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Bush expands war by bombing Africa

U.S. aircraft, special forces kill scores of Somali civilians

By Deirdre Griswold

Jan. 10—The Bush administration and its military arm have attacked Somalia.

It is a sure sign that their plan to get Ethiopian troops to do the fighting for them in this East African country has backfired, stirring up even more resistance to foreign intervention.

And it is also a sure sign that they intend to expand the criminal war begun in Afghanistan and Iraq, which is aimed at securing U.S. imperialist domination over the oil-rich regions of the Middle East and Africa.

On Jan. 8, U.S. warplanes began bombing targets in many different parts of Somalia, claiming they were seeking out members of Al-Qaeda—in other words, the same old excuse the Bush administration gave earlier for unleashing open aggression, which is illegal under every international law.

The Associated Press reported Jan. 10 that U.S. special forces were participating in the fighting in Somalia, and that five U.S. warships were off the coast, including the enormous aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower, whose 4.5-acre flight deck can carry 100 aircraft. This ship is a monstrous moving base for aggression around the world.

As of this writing, the attacks have continued for three days. They have been carried out by AC-130 gunships, horrible planes built by Lockheed. Costing \$72 million each, the latest version of this death-dealing aircraft has guns and cannon that

spray out thousands of rounds a minute.

A Somali elder, Haji Farah Qorshel, said 64 civilians had been killed and 100 injured in the three days of attacks. (New York Times, Jan. 10) Spokespersons for the U.S. government, speaking from Washington and refusing to be identified, claim only a handful were killed.

A later report from Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, appeared on the Times's Web site on the afternoon of Jan. 10. It said that, since the U.S. attacks began, fighting between the "government" and "insurgents" has intensified. This "government" was imposed after Ethiopia invaded Somalia on Dec. 20 with the blessings and material support of Washington and the Pentagon. For the last week, the Western media had been reporting that the "insurgents" were on the run.

"The capital of Somalia exploded in violence this morning after insurgents attacked a government barracks overnight and soldiers responded by sealing off large swaths of the city and searching house to house for weapons," said the Times report.

"The raids immediately sparked resistance. Squads of Ethiopian soldiers and troops loyal to the transitional government poured into the streets, where they battled outraged residents and a handful of masked insurgents.

"From dawn through early afternoon, the pop of gunfire and the boom of explosives echoed across Mogadishu. ..."

The U.S. calls the popular Islamic Courts Union "insurgents." *Continued on page 9*

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International Human Rights Day demonstration, Dec. 10, Cebu City, Philippines.

WW PHOTOS: DIANNE MATHIOWETZ



Eviction struggle highlights Katrina housing crisis

By David Hoskins

On Jan. 4, eighteen families of the Woodlands complex in New Orleans assembled for a press conference to protest their eviction by Johnson Properties Group, LLC. Minutes before the conference was to convene, organizers received a call from Johnson Properties Group agreeing not to enforce the eviction until at least Jan. 8.

The conference continued as scheduled with tenants vocalizing their anger at being evicted from their homes at Woodlands. Although the tenants were relieved at the temporary stay in their eviction, their struggle is far from over. As Common Ground Legal Team member Soleil Rodrigue points out, there is still a real need to "make sure that everyone has a place to be and has a place to sleep with their families and their children and that no one will leave here and go into the streets".

Once the evictions are finalized 16 families with close to 40 children will have nowhere to go unless alternative housing is secured for them. Two families were able to find housing prior to the Jan. 4 eviction date. Along with the loss of housing, families are also losing job-training and employment programs provided at the Woodlands, making it less likely that they will be able to afford housing once the evictions are finalized.

The Woodlands had been managed by Common Ground Collective as a community-based initiative to provide relief and training to those suffering following Hurricane Katrina. The complex, whose rents were the lowest in the city, was sold out from under Common Ground's management to Johnson Properties Group, at which time the new owners aggressively pursued the eviction of current residents.

Katrina survivors face national housing crisis

The Woodlands tragedy is just a snapshot of the greater housing crisis facing the survivors of Katrina more than a year after the U.S. national and state govern-

ments stood by as they lost their homes and loved ones. Housing costs across New Orleans have escalated 70 to 300 percent over pre-Katrina rates.

Government promises of funding for housing aid and recovery have gone unfulfilled. A recent federal appeals court decision gave the Bush administration permission to shut down a post-Katrina program that provided housing payments to 4,200 survivors living in Texas.

A lower court had ordered the program to restart after it was found that over the summer FEMA had sent vague letters containing contradictory computer codes to families instead of uniform letters that clearly explained when and why the funding would be cut off. The appeals' ruling allows FEMA to once again break its promise to the survivors of Katrina.

In places like Pass Christian, Miss., only a handful of the hundreds of homes destroyed by the hurricane have been replaced. More than 70,000 homes in Mississippi were lost and over 30,000 families are still cramped in the small trailers provided by FEMA.

Now developers and some community groups are moving toward the construction of low-cost modular homes as a fix to the housing shortage. Unfortunately the homes are only low-cost in their construction and do not always sell at low-cost prices on the market.

The main appeal for politicians and developers is the speed with which the homes can be built—a modular home can be completed in a matter of days compared to months for other types of housing.

But the bargain prices and speedy construction time leave questions about their safety and whether they have a chance of withstanding category-4 winds which are sustained between 131 and 155 mph should another Katrina-strength hurricane strike in the future.

The post-Katrina housing crisis clearly demonstrates that the government-sanctioned assault on survivors continues unabated as rapacious developers seek to satisfy their quest for profit at any human cost. □

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BENTON HARBOR

Ongoing fight for justice

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

On Jan. 25, motions to drop charges against Rev. Edward Pinkney will be heard at 9 a.m. at the Berrien County Courthouse, 811 Port Street in St. Joseph, Mich. Support is needed in court for this latest effort to end the nearly two-year racist frame up of Rev. Pinkney, who is African American.

The charges stem from a struggle against racism, brutal police repression and Whirlpool, the multinational corporation that controls Benton Harbor.

Rev. Pinkney and his organization, BANCO (Black Autonomy Network Community Organization), sponsored the successful recall of city commissioner Glen Yarborough, a supporter of Whirlpool's development plans that don't provide improvement for Black residents.

Benton Harbor is the impoverished apartheid-style Black township next to St. Joseph, a 95 percent white afflu-



Rev. Pinkney leads March 2006 protest in Benton Harbor.

ent city on the shores of Lake Michigan. Benton Harbor is a company town. Whirlpool is the company whose \$1.7 billion buyout of Maytag last year gave it control of 80 percent of the global major home appliance market.

Without Yarborough on the commission, Whirlpool did not have enough votes to "approve" the development. The election was overturned. Rev. Pinkney was falsely charged with voter

fraud. His first trial ended in a hung jury. Determined to punish and silence the man who is demanding jobs and development for the Black community, Rev. Pinkney

Continued on page 4

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Vol. 49, No. 2 • Jan. 18, 2007
Closing date: Jan. 10, 2007

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

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.

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Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor,
New York, N.Y. 10011.

To honor Dr. King

National activities will evoke struggle, fightback

By LeiLani Dowell

Over the Jan. 15 weekend, cities across the United States will be holding parades and marches to honor the life of civil-rights, labor and anti-war leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Each year, many of these events attempt to downplay King's legacy of struggle, with anti-worker corporate sponsors and even military processions. However, the spirit of Dr. King lives on, and will be reflected in resistance events:

DENVER

In Denver a rally will distinguish itself from the city's official MLK "Marade," which is sponsored by State Farm insurance and several other companies. Although these companies have huge advertising banners, the city tells the people to not bring banners and signs.

Speaking at the people's rally will be Larry Hales, FIST leader and contributing editor of Workers World newspaper, on King's legacy to the global struggle against oppression; Tizoc Martinez from the Mexican National Liberation Movement, on attacks against immigrant workers in Greeley, Colo.; and Loree McCormick-Rice, victim of police brutality, on police repression. Rock Em Sock Em, a youth-of-color spoken-word group, will perform. A feeder march with anti-war, anti-oppression banners and signs will then join the city's march.

The call for a separate rally states:

"As the conditions of the society pit us against each other, they have also led us to the conclusion that our struggles are linked. The fight must be moved forward together. Therefore, activists from the Black, Mexican, Latin@, Asian and Arab communities have come together to move the age-old fight of liberation into the future—first, by reclaiming our history and using its lessons to shape our struggle; then, by once again taking hold of our future with the optimism and courage that will forever change the world. For neither history nor the future belongs to a book or a leader or a classroom, it belongs to the people. So, just as the people have reclaimed history today, so we will reclaim our future.

"In commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement of the sixties, we ask all people of color to stay true to the values of all our fallen heroes. Year after year the MLK Marade passes, reminding us all of the potential of people of color to change their conditions. Our histories speak repeatedly of those who challenged the roles defined for them by their oppressor, those who refused to become tools for the oppressor, and those who died for the liberation of humankind. In uniting with our oppressed brothers and sisters, in believing in the people's power to effect change, we are applying the values taught to us by these histories.

"We are calling for a separate rally and feeder march organized and led by people from the communities above to build a united front against racism, oppression, occupation and war."

DETROIT

The Detroit Martin Luther King Day "Freedom from the shackles of war, racism and poverty" March gathers at Central United Methodist Church, Woodward at Adams in downtown Detroit, at noon on

Jan. 15. This year's rally and march will place special emphasis on the struggle to end the war in Iraq and the rising tide of racism in the United States, especially in light of the affirmative action ban passed on Nov. 7. A sound car sponsored by Latinos Unidos/United of Michigan to build for the march got an enthusiastic response on Jan. 7; more than 1,000 bilingual leaflets were distributed in the Latin@ community.

NEW YORK

In response to President Bush's expected call for a troop "surge" in Iraq, the Troops Out Now Coalition in New York is calling for a united surge of antiwar forces to converge at Times Square on Jan. 15 at 4 p.m.

TONC leader Sara Flounders told WW: "On Dr. King's birthday, TONC is working with antiwar forces around the country to launch a massive people's offensive against the war, which will take us from the local battle fronts to Washington, D.C., this spring. Our central demands are the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all occupation troops from Iraq, and a cut off of all—not some, but all—funds for the war."

Prisoners, supporters build protest against death row

By Sharon Danann
Cleveland

On a sleepy country road in northeast Ohio looms a prison of monstrous proportions, the Ohio State Penitentiary. Most of Ohio's 193 death row prisoners are held there.

Black inmates make up 52 percent of the population of OSP while Black people are less than 12 percent of the population of Ohio.

To honor the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., three grassroots groups are planning a rally at the gates of OSP on Jan. 14 to overlap with the end of visiting hours there. The groups are the Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee, Youngstown Prison Forum and LOOP (Loved Ones Of Prisoners), also based in Youngstown.

Although the prison area is rural, it is part of the city of Youngstown, a former giant in the steel industry. There was a time when Youngstown had the highest rate of home ownership of any city in the country, due to union steelworker jobs. With the steel mills gone, many of these workers have ended up working in the state and for-profit prisons, the new growth industry in Youngstown.

To bring people out to the rally, the prisoners initiated a prisoner chain letter. Multiple copies of a letter addressed both to prisoners and their families and friends and pre-stamped envelopes were sent out to many prisoners who in turn forwarded the letters.

Many people e-mailed and called the Cleveland group to reserve seats in vans to Youngstown and offered to help in other ways. Prisoners wrote to express their commitment to the network.

A huge mailing about the event went out to the Islamic centers in northeast Ohio and the church directory of Cleveland's African-American newspaper, Call and Post. E-mails have been distributed through death penalty opposition and prisoner solidarity list serves, as well as

NORTH CAROLINA

In Raleigh, Black Workers for Justice and UE Local 150 will hold a Community Speakout and Action Planning on Jan. 13. Their announcement reads, "King stood with sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968! You, your co-workers, family & friends are invited to stand with workers in your community today!"

City workers will discuss their strike, building the union, fighting City Hall, the struggle for collective bargaining rights and building for a mass Feb. 10 NAACP march, which will deliver the organization's 2007 14-point program to the legislature. This includes demands of "U.S. out of Iraq!" as well as repeal of N.C. General Statute 95-98, an anti-collective-bargaining rights law.

On Jan. 15, a March against War and Racism will be held in Chapel Hill.

SAN DIEGO

The San Diego parade to honor the memory of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was, years ago, moved out of the Black community. For many San Diegans the ubiquitous presence of FBI, police, U.S.

military and militarized student contingents has become increasingly offensive and intolerable.

In an effort to return the commemoration to the Black community and to restore the tone to one opposing war and racism, the San Diego International Action Center initiated a coalition, the King/Chavez Coalition for Justice and Unity, which will hold a community rally and picnic at Martin Luther King Jr. Park, 6401 Skyline Avenue, on Jan. 15.

Coalition organizer Gloria Verdieu explained the purpose of the coalition is "to reclaim our legacy and cultural heritage in an effort to continue the advancement of social justice and unity."

Uniting the names of two great leaders in the struggle for social justice, Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez, is a defiant answer to Minutemen types active in Southern California, who, as part of their efforts to criminalize undocumented workers, seek to drive a wedge between Black and Latin@ communities.

Larry Hales, Larry Holmes, Cheryl LaBash, Bob McCubbin and Dante Strobino contributed to this report.

From Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 letter from Birmingham Jail:

"For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop.

If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom ..."



the national list serve of the International Action Center.

A member of the Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee called in to Reverend Al Sharpton's national radio show to announce the action at OSP. She also filled listeners in on the cases of the Lucasville Five, prisoners who received death sentences following the heroic rebellion in the Lucasville prison in 1993.

Four of these men are in OSP's permanent solitary confinement, as are other prisoners who were part of the uprising but did not receive death sentences. Recent evidence shows that four of the Lucasville Five were sent to death row by a "witness" who was lying at their trials to benefit himself.

The members of the Lucasville Five Defense Committee have also been distributing flyers in hair salons, barber shops and community centers. At a recent meeting of a community group called Black on Black Crime, five people signed

up for the vans to Youngstown. People spoke of relatives or friends of theirs who are incarcerated in OSP.

The Youngstown organizations will be leafleting and speaking at events celebrating Dr. King on Jan. 12, 13 and the morning of Jan. 14. The Cleveland group is planning a press conference for Jan. 11. Speakers will include political and religious leaders as well as Staughton Lynd, attorney and historian, whose book, "Lucasville: the Untold Story of a Prison Uprising," is the definitive book on the subject. Questions will be raised about the constitutionality of lethal injection, an issue that Ohio's incoming governor, Ted Strickland, will have to address.

Organizations around Ohio plan to keep up the heat through events and campaigns of various kinds. The movement will not stop until there is a complete pardon of all Lucasville-related charges and a permanent halt to executions in Ohio and the U.S. □

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Of Enron, McCloy and today's coverups

What's up with the economy?

By Deirdre Griswold

Exactly what is happening with the enormous U.S. capitalist economy? There are many indications that it could be in deep trouble: the mounting debt, personal, corporate and federal; the massive layoffs and buyouts in basic industries that once were the bedrock of U.S. manufacturing; the feverish pace of mergers and acquisitions; the relentless slide of the dollar in relation to the euro and the yen.

But getting a comprehensive picture of the economy by examining individual aspects is as hard as trying to figure out an elephant with your eyes closed.

Take the collapse of the energy giant Enron in 2001, which left its stock virtually worthless and 4,000 employees out in the street. Investigations soon showed that this prestigious firm—named “America’s Most Innovative Company” by Fortune magazine for six consecutive years—had concealed deep problems behind a web of complex financial arrangements.

In other words, its top officers had fooled the public and most of Enron’s investors, as well as its competitors. One thing they did was set up supposedly independent companies—called special purpose entities or SPEs—to hide Enron’s debts, making it look prosperous when it was actually losing money.

Of course, those in on the deception bailed out early, selling their stock while assuring the public and their employees that everything was fine. That’s why Enron CEO Jeffrey K. Skilling is now in jail and founder Kenneth Lay was headed there before he died of a heart attack last July.

A recent article in the New Yorker (“Open Secrets” by Malcolm Gladwell, Jan. 8) describes the great lengths Enron went to in order to keep outsiders from understanding how the company was doing. Enron had some 3,000 SPEs, and “the paperwork for each one probably ran in excess of a thousand pages”—totaling about 3 million pages. Who was going to look through all that? Even a

summary of Enron’s SPEs could have taken 120,000 single-spaced pages.

A debate is going on over whether this type of obfuscation was illegal or not. But those who, like Gladwell, imply that Enron’s executives may not have broken the letter of the law when they pocketed millions of dollars while stiffing everyone else merely confirm that the whole system in which this can happen is criminal to its very core.

So much has been written in recent years about the great beneficence of U.S. capitalism that one might think Enron was a terrible anomaly, a rotten apple in an otherwise beautiful barrel.

Not. There have been innumerable cases like Enron before, some involving people who went on to become luminaries of the corporate and political establishment.

McCloy’s railroad caper

Here’s just one example, taken from the book “The Chairman: John J. McCloy and the Making of the American Establishment” by Kai Bird.

McCloy in the 1920s was a young Wall Street lawyer working for the firm Cravath, Henderson & de Gersdorff. He was also developing personal connections to the most influential bankers of the day. In 1925 Cravath entrusted McCloy with preparing the papers for a massive reorganization of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. With assets of more than \$700 million, it was a large company for its time, but was operating in the red.

“McCloy started work on the drafts a full two months before there was any public hint that the St. Paul was going under,” wrote Bird. However, McCloy’s friends at Kuhn, Loeb, a major investment bank of that time, got wind of it.

McCloy’s real job was to prepare the papers about the reorganization in such a way that no one but Cravath’s friends could take advantage of it.

“While McCloy was diligently drawing up the receivership papers and taking various affi-

davits, the major holders of St. Paul stock and the men who had appointed the company’s board of directors, William and Percy Rockefeller and Ogden Armour, were quietly selling out. In a short time, few of the railroad’s directors had any stock at all in their own company.”

Sound familiar?

More than half the shares in the railroad were owned by small investors who didn’t have a clue.

“The directors’ only allegiance seemed to be to the troubled railroad’s bankers, Kuhn, Loeb and the National City Bank,” continues Bird.

“In anticipation of the receivership, Kuhn, Loeb needed a legal device whereby none of the some 40,000 individual investors, scattered all over the country, could attempt to exercise collective control over the reorganized railroad. To this end, McCloy, Swatland and Douglas drafted an enormously complicated and wordy document.” Donald Swatland and William O. Douglas worked with McCloy on the document. Yes, THAT Douglas, who later became chief justice of the Supreme Court. ...

“The document had no table of contents and no index. The language was all but impenetrable; one sentence alone ran to 2,250 words.”

The small investors couldn’t make head or tail of it. Before long the Cravath receivership committee controlled an absolute majority of the shares. McCloy was soon appointed the youngest-ever president of a railroad company.

However, his committee quickly turned over the railroad to Kuhn, Loeb, which, as the only bidder, got the company on the cheap.

The banks got paid very well for their “services,” as did Cravath. McCloy eventually became a partner in this powerful law firm and an even closer friend of the Wall Street banking fraternity.

In his long career, he became so powerful that John Kenneth Galbraith dubbed him “Chairman of the American Establishment.”

McCloy became legal counsel to every one of the huge petroleum companies called the “Seven Sisters.” He became an assistant secretary of war, president of the World Bank, was appointed high commissioner of occupied Germany, chaired the Chase Manhattan Bank, the Ford Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations and the President’s Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament, and was considered “a private, unofficial adviser to most of the presidents of the 20th century.”

There are lots of other bright, unscrupulous McCloyes reaping the rewards of capitalism today. Will it take another stock market and banking collapse like that of the 1930s, which finally generated a Senate investigation of Wall Street, to find out what they have been concealing?

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ON THE PICKETLINE

By Sue Davis

Rights for mall workers

The Service Employees International Union landed a precedent-setting win when it signed an agreement Dec. 18 with two of the largest shopping mall owners. Simon Property Group Inc., the largest U.S. mall owner, and Westfield Group, one of the largest real estate owners in the world, agreed to work only with contractors that meet specific employee standards.

The contract, the first in the shopping mall industry, will raise the wages of and offer affordable health insurance to approximately 5,000 janitors, security guards and other workers at 373 malls around the country. This reverses an outsourcing trend where companies bid contracts to the cheapest supplier, regardless of how they treat their workers, noted Stephen Lerner, director of SEIU’s Justice for Janitors campaign. (Business Week, Dec. 18)

In the last few months of 2006, more than 10,000 service workers of all backgrounds won higher pay, health insurance and/or the right to vote to form a union. These include 5,300 janitors in Houston, 5,000 security staff in Los Angeles and more than 1,000 janitors and security staff at major universities such as Harvard and the University of Miami. (SEIU press release, Dec. 18)

‘No worker is illegal’ campaign

Rank-and-file members of SEIU in California have launched a “No worker is illegal” campaign. They initiated the protest last fall to pressure SEIU leaders to stop supporting reactionary immigrant bills. The issue is on the agenda at SEIU’s International Executive Board meeting later in January.

Spearheaded by Local 790 in San Francisco, the campaign opposes the McCain-Kennedy bill, which would further militarize the U.S./Mexican border, level sanctions against employers who hire undocumented workers and establish a federal so-called “guest worker” program which does not offer a path to citizenship. One such 2006 program was so discriminatory that the Southern Poverty Law Center sued a contractor and won back wages for hundreds of Latin American immigrants. (Workers World, Dec. 28)

“How are we supposed to organize workplaces with these kinds of laws?” asked Renee Saucedo, a leader of the campaign. (Labor Notes, January 2007)

To support this important rank-and-file initiative before the January meeting, sign the petition at www.noworkerisillegal.org.

Newspaper workers sign contracts

In December members of The Newspaper Guild-CWA and other unions in Boston, Honolulu, Philadelphia, and San Jose signed bitterly fought contracts with more concessions than gains.

“These were tough, tough fights, and the contracts aren’t pretty, but neither is the industry right now,” said Linda Foley, TNG-CWA president, in a Dec. 22 press release.

The release explained: “Newspapers across the country have cut 34,000 jobs in the last five years and have announced thousands more cuts in the past few months. Although some papers are struggling financially, even highly profitable newspapers are slashing jobs, wages and benefits in the race for corporate profit.”

Wisconsin day-care workers win union

The overwhelming majority of the 7,000 licensed child care providers in Wisconsin signed cards to join AFSCME/Child Care Providers Together last fall. The union was certified on Oct. 30.

“Providers joined together because they want to have a voice in the policies that affect their profession,” said Gerald McEntee, president of AFSCME. Support came from workers in metro, suburban, and rural areas across the state and included English-, Spanish- and Hmong-speaking providers. The union will focus on developing leaders charged with setting up a negotiation process.

“Considering the onslaught of W-2 and the smashing of unions/living wage jobs in Wisconsin, which hit women the hardest, especially in Milwaukee where the largest percentage of Black, Latina and Hmong women live, this will help them immensely,” local labor activist Bryan G. Pfeifer told Workers World. “This will also help many poor white women in rural areas.”

AFSCME/Child Care Providers Together is part of a national movement to organize child care professionals, who have been considered self-employed independent contractors because they work at home. Similar campaigns have been successful in Iowa and Oregon and are underway in California, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. AFSCME represents more than 150,000 family child care providers, day-care center workers, Head Start teachers and early childhood employees. □

Benton Harbor

Continued from page 2

is scheduled for retrial in March 2007.

Rev. Pinkney has not been silenced. On Nov. 9, 2006, at the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board of Trustees meeting, he testified against the 530-acre Harbor Shores development sponsored by Whirlpool.

A bold example of development for the affluent, crumbs for the poor seen in cities across the country, it features a Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course, two hotels, a water park, 200,000 square feet of commercial space and 1,000 residential housing units.

Benton Harbor’s unemployment rate is 70 percent. Ninety percent live below the poverty

level. Even with the promised “reduced price” to use the golf course, this development will not meet the real needs of the people in Benton Harbor.

On June 16, 2003, the constant racism, police repression and economic devastation of Benton Harbor exploded. Police cars chased and drove Terrence Shurn, a young Black motorcyclist, into the side of a building, killing him. The community rebellion that responded brought the horrible and intolerable conditions of life in Benton Harbor to the attention of state and national news.

Donations to the defense fund can be made at the BANCO blogspot: <http://bhbanco.blogspot.com/>. □

MASSACHUSETTS

Voters elect African-American governor

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Boston

Deval Patrick was officially sworn in as governor of Massachusetts on Jan. 4. He is the second African American to be elected governor in the history of the United States since U.S. Reconstruction.

L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia was the first African American elected governor in 1989. P.B.S. Pinchback of Louisiana was the first African American to become governor in 1872, not by election but by replacing the governor who had died in office.

In a landslide victory on Nov. 7, Massachusetts voters swept Democratic candidate Deval Patrick into office with 56 percent of the vote—20 percentage points more than his rival, the white Republican Party candidate Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey.

This was a resounding and historic vote against racism, for immigrant rights and against cutbacks. The Black community heavily campaigned for Patrick, who carried out a grassroots campaign that captured the hearts and minds of many oppressed people with its message of respect and hope for poor and working people.

“We have made history” was the overwhelming sentiment in communities of color in Boston. This feeling is underscored by the fact that many African Americans remember all too well that only 30 years ago Black families’ homes were being stoned and firebombed in mostly white neighborhoods like East Boston, South Boston and Hyde Park; that the racist anti-busing forces had their headquarters in City Hall, and that Black people could

risk their health and even their lives if they ventured into certain neighborhoods.

Many Boston newspapers, when writing about Patrick’s campaign, evoked an incident where racist whites broke the nose of an African-American man—Theodore Landsmark—with a pole flying the U.S. flag. The attack took place on the steps of City Hall and a photo of this horrific attack was disseminated around the world.

Progressive vote against racist reaction

Patrick’s election victory is also very significant in that it takes place in a state that is more than 80 percent white and where African Americans are only 7.5 percent of the population. Patrick had a solid majority of votes in the mostly white neighborhoods of South Boston—once the center of the racist anti-busing forces—and West Roxbury. In Patrick’s hometown precinct in Milton, 88 percent of registered voters turned out.

These statistics show that voters in Massachusetts did not succumb to racism despite ongoing racist TV ads backed by the Healey campaign.

Healey campaign volunteers actually picketed outside Patrick’s home in orange prisoner jumpsuits. Healey also reverted to attacks on some of Patrick’s family members, shocking many. In response to these reprehensible ads the leading Massachusetts legal trade paper, Lawyer’s Weekly, for the first time in its history decided to endorse a candidate—Deval Patrick.

Patrick’s support of same-sex marriage won a strong LGBT community campaign for him. His support for the rights of immigrants to have driver’s licenses and to have in-state tuition saw record numbers of immigrants voting for him. Before leaving office Romney signed a law which said that state troopers could detain anyone they suspected of being an “illegal immigrant” and call U.S. immigration officials.

But many African-American voters and other voters of color had their right to “make history” taken away or obstructed when 26 precincts in Roxbury, Hyde Park and Mattapan “ran out” of ballots at 6

p.m. on election night.

At one polling place in Roxbury, there were no more ballots at 6:30 p.m. and by the time the polls closed no more ballots had been delivered as the Boston Election Commission had earlier promised. Over 100 people there who had been waiting to vote for more than two hours were forced to leave. Some people at places that ran out of ballots were told to go to other locations. When they arrived, those locations had no ballots. At other polling places, the electronic ballots malfunctioned.

Harvard Law School Professor Charles Ogletree, who was monitoring the polls, said, “We’re getting a sense of déjà vu from the national election, but this is not Florida or Ohio. This is Massachusetts. This is as bad as the worst Jim Crow segregation of the ‘30s ‘40s and ‘50s.”

Despite these adversities, reports from polling places were that the turnout in mostly Black and Latin@ precincts was huge. Polling officials expected 35,000 voters to turn out in traditionally “low-voting” precincts but got 50,000 instead.

Masses hope for real change

Patrick’s election as governor ended a 16-year Republican reign characterized by gross cuts in spending for programs serving the state’s most vulnerable and oppressed.

The Nov. 7 vote was a clear rebuff to the severe, unrelenting and racist cutbacks of out-going Republican Gov. Mitt Romney’s administration.

On July 8, 2006, Romney signed Massachusetts’s 2007 fiscal year budget, vetoing \$573 million in spending that overwhelmingly impacted state health, childcare, food and housing programs. For example, Romney vetoed \$3 million in emergency food assistance. He called it “excessive.”

He vetoed \$5 million of a proposed \$10 million for Medicaid for community health centers, \$1.3 million for childcare and \$5 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program.

Hatred for Romney reached an all-time high with “The Big Dig” construction scam where billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money was given for years to contrac-

tors accused of fraudulence and incompetence who reportedly cut corners and used faulty, unsafe materials resulting in the collapse of a section of the tunnel that killed an immigrant mother.

The Nov. 7 vote for Patrick reflects the overall anti-Republican backlash, especially where the Iraq War is concerned. Despite his progressive platform, Patrick is a multi-millionaire with some political ties to the capitalist establishment. In 1994 Clinton appointed him assistant attorney general for civil rights.

He was Texaco’s vice president and general counsel from 1999 to 2001. According to www.killercoke.org, during this time Patrick was the principal architect of the Texaco/Chevron merger that resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs. He also opposed the right of 30,000 poor Ecuadorians to sue Texaco for damage to their health and environment.

He served as executive vice president and general counsel for the Coca Cola Company. He stated that Coke’s labor relations in Colombia were exemplary and that most workers were represented by unions in Coke’s Colombian plants—in reality, 90 percent are not represented by unions. He also helped Coke avoid paying billions in taxes. (www.killercoke.org)

Patrick was on the board of the firm that runs Ameriquest, a mortgage company accused of predatory lending practices in poor and oppressed communities. Millions of Massachusetts residents were scammed. (Boston Globe, May 31)

Patrick grew up poor on the South Side of Chicago and was raised by a single parent, his mother. He got a scholarship to a private academy and received his law degree from Harvard University.

Seeking “economic justice” in the areas of jobs, housing, education, health care, an end to high taxes, etc., was the reason given by many voters for why they voted for Patrick, along with appreciating his humble upbringing in Chicago.

Some 14,000 people attended Patrick’s outdoor inauguration to view this historic event, many bringing their children and waiting in line for hours for a chance to shake his hand. □



Help us send this **NEW** book to press in time for **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Marxism, Reparations & the BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

The popular “Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle” pamphlet will be expanded into a spine book with color plates in time for February’s Black History Month, but we need your financial help to make it a reality. The book will include articles from the pages of Workers World on:

- Hurricane Katrina
- Labor
- Immigrant Workers
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Funds are needed right away to help get this book published and distributed to high schools, college campuses, libraries, union halls and elsewhere. Acknowledgements will be made in the book to those who contribute \$50 or more to this effort. Make checks out to WW Publishers and put in the subject line: “Reparations book”. Send your donations to WW Publishers, 55 W. 17th St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10011.

Suicide or foul play?

First Black mayor found dead

By Larry Hales

On Dec. 30, 57-year-old Mayor-elect Gerald “Wash” Washington, the first Black mayor of Westlake, a small Louisiana town, was found shot to death. Westlake is located 200 miles west of New Orleans and is part of Calcasieu Parish, whose county seat is Lake Charles.

The death has been ruled a “suicide” by the Calcasieu Parish coroner and the police. Washington’s family has ordered a second autopsy. His son, Geroski Washington, says that the sheriff’s office did sloppy work and wants the state police to take over the investigation.

“We were dissatisfied with the time frame of the investigation and the way it was opened and closed. We’re thinking it’s a cover-up because of the quick and fast work they did and didn’t do,” Geroski Washington said. (Associated Press)

Many people are confused, because Gerald Washington was seen as a positive, happy person, and there had been no signs of depression that could have led him to commit suicide.

To many of the Black residents of the town, which is 80 percent white and nearly 18 percent Black, it isn’t far-fetched to suspect murder.

What makes his death even more suspicious is how he spent his last day.

Washington had won the election by 69 percent and was sworn in as mayor on Dec. 19. He arrived at City Hall at noon on Dec. 30, set the alarm system for City Hall, got instructions on how to lower and raise the flag, ordered new letterhead for stationary and a button-down shirt embroidered with “Gerald Washington, Mayor” on it.

A few hours later he placed a \$4 bet on a race horse.

At 10 p.m. on the same day, a motorist passing by the school administration building, which used to be Mossville High School—Washington’s alma mater—called 911 and reported a dead body.

Washington’s pearl-handled revolver was found next to him and he had a bullet wound in his chest.

People in the city of 4,500 remain shocked. Even the outgoing mayor, Dudley

Dixon, who had met Washington at City Hall that same day, was shocked.

Dixon said, “He had a smile that would just light up this room,” and “He had a just dominating personality.”

For many it is difficult to comprehend that the gunshot wound was self-inflicted.

The first autopsy has found that the weapon was pressed up against Washington’s chest, which is not the area most would associate with gunshot suicides. Additionally, the death occurred in the parking lot of Washington’s alma mater. There was no note, no indication that he had tried to get his finances in order, no attempts to reach out to anyone or to say goodbye. Plus, he was due to assume the mantle of mayor.

The results of the second autopsy have yet to be released; however, the circumstances surrounding the death are troubling. No one knows what the second autopsy results will yield, but in the south, the seat of slavery and racist repression that still permeates the politics of the area, the death of Gerald Washington may reveal itself to be a political coup. □

U.S. behind reign of terror swe

By Teresa Gutierrez
Cebu City, Philippines

The International Action Center (IAC) sent a fact-finding delegation to the Philippines Dec. 7 to Dec. 19. The delegation was comprised of IAC National Co-Director Teresa Gutierrez, and Dianne Mathiowetz of the Atlanta IAC. Also on the trip were two representatives of BAYAN USA and a member of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement from New York City.

Jan. 8—Our trip coincided with the scheduled meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which was to take place the first week of December in Cebu City. ASEAN's main role is to facilitate economic and political penetration of the area for imperialism. However, the Philippine government announced that the ASEAN meeting would be cancelled due to a reported typhoon that was to hit the island at the same time. It was evident, however, that the summit of 25 Asian countries was actually cancelled due to the political typhoon sweeping the country.

Major demonstrations and massive political sentiment against the president of the country, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, were the real reasons the summit was cancelled. As of this writing, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has announced that the ASEAN summit will take place here in Cebu City from Jan. 10 to 15.

One of the most outstanding developments revealed to our delegation was the tremendous wave of repression hitting the Filipino population. Since 2001, over 700 people in the Philippines have been killed or disappeared. The wave of repression against the people is so stark that every week since 2004 approximately two activists have been killed and one has disappeared.

This alarming situation was described to us repeatedly, confirming published reports by several sources. Amnesty International issued a report in August stating its concern over "continued violation of human rights in the country."

In fact, during the two-week period since we arrived, a total of seven people have been reported missing or killed by



Photo of assassinated person at Human Rights Summit, Cotabatu City, Philippines.

the official newspapers of this country.

The findings of the "Stop the Killings in the Philippines Campaign," published by the IBON Foundation, concluded that, "The pattern of assassinations and political persecution of activists, members of people's movements, and leftist leaders in the Philippines has become an urgent international issue."

IBON continued, "While killings and summary executions are not rare in the Philippines, this trend of political assassinations intensified in 2004 during the national elections, and has continued in the last two years—making it possibly the worst period for human rights violations since the Marcos era."

Behind the wave of terror: U.S. imperialism

The wave of terror currently sweeping the Philippines is part and parcel of U.S. imperialism's historical and bloody drive to dominate and control the Southeast Asian region, especially the Philippines. These aims are best capsulated in the words of U.S. Sen. Alfred Beveridge when he said in 1900, "The country that rules the Pacific, rules the world."

U.S. imperialism invaded and occupied the Philippines and other countries of the Asia Pacific region at the beginning of the 20th century.

Indeed, East Asia is key to imperialist aims to control markets and make ever greater profits. Over 2.5 billion people live

in this region—one-third of the world's population—and their economies are 25 percent of the world's gross domestic product. Southeast Asia is 9 percent of the world's population and 5 percent of the global GDP.

The region is home to some of the most strategic countries in the world: China, Korea and Vietnam, which have all been at the center of imperialism's war drive. Japan, an imperialist country, is a major rival to Wall Street.

According to the Institute of Political Economy, based in the Philippines, the United States currently has more than 386,000 U.S. troops deployed in 150 countries, including 70,000 troops in East Asia. There were 850 U.S. military bases in 138 counties as of 2005.

Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are key nations to Washington, used in every way possible to maintain its domination in the area.

The task of these thousands of troops is to make sure that the main strategic objectives of the U.S. are protected in the region. Southeast Asia is of particular interest to the U.S. It seeks to maintain hegemony with its puppet regimes and exclude Japan and China, one reason why the Philippines is key to the U.S. It wants free access to major sea lanes and to deepen and expand trade and investment in the area.

Imperialism carries out these aims at the same time that it drives the Asian Pacific people further and further into poverty

and despair. Eliza Griswold, a journalist, writes: "[T]he most pressing problem in today's Philippines isn't terrorism or even government corruption but poverty and a lack of social mobility. About 15 percent of its people live on less than \$1 a day."

The war on terror: a basis for re-colonization

The U.S. has operated military bases in the Philippines since 1947. After righteous struggles that shook the country, most of these bases closed in 1992. But with the advent of U.S. imperialism's so-called war on terror, there is now a concerted effort to once again militarize the Philippines. The rebuilding of official U.S. bases in the Philippines is centered in Mindanao, a primarily Muslim area.

U.S. Navy Commander Adm. William J. Fallon—commander of the U.S. Pacific command—said last March 7, "Southeast Asia is the front line of the war on terror."

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has not only become a key ally of imperialism, she is a puppet of Washington.

This so-called war against terrorism is in reality a war of terror against the people.

Victims of repression in the Philippines—those who have died as a result of these extrajudicial killings—are mainly people who are fighting against deadly economic policies or who are denouncing the repression: activists, students, labor leaders, journalists, members of people's movements and leftists.

State terror reigns in the Philippines. The situation is so serious and so critical that even spokespeople of foreign chambers of commerce and transnational corporations have been forced to pay lip service against the repression.

On Jan. 6 the Macapagal-Arroyo administration announced that the government will spend about 10 billion pesos in 2007—a lot of money for an impoverished nation. About \$200 million is earmarked for the purchase of attack helicopters and other military equipment, which is a sign that the repression will not only continue but intensify.

Repression breeds resistance

Since Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001, about 730 people have been

EYEWITNESS REPORT

Anti-torture conference denounces U

By Gloria Rubac
Athens, Greece

Organizations and activists from over 30 countries participated in the Fifth International Symposium Against Isolation in Athens, Greece, Dec. 15-18, declaring anti-imperialist unity in supporting political prisoners around the world. Over the four-day symposium, the politics of isolation, secret detention and torture were graphically exposed by dozens of panelists, some of whom had been imprisoned themselves or were activists or lawyers working on behalf of political prisoners.

The symposium gave special attention to the 10,000 people from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt who are in Zionist prisons as well as to those in the U.S.-run prisons of Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo and Bagram, and those in Turkish prisons.

Participants declared strong support for U.S. political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, the Cuban Five



and the MOVE 9, greeting messages from Mumia as well as from activists on death row in Texas with great applause.

Pam Africa, representing the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, told of Mumia's political strength despite his illegal incarceration for decades. Ralf Minkenberg from Germany, with the Solidarity Committee with the Cuban Five—"Basta Ya"—spoke of worldwide support for these Cuban heroes, who were truly fighting terrorism.

Melek Akgun, representing TAYAD, a Turkish association of prisoners' families,

gave a heart-wrenching account on conditions of isolation in Turkish prisons. Her son, a political prisoner, has been imprisoned for five years. She said that the prison isolation has psychologically disabled her son.

To call attention to these conditions of isolation, prisoners in Turkey have employed the tactic of the "Death Fast." Some 122 prisoners have died in the fast so far and over 600 are left with disabilities. Right now three people, including Behic Ascı, a lawyer for some of the prisoners, have been fasting for over 250 days and are in critical condition.

First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Greece José Cala and First Secretary of the Venezuelan Embassy in Greece Porfirio Pestana both addressed the symposium. Cala spoke on the terrorist attacks against his island by U.S. imperialism since 1959 as well as the economic blockade against the Cuban people. He urged support for the Cuban Five, known in Cuba as the

"Five Heroes." Cala brought a recent film about the Five that was screened.

A Peoples Video Network film, "Shaka Sankofa: The World's Greatest Legal Lynching," was shown. Many of the international participants were surprised by the overt racism and injustice at the core of the U.S. criminal justice system. They greeted with cheers scenes of protesters in Austin and Huntsville, Texas, trying to stop Sankofa's execution.

One of the panels dealt with Washington's so-called war on terrorism and the future of social and political rights. Many speakers told of anti-terror laws being put on the books in their country. In Belgium, the state can condemn a person just for belonging to an organization or association. Those detained have their human rights violated and torture is used against them. The symposium issued a call for support for defendants in upcoming trials in Belgium and Denmark.

The right to resist

One panel focused on the resistance to

Keeping Philippines



Mother of Sherlyn Cadapan, a missing student activist, attending demonstration against changes in the Constitution in Manila.

killed. (IBON)

They include Bishop Alberto Ramento; Markus Bangit, an indigenous leader of the Malbong Tribe of Tomiangan, Tabuk, Kalinga and the coordinator of the Elders Desk of the Cordillera People's Alliance; activist teacher Napoleon Pornasodoro; Bayan Muna Party (People First Party) members Jayson Delen and Jimmy Mirafuente; Cris Hugo, the regional coordinator of the League of Filipino Students; and Nestle Union president and KMU leader, Diosdado Fortuna. The KMU is the revolutionary workers union in the Philippines and stands for the May 1st Movement.

More than 168 leaders and activists remain missing.

The IAC delegation met with the mother of one missing student leader, Sherlyn Cadapan. Sherlyn was abducted with another student leader, Karen Empeño, and 55-year-old activist Manuel Merino.

The young women, both in their early 20s, are students at the University of the Philippines (UP). The three were abducted on July 26, 2006. They were volunteers of the Alliance of Peasants in

U.S. delegation with Filipino activists in Cebu City.

Bulacan, Philippines.

Six armed men forcibly entered the house where the students were staying. Merino, who was staying at a house nearby, came to help the two young women. All three were forced into a vehicle and driven away. The young women's parents believe that troops of the 56th infantry Battalion in Bulacan were the ones who abducted the three activists.



The commander of the 7th Infantry Division, based where the abduction took place, told the family that the young women were members of the New Peoples Army, the armed wing of the resistance in the country. The family believes that such statements indicate the military knows the whereabouts of the three.

The mother of Sherlyn Cadapan told me at a demonstration against proposed changes to the Philippine Constitution that she will not stop until she finds her daughter.

Despite the wave of repression sweeping the country, the movement is strong. The abductions and assassinations have not stopped the people's struggle for self determination and freedom from imperialist domination.

Despite a heavy police presence in preparation for the scheduled ASEAN conference here, the movement organized conferences for Jobs and Justice and against Global Terrorism, as well as demonstrations in the streets, which IAC representatives participated in.

Many of the people who attended these events told of family members missing or dead. But the history of the will of the Filipino people to resist domination is as long as imperialism's aims in the region. It will be the Filipino people who will ultimately prevail, as seen by the courage and commitment here.

Copies of the IBON Foundation report can be ordered at leftbooks.com.

By Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

In praise of princes and presidents—Ford

Following is a transcript of a Jan. 5 audio column. Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear Mumia's political messages.



I have struggled to not write about the passing of U.S. President Gerald Ford. I sought to not do so for days.

Yet, the imperial fashion adopted by most of the American press, which praised his administration almost unanimously as "his salvation of the republic," forced me to put pen to paper.

Much of the reporting that we have seen has simply been dishonest, historically inaccurate and a national amnesiac.

What I found particularly perturbing was the virtually unanimous official opinion that former President Ford's pardon of Richard M. Nixon was an act of "courage."

Why? Because he opposed the will of the majority of the American people?

There is something unseemly about issuing a pardon to a man before he was criminally charged with anything, and further, one who built much of his political career on law and order.

Ford, to hear the corporate press tell it, simply made a deep, inner decision to save the nation the trauma of a trial against Nixon by issuing a preemptive pardon.

The problem with this official reading is that there's plenty of evidence that it just ain't true.

Acclaimed historian Howard Zinn, in his phenomenal *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Collins Perennial, 2003), tells us that months before the Nixon resignation, "top Democratic and Republican leaders in the House of Representatives had given secret assurance to Nixon that if he resigned they would not support criminal proceedings against him." (p. 546)

The New York Times reported that what Wall Street wanted in case Nixon resigned was "the same play with different players."

It took a French journalist to voice what no mainstream American paper would—that U.S. political leaders wanted a change of face, but not a change of politics.

Zinn writes: "No respectable American newspaper said what was said by Claude Julien, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique* in September 1974. 'The elimination of Mr. Richard Nixon leaves intact all the mechanisms and all the false values which permitted the Watergate scandal.' Julien noted that Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, would remain at his post—in other words, that Nixon's foreign policy would continue. 'That is to say,' Julien wrote, 'that Washington will continue to support General Pinochet in Chile, General [Ernesto] Geisel in Brazil, General [Alfredo] Stroessner in Paraguay, etc.'" (p. 545)

Clearly, for millions of people in the U.S., and in Latin America, "the long national nightmare" was far from over.

Nixon's regime was criminal to the core, despite his rhetoric about law and order. It was a government that broke laws frequently and flagrantly, and got away with it. Slush funds, burglaries, illegal corporate campaign contributions, illegal wiretaps, corruption—you name it.

A deal, a pardon, a swift goodbye and the imperial press applaud.

"Law and order" was a program for Blacks, Hispanics, poor people, political opponents and radicals. For the wealthy and well-to-do, it was business as usual.

Ford was part of that program.

And because he played his part, the media played their part: "The king is dead. Long live the king."

From Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the immortal lines are written: "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings."

The stories, we see, are still being told. □

U.S., Zionist, Turkish prisons

global wars of imperialism and the failure of the U.S.'s strategy in the Middle East. Dr. Hisham Bustani of the Popular Arab Resistance Alliance spoke of the recent U.S. and Israeli failure in Lebanon. "Imperialism doesn't know what to do," he said, "so they keep changing plans. The U.S. is weak now and the solution for the Arab masses is armed resistance. We must defend ourselves when we are called terrorists. WE are not the terrorists! We are the resistance and we have the right to defend ourselves against U.S. imperialism."

A member of the Egyptian Socialist Party spoke on supporting the resistance in the Arab world. "The victory of the resistance will mean that the U.S. control of capital and human resources will change. The poor in the U.S. must understand that this is in their interest," she said. "We hear the debate among the anti-war movement—armed resistance or peaceful resistance. It is the right of our people to use arms against the greatest imperialist power in the world.

All oppressed people have the right to choose our path to defeat imperialism," she stated.

Boris, a young activist from Bulgaria, assured all that the struggle in Eastern Europe did not stop with the fall of socialism. His organization, the 23rd of September Resistance Movement, supports worldwide communism and is fighting against the restoration of capitalism in Bulgaria and Eastern Europe.

One former political prisoner, Alexander Moumbaris, told of leaving home in Europe to travel to South Africa to fight apartheid. He became a part of the armed wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and was captured and imprisoned for 12 years. He finally escaped in 1979 and fled to France where he still lives. "After we won against anti-terror laws in South Africa, it is hard to see history repeating itself today. But, the struggle continues," he said.

From support for the resistance in Iraq to the Zapatistas in Mexico to the

FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) to those fighting in the Philippines and Palestine, revolutionary international solidarity against imperialism seemed the unifying theme of the symposium. Many prisoners around the world fasted during the symposium to show their solidarity.

The symposium ended with the international delegations attending a memorial meeting for the revolutionaries who have fallen in the battle against isolation and in resistance to imperialist wars, gathering in an institution named EAT-ESA, which the gendarmerie had used as a torture center in the time of the Greek junta (1967-1974) and which is now a museum. Representatives of EAT-ESA, who took part and had themselves been tortured, told the delegations about those times. A wreath of red carnations was laid at the memorial for the fallen.

Gloria Rubac represented the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement at the symposium.

Having achieved military security

North Korea plans to strengthen economy

By Deirdre Griswold

The people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are celebrating the New Year with greater confidence and optimism.

After years of extreme threats from Washington, which reached a crescendo when President George W. Bush implied a U.S. invasion was possible by naming North Korea, along with Iraq and Iran, an "axis of evil," the Koreans last year showed the world that they possess a deterrent to aggression, a true nuclear shield. Their scientific and technological development has reached the stage where they possess nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

When the DPRK made this earthshaking announcement, the chorus of denunciations around the capitalist world was intense. How dare this former colony join the exclusive "nuclear club"? That club is for the imperialists and their loyal subjects, not for a country that from its inception has declared its intention to build a socialist society.

Koreans know what war is and they don't want another one. They lost some

3 million people during the U.S. invasion and war of 1950-53. There is not one Korean family that was not harmed by the war, in which U.S. bombers leveled every building above one story in the North.

For over 50 years, Washington has shown a particularly pathological hatred for the Koreans, who never lost their will to resist foreign domination, even when ringed by U.S. nuclear-armed submarines, missiles and planes.

In the extremely difficult period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. made every effort to starve the DPRK of energy and food, hoping to drag it down as well. At the same time, the north experienced an unprecedented drought followed by devastating storms. In this same period, Kim Il Sung, the remarkable fighter who had led their anti-colonial resistance and then become president of a truly independent Korea, died.

In those literally dark days, when the inhabitants of this cold, far northern country had to conserve energy by not turning on lights, not heating their homes and not using elevators in their high-rise apartments, a decision had to be made on where to concentrate their resources.

If the DPRK were to survive as an independent, sovereign country in control of its own economic system, it had to have the means to resist U.S. nuclear threats. Under the leadership of Kim Jong Il, the new leader, the decision was made to follow a policy called Songun, which means "army first." Everyone would tighten their belts in order to build Korea's military defense.

While Washington was increasingly preoccupied with its failed attempt to recolonize Iraq, the DPRK went ahead and built up its defenses, made all the more necessary by the absolute refusal of the U.S. to normalize relations on the Korean peninsula. To this day, there has been no formal end to the Korean War and no peace treaty.

It was a hard time. But the people and leadership of the DPRK were determined never to be in a defenseless position, no matter how much sacrifice that took.

Now the Koreans are reaping the rewards of this decision. They feel more secure than before, and can now turn to the domestic economy. "Last year was a year filled with pride, a year in which an epoch-making phase was opened for the building of a great, prosper-

ous and powerful nation," said a joint New Year's editorial of the DPRK's three leading newspapers.

The people of the DPRK look to this joint editorial each New Year to lay out the perspective for the months ahead.

"The present reality, in which all conditions for leaping higher and faster have been created, demands that we step up the revolutionary advance more vigorously to achieve the high objectives of the building of a great, prosperous and powerful socialist nation," the statement says further down.

"The main task in the present general march is to direct primary effort to rapidly improving the standard of the people's living and, at the same time, to step up technological updating to put our economy on a modern footing and display its potentials to the full."

The DPRK has already achieved an enormous technological breakthrough with its nuclear program. Now it wants to concentrate on building up its heavy and light industry and agriculture.

If any country can be said to have pulled itself up by the bootstraps, it is the DPRK.

Clarion call for 2007

Free the Cuban Five

By Cheryl LaBash

The action plan for 2007 was set by lawyer Roberto González, brother of René González, one of the five Cuban heroes unjustly imprisoned for their work to stop terrorist attacks on their beloved homeland, Cuba. He said, "The hope for their release resides in the struggle we all wage non-stop." (Granma)

The five Cuban men held unjustly in U.S. federal prisons are Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, René González, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino.

In 1998 they were ripped from their Cuban homeland while in Florida, thrown into severe isolation solidarity confinement, tried and convicted of "conspiracy espionage" in a trial where there was absolutely no evidence of any espionage and sentenced to from 15 years to double life terms.

The uphill battle to publicize the political nature of their conviction and the double standard by the U.S. government was slow but cumulative.

What sense did it make to imprison anti-terrorists like the Cuban Five when the U.S. spent hundreds of billions of dollars funding a so-called war on terror?

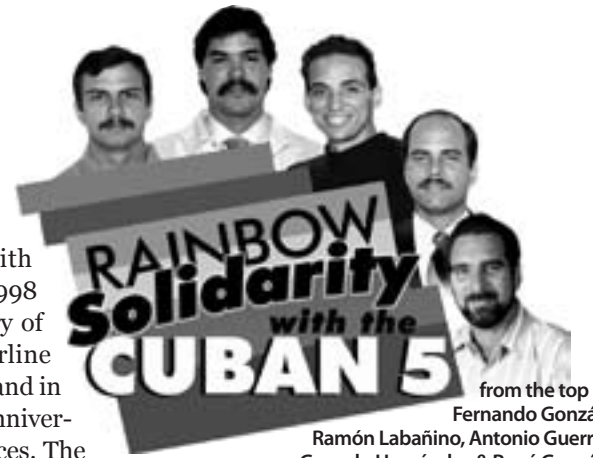
Although the 11th Circuit Court ruling in 2006 reversed the decision of the three-judge panel declaring there was no way for a fair trial to be held in Miami due to the "perfect storm" of prejudice, it also brought an intensification of solidarity with the Cuban Five around the world and inside the United States as well.

A year after their sentencing, December 2002, there were 100 committees demanding the Cuban Five be freed. By December 2006, the figure has reached 290 in 90 countries.

Also in 2006, two international soli-

darity drives coincided with the date of their arrests in 1998 through the 30th anniversary of the bombing of Cubana Airline 455 by U.S.-based terrorists and in December to mark the fifth anniversary of the draconian sentences. The first national demonstration in the U.S. to Free the Five was held in Washington, D.C. Big media breakthroughs began in large part due to the dogged press work by the National Committee to Free the Five.

While the legal process grinds on, solidarity will continue to expand and reach more sectors in 2007: on campuses; in Black, Latin@ and immigrant communities; in LGBT and women's movements; in the anti-war/anti-occupation mobilizations; committees to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, the Angola 3, and all political prisoners; in the labor movement; in newspapers; and radio and TV news.



from the top left, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández & René González.

A Jan. 7 call for Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five has already won a swift and enthusiastic response from lesbian, gay, bi, trans and other individuals and organizations fighting sex/gender and sexual oppression. For more information about the call, e-mail Leslie Feinberg at transgenderwarrior@gmail.com.

For more information, organizing tools or organizations near you that are working to Free the Cuban Five, go to: www.freethethefive.org, www.antiterroristas.cu, www.freethethefive.org, and www.cuba-solidarity.com or any Workers World Party branch listed in WW newspaper. □

Haitian resister inspires audience

By G. Dunkel
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Well over 300 Haitians came out Jan. 7 to hear Sò Ann bring her message of fighting for justice, both social and economic, as well as demanding the return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti from his exile in South Africa.

Some longtime Haitian activists and militants felt that the recent big demonstrations inspired by the popular organizations in Cité Soleil had awakened the community and let them organize such a large meeting even though the press release announcing it only went out Jan. 4.

Sò Ann is the name under which Anne Auguste is better known. According to Fanfan Latour, a journalist and member of Fanmi Lavalas who chaired the evening meeting, Sò Ann is "a pillar of the

resistance as well as the arts and culture in Haiti."

Sò Ann was recently released from prison after over two years, when the Haitian courts found that no charges had ever been brought against her.

The collection during the meeting brought in \$1,200 for her work in Haiti.

Besides listening to Sò Ann, Joselyn Gay and some of her troupe, Ti Flute, Gerard the drummer and singer Rozna, some political presentations were made.

Bernier Archille from the Haiti Support Network talked about the significance of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who declared Haiti independent in 1804, for the present struggle.

Roger Leduc from Kakola remarked that this meeting marked the end of the discouragement and demoralization of the Haitian community in New York.



Fanfan Latour and Sò Ann sing Haitian national hymn at Jan. 7 meeting. Sò Ann, left.

WWW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

Leduc analyzed how the U.S., French and Canadian imperialists used the U.N. and its MINUSTAH, the U.N. Mission to Stabilize Haiti, to occupy the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

Fanmi Lavalas, the Haiti Solidarity Network and Kakola organized the event. The International Action Center was thanked from the chair for supplying the sound. □

U.S. biggest culprit of global warming

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

The spring-like condition of the weather in the first week of January in New York had everyone talking. Flowers were blooming months early. It was the first snowless winter since 1877 (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 6), and many people were worrying about one thing: global warming.

While weathercasters reported that the recent oddities were due not to global warming but to El Niño—temperature fluctuations in surface waters of the tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean—it's not just New York that has been showing the symptoms. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology reported that 2006 saw the warmest spring there on record. Neil Plummer, senior climatologist of the bureau, said, "Most scientists agree this is part of an enhanced greenhouse gas effect. Of Australia's 20 hottest years [on record], 15 have occurred since 1980." (Financial Times, Jan. 3)

Ted Scambos, a glaciologist with the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colo., reports, "From Europe, the East Coast, north to the Arctic and across to Siberia, there's a very large swath of the Northern Hemisphere for the months of September, October and November that [were] exceedingly warm." (Washington Post, Jan. 7)

After petitions and a lawsuit from environmental groups, the Bush administration has recently proposed to put the polar bear on the threatened species list under the Endangered Species Act. In 2005, scientists found evidence that polar bears were drowning because they had to swim longer distances to find food, due to the melting of the Arctic ice shelf. (Sunday Times of Britain, Dec. 18, 2005)

On Dec. 29, the Guardian UK reported that a huge ice island had suddenly broken off from an ice shelf in the Canadian Arctic, alarming scientists who had assumed that global warming changes would occur much more gradually.

United States corporations guilty

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the United States is the largest single emitter of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, a leading cause in global warming. (www.eia.doe.gov) Some state, city and local governments have passed legislation to cut emissions, as in California, New York, Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va.

Yet the federal government has washed its hands of the issue—consistently refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was originally negotiated in 1997. Signatory countries

of the non-binding protocol commit to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases, or provide economic incentives for reduction.

Placing the blame directly on the United States, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights stating the United States' refusal to limit its emissions has violated the rights of the Arctic Inuit people to use their traditional lands, their rights to health and life, and to their livelihood. While the commission rejected the petition in December, Inuit leaders vow to continue the struggle to expose these violations. (Nunatsiaq News, Dec. 17)

Not only are capitalist corporations—the government's real bosses—unwilling to do anything to stop what is already becoming a global crisis; some of them are still actively trying to mislead the public to think that global warming doesn't exist.

A Jan. 3 press release from the Union of Concerned Scientists announced their new report on "how ExxonMobil has adopted the tobacco industry's disinformation tactics, as well as some of the same

organizations and personnel, to cloud the scientific understanding of climate change and delay action on the issue. According to the report, Exxon Mobil has funneled nearly \$16 million between 1998 and 2005 to a network of 43 advocacy organizations that seek to confuse the public on global warming science." The report is available at www.ucsusa.org.

The release explains that ExxonMobil has:

- raised doubts about even the most indisputable scientific evidence;
- funded an array of front organizations to create the appearance of a broad platform for a tight-knit group of vocal climate change contrarians who misrepresent peer-reviewed scientific findings;
- attempted to portray its opposition to action as a positive quest for "sound science" rather than business self-interest;
- used its access to the Bush administration to block federal policies and shape government communications on global warming.

If ExxonMobil were a country, it would be the sixth-largest expender of global warming emissions. (AlterNet, Jan. 8)

Other corporations attempt to cover up their horrible track records on the environment by making only the paltriest efforts to help. For example, a New York Times editorial lauds Wal-Mart for pushing to sell 100 million compact fluorescent light bulbs—which use less energy than regular light bulbs—a year. More than half the electricity in the U.S. comes from coal-burning plants, the editorial reports.

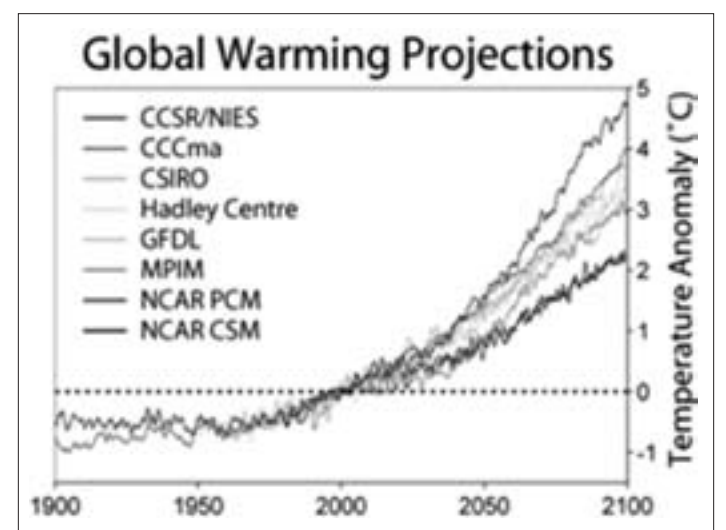
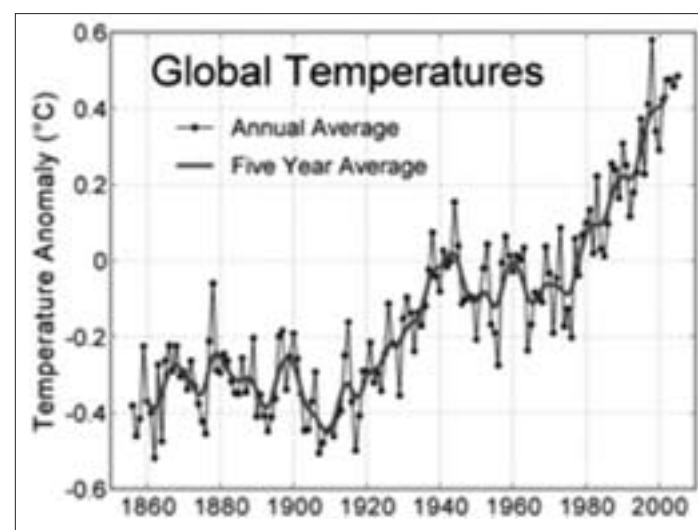
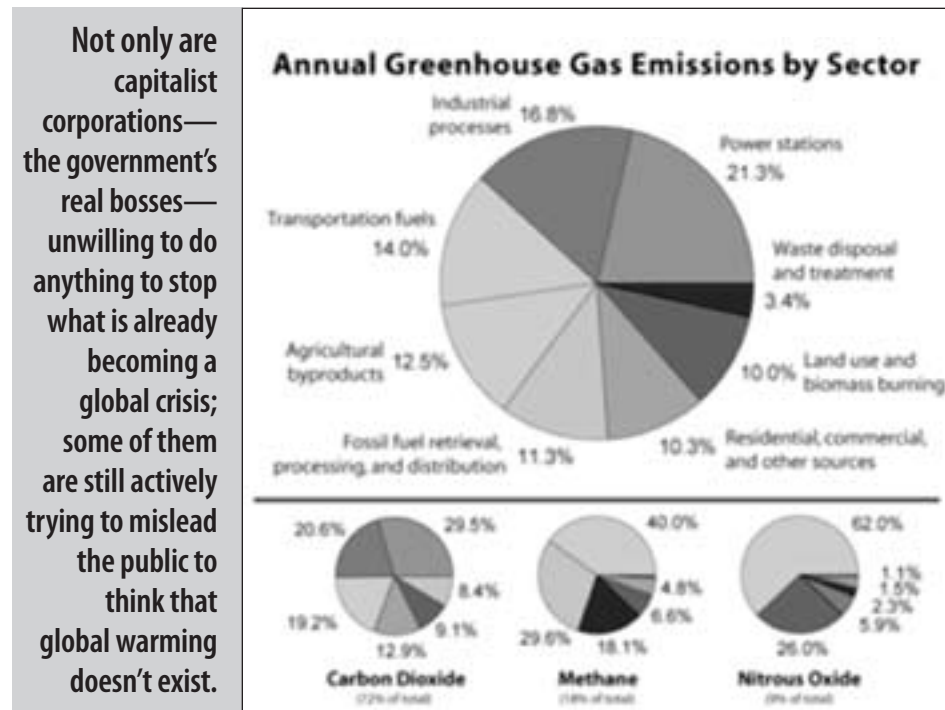
Yet from Connecticut to Washington to Pennsylvania, complaints have been filed against Wal-Mart stores for violations of water quality standards, as well as pesticide and fertilizer pollution. In Dallas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was willing to waive some water quality standards just for Wal-Mart stores.

While products like compact fluorescent light bulbs can provide some reprieve to the problem of global warming emissions, the largest contributors to the problem are not individuals, but these corporations. Under capitalism, they are allowed to run rampant, trampling over any rights of workers, including environmental protection, unless a struggle forces them back.

In addition, when disasters occur as a result of these policies—like Hurricanes Katrina and Rita—the U.S. government is not only ill-equipped but unwilling to deal with the consequences to the people. Recently, National Hurricane Center Director Max Mayfield stepped down from his 34-year position, saying that the United States lacked the political will to commit to the kind of hurricane preparedness that will be needed in the current highly active hurricane cycle. (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 3)

The struggle to save the planet from global warming is therefore yet another reason why capitalism must be replaced with a system that places people—and the environment that sustains them—over profits.

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Bush expands war by bombing Africa

Continued from page 1

For over a year, this grassroots grouping, which has no outside imperialist support, has been building up social services in the country and pushing back the group of Somali puppets now dubbed the "government" by the invaders. These same forces used to be referred to by the corporate media as "warlords."

Washington has secretly funded these Somali puppets, according to many press reports, but this strategy blew up in the faces of the Bush crew last May as the ICU drove the foreign-backed collaborators out of many cities, to the applause of enthusiastic crowds who greeted the Islamic fighters as their liberators.

Now the puppets are being called the

government by the Western media, and the "deputy prime minister," a former U.S. Marine named Hussein Aided, is dutifully calling for U.S. troops on the ground. Aided's call must amuse/enrage many Somalis, since U.S. troops have been there ever since the December invasion. (Guardian, Jan. 10)

The last time the U.S. admitted to having troops in Somalia was in the 1990s. An intervention orchestrated by George H.W. Bush, father of the current president, in 1992 toward the end of his administration was carried out supposedly for "humanitarian" reasons. Somehow, the news media here saw no problem with echoing the line from Washington that heavily armed Marines were needed to deliver

bread to hungry Somalis.

This cynical maneuver against one of the poorest countries in the world ended in disaster for the invaders. After a vicious attack by Black Hawk helicopters on a crowded market area in downtown Mogadishu in October 1993, the armed and motivated population shot down one of the warships. In the street fighting that followed, some 18 U.S. troops, many of them highly trained Delta Force commandos, were killed by the enraged populace. Washington's dreams of controlling Somalia and its strategic coastline on the Horn of Africa had been dashed.

The present situation seems to be pointing in the same direction. The Somali people have resisted foreign domination ever

since the colonial period. As the latest report in the New York Times shows, the civilians are cheering on those who risk their lives by fighting back against this highly armed force of U.S.-supplied mercenaries.

As Bush calls for more troops to Iraq, sending soldiers and National Guards overseas for a second and even third time, the hatred for U.S. imperialism grows ever more acute throughout the world.

This latest violence against the people of Somalia, concocted by callous, smug, racist empire-builders playing with the lives of millions, will end in disaster, too. But the end will come only when an aroused popular movement joins the people of the world in demanding: Troops out now!

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U.S. hypocrisy on Palestine

The U.S., France and other imperialist powers claim to be “appalled” over fighting between the Palestinian groups Fatah and Hamas. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s recent call for a halt to the fighting, however, is sheer hypocrisy. Washington, Tel Aviv and the European imperialist powers have used every weapon in their arsenal to exacerbate tensions between Fatah and Hamas.

In January 2006, the Palestinian people overwhelmingly voted in legislative elections for Hamas, a group known for determined struggle against occupation. Neither U.S. finance capital nor its clients in Tel Aviv accepted the Palestinian people’s choice, and have waged a most brutal campaign for “regime change” ever since.

For the last year, Israel, the U.S. and European imperialists have waged economic war on the Palestinian Authority (PA) to render it ineffective. The U.S. and Europe have withheld promised funds, and U.S. banks have imposed a financial blockade on PA banks, denying the PA funds from Arab League countries or anyone else. Israel has held back the \$55 million in PA tax monies it collects monthly. These funds account for a third of the PA’s budget and pay the wages of the PA’s 160,000 civil servants, including the security forces involved in current clashes. A third of the Palestinian population depends on this money to survive.

At the same time, Israeli occupation forces—bankrolled and armed by the U.S.—have laid siege to Gaza and the West Bank, continue daily military incursions, bombings, arrests, huge land confiscations and destruction of homes,

and are building the apartheid wall. Some call these assaults the most serious in the entire history of the Palestinian struggle.

It is within the context of this brutal imperialist economic squeeze, military onslaught and truly untenable situation for the Palestinian people that tensions have risen between Fatah and Hamas.

Imperialism is trying to use the weapon of “divide and conquer” to disrupt the struggle in Palestine, just as it is used to “Balkanize” Iraq. Washington and Tel Aviv now clearly favor Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, who is the PA president, over Hamas, which controls the PA cabinet and legislature. Before Hamas became part of the PA government, however, Israel vilified Abbas and refused to speak with him.

In the name of “peace,” the U.S. and Israel are waging war against the PA and the people who have elected Hamas. But the real goal is to destroy every attempt by the Palestinian people to assert true self-determination and build a sovereign Palestine. Palestinian sovereignty provides the only hope for true peace.

This is one of the most difficult times in the history of the Palestinian resistance. International support is needed more than ever to lift the siege on this heroic national liberation struggle. The anti-war movement here can be most helpful by renewing the fighting to get U.S. imperialism out of the Middle East, and to stop all U.S. aid to Israel.

Free from the bone-crushing burden of foreign interference and U.S.-financed Israeli domination, the Palestinian people can and will resolve peacefully any differences among them on how to best liberate and run their country. □

Iraq: a moment of truth

President George W. Bush’s decision to expand the criminal war on Iraq can leave its mark on U.S. history as indelibly as Lyndon Johnson’s decision to escalate the Vietnam War in 1964.

Bush once more is announcing a plan for “victory.” He is adding 20,000 U.S. troops to Baghdad’s turmoil. Some will come from the regular U.S. Army and Marine Corps. Most will be recycled from the Army Reserves and National Guard.

Iraqis, whose lives are hell, who have lost hundreds of thousands of loved ones to Washington’s aggression, will be left with few joys. One satisfaction will be to strike a blow at the hated invader, and to fight on until all invaders are driven out.

Only 11 percent of the U.S. people say they support the escalation. Even the majority of ruling-class politicians, media pundits and military figures realize that the U.S. has lost in Iraq. But none of them has the will to take the responsibility for organizing a U.S. withdrawal.

His generals saw the escalation as hopeless, so Bush replaced them with officers willing to shed more Iraqi and U.S. blood. For U.S. ruling circles, it is a moment of truth. All indications are that no capitalist politicians, Democratic or Republican, will act to stop the Bush gang.

For the millions here who have opposed the war, and the tens of millions who will join them, it is equally a moment of truth, with no easy answers.

The fight to end the occupation, to save the lives and limbs of Iraqis and GIs alike, will be a fight against the government in Washington—not to convince “sensible” politicians to break with Bush, but to unite all forces in U.S. society who want to move from dissent to resistance, who will throw a wrench in the war machine that is still in Bush’s hands. □

Protest hanging, further executions in Iraq

The following short excerpts on protests regarding the U.S. lynching of Saddam Hussein reached Workers World after we went to press last week. They include appeals in defense of other Iraqi political prisoners held by the U.S. occupiers in Iraq.

Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) held demonstrations on Dec. 30 in Kolkata (Calcutta) and other cities in India condemning the execution of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The marchers accused the U.S. of wanting “to impose its hegemony over other countries. ... It was time for other countries to revolt against the U.S.,” they noted. K. Somashekar, general secretary of the district unit, accused the U.S. of committing a barbaric act in violation of all democratic norms with the ulterior motive of gaining gain control over the oil reserves in Iraq.



Carolyn Ho speaks at NYU on Dec. 7 in support of her son, Ehren Watada, shown on poster.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

GI dissent ready to go public

By John Catalinotto

The first attempt at a mass expression of dissent by enlisted U.S. service people is scheduled for Jan. 15, the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday holiday, at a large U.S. Naval base in Norfolk, Va.

Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto, who grew up in Atlanta under the strong influence of that city’s movement for civil rights for the African-American population, is a key spokesperson for troops who, since late October, have been collecting hundreds of GI signatures to an anti-war “Appeal for Redress.”

Hutto told Workers World on Jan. 8 that “people from the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), Military Families Speak Out and other anti-war groups and long-term organizers of GI dissent will be coming to support the active-duty rank-and-file soldiers, sailors and marines who will be publicizing their appeal to the U.S. Congress—an appeal protected as a right of service people—to put an end to the war.”

The appeal, which can be found at www.appealforredress.org, reads:

“As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home.”

The news conference will publicize the solidarity of active-duty troops with the sentiment now shared by 70 percent of the population that the war and occupation of Iraq should be ended, and will do it as part of the commemoration of the role played by Rev. King in the struggle against war and racism.

U.S. v. 1st Lt. Watada

The pre-trial hearing in the case of U.S. v. First Lt. Ehren Watada opened Jan. 4 in Ft. Lewis, Wash., as a demonstration of over 100 of Watada’s supporters gathered for a rally and vigil at a freeway overpass near the fort’s entrance.

Watada is the first officer to refuse duty in Iraq, calling it his responsibility to refuse to participate in a war crime by taking part in an illegal war of aggression.

Members of IVAW, which supports Watada, had arrived from across the country to set up “Camp Resistance” across the road from a side gate to the fort, with plans to stay until the end of Lt. Watada’s court martial.

The government had subpoenaed a number of journalists, some of whom were known as opponents of U.S. policies in Iraq, who had reported on Watada’s statements. The idea was to get them to authenticate statements Watada made on video. The journalists included Sarah Olsen, Dahr Jamail, Gregg Kakesako and Marc Ash. Most, so far, have refused to testify against their source. The military refused to allow any of the subpoenaed reporters in to cover the hearing.

Watada is charged not only with “missing movement by design” to Iraq, but with making statements that amount to “conduct unbecoming an officer.” In the hearing, according to Watada’s defense committee, Judge Lt. Col. John Head ruled that by charging Watada with violations involving his speech, “the prosecutors were allowing a military jury to consider his motives for refusing the order to deploy.”

Watada’s supporters plan nationally coordinated demonstrations for Feb. 5, the day his court-martial is scheduled to open. For more information see www.thankyoult.org. □

The People’s Emancipation Movement Combine of left Parties led by Socialist Party of Bangladesh (SPB) organized a protest meeting in the capital city, Dhaka, against the killing of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. At the meeting, Comrade Khalequzzaman, Convenor of SPB, said, “By killing President Saddam Hussein, U.S. imperialism wanted to destroy [the] Iraqi freedom struggle.”

Dennis Halliday and Hans von Sponek: As two former UN Humanitarian Coordinators for Iraq we would like to repeat the appeal we made last year to the U.S. government for the release of Tariq Aziz, former deputy prime minister of Iraq. Tariq Aziz has been imprisoned for the past three-and-a-half years without charges. During this period his fundamental rights under international law have been discarded just as in the case of other POWs and

political prisoners in Iraq. We are making this renewed appeal for Tariq Aziz because of his poor and deteriorating health and the resulting danger to his life. (iacenter.org)

Dr. Curtis F. J. Doebbler, international human rights lawyer and attorney to President Saddam Hussein: The imminent executions of Mr Barzan Ibrahim Al-Tikriti and Judge Awad Al-Bandar are illegal and violate international law, particularly international human rights law for the following reasons:

The Iraqi Special Tribunal (IST) is illegal. It was the intended consequence of an illegal war, the crime of aggression. U.S. President Bush said the war was intended to kill the Iraqi leadership. International law requires no state recognise the consequences of an illegal action. It was created in violation of

Continued on page 11

Roots of sexual oppression

1976 WWP pamphlet found answers in Marxism

By Leslie Feinberg

The profound and meaningful contribution of Workers World Party's 1976 publication "The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal" was that it examined the roots of modern lesbian and gay oppression from a historical materialist standpoint.

Marxists are often accused of having a worldview that ignores oppression, focusing solely on the economic battle between the owning classes and the laboring classes.

However, "The Gay Question" drew on more than a century of revolutionary Marxist scientific approach to understand how oppression arose and what it will take to eradicate it in all its forms. In doing so, the analysis widened and deepened the application and contributions of Marxism as a science of human economic development and the social relations it has produced.

McCubbin did not have to break fresh soil, he tilled it. Just as Charles Darwin's analysis of evolution created a new scientific understanding of species development, Engels and his life-long collaborator Karl Marx laid the groundwork for a scientific basis to understand social development.

Engels' groundbreaking 1884 work "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" used anthropological evidence from North America, Africa, Asia and Australia to conclude that women have not always been oppressed.

Engels deduced that social interaction was not governed by repression, domination or exploitation of one group of people by another during the long history of cooperative societies that preceded economic divisions between haves and have-nots.

The necessity of early humans to band together for group survival also created very different "family" relations than today. Kinship and group living arrangements were based on female descent, not male. The overall role of females in social organization resulted in respect for their contributions.

As labor efficiency, tools and technique developed, however, human societies accumulated a surplus—more than was required for immediate consumption. The struggle that led to private ownership of this surplus, which had been produced by collective human labor, transformed social life.

"The overthrow of mother-right"—matrilineal cooperative society—Engels summed up, "was the world historic defeat of the female sex."

In the more than 120 years since he wrote this, Marxism has been a powerful tool in the hands of Black, Latin@, Native,

Asian and white activists for women's liberation in this country—communists, socialist feminists, materialist feminists and other revolutionaries.

And it has been a powerful ideological and theoretical weapon worldwide. African-Caribbean Marxist revolutionary activist, theoretician and internationalist Walter Rodney stressed in 1975 that those who try to relegate Marxism to an outdated European ideology do not take the following into account:

"That it is already the ideology of 800 million Chinese people; that it is already the ideology which guided the Vietnamese people to successful struggle and to the defeat of imperialism. That it is already the ideology which allows North Korea to transform itself from a backward, quasi-feudal, quasi-colonial terrain into an independent industrial power. That it is already the ideology which has been adopted on the Latin American continent and that serves as the basis for development in the Republic of Cuba. That it is already the ideology which was used by Cabral, which was used by Samora Machel, which is in use on the African continent itself to underline and underscore struggle and the construction of a new society." ("Yes to Marxism" pamphlet, February 1986, People's Progressive Party of Guyana)

Roots of sexual oppression

McCubbin presented evidence of acceptance of homosexuality in pre-class societies on far-flung continents. The development of private ownership of the new storehouse of surplus "not only brought forth economic inequalities that set the stage for class society but also had the effect of replacing the matriarchal order

with one dominated by men."

"The new property relations were," he emphasized, "insupportable and unworkable without consequent changes in kinship relations, sexual relations, and religious attitudes and practices."

McCubbin traced the historic rise of state repression of sexuality and anti-homosexual patriarchal religious bigotry to the cleavage of society into economic classes.

He laid a historical materialist foundation for understanding how chattel slavery came into being, why the feudal Church unleashed the bloody Inquisition and how these phases in human economic development increasingly repressed and oppressed sexuality.

Contributions to trans theory and activism

Of course the 1976 pamphlet—and even its reprint 17 years later as "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View"—is now dated in some of its language and peripheral concepts—true of all scientific discoveries which help pave the road forward.

McCubbin's analysis was ahead of its time in including focus on the honored status in cooperative societies of gender-variance and in its defense of the rights of modern transsexual women and men to live in the sex that is "home."

The analysis was weakened, however, by two realities. First, the modern transgender and transsexual movement in the U.S. had not yet developed. And sex-reassignment programs only accepted transsexual individuals whose sexuality would be heterosexual in post-transition. This skewed an understanding of the fact that sexual diversity is as much a fact among transsexual men and women as every-

where else in society.

Workers World Party continued to struggle to actively defend transsexual and transgender people against oppression, through banners at demonstrations, articles, leaflets and pamphlets that culminated in the 1992 publication of "Trans Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come."

The entire text of that pamphlet has been reprinted in two anthologies: "Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference and Women's Lives," edited by Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham (Routledge, 1997) and "The Transgender Studies Reader," edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (Routledge, 2006).

The later anthology described the 1992 pamphlet as "small but influential," adding that, "It is an important foundational text of contemporary transgender theory and activism."

The pamphlet, and the larger book it inspired—"Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman" (Beacon 1996)—made their own contribution to Marxism. The historical materialist analysis offered compelling and consistent evidence that although there was an overall division of labor between females and males in pre-class societies, sex reassignment, intersexuality and gender diversity played an important social role on every continent.

Like evolutionary science, when Marxist understanding of human economic development and the social organization that arises from it is updated, this only strengthens its analysis, despite "creationist" attacks of every ideological stripe.

Workers World Party has continued to stress that battles against oppression are not "secondary" to the class struggle, they are a form of class struggle, particularly when they target the capitalist class.

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Next: Defending the Cuban Revolution! E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org



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. Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

Prosecuting an ideology:

Reflections on the Duke Lacrosse rape case

Following are excerpts.

On Dec. 22, Durham County, N.C., District Attorney Michael B. Nifong dropped the first degree rape charges against all three Duke lacrosse players. As of this writing, the kidnapping and sexual abuse charges against Dave Evans, Colin Finnerty and Reade Seligmann are still pending. According to the corporate media—including a recent editorial in the Washington Post—the remaining charges should also be dropped.

Meanwhile, the needs of the survivor are completely invisibilized and ignored.

Rape is a crime against humanity that violates and dehumanizes a person in the most invasive way imaginable. But rape is also a tool of sociopolitical dominance, and it is a main weapon in the arsenal of white male capitalist supremacy. Rape was and still remains a key component of genocidal imperialist campaigns across the globe. Imperialists understand very well the old dictum that once you have destroyed a nation's women, you have subjugated that nation.

The concept of criminal law in the United States is based on capitalist prop-

erty rights. This property concept includes interactions between individuals; in fact, all relations between people in U.S. society are commodified. Traditionally, women under capitalist law were defined as a man's property, and the property rights over a woman were passed from her father to her husband upon marriage. Therefore, any injury upon the body of a woman was seen not as a violation of the woman's bodily integrity, but as a breach of the man's property rights. Even as women have fought for and won basic citizenship rights over the past two centuries, this basic ideological concept of rape as a breach of men's property rights still stands.

This property concept forms the very basis of white supremacy in this country. Slavery as a system held Black bodies to be the property of white men, to be used for whatever purposes those men deemed fit. Male and female slaves were purposefully used as sexual and reproductive tools by slave-owners, in order to perpetuate and maintain white male wealth. Female slaves in particular were raped to ensure their total compliance to the master's domination and will, and the children who were fathered as a result of

these rapes legally assumed the class status of the slave mother, ensuring yet another generation of productive slave laborers. In short, it was a win-win situation for the slave-master.

From the beginning of the [Duke] case in March 2006, the corporate-owned media has sensationalized every detail of this case, while making no pretense at reporting the facts or informing the public.

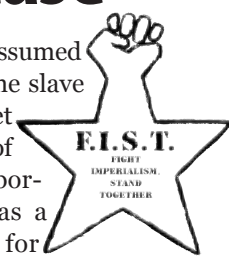
Supporters of the three defendants profess an unerring faith in the criminal justice system, especially the supposed American principle of "innocent until proven guilty."

When we are discussing sexual violence, or any issue of systemic power in society, it is imperative that we examine and question the conventional narratives that we have all been taught throughout our lives.

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Iraq executions

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international humanitarian law.

Articles 54 and 64 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibit occupiers from creating special courts to try their enemies and from vetting judges for their political alliances. The trial was unfair "aggressor's justice." The range of observers finding the trials before the IST unfair include international NGOs like Human Rights Watch and the Quakers to state actors such as the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. □

El asesinato de Saddam Hussein

Bush se prepara para intensificar la guerra en Irak

Por Sara Flounders

Mientras la cantidad de soldados estadounidenses pasa de 3000 y la cifra de muertes iraquíes exceden las 600.000, la ejecución de Saddam Hussein muestra las intenciones de Bush de intensificar la guerra en contra del pueblo de Irak, ya que planea enviar a 30.000 soldados más para mantener la ocupación.

Los miles de millones de dólares que ya se han gastado en esta guerra y los más de \$100 mil millones que Bush está pidiendo para este invierno y la primavera—han sido robados del pueblo de aquí que necesita ese dinero para empleos con salarios dignos, para el cuidado de la salud, viviendas, educación y para la reconstrucción de la costa del Golfo.

La ejecución de Saddam Hussein por la ocupación militar de los Estados Unidos en Irak muestra de nuevo de manera muy clara, la naturaleza de la ocupación criminal. La ejecución del presidente constitucional de Irak fue un ultraje brutal colonial con el propósito de insultar la soberanía nacional iraquí. Todo fue manejado con intenciones de inflamar los sentimientos de odio sectarios y religiosos entre el pueblo iraquí.

El video no oficial que circula por el Internet muestra una atmósfera de linchamiento. Era una escena caótica con insultos, abusos, y burlas mientras Saddam Hussein permanecía desafiante y calmado.

Conforme la ira y el resentimiento aumentan en Irak e internacionalmente por la ejecución y la manera en que ésta se llevó a cabo, la prensa capitalista estadounidense ha ido al extremo de describir la ejecución como un asunto iraquí, como una decisión del Alto Tribunal Iraquí, un comité sobre el cual las fuerzas de ocupación supuestamente no tienen mucho control o influencia.

El Alto Tribunal Iraquí es una creación de las fuerzas de ocupación de los Estados Unidos. Su creación fue un esfuerzo desesperado para justificar la ilegal y criminal invasión. Desde el comienzo, el tribunal fue una corte totalmente ilegal—prohibida explícitamente por la ley internacional. Bajo los acuerdos de la Convención de Ginebra, los cuales el gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha firmado, una potencia de ocupación está explícitamente prohibida de cambiar la estructura judicial o de establecer nuevas cortes.

L. Paul Bremer III, cabecilla de la Autoridad Provisional de la Coalición en el año 2003, estableció el tribunal. Las autoridades de la ocupación estadounidense nombraron oficialmente a los jueces y al personal, y el Congreso de los Estados Unidos estableció un fondo económico de un millón de dólares para pagar por los gastos de la corte. Los asesores estadounidenses redactaron las leyes de la corte.

Durante el juicio, tres abogados de la defensa fueron asesinados. El Alto Tribunal Iraquí utilizó testigos coaccionados, censura, aislaron a los acusados y les negaron todo tipo de visitas y de derechos legales. Aún el anuncio de la corte sobre la sentencia de muerte fue calculado para que saliera el fin de semana antes de las

elecciones estadounidenses el pasado mes de noviembre.

Washington controló el juicio y la ejecución

Todo el tiempo hasta su ejecución, Saddam Hussein estuvo en manos del ejército estadounidense. Fue capturado por las fuerzas estadounidenses, y encarcelado en la base estadounidense Camp Cropper. Para su ejecución, fue llevado por un helicóptero de Estados Unidos, con guardia de Estados Unidos, hacia el Camp Victory, otra base estadounidense. Las fuerzas estadounidenses transportaron a los verdugos y a los colaboradores que iban a servir como testigos.

Los oficiales estadounidenses escogieron a los verdugos y a los colaboradores que fueran de ascendencia chiíta aparentemente con la intención de culpar a los chiítas de la ejecución de Saddam Hussein. Recordemos que la ocupación estadounidense decidió quién podría postularse para un puesto gubernamental y cómo el gobierno iraquí podría ser estructurado. Ellos protegen a los títeres débiles y colaboradores dentro de la Zona Verde.

Una declaración del ex gobernante partido Baath luego de la sentencia en noviembre pasado destacó que “los efectos teatrales que han denominado un juicio, no son más que una forma para que los EEUU echen la culpa del crimen de ejecutar a Saddam Hussein al gobierno títere.”

El momento escogido para la ejecución en el día Eid al-Adha, uno de los días festivos más sagrados del año musulmán, agregó aún más a la ofensa y al ultraje. Este día es tradicionalmente un día de paz, de poner al lado las broncas y la ira, por lo menos mientras dura la festividad. Ocurre después de la época del año cuando millones de musulmanes hacen peregrinaje a la Meca. Es inaceptable y explícitamente ilegal en la religión musulmana, e incluso en la constitución confeccionada bajo el tutelaje de los EEUU, ejecutar a una persona durante este período.

La ejecución fue un acto de desesperación y debilidad cuando la ocupación ha colapsado y la resistencia ha ganado fuerza. En vez de seguir los consejos de negociaciones promovidos por el Grupo de Estudio de Irak y otros estrategas que temen un pronto desastre para los EEUU en Irak, Bush ha indicado, con la ejecución de Saddam Hussein, una decisión de intensificar la guerra.

También es sospechoso que un video “no oficial” fuera publicado mostrando a supuestos miembros del Ejército Mahdi insultando a Hussein. El asesinato de Hussein ocurre después de noticias publicadas que EEUU ha incrementado sus ataques y detenciones de miembros del ejército Mahdi, liderado por Moqtada al-Sadr. Esta ofensiva también es parte de un intento desesperado para dividir aún más al país y sofocar cualquier posibilidad de negociación o plan de sacar las tropas de los EEUU.

Según fuentes que monitorean los lugares de la resistencia iraquí en el Internet, éstos han publicado mensajes advirtien-

do a los luchadores de la resistencia que EEUU está intentando provocar batallas entre la resistencia y el Ejército Mahdi. Estos mensajes urgen a los luchadores a tomar como blanco principal las fuerzas de ocupación estadounidense, y donde sea posible, convencer a los efectivos del Ejército Mahdi a unirse a la resistencia en contra de los EEUU.

La ejecución no tuvo nada que ver con los supuestos crímenes del presidente de Irak, ni tampoco se puede considerar el juicio como una opinión legal histórica del papel jugado por Saddam Hussein en Irak. Está visto en Irak y alrededor del mundo como un acto de una potencia conquistadora, con la intención de humillar a la nación ocupada en contra de la voluntad de la mayoría abrumadora de la población.

EEUU apoya a muchas dictaduras

La guerra nunca tuvo nada que ver con llevar democracia a Irak. Siempre ha sido una guerra sobre el petróleo y la dominación corporativa de los EEUU sobre la región entera. EEUU nunca ha estado opuesto a dictaduras. Ha instalado, apoyado y armado dictaduras cuando estaban en los intereses de promover las ganancias corporativas. Desde su apoyo y armamento de dictaduras en Pakistán, Arabia Saudita, Egipto, y Kuwait hoy hasta el Shah de Irán, Mobutu en el Congo, Suharto en Indonesia y Pinochet en Chile, el gobierno de los EEUU ha apoyado algunos de los regímenes más brutales en la historia, cuando sirvieron a los intereses de Wall Street.

En los años '80 Washington estaba listo a cooperar con el gobierno de Saddam Hussein cuando quería utilizar a los iraquíes en contra de la Revolución de Irán a través de la guerra entre Irán e Irak. Fue la antigua táctica de “dividir para conquistar”, y Henry Kissinger hasta escribió sobre el deseo de debilitar a ambos lados teniendo a Irán e Irak combatiendo entre sí.

Saddam Hussein no fue ejecutado porque las fuerzas de ocupación de los EEUU lo consideraran un dictador. Aunque en el pasado había estado dispuesto a tratar y maniobrar con el imperialismo, Washington consideró que su crimen verdadero fue rehusar entregar la soberanía o el control de los recursos de Irak. El rehusó someterse al Nuevo Orden Mundial. Fue ejecutado por ser un obstáculo a la reconquista del Medio Oriente para el imperialismo estadounidense.

El poderío de las corporaciones en los Estados Unidos estaba decidido a terminar con el control nacional del petróleo ganado durante la revolución de 1958 en Irak. Esta nacionalización había transformado a Irak en un país próspero y de rápido desarrollo con el nivel de vida más alto de la región — un país moderno y secular donde la educación y el cuidado de la salud eran gratuitos.

Toda la clase dominante estadounidense, el establecimiento político completo, los medios de difusión corporativos y las dos cámaras del Congreso, tanto Demócratas como Republicanos, apoyaron el bombardeo y la destrucción masiva de las ciudades iraquíes, las industrias y las

instituciones educativas en 1991. También apoyaron el bombardeo, la invasión y la ocupación de Irak en 2003.

Los crímenes de guerra de los Estados Unidos

El imperialismo estadounidense ha cometido numerosos crímenes de guerra en su esfuerzo por subyugar Irak. Su Pentágono ha usado bombas nucleares de alta penetración (bunker busters), bombas de racimo, fósforo blanco, napalm y armas de uranio radioactivo reducido en las ciudades de Irak. Trece años de sanciones impuestas por los Estados Unidos resultaron en la muerte de 1.5 millones de iraquíes por enfermedades y desnutrición.

Desde la invasión del 2003, las fuerzas de ocupación estadounidense han llevado a cabo detenciones en masa, humillaciones y torturas sistemáticas de presos indefensos que todo el mundo conoce por las fotos de Abu Ghraib. La ocupación estadounidense ha creado un caos que ha cerrado escuelas, universidades y hospitales, dejando aún a la capital Bagdad, sin agua potable, sin servicios de sanidad y sin más de cuatro horas de luz eléctrica al día.

La corrupción de miles y miles de contratistas estadounidenses ha resultado en el saqueo de proyectos de reconstrucción y en el robo de miles y miles de artefactos culturales. Casi cuatro años de ocupación han resultado en la muerte de más de 600.000 iraquíes y el éxodo de 2 millones de iraquíes.

Fuera de las críticas y acusaciones que los iraquíes tengan contra Saddam Hussein, era su derecho soberano el decidir su destino, libre de fuerzas de ocupación extranjeras. La entidad independiente Centro Iraquí para Investigaciones y Estudios Estratégicos recientemente hizo una encuesta entre los iraquíes para averiguar si su vida era mejor bajo el gobierno de Saddam Hussein comparada con la humillación y el caos actual. Casi el 90 por ciento declaró que la situación de Irak era mejor y más estable antes de la ocupación estadounidense.

El movimiento de protesta contra la guerra imperialista en Irak y que demanda que todas las tropas estadounidenses sean retiradas, necesita también declararse contra todas las formas de ocupación colonial. Los contratos de las corporaciones estadounidenses y las leyes que han privatizado y saqueado los recursos iraquíes deben ser cancelados. Las cientos de bases estadounidenses, los miles de puestos de control, y las veintenas de prisiones secretas deben ser cerradas. Las cortes ilegales deben ser desmanteladas.

Finalmente, es necesario que este movimiento demande que el gobierno estadounidense y los oficiales militares sean acusados de crímenes de guerra y crímenes contra la humanidad por sus acciones en Irak.

Sara Flounders es co-directora del Centro de Acción Internacional, el cual organizó manifestaciones el 30 de diciembre para protestar la ejecución de Saddam Hussein.