Iraq—things the whole world has been aware of for quite some time.

In return for this less than startling admission, the duo—each at the lowest ebb of popularity in their respective countries—received reams of sober coverage in the Western media, designed to give the impression that, finally, these leaders of the imperialist world were facing reality and could begin to turn the situation around.

But there was no apology to Safa Younis, nor any promise of reparations to her and her neighbors in Haditha, Iraq, who survived a massacre of 24 civilians by U.S. Marines last November. The massacre is the latest in a long line of bloody scandals since Washington, backed by its junior partner in London, launched the "War on Terror" in 2001.

Safa, 13, was the only survivor of her family of eight. Rampaging Marines slaughtered her father and mother, Khafif and Aeda Yasin Ahmed, her four sisters aged 14, 10, 5 and 3, her 8-year-old brother, and a 1-year-old girl staying with the family.

Neighbors said the family members were shot at close range or killed by grenades. The children died screaming.

Safa survived because she was covered in her mother's blood when she fell to the floor. The killers thought she was dead.

Her next-door neighbors, the Ali family—from 76-year-old amputee and grandfather Abdul Hamid Hassan Ali all the way to 4-year-old Abdullah—suffered a similar fate. ("In Haditha, Memories of a Massacre," Washington Post, May 28)

Bush and Blair also said nothing about the recent report of the United Nations Commission on Torture. The report condemned the United States for torturing "suspected terrorists" around the globe. And it called on Washington to immediately close the chamber of horrors at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, where more than 400 prisoners are held without charge.

Of course, Bush and Blair were also

silent on how their governments conspired to concoct the outrageous "weapons of mass destruction" lies used to justify the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Nor did they comment on the decades-long U.S. scheme to swallow Iraq's vast oil wealth lock, stock and \$70-a-barrel.

So just what did Bush and Blair "admit"?

Blair spoke of tactical mistakes, like underestimating the Iraqi popular resistance. "It should have been obvious to us," he said.

But colonialists and imperialists have always discounted the people's will to resist.

Bush, who now wishes he'd managed to drag more countries into the occupation to take some pressure off himself, said he regretted belligerent pronouncements he made after Sept. 11, 2001. He said, "In certain parts of the world, it was misinterpreted."

As for torturing and killing prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison, Bush was not apologetic, merely resentful of the exposures. "We've been paying for that for a long time," he said.

Both refused to offer any plan to bring the troops home. Bush dismissed reports

that the Pentagon hopes to reduce the U.S. occupation force from 131,000 to 100,000 by the end of the year.

When a U.S. military official told Reuters May 27 that U.S. troops might hand control of Baghdad and three other Iraqi provinces to local police later this year, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad publicly pooh-pooed the idea the next day.

On May 23, meanwhile, the British newspaper The Telegraph reported that military chiefs in London plan to keep troops in Iraq until at least 2010.

As of May 29, some 113 British and 2,466 U.S. troops have died. (CNN.com)

There will be no peace in Iraq until there is justice for the Haditha martyrs and the thousands more just like them, known and unknown. There will be no peace until all the foreign troops are withdrawn, until reparations are made, until Iraq enjoys true self-determination.

There must be no peace for Bush, Blair, or the other war criminals until they are brought to people's justice.

If you remember nothing else about Bush and Blair's news conference, remember this: There was no apology to Safa Younis. □

## The U.S. role in Darfur, Sudan

Continued from page 10

Sudanese government has retained its independence of Washington. Unable to control Sudan's oil policy, the U.S. imperialist government has made every effort to stop its development of this valuable resource. China, on the other hand, has worked with Sudan in providing the technology for exploration, drilling, pumping and the building of a pipeline and buys much of Sudan's oil.

U.S. policy revolves around shutting down the export of oil through sanctions and inflaming national and regional antagonisms. For over two decades U.S. imperialism supported a separatist movement in the south of Sudan, where oil was originally found. This long civil war drained the central government's resources. When a peace agreement was finally negotiated, U.S. attention immediately switched to Darfur in western Sudan.

Recently, a similar agreement between the Sudanese government and rebel groups in Darfur was rejected by one of the groups, so the fighting continues. The U.S. poses as a neutral mediator and keeps pressing Khartoum for more concessions but "through its closest African allies helped train the SLA and JEM Darfuri rebels that initiated Khartoum's violent reaction." (www.afrol.com)

Sudan has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the world. Over 400 ethnic groups have their own languages or dialects. Arabic is the one common language. Greater Khartoum, the largest city in the country, has a population of about 6 million. Some 85 percent of the Sudanese population is involved in subsistence agriculture or raising livestock.

The U.S. corporate media is unanimous in simplistically describing the crisis in Darfur as atrocities committed by the Janjawid militias, supported by the central government in Khartoum. This is described as an "Arab" assault on "African" people.

This is a total distortion of reality. As the Black Commentator, Oct. 27, 2004, points out: "All parties involved in the Darfur conflict—whether they are referred to as 'Arab' or as 'African,' are equally indige-

nous and equally Black. All are Muslim and all are local." The whole population of Darfur speaks Arabic, along with many local dialects. All are Sunni Muslim.

### Drought, famine and sanctions

The crisis in Darfur is rooted in inter-tribal fighting. A desperate struggle has developed over increasingly scarce water and grazing rights in a vast area of Northern Africa that has been hit hard by years of drought and growing famine.

Darfur has over 35 tribes and ethnic groups. About half the people are small subsistence farmers, the other half nomadic herders. For hundreds of years the nomadic population grazed their herds of cattle and camels over hundreds of miles of grassy lowlands. Farmers and herders shared wells. For over 5,000 years, this fertile land sustained civilizations in both western Darfur and to the east, all along the Nile River.

Now, due to the drought and the encroaching great Sahara Desert, there isn't enough grazing land or enough farmland in what could be the breadbasket of Africa. Irrigation and development of Sudan's rich resources could solve many of these problems. U.S. sanctions and military intervention will solve none of them.

Many people, especially children, have died in Sudan of totally preventable and treatable diseases because of a U.S. cruise missile attack, ordered by President Bill Clinton on Aug. 20, 1998, on the El Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum. This plant, which had produced cheap medications for treating malaria and tuberculosis, provided 60 percent of the available medicine in Sudan.

The U.S. claimed Sudan was operating a VX poison gas facility there. It produced no evidence to back up the charge. This simple medical facility, totally destroyed by the 19 missiles, was not rebuilt nor did Sudan receive a penny of compensation.

### UN/NATO role in Sudan

Presently 7,000 African Union troops are in Darfur. Their logistical and technical back-up is provided by U.S. and NATO forces. In addition, thousands of UN per-

sonnel are overseeing refugee camps for hundreds of thousands dislocated by the drought, famine and war. All of these outside forces do more than hand out needed food. They are a source of instability. As capitalist would-be conquerors have done for hundreds of years, they consciously play one group off against another.

U.S. imperialism is heavily involved in the entire region. Chad, which is directly west of Darfur, last year participated in a U.S.-organized international military exercise that, according to the U.S. Defense Department, was the largest in Africa since World War II.

Chad is a former French colony, and both French and U.S. forces are heavily involved in funding, training and equipping the army of its military ruler, Idriss Deby, who has supported rebel groups in Darfur.

For more than half a century, Britain ruled Sudan, encountering widespread resistance. British colonial policy was rooted in divide-and-conquer tactics and in keeping its colonies underdeveloped and isolated in order to plunder their resources.

U.S. imperialism, which has replaced the European colonial powers in many parts of the world, in recent years has been sabotaging the economic independence of countries trying to emerge from colonial underdevelopment. Its main economic weapons have been sanctions combined with "structural adjustment" demands made by the International Monetary Fund, which it controls. In return for loans, the target governments must cut their budgets for development of infrastructure.

How can demands from organizations in the West for sanctions, leading to further underdevelopment and isolation, solve any of these problems?

Washington has often used its tremendous power in the UN Security Council to get resolutions endorsing its plans to send U.S. troops into other countries. None were on humanitarian missions.

U.S. troops carrying the UN flag invaded Korea in 1950 in a war that resulted in more than 4 million deaths. Still flying that flag,



they have occupied and divided the Korean peninsula for over 50 years.

At the urging of the U.S., UN troops in 1961 were deployed to the Congo, where they played a role in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister.

The U.S. was able to get a UN mandate in 1991 for its massive bombing of the entire Iraqi civilian infrastructure, including water purification plants, irrigation and food processing plants—and for the 13 years of starvation sanctions that resulted in the deaths of over 1.5 million Iraqis.

UN troops in Yugoslavia and in Haiti have been a cover for U.S. and European intervention and occupation—not peace or reconciliation.

The U.S. and European imperialist powers are responsible for the genocidal slave trade that decimated Africa, the genocide of the Indigenous population of the Americas, the colonial wars and occupations that looted three-quarters of the globe. It was German imperialism that was responsible for the genocide of Jewish people. To call for military intervention by these same powers as the answer to conflicts among the people of Darfur is to ignore 500 years of history.

*Sara Flounders went to Sudan just after the bombing of the El Shifa pharmaceutical plant in 1998 with John Parker as part of an International Action Center fact-finding delegation led by Ramsey Clark.*

## Líder cubano envía mensaje de solidaridad al movimiento estadounidense

*A continuación reproducimos el mensaje de Ricardo Alarcón, presidente de la Asamblea del Poder Popular de la República de Cuba que fue enviado desde la Habana el 20 de mayo a las demostraciones en apoyo a Cuba y Venezuela.*

Queridas hermanas y hermanos:

En nombre del gobierno revolucionario de Cuba y del pueblo cubano, yo saludo a los organizadores y participantes de la demostración del 20 de mayo en apoyo a Venezuela y Cuba.

Apreciamos su solidaridad para nuestra lucha por la independencia y la justicia frente a la agresión imperialista que nuestro pueblo ha estado resistiendo heroica y exitosamente por 47 años. A pesar del bloqueo económico, nuestro pueblo ha avanzado dramáticamente en la construcción de una nueva y mejor sociedad y ha estado cooperando muy cercanamente con nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Venezuela; estamos ayudando a muchos otros en América Latina, el Caribe, África y Asia en el mejoramiento de sus vidas. Creemos fuertemente que el cuidado universal de la salud y la educación gratis, el empleo y la vivienda decente son derechos básicos que pertenecen a todos incluyendo a las millones de personas que no tienen esos derechos en los Estados Unidos.

Urgimos a todos ustedes a que se unan a nosotros exigiendo el fin a la criminal e hipócrita política de la administración de Bush, que continúa promoviendo el terrorismo en contra del pueblo cubano, como ha sido ilustrado por su protección a despiadados asesinos como Orlando Bosch y Luis Posada Carriles mientras mantienen injustamente a los Cinco héroes cubanos que fueron detenidos hace casi ocho años precisamente por sus esfuerzos en contra de esos mismos grupos terroristas que operan con impunidad y con la protección oficial de las autoridades estadounidenses.

Les exhortamos a que se unan a la campaña internacional en contra del terrorismo promovido por los Estados Unidos—desde el 12 de septiembre, cuando los Cinco Cubanos fueron privados de su libertad por ocho años, hasta el 6 de octubre, día que marcará el 30° aniversario de la destrucción del avión de civiles Cubana y el asesinato de las 73 personas a bordo. Debemos también conmemorar el próximo 21 de septiembre—el 30° aniversario del asesinato en Washington, D.C. de Orlando Letelier y de Ronnie Moffit.

Orlando Bosch estuvo involucrado en el plan para asesinar a Letelier y a Moffit, como se ha visto claramente en ciertos documentos estadounidenses cuya clasificación confidencial ha sido anulada, pero

Bosch nunca ha sido interrogado por la FBI y está viviendo en Miami, donde sigue activamente con sus misiones criminales.

Luis Posada Carriles es un fugitivo de la justicia venezolana de la cual escapó con la ayuda de la Casa Blanca de Reagan y Bush hace 20 años. El gobierno estadounidense sabe muy bien que él y Bosch planearon la destrucción de nuestro avión en 1976. Estados Unidos tiene la obligación de extraditar a Posada a Venezuela para continuar con su juicio por los horribles crímenes cometidos, o tiene la obligación de juzgarlo en los Estados Unidos por el mismo crimen. No hay otra alternativa legal según las convenciones internacionales contra el terrorismo que fuera firmada y ratificada por los Estados Unidos. Pero el Sr. Posada ha estado por más de un año bajo la protección oficial de los Estados Unidos y hasta ahora él no ha sido extraditado ni acusado.

La detención de Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando y René ha sido unánimemente encontrada arbitraria e ilegal por un panel de cinco miembros expertos en derechos humanos de la ONU. Sus condenas fueron revocadas también por decisión unánime de tres jueces de la Corte de Apelaciones de Atlanta. Esas decisiones fueron anunciadas en mayo y agosto de 2005, pero los cinco cubanos todavía permanecen encarcelados, sujetos a un

tratamiento cruel, con graves violaciones de sus derechos humanos incluyendo la negación de visas a las esposas de Gerardo y René a quienes no se les ha permitido entrar a los EEUU para visitarlos.

Hay que liberar a los cinco cubanos de inmediato. Posada Carriles y Bosch deben ser procesados y castigados como terroristas confesos de lo cual hay ya amplia documentación.

La cínica “guerra contra el terrorismo” de Bush tiene que ser desenmascarada, denunciada y derrotada.

La agresión contra el pueblo de Irak debe ponerse fin inmediatamente. La explotación y la discriminación contra trabajadores inmigrantes, y la guerra contra la gente pobre deben terminar.

Las amenazas contra Venezuela y los intentos intervencionistas contra otros pueblos en Latinoamérica tienen que ser condenados y rechazados.

Luchemos conjuntamente para forjar puentes de amistad, paz y cooperación entre los pueblos de los EEUU y Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Luchemos unidos, hombro a hombro, hacia un nuevo mundo mejor, un mundo de justicia y libertad para todos.

Que viva el pueblo de América. Que vivan los pueblos de Latinoamérica y del Caribe. En solidaridad luchemos juntos hasta la victoria siempre. □

## Infantería de Marina masacró civiles de Haditha en Irak

Por John Catalinotto

En el primer año de la ocupación de Irak por los EEUU, algunas voces, incluso dentro del movimiento contra la guerra en los EEUU, decían que una retirada rápida de las tropas estadounidenses dejaría a Irak víctima de una guerra civil, de un caos general y de asesinatos y masacres al azar. Algunos presentaron esto como un argumento para que las fuerzas militares de los EEUU se quedaran.

Ahora, luego de más de tres años de ocupación militar continua por los EEUU, Irak está plagado de caos general y de lo que parecen ser asesinatos y masacres al azar, y algo que parece ser una guerra civil.

El presidente George W. Bush y el primer ministro Tony Blair están alabando al nuevo gobierno de Irak que se formó al fin luego de riñas amargas, cinco meses después de las elecciones. Sería ridículo si no fuera tan criminal.

La electricidad aún no funciona. Están produciendo petróleo a un nivel más bajo que antes de la guerra, y muchas de las ventas de este son hechas ilegalmente.

La misma policía de Irak lleva a cabo asesinatos masivos sirviendo los intereses de partidos políticos estrechos o de sectas religiosas, o simplemente sirviendo a sus propios intereses corruptos. Y los iraquíes educados que tienen la oportunidad están tratando de emigrar, según los reportes de iraquíes y del New York Times del 21 y 22 de mayo.

Encima de esto, los militares estadounidenses, supuestamente la fuerza más disciplinada, lleva a cabo masacres desenfrenadas de civiles iraquíes. Según la última revelación, uniformados de la

infantería de marina masacraron por lo menos a 16 iraquíes civiles, incluyendo niños, en la ciudad de Haditha en noviembre pasado.

Fuentes iraquíes consideran la masacre de Haditha una operación corriente del Pentágono. Es por eso que tantos iraquíes se unen a la resistencia. Lo que hace destacar esta acción, sin embargo, es que no solo se quejaron los iraquíes, sino que la prensa de los EEUU y el representante del congreso, Joseph Murtha, coronel retirado de la infantería de marina y veterano de la Guerra de Vietnam, expusieron este crimen de guerra.

Los marines que asesinaron a los civiles, sostuvieron que estaban en medio de una batalla cuando pasó este suceso. Murtha, quien ha estado informado de la investigación militar del suceso, dijo el 18 de mayo: “No hubo ningún bombardeo. No hubo ningún aparato explosivo improvisado [AEI] que matara a esa gente inocente. Nuestras tropas reaccionaron exageradamente a causa de la presión que hay sobre ellos y mataron a civiles inocentes a sangre fría.”

La revista Time había reportado anteriormente que “los testigos presenciales dudan sobre la aserción de los militares, diciendo que cuatro de los iraquíes habían sido encerrados en un closet, y luego les dispararon.”

### Tropas de ocupación cometen crímenes de guerra

Murtha es un miembro pro-militar del Congreso que ha empezado a oponerse a la ocupación de Irak por motivos tácticos. Representando una sección de oficiales del Pentágono, él expone su miedo de que el ejército se vaya a autodestruir si la ocu-

pación continúa.

Murtha comprende la situación en que se encuentran las tropas estadounidenses, basado en su propia experiencia en Vietnam. En los lugares donde las tropas de ocupación se enfrentan a la resistencia popular y temen a todo el mundo, ellos disparan rápidamente, por miedo y por rabia. Así cometen crímenes de guerra.

Murtha no estaría de acuerdo con esta aserción, pero bajo esas circunstancias lo único honroso que pueden hacer las tropas estadounidenses en Irak es rehusar combatir contra la resistencia. De otro modo estas masacres de civiles van a continuar, igual como pasó en Vietnam. Algunas masacres seguirán por los ataques aéreos, como las bombas contra sospechosos “insurgentes” que caen en las casas de las aldeas.

Un ataque así acaba de ocurrir en Afganistán. El comandante Scott Lundy, hablando a nombre de la “coalición”, reportó un “gran éxito” al matar a “80 combatientes del Talibán” en un ataque el 21 y 22 de mayo en el pueblo de Azizi en la provincia de Kandahar. Esta aserción luego fue modificada pues fueron muertos 20 combatientes más 16 civiles, incluyendo niños, y otros 15 fueron heridos.

### Blair entra a hurtadillas

Fue señal de la debilidad del nuevo gobierno iraquí que el viaje de Blair a Irak tuviera que ser llevado a cabo en secreto. Fue otra señal que los tres ministerios importantes encargados de la seguridad — el de Interior, de la Defensa, y del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional — no tuvieran nombramientos porque el nuevo Primer Ministro Nouri Al-Maliky no podía encontrar personas aceptables por

todos los partidos en lucha.

Al-Maliky había prometido hace un mes que el gobierno se formaría en 24 horas. Ahora, después de haber creado ministerios gubernamentales suficientes para dar puestos a cada partido con varias personas elegidas, y proclamando un gobierno nuevo, él tuvo que nombrarse a sí mismo y a dos ayudantes para los puestos más importantes en base temporera.

Él propone llenar los puestos ordinarios de las fuerzas de seguridad con las milicias de los varios partidos y sectas — es decir, con las fuerzas acusadas con sobrada razón de ser “escuadrones de muerte”. Cada puesto es cuidadosamente nombrado fijándose en cuál partido y cuál secta pertenece la persona.

No obstante, tanto Blair como Bush exaltaron el nuevo gobierno como una victoria para la democracia en el Medio Oriente y especialmente una victoria para su invasión injustificada y criminal de Irak.

A pesar de las alabanzas de los dos líderes imperialistas, ellos no esperan resultados rápidos. Según un informe de Prensa Asociada, la Casa Blanca no espera una retirada rápida de las tropas. “No vamos a mirar nuestros relojes y decir, toca la hora de irnos,” dijo Tony Snow, secretario de prensa de la Casa Blanca, el 23 de mayo.

El General Peter Pace, presidente de la junta de jefes militares, lo había expresado aún más brevemente una semana antes cuando un comité del Senado le preguntó si las tropas podrían retirarse completamente de cualquiera de las 18 provincias de Irak dentro de los próximos tres meses.

“No, señor,” respondió Pace. □