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Special report from Baghdad

Iraqi people prepare for U.S. invasion

By Sara Flounders
Baghdad, Iraq

A delegation led by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark arrived in Baghdad Feb. 22 after a 14-hour drive from Amman, Jordan, across the open desert. A waning moon lit the nearly empty six-lane highway. We couldn't help wondering if the Pentagon will launch the war when the moon disappears from the sky. Or will the surging world movement against this war be powerful enough to stop the attack?

The delegation's purpose, as in previous trips, was to assess the impact of the 1991 war and 12 years of sanctions, especially on health care.

Dr. Zuhair Abdul Al-Azawi, senior deputy minister of health, told the delegation on Feb. 24 that after 11 years of constantly worsening conditions, this year the situation had finally stabilized and even slightly improved. Conditions are of course still horrendous compared to the excellent health care available to Iraqis before the 1991 U.S. war, when hospitals were targeted by bombs and missiles. Sanctions since then have kept out even standard medicines and medical equipment. They've also diminished the capacity of water purification plants, the food processing industry and the electric power grid.

After years of deprivation, there are no surpluses to cope with an emergency. Every effort is being made to distribute generators, drugs, antiseptics and all other available material to different parts of the country.

"This time," said Clark, "our greatest concern is the state of preparedness of the health services in the face of war. In 1991 when the hospitals and pharmacies were fully equipped, doctors ran out of everything in the first weeks of the war.

"When we visited hospitals in February 1991 there were no antiseptics, no gauze, no gloves, no antibiotics and no anesthesia. Thousands died because there were no materials to save them. But again, the bad water will be the greatest crisis.

"The world must be told of the impending crisis," Clark added. "And there must be every form of emergency medical assistance now."

Surface calm in Baghdad

On the surface Baghdad, a city of 5 million people, is calm. Schools, workplaces, offices and shops are open. Traffic is heavy.

There are photo exhibits and sports events, even weddings. Movie houses are open. But every small merchant says that people buy only what they absolutely need. People expect a horrendous war, with the civilian population a Pentagon target.

"My family has a plan when the missiles start to hit," Ali told us. "We are all going to stay in the same room. Whatever happens, it will happen to all of us together."

For decades, Ali and his two brothers have run a small fish store in a poor market neighborhood of Baghdad. Their

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These children in Baghdad are primary targets of the Pentagon. Half the Iraqi people are under 15.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Black History Month forum

'King was an internationalist'



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Clayborne Carson, keynote speaker at a celebration of Black History Month in San Francisco. Top center, Leilani Dowell chaired the event.

By Bill Hackwell
San Francisco

A multinational crowd celebrated Black History Month here in the African American Art and Cultural Complex on Feb. 22. The educational event was co-sponsored by the International Action Center and the African American Historical Society.

Leilani Dowell, a student and youth organizer with ANSWER, chaired the event. She explained that ANSWER was serious about creating a genuinely multiracial movement. "Poor Black students are being offered two career paths," she said, "the military and the prison-industrial complex. We need to link up the struggle for civil rights with the anti-war movement."

Jean Damu from the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America explained that the reparations movement isn't just about the huge sums stolen from Black people beginning with slavery, but is also about retrieving the culture of Black people and providing an economic future.

Other speakers included Glen Nance from the S.F. African American Historical Society and chair of the African American Studies Department of City College, and Bill Jennings, editor of It's About Time, a newsletter of alumni of the Black Panther Party. Jennings focused his remarks on the legacy of the Black Panther Party and its relevance to today's struggle for civil rights. Ted Frazier of the NAACP told the crowd that when he was in Florida investigating the stolen election that put Bush in office in 2000, it became clear to him that the Democrats were as negligent in assuring a fair election as the Republicans.

The keynote speaker was Clayborne Carson, director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University. He explained the importance of not letting the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. be reduced to a few of his well-known speeches. The media do this, implying that he struggled for civil rights and now this has been achieved. Martin Luther King Jr. was an internationalist, said Carson, and should be seen in that context today because we live in a world that is still built on a system of colonialism and oppression. □

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WW CALENDAR

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Sat., March 8
On International Women's Day--No War. Action initiated by NY ANSWER. For info (212) 633-6646.

SAN FRANCISCO

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat., March 15
Emergency convergence on the White House to stop a war on Iraq. Parallel actions will also be held in Los Angeles and San Francisco. For info see www.internationalanswer.org.

National Lawyers Guild weighs in against red-baiting

The National Lawyers Guild sent out the following resolution to its chapters on Feb. 21:

WHEREAS the ANSWER coalition has been subjected by some critics to unprincipled attacks based on what others perceive to be the political philosophy of some of its members; and

WHEREAS we are entering a dangerous period in our history in which reactionary and establishment political forces will attempt to isolate and fragment the progressive movement; and

WHEREAS the National Lawyers Guild has a proud history of working with progressive political groups and individuals representing a wide variety of political philosophies; and

WHEREAS the ANSWER coalition has been actively involved in mobilizing a mass movement against war and racism;

THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED:

That the NLG opposes red-baiting and similar tactics of ideologically motivated negative labeling of sectors of the progressive movement; and

That the NLG categorically rejects calls to "purge" the movement of progressive people who hold certain beliefs or who are members of particular parties, and recognizes such demands and divisive attacks as a real threat to an effective anti-war movement; and

That the NLG will not participate in witch hunts and opposes in the strongest possible terms calls for congressional investigations of political organizations, and stands ready to assist all who resist this new McCarthyism; and

That the NLG insists that such disagreements about politics and strategy as may from time to time exist among groups in the progressive movement must be aired and resolved in an atmosphere of mutual respect and on a principled basis, with the goal of building a broad-based movement.

JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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Arrests in two states signal shift

Ashcroft moves against Palestinians in U.S.

By Leslie Feinberg

It's true. There's a cabal in the United States that funnels funds and bombs for terrorists in Palestine. The safe house is a white mansion in Washington, D.C. The weapons cache is controlled at a pentagonal building in nearby Virginia. And the masterminds can be found on Wall Street and in a still-undetermined number of corporate and banking board rooms.

But there are no blaring headlines about those who actually fund terrorism to support the Israeli occupation of historic Palestine. Instead, the headlines are about the Feb. 20 FBI arrest of Dr. Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian professor from the University of South Florida.

The same day, government agents also arrested USF Arabic instructor Sameeh Hammoudeh and four men in Chicago, including Ghassan Ballut and Hatem Fariz, who reportedly have close ties to the area Palestinian community.

Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the arrests on Feb. 20, charging the men with allegedly "financing, extolling and assisting acts of terrorism."

All of those arrested have flatly denied

the charges—some of which could result in life sentences. Supporters emphasize that these arrests are part of the Bush administration's racist witch hunt to lay the basis for full-scale Pentagon war in the Middle East.

Professor Al-Arian has begun a hunger strike in detention.

Those arrested join the unknown numbers of Arab, Muslim and South Asian people who have been snatched up and disappeared by federal police in a roundup reminiscent of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

However, these arrests also mark a shift in this administration's "war on terror"—toward targeting the Palestinian liberation struggle. Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech to the United Nations in which he delivered the U.S. "case" against Iraq was a harbinger of this tactical move.

Al-Arian: 'It's all about politics'

Supporters maintain that Al-Arian in particular has been in the government's crosshairs because for many years he has consistently and outspokenly stood up for the Palestinian people's right to live free

from occupation. He is also a well-known proponent of civil liberties and civil rights.

"He's a political prisoner, right now as we speak," Al-Arian's lawyer, Nicholas Matassini, told the Associated Press.

Al-Arian helped establish the Islamic Society of North America and other affiliated organizations. He co-founded the World and Islam Studies Enterprise, a research and academic institution, in 1990. In 1997, he co-founded the National Coalition to Protect Political Freedom; he was later elected its president.

The same year, Al-Arian helped found the Tampa Bay Coalition for Justice and Peace, which fought the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of his brother-in-law, Mazen Al-Najjar. Al-Najjar was deported from the United States in 2002 after being held behind bars for almost five years based on "secret evidence."

The base of solidarity with Al-Arian has widened since he was placed on forced leave from his tenured teaching job at USF and banned from the campus shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Since then, he and his supporters have fought for his reinstatement.

The Executive Council and Delegate

Assembly of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York, Federation of Teachers Local 2334, passed a resolution in support of Al-Arian last April 25. Federation of Teachers President Sandra Feldman sent a letter in support of Al-Arian's rights to USF President Judy Genshaft on June 20.

Following the Feb. 20 arrests, Muslim and Arab organizations and communities in the United States began organizing support. The Muslim Student Association held a Florida news conference Feb. 21. MSA Vice President Aliyah O'Keeffe said, "We are concerned that the USF professors were arrested for their political views."

The group plans a courthouse protest before Al-Arian's bail hearing in Tampa on Feb. 25. (The Oracle, Feb. 24)

Friends, family and activists are rallying for the Chicago men.

A Feb. 21 statement by the International ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—coalition affirmed that the anti-war, anti-racist group "joins the organizations and individuals worldwide who are condemning Bush's and Ashcroft's political targeting of Dr. Al-Arian." □

Mumia still waiting for due process

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Well over a year since a federal judge vacated his death sentence, political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal remains on death row, waiting for the courts to grant due process and allow evidence of his innocence to be heard.

In December 2001, U.S. Court of Appeals Third Circuit Judge William H. Yohn, while refusing to grant Abu-Jamal's right to a new trial, overturned his death sentence. But the judge upheld Abu-Jamal's conviction stemming from the 1981 shooting death of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.

The prosecution has since appealed overturning the death sentence. Abu-Jamal's attorneys have appealed upholding the conviction. These appeals are on hold pending the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's ruling on other state appeals.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys, Eliot Grossman and Marlene Kamish, are demanding that the courts hear the massive evidence—overlooked or rejected by the courts in 2001 and 2002—that shows Abu-Jamal was framed by the cops and prosecutors for a crime he did not commit. In particular, the attorneys are requesting the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to allow Arnold Beverly, who has confessed to killing Faulkner, to appear before them and testify.

The Philadelphia district attorney's office has blocked admission of Beverly's confession, claiming they don't find it credible. But the question remains why the district attorney would not therefore jump at the chance to cross-examine Beverly and disprove the former hit man's testimony.

Why don't the prosecutors want to question a person who claims to have killed a police officer in a killing-for-hire masterminded by others still at large?

The appeal in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court also stems from Common Pleas Judge Pamela Dembe's dismissal of Abu-Jamal's petition for post-conviction relief and/or writ of habeas corpus, previ-



PHOTO: MUMIA.ORG

ously filed in July 2001. In her August 2001 ruling, Dembe also rejected admission of Beverly's confession, claiming it was not "timely."

However, the 1981 convictions of Felix Rodriguez and Russell Weinberger for the murder of optometrist Clarence Langley were recently overturned when another Philadelphia common pleas judge, Benjamin Lerner, accepted the confession of two other men who admitted to the crime. In covering this reversal, the Feb. 24 Philadelphia Inquirer pointed to the growing number of murder cases that are unraveling across the country, leading states to declare moratoriums or abolish use of the death penalty. However, the article made no mention of Abu-Jamal's case.

The danger is that the state will attempt to reinstate the death penalty for Abu-Jamal. During his successful Pennsylvania gubernatorial campaign, Ed Rendell, formerly both mayor and district attorney of Philadelphia, promised to do so if elected.

On Feb. 5, after less than a month in office, Rendell signed his first death warrant, for the execution of Robert Fisher.

Anti-war movement takes up Mumia's case

Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal told Workers World that while the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has not yet made a decision on the post-conviction hearings, it recently turned down Abu-Jamal's attorneys' requests for oral arguments, and can make a decision not to hear Beverly's

confession or any additional evidence.

"We still have a window of opportunity to demand that the courts do the right thing," said Africa. "We have all the information and we have the voices of world leaders including Nelson Mandela, of legislators including the Congressional Black Congress, and of legal minds including members of the British Parliament—all saying that this man has not received due process under the law."

Africa noted that throughout the drawn-out court proceedings, support for Abu-Jamal has remained strong. International delegations have lobbied on his behalf and the growing anti-war movement has kept his name out there.

Africa thanked "the people at ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—'who made sure that Mumia's voice was there at every major anti-war demonstration, speaking out and raising people's consciousness about U.S. foreign policy. The New York Times, Michael Smirconish and Phil Donahue have all attacked ANSWER for this, but this only shows the force of the movement."

She praised the efforts of ANSWER, the New York Committee in Defense of Mumia and the Mobilization to Free Mumia, which have worked to bring information on the case to the ranks of the growing grassroots anti-war movement.

An injury to one is an injury to all

Africa also reported that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has accepted, by a vote of six to one, the filing of two notices

of joinder filed by the Labor Action Committee and signed by 175 individuals in support of a friend of the court brief.

Written by California defense attorney Michael F. Yamamoto, the brief outlines the massive weight of evidence demonstrating Mumia Abu-Jamal's innocence. The brief is introduced by six unions—Longshore and Warehouse Local 10 (San Francisco), Letter Carriers Golden Gate Branch 24, the National Union of Journalists of the United Kingdom (Britain), International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 representing dock workers in Charleston, S.C., and two independent unions—"Zahyst" and "Uspih," representing bottling plant and public workers in the city of Kiev, Ukraine.

Members of these unions, some fresh from their own battles with the state, filed the brief under the universal labor principle that an injury to one is an injury to all.

The court also ruled that it would not oppose the filing of hundreds of additional joinders by the LAC, and agreed to read and review each one submitted.

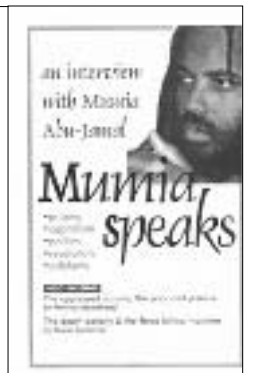
Africa urged supporters to sign on to the joinder campaign and to contact the Labor Action Committee, PO Box 16222, Oakland, CA 94610, or ICFEAMJ, PO Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143 for information.

On April 4, International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal will hold a news conference and file additional joinders. On April 24 they will hold an open town meeting outside Philadelphia City Hall to demand due process for Abu-Jamal. □

MUMIA SPEAKS

An interview with Mumia from death row. Columns by the Black journalist on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica Moorehead, Larry Holmes and Teresa Gutierrez

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After a lifetime of hard labor

Steel retirees robbed of benefits

By Milt Neidenberg

Bethlehem Steel was once the second-biggest steel corporation in the world, a 20th-century industrial giant. Now its executives have callously announced that 95,000 retirees and their loved ones will no longer receive health benefits and life insurance after March 31.

Pensions have been reduced to marginal levels. The company is seeking to dump them completely.

The workers who labored in heat, smoke and soot to make steel under the most difficult and dangerous conditions have been discarded, just like metal scraps lying on the dirt floor. They worked in eight-hour shifts that rotated around the clock from week to week, affecting their health and family lives.

On Oct. 15, 2001, Bethlehem Steel filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

After the bankruptcy, Bethlehem agreed to sell to a group of investor-speculators—the International Steel Group of Cleveland, which recently took over LTV, another bankrupt steel company. Add LTV retirees and loved ones to the tens of thousands of steel workers who have lost their health benefits and pensions.

At this point Bethlehem Steel employs only 12,000 workers—at the Burns Harbor, Ind., plant, the Sparrows Point Division near Baltimore, and in tiny operations in a few plants such as Lackawanna, outside Buffalo, N.Y.

A generation ago, the Lackawanna plant alone employed 20,000 workers.

Some 30 years ago Lackawanna's smoking coke ovens, towering blast furnaces and fiery open hearths produced over 22 million ingot tons of raw steel annually. Linked by railroads, the mills extended for miles.

Over 16 million tons of finished steel were rolled out during the record year of 1973. Then, the company employed about 300,000 workers.

They forged the steel for the George Washington and Golden Gate bridges, the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Rockefeller Center,

the Empire State Building, ships and military hardware used in times of war. They also shaped steel for consumer goods, from automobiles to refrigerators.

How is it possible, with the infrastructure of the country so in need of repair, that Bethlehem and 18 other giant steel companies have declared bankruptcy over the last four years? What happened to these shuttered, rusting giants?

They have become casualties of the power, arrogance and greed of corporate boards, inextricably connected to powerful banks, heedless of the laws of capitalism. Overproduction, the drive for profits, and the capitalist cycles of boom and bust sealed the fate of these industrial dinosaurs.

Layoffs, more profits and more layoffs

Steel barons and their Wall Street bankers built an empire that represented the most ruthless, reactionary, anti-union, racist and anti-Semitic sector of the ruling class. They collaborated with the fascist wing in Germany that bankrolled Adolph Hitler.

It all began over a century ago when J.P. Morgan and steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie selected Charles M. Schwab to run U.S. Steel, the first billion-dollar corporation of the time. Schwab made his fortune, left, and founded Bethlehem Steel.

Steel was the last industrial empire to recognize workers' right to organize a union. Only after many strikes and pitched battles was the United Steel Workers of America born. It held its first constitutional convention in Cleveland in 1942.

Until 1973 Black and immigrant workers were concentrated in labor gangs in Bethlehem Steel. They did the heavy, dangerous, dirty jobs. It took the Black rebellions and the civil-rights struggle of the 1960s to overcome 70 years of racist practices. Finally, the company, without admitting guilt, "permitted" these heavily exploited workers to bid into the better paying jobs, covering 32 classifications.

Even then, the government looked the

other way when the company refused to give back wages or pay any penalties for its criminal activities.

The scientific-technological revolution of recent decades was especially hard on steel workers. Computers electronically moved huge machinery and a revolutionary process called the Basic Oxidizing Furnace was introduced. The BOFs eliminated open hearths and other production processes. This led to staggering layoffs. Steel bosses drastically reduced the crews, driving out workers with lower seniority.

The new technology produced record amounts of steel. Overproduction created a glut in the market. Global competition became bitter and intense. Profits rose. Jobs were eliminated.

Mini-steel plants started up to compete with the sprawling integrated steel plants like Bethlehem. They offered lower capital investment and cheaper, non-union labor costs. They took over a substantial section of the market.

Steel plants began to shut down along the rivers and lakes where the smokestack industries were concentrated. Hiring signs became a symbol of the past. Steel towns became ghost towns.

It didn't have to happen.

Wanted shorter week

In 1959, some 540,000 steel workers went on strike for 116 days. It was the longest strike in the history of the industry.

The bosses wanted drastic changes in work rules. They demanded the elimination of past practices to fit the developing new technology.

Progressive union members, including socialists and communists, saw the danger of mass layoffs and raised the slogan of a shorter workweek with no loss in pay. Instead, the USWA leaders gave up the struggle for the shorter workweek. They settled for supplementary unemployment benefits—the fund dried up later on—a wage increase and contracts that "guaran-

teed" pension, insurance and health benefits.

Under capitalism, nothing is guaranteed. The bosses' promises are turning out to not be worth the paper they were written on.

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. is a federal agency that insures the pension plans of only 44 million workers and retirees. It has reported "a net loss of \$11.4 billion, the largest in the pension-insurer's 28-year history." (Wall Street Journal, Jan. 31) It blamed much of the losses on bankrupt steel companies.

Employers are refusing to increase their premiums to the PBGC. At the same time they are allowing their under-funded pension plans to go down the drain. The elimination of pensions and health benefits for those who worked a lifetime for their old-age security has become a priority in Wall Street and Washington.

The Bush administration is part of this conspiracy. Funds are being ripped off from Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid to subsidize military aims to dominate the globe. The preemptive attack on the Iraqi people will divert billions of dollars from social services.

"White House Proposals Would Shift Pension Burden to Individual Workers" was a headline in the financial pages of the Feb. 20 New York Times.

It's a national disgrace that will soon be met by fierce resistance within the ranks of labor, as the anti-war movement integrates the heartbreaking issue of pensions and health benefits with the struggle against imperialist war. Retired steel workers and the millions of others who are being denied their old-age security constitute a powerful force in the fight for social and economic justice.

They worked long and hard. They deserve better.

Neidenberg worked for over 15 years in the Lackawanna plant of Bethlehem Steel. □

Daycare workers hold one-day strike

Some 7,000 workers at city-funded day care centers here held a one-day strike in New York on Feb. 12.

The workers are members of AFSCME District Council 1707. The daycare directors are represented by the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators. Under

New York state's Taylor Law, many city employees aren't allowed to strike. But this strike was legal, since the daycare centers are privately run although city funded.

Daycare teachers make \$34,000 a year, \$5,000 less than their counterparts in the school system. Other workers, like custodians and kitchen aides, make \$20,000.

New York's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, maintains that the city doesn't have the money to satisfy the unions' demands for a 4-percent annual raise over the five years of the contract, which expired in 2000.

The unions called a demonstration on Broadway near City Hall. Along with the strikers, parents and members of other unions came out in support.

"The time is now, Mr. Bloomberg," said District Council 1707 Executive Director Raglan George. "Give us our money now!"

D.C. 1707 President Brenda Stokeley linked the workers' struggle for a decent contract to the struggle against a new war on Iraq. City Council member Charles Barron aimed his comments at Bloomberg: "Tax those who are billionaires, like you, mayor."

Aicha Jackson, a teacher at the Joseph DiMarco Child Care Center in Long Island City, Queens, said: "We are professionals, not baby sitters. We set the foundation for children to go to school."

City Council members Tracy Boyland and David Weprin, Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields, and Larry Holmes from the ANSWER coalition also expressed solidarity.

—G. Dunkel



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

NEW YORK

Homelessness reaches of Great Depression

By Heather Cottin

A scourge is haunting the capital of capitalism: homelessness. Not since the Great Depression has New York City seen such growth in the number of families and individuals who turn to the overcrowded municipal homeless shelters for refuge.

In a report titled "State of the Homeless 2003," the New York Coalition for the Homeless has revealed the appalling fact that homelessness has grown by over 200 percent since the housing crisis first reappeared during the Reagan era. The decision by banks and city government to decrease New York's affordable low-income housing stock has favored landlords and forced thousands into destitution since the 1980s, even as the economy was booming for most of this time.

The report indicates that homelessness primarily affects families with children. This winter children composed 50 percent of New York City's homeless.

Children and families made up 79 percent of those seeking shelter last year—double what it was five years ago. Homelessness among individuals has risen as well.

One way the city deals with families facing homelessness is to purchase temporary housing in the form of "scattered site units." That is a euphemism for the practice of paying landlords \$100 a night to house families. Landlords then turn the families out on the streets. They are forced right back into the fetid homeless shelters, which are unable to handle the growing numbers of poor and working people who can no longer afford to pay rent.

By supporting the landlords at \$3,000 a month per apartment, the city is contributing to the housing crisis for the poor. Mayor Michael Bloomberg is effectively reducing the number of apartment units available at reasonable rents. Rental prices are thus artificially manipulated upward, simultaneously creating more homelessness and more profit for the mayor's landlord constituency.

The number of low-rent apartments in New York City shrank from over 1 million to fewer than 500,000 in the 1990s.

Because of a 1981 court ruling, Callahan vs. Carey, the administration of Rudolph Giuliani was prevented in 2000

1906-2003

TED DOSTAL, THE IRON MAN

By Martha Grevatt and Frances Dostal Cleveland

The working-class movement lost a stalwart fighter with the death of Comrade Ted Dostal on Feb. 13.

A founding member of Workers World Party, as well as a founder of WWP's Cleveland branch in 1967, Ted was lovingly referred to by his comrades as "the Iron Man." This nickname was originally bestowed on him by the Cleveland Police Department's anti-subversive squad—the "red squad"—because he never missed a demonstration. From the 1960s up into the 1990s, the Iron Man lived up to this reputation.

Ted was born in a farmhouse in Olivia, Minn., in 1906. He earned a degree in math and physics from the University of Minnesota and taught school in Wisconsin for two years. He returned to Minneapolis seeking work, but during the Depression there was none to be found.

He became active in the labor movement, supporting the historic Minneapolis Teamsters strike of 1934 and the successful Farmer-Labor Party gubernatorial campaign in 1936. During this time he was won over to socialism.

In 1940 he moved to Youngstown, Ohio, where he was a steam engineer in the steel mills for the next 26 years. He recruited many steel workers into the union. He was a grievance committee member until losing the office during the McCarthy era.

Through the union he worked to break down racist barriers on and off the job. A previously segregated bowling alley was forcibly integrated when the union's integrated team insisted on bowling there.

In 1959, while attending meetings in Buffalo that would eventually lead to the formation of Workers World Party, he met the love of his life, Frances Sherman. They were married in Youngstown and sent out

Ted and Frances Dostal at a rally against the Klan in the 1980s.

WW PHOTO: ALAN ROTH

announcements exclaiming that "the union makes us strong."

Frances and Ted soon found themselves immersed in both the civil-rights and anti-war movements. They organized support throughout Northeast Ohio for Mae Mallory and Rob Williams, two Black leaders sought on frame-up charges in North Carolina. They also led a union of the unemployed during the recession of the early 1960s.

In 1967 Ted retired from U.S. Steel and he and Frances moved to Cleveland. They continued to organize against the Vietnam War and in defense of the Panthers and other victims of government frame-ups, as well as for the rights of prisoners.

In 1968 Ted participated in the protests in Chicago outside the Democratic Convention, teaching youthful activists how to make barricades.

That year he was also arrested during a protest against George Wallace and charged with assault on a police officer, a charge that was later dropped. In 1969 he was arrested for contempt of court while being a sympathetic observer at a demonstration supporting Black nationalist leader Ahmed Evans. He served four months in prison in 1972 but was let out



early when the prisoners began planning a strike.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s he led the Senior Citizens Coalition in scores of militant protests for health care, lower utility bills and free bus fare.

In 1981 Ted organized for a march on the Pentagon protesting the war in El Salvador, among other issues. He later assisted the work of the All Peoples Congress. Throughout the 1980s he demonstrated against apartheid and against U.S. policy in Central America. Ted and Frances marched every year in the annual lesbian/gay/bi/trans pride celebrations.

In every Workers World election campaign, Ted would single-handedly collect over 1,000 signatures on nominating petitions. On the college campuses his approach would be unique: "Say there, young fella, how'd ya like to sign a petition?" or "How'd ya like to see a woman

for president?" Young people found his magnetism hard to resist. In the 1980, 1984 and 1996 presidential campaigns, as well as the 1992 senatorial campaign, he was indispensable to the party winning ballot status.

In 1994 Ted and Frances traveled to Cuba with the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange.

In 1999 Ted began to grow weaker, suffering a series of illnesses and injuries. Nevertheless, he made it downtown in his wheelchair for a demonstration in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

When he could no longer demonstrate he was still the persistent voice on the telephone getting others out. When he could not be active politically at all, he would wake up from dreams and talk about meetings, protests or trips to Cuba. He lived, breathed and dreamed the class struggle up until his final hours.

Ted is survived by Frances, by many adoring nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, by all of his comrades and by the Cleveland activists for whom the Iron Man was truly an institution.

Ted Dostal, presente! □

While U.S. poses as liberator of women

Rape charges rock Air Force Academy

By Monica Moorehead

The U.S. military is building up an ominous presence in the Persian Gulf while the White House claims it intends to free the Iraqi people. Whenever Washington wants to impose its aggression on an oppressed country, it tries to portray the Pentagon as a liberation army. When the United States invaded and bombed Afghanistan, the Bush administration claimed part of its objective was to liberate women in that country.

But this military machine's real character is seen in recent revelations about the extent of documented rapes of women cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. There has been an obvious cover-up of these horrific crimes on the part of the Air Force brass.

Many women who filed complaints of rape and sexual harassment to the proper authorities say their complaints were dismissed, and/or the women themselves were accused of being promiscuous. Once a woman makes an allegation, her background is investigated vigorously—but not her attacker's.

The women first went public with their accusations on Denver television station KMGH-TV.

Dorothy Mackey, a former Air Force captain who resigned after being sexually harassed by two officers, told the Associated Press that the women "have attempted to talk about it or find some assistance within the system. Instead they

have systematically been told to shut up by other cadets or the system itself."

Mackey's lawsuit against the two officers was rejected by the anti-woman U.S. Supreme Court.

Because of this "good old boy" type of network and thinking, not one male cadet has been brought up on charges, much less court-martialed. A number of these women decided to leave the academy when their complaints were ignored.

Now that the word is out, Secretary of the Air Force James Roche has called for a special review panel to assess how sexual assault charges in the military are handled, especially in the Air Force.

This smacks of the same old tactic of the fox guarding the chicken coop. Once the panel has done its job, it will be back to business as usual—open season on women.

These recent developments at the Air Force Academy are just the tip of the iceberg. Women are subjected to sexual assaults, insults and rape daily in all branches of the armed forces. Most complaints about these incidents never see the light of day.

In a separate but related development, four marines at the Twentynine Palms training center in California were arrested in mid-February on charges of raping an unconscious 17-year-old woman in a motel.

In 1991, the Tailhook scandal exposed a massive cover-up of sexual assault in the U.S. Navy.

A number of women officers were groped by male officers as they made their way down a hall during a convention of the Navy pilots' organization in Las Vegas. After the women named 117 naval officers implicated in this sordid incident, Navy Secretary H. Lawrence Garrett was forced to resign and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Frank B. Kelso took an early retirement.

Last August, another incident of sexual harassment took place at the same hotel. A civilian woman was assaulted by a group of naval officers.

The U.S. military does not serve as liberators, but as potential colonizers. The fact that it promotes violence against women as well as racism and homophobia inside its own ranks should help make that reality even clearer.

And it should help to build even more massive opposition to the war of conquest on Iraq—including from those inside the military who are being sent to kill or be killed. □

BLAST FURNACE BROTHERS

BY VINCE COPELAND

The story of two important victories that were won, first by the Black workers, then by the white and Black workers together, in the Bethlehem Steel Co.'s Lackawanna plant. 33 pages \$2 includes shipping and handling

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levels

from evicting homeless people from New York City shelters. The court had ruled that individuals who face "physical, mental or social dysfunction" have the right to temporary haven in a public shelter.

Bloomberg has decided to ignore the ruling, and force homeless adults out of the shelters and into the streets after 30 days. Bloomberg, like Giuliani before him, would evict men and women, many of whom are veterans or mentally disabled.

Charles Dickens would find Bloomberg's scheme to break up destitute families incredible. The plan would place all homeless children in foster homes and throw their parents out into the streets.

Bloomberg, a multi-billionaire, is displaying the depravity of capitalism and the transparent superficiality of the bourgeois class, which pretends to care about "family values."

The report says there are now 40,000 homeless in New York City. That's an 82 percent increase over 1998. The cost of one day of war on Iraq could provide comfortable apartments for all of them, with plenty left over for other social needs. □

Even as troops are readied

U.S. pours on threats to get war votes

By Fred Goldstein

The political effects of the massive worldwide anti-war demonstrations are being felt with a vengeance in Washington, in the United Nations Security Council and in capitals around the globe. The anti-war resistance has forced the Bush administration, against its will, to introduce a new resolution in a last-ditch attempt to get Security Council approval for its unprovoked war of aggression against Iraq.

Despite this accomplishment, the danger of war looms larger as the Bush administration is preparing to defy the world. Nevertheless, the lesson of recent events is that a further escalation of the anti-war struggle is the only answer to Washington's intransigence.

When the Bush administration went to the Security Council last November with Resolution 1441—which allowed the U.S. to proceed with its war plans against Iraq—the vote for it was 15 to 0. Washington then firmly rebutted the French government's argument that a second follow-up resolution would be required for any authorization to go to war.

To get the unanimous vote, however, the U.S. grudgingly agreed to language in the resolution to the effect that, after the inspectors came back with their report, there would be "further consultation" with the Security Council.

Since then, the anti-war movement has exploded around the globe. On Jan. 18, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in Washington and San Francisco, as well as hundreds of thousands more in Europe. This was followed by Feb. 15, when more than 10 million demonstrated around the globe, including nearly 2 million in London.

Bush's allies shaken by mass protests

These demonstrations shook the foundations under Washington's main ally in Europe, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, as well as Bush's two other imperialist supporters there, Jose Maria Aznar of Spain and Silvio Berlusconi of Italy. And it was precisely these three countries that saw the largest anti-war demonstrations in the world.

"As recently as last month," wrote Patrick E. Tyler in the New York Times of Feb. 25, "the White House acted as if it would not return to the Security Council for a second resolution. But Mr. Blair, stung by criticism at home, urged the administration to reconsider. ...

"Late last week," continued the Times, "it was not clear whether Mr. Bush would gamble on the prospect of a highly visible loss in the Security Council after the ebullient highs of last November, when the Council voted 15 to 0 to affirm the administration's muscular stand..."

"But suddenly on Saturday morning, Mr. Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, reported a conference call involving the president, the Spanish prime minister, Jose Maria Aznar, Mr. Blair, and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy to map out the steps at the United Nations that would pave the way to war.

"That conference call set off a cascade of diplomatic lobbying on four continents that is continuing," wrote the Times.

The lobbying is aimed at overcoming the French, German and Russian position. They are circulating a memorandum calling for more protracted and intensified inspections and opposing immediate war.

Washington needs nine of the council's 15 votes and no veto by France, Russia, or China in order to pass its war resolution.

Threatening Africa and Latin America

According to an Associated Press dispatch of Feb. 24, "Senior U.S. officials have been quietly dispatched in recent days to the capitals of key Security Council countries where they are warning leaders to vote with the United States on Iraq or risk 'paying a heavy price.'"

Washington is zeroing in on the African countries of Angola, Guinea and Cameroon and the Latin American countries of Mexico and Chile.

The article quoted an unnamed U.S. diplomat as saying: "The order from the White House was to use 'all diplomatic means necessary.' And that really means everything."

Continued the article, "The wording of the order is a twist on 'all means necessary'—the diplomatic terminology that authorizes going to war."

A Mexican diplomat told the AP: "They actually told us: 'any country that doesn't go along with us will be paying a very heavy price.'"

The visits from U.S. diplomats were described as "hostile," showing little regard for the fact that the Mexican people are "overwhelmingly opposed to a war."

The U.S. is hoping to capitalize on the

desperate poverty of the African countries to both threaten and bribe them into line. On his trip to Asia, Secretary of State Colin Powell lobbied the Japanese imperialists to press the African countries. Japan has investments and influence in the region.

The mass anti-war demonstrations not only shook Blair, Aznar and Berlusconi—they also sent a message to sections of the ruling class in the U.S. that the Bush administration had better try to bolster its political position in Europe and around the world before it plunges into Iraq.

Most importantly, the demonstrations helped to deepen the split between the two imperialist camps: France and Germany on the one hand and the U.S. and Britain on the other. Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder, feeling the heat of the masses in their own countries, gained confidence and incentive to ride the growing anti-Bush, anti-war wave and formulate a position counter to Washington.

Anti-war forces gain time

The demonstrations both pushed back the Pentagon's timetable for war and forced the Bush administration into a bitter diplomatic struggle, thus gaining time and opportunity for the anti-war forces to further escalate their efforts.

However, the movement must deal with the overriding fact that the Pentagon has 180,000 troops in the region; that each concession made by the Iraqi gov-

ernment to the demands of the inspectors is met with rejection or further demands by the Bush administration; and that the right-wing hawks in Washington are determined to go to war. Some of them would even relish doing it in defiance of the UN Security Council.

The struggle of the French and German imperialists to slow down and obstruct the U.S. war drive has at least temporarily increased the political isolation of Washington and helped to expose its fanatical dedication to carrying out its war of aggression. And any thing that even temporarily stays the hand of the Pentagon is helpful to Iraq and to the anti-war movement.

At the same time that the movement strives to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by this split, it must clearly reject the fundamental premise being promoted by the nuclear-armed, high-tech super-power, U.S. imperialism: that it has the right to go into a sovereign state, disarm that country, and threaten to overthrow its government—all in violation of international law, of the UN Charter and of the fundamental right of a formerly colonized people to self-determination.

In this regard, there is not a ray of daylight between the French and U.S. positions. The memorandum being circulated by France, Germany and Russia states that, "So far, the conditions for using force against Iraq are not fulfilled." It further states that "the pressure on Iraq must be increased" and outlines the steps to increase that pressure. This includes increasing the number of inspectors, setting up "mobile units" to check on trucks and a "new system of aerial surveillance."

It states that the inspectors shall "report immediately to the Council any interference by Iraq with the inspections activities as well as failure by Iraq to comply with its disarmament obligations."

It concludes that "the combination of a clear program of action, reinforced inspections, a clear timeline and the military buildup proved a realistic means to reunite the Security Council and to exert maximum pressure on Iraq."

In other words, the French imperialists are posing to the world as the "anti-war" party. They and the Germans are trying to improve their relations and their penetration of the oppressed countries by cleverly adopting an anti-U.S. position, knowing that the vast majority of the world is opposed to the war and to Bush.

Imperialist 'pacifism' of convenience

It must be remembered that the French were a brutal colonial power in Vietnam and southeast Asia, in the Middle East and in West Africa. Now they are a weakened power forced to rely heavily on economics, politics and diplomacy in fighting for spheres of super-exploitation.

They would be quick to send their forces to aid in the destruction of the Iraqi people and the recolonization of the country if they thought French oil companies, bankers and other multinationals could benefit from it. And they may very well do so. The same is true for the German imperialists, who enslaved South West Africa, participated in the "open door" division of China, and who presently have troops in Afghanistan.

But for now, as weaker powers, they prefer "multilateral" colonial ventures rather than U.S. "unilateral" ventures that leave them with little or none of the loot.

The weakness of Blair, Aznar and



at UN

Berlusconi, the confidence of the French and the Germans, and the political struggle in the Security Council against the U.S. rush to war is based upon the pressure of the masses of the people. It is the struggle that has produced a renewed effort to extend the inspections.

Among those states promoting the extension of the inspections are two basic camps. The imperialist camp, headed by Paris and Berlin, wants to protect their own imperialist interests.

However, the vast majority of poor and oppressed countries, as seen in the African Summit Conference and the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as most of the UN General Assembly, are voting for more inspections because they are really against this war of colonial conquest. But they feel powerless to express this opposition in any other way than to side with the French position.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which now comprises 116 countries representing 55 percent of the world's population, recently met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The overwhelming sentiment was to stop the war.

The real sentiment of the people represented by those governments was expressed by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who opened the second and final day by denouncing Bush as a "big brother" proliferating arms and Tony Blair as a "neocolonialist." (Reuters, Feb. 24)

"Iraq might have developed or desired to develop arms of mass destruction," said Mugabe. "But the United States has massive arms of that magnitude. Why can't they demonstrate what Iraq should [do] by destroying their own massive heaps first."

The United States, Britain and the West "have turned themselves into ferocious hunting bull-dogs raring to go," Mugabe continued. "We, their hunted game, are for slaughter."

The weakened governments of the world, however, many of them simply dependencies subject to the political, economic and military strangulation of the imperialist powers, bowed to the pressure of the masters in the White House and the Pentagon and repeated the line about urging Iraq to comply.

Right now, UN weapons inspector Hans Blix has told the Iraqi government to destroy missiles that allegedly can go beyond the prohibited range of 150 kilometers. The Iraqis have said that these missiles are within the range, once they are mounted with their payload. Yet Blix has told them that this is not a discussible item.

So the premise of inspections, on which all the imperialists agree, is that the U.S. and Britain have the right to surround Iraq with a military force powerful enough to destroy the country while at the same time the UN will force the Iraqis to give up one of their important means of self-defense.

This is the logic of the inspections regime. It is a criminal regime calculated to render the victim as defenseless as possible. It harkens back to an earlier colonial period when the European powers were able to plunder entire defenseless continents.

The anti-war movement must be independent of all attempts to impose the will of imperialism on Iraq or any other country. Iraq has the right to defend itself. The movement should keep doing what it has been doing, except on a larger and more forceful scale of resistance: demanding no war on Iraq, under any conditions or for any pretext. □

Convergence on White House on the 15th

Anti-war actions to multiply in March

By John Catalinotto

The intransigence of the Bush administration in the face of massive anti-war actions has impelled activists worldwide to continue the struggle to "stop the U.S. war on Iraq before it starts," as many organizations state on their leaflets these days.

Here in the United States local actions are already set on March 1, a moratorium is scheduled for March 5, there will be International Women's Day protests on March 8 that focus on the threatened war, and an emergency national convergence is scheduled for March 15 in Washington.

Larry Holmes of the International ANSWER coalition told Workers World that "With the Bush administration moving closer to war each day, the movement feels the urgency to counter it. But it's more than that," he added. "The mass mobilizations of Feb. 15 amount to a popular mandate to the movement to take actions that can stop the war."

Holmes pointed to the March 15 demonstration in Washington as timed for the moment when Bush and company have warned they will launch a war after trying to push a resolution through the Security Council at the United Nations. "We don't know how the UN vote will go," said Holmes, "but either way, ANSWER will mobilize against the war."

The plan for March 15 is to gather at 12 noon at the Washington Monument, just south of the White House at Constitution Ave. between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, for a rally and march. The protest, says

Holmes, has the general support of the peace movement.

Buses, vans and caravans will travel from the East Coast, Midwest and South to be at the White House on March 15. Transportation and downloadable leaflets are available on the web site listed below.

On the initiative of the Not In Our Name coalition, there will be a moratorium on March 5. On NION's web site, the group calls for the "next phase of resistance to stop the war before it starts—no school, no work, no business as usual," and suggests people call in sick, close their businesses, or, if they are students, plan a walkout at their schools.

Teresa Gutierrez told Workers World of a call by the Women of ANSWER to make March 8, International Women's Day, a day of solidarity with Iraqi women. "It has been true that, on the home front, women bear the brunt of war. But now the home front and the war front are almost indistinguishable. Iraqi women are under attack these days as they face the missiles and bombs of the Pentagon, the loss of drinkable water, the absence of health care. Here, too, women face cuts in social services and the disruption of their families."

ANSWER chapters in New York City, Baltimore, Los Angeles and other U.S. cities have planned IWD actions.

Code Pink Alert has been holding a "rolling fast and vigil" against

the war for the past few months in Washington, D.C. The group calls it a "women's preemptive strike against war." The vigils are building up to a demonstration on March 8, when people are being asked to "come to Washington to stand up for peace and justice."

For International ANSWER bus information and to download leaflets, go to www.internationalanswer.org. For NION, see www.notinourname.net/. For Code Pink Alert, see www.codepink4peace.org.



BROOKLYN

Black community organizes against war

Special to Workers World
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Two recent activities here signal the growing emergence of the Black community in the anti-war movement.

In Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, Buddhist women used their annual women's commemorative meeting on Feb. 23 to discuss Bush's war against Iraq and how to stop it. The theme was "Celebrating Women Warriors for Peace."

Guest speaker Aisha al-Adawiya of Women in Islam told the fired-up group of mostly Black women that, "Women have the power to change the world. You can do it, never give up." This theme was echoed by others, including Soka Gakkai International-USA leader Patricia Kasahara, who stressed the importance of taking action.

International ANSWER Coalition representative and guest speaker Pat Chin urged maximum participation at the upcoming March 8 International Women's Day anti-war protest in New York. Chin also stressed the importance of fighting against racism and for justice and socialism.

The meeting was co-chaired by Beverly Morgan and Portia Waldon, who, along with Chin, are also founders of the



PHOTO:
CARVEL GRAY

Bedford-Stuyvesant Coalition for Peace.

A Black History Month program on Feb. 13 used the publication of Walter Mosley's new book, "What Next: A Memoir Toward World Peace," as a forum for discussion on the deep anti-war sentiment in the Black community and how to mobilize greater participation in the peace movement.

Mosley addresses his book to African Americans and identifies "global capitalism" as a deterrent to peace. Based on the long history of slavery and racism, Black people are, he correctly opines, uniquely positioned to be leaders in the anti-war movement. While admitting he has no ready solutions, Mosley calls for dialogue and action in the quest for peace.

Several other speakers addressed the

gathering. They included Vinie Burrows, UN Women's Democratic Federation; Job Mashariki, Black Veterans for Social Justice; Katrina James, Cornell Black Alumni Association; and Ron Daniels, Center for Constitutional Rights. ANSWER coalition representative Pat Chin outlined planned anti-war activities, while calling for increased Black participation. "Let's lift our spears for freedom, and sound our drums for peace," she declared.

The meeting, which recalled Black heroes Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was hosted by Dr. Andree-Nicola McLaughlin of Brooklyn's Medgar Evers College and Dr. James Turner of Cornell University's Africana Studies and Research Center. □

From dissent to resistance

European workers block bases and 'death trains'

By John Catalinotto

Railroad workers and anti-globalization "disobedienti" have joined together in northern Italy to block the moving of U.S. tanks and trucks to be used against Iraq.

On Feb. 21 thousands of railroad workers who were demonstrating in Padova against layoffs also raised anti-war slogans. Word arrived that a train loaded with military materiel was traveling from nearby Camp Ederle, the site of weekly protests, to Camp Darby, near Pisa. Railroad workers had blocked its path near the town of Monselice.

By the time national police removed those blocking the train, word had also reached the anti-globalization movement. Further down the line near Padova, other groups blocked the tracks. They set off flares to stop the train for about two hours.

Meanwhile, more demonstrators were gathering further south, threatening to camp out on the railroad tracks to stop the "death train." Anti-globalization organizers said people were ready to struggle in Ferrara, Bologna and even in Tuscany further south.

Confronted by the workers, executives

admitted this train was only the first of at least 26 that would be carrying "tactical arms" to Turkey. The anti-war movement in Italy says Premier Silvio Berlusconi's turning over Italy's infrastructure to the U.S. war machine is a crime and must be stopped.

Union workers and anti-war activists notified the railroad bosses that their actions were only the first in a series to "stop the global war." Roberto Martelli, the railway union secretary general in Tuscany, said: "The traditions of the railroad workers and their union are based on the principle of peace. Our members have no intentions to offer their services to the war."

Dock workers at Livorno are also refusing to unload military transport ships.

Inspecting Frankfurt's airport

On Feb. 22 at the military section of the Rhine-Main airport in Germany, demonstrators dressed as weapons inspectors and labeled "Hans Blix" and "Mohamed El Baradei" led 3,000 others trying to get through police and guards to look for U.S. weapons of mass destruction. Militant demonstrators got through to the tarmac, where they blockaded the base for three hours.



Above, Italian paramilitary police seize anti-war activists who had chained themselves to the railway near Pisa in order to block the U.S. military convoy. Left, the Italian paramilitaries patrol as U.S. soldiers load military vehicles on a train near Vicenza.



In Britain on Feb. 20, four anti-war activists used their bodies to block the runway of the Brize Norton base, from which British troops are being flown to the Persian Gulf.

On Feb. 23, some 450 people took part in a march on the Fairford base of Britain's Royal Air Force. A dozen breached the main gate before they were apprehended and arrested. Fairford was a point of departure for U.S. B-52 bombers during the 1991 Gulf war and 1999 assault on Yugoslavia. □

Special report from Baghdad

Iraqi people prepare for U.S. invasion

Continued from page 1

shop had the misfortune of being near one of Baghdad's larger bridges. In the 1991 war, bombs destroyed the bridge and much of the community—and one wiped out their shop.

The brothers worked hard and rebuilt their shop. But now people are too poor to afford to buy fish.

We spoke to Ali on Feb. 22, just a week after the massive worldwide demonstrations against a war. Protesters are trying to stop the Pentagon's "Shock and Awe" plan, which the media say will deliver as much destructive power in two days with "conventional" weapons as the atomic bomb that hit Hiroshima in 1945.

Ali remembered how hard it was to

get drinking water after U.S. firepower destroyed the water and sewage systems in 1991. "We drank whatever we could get," he said. "Lots of people got sick. Many died, especially the children."

In 1991, the Pentagon had a strategy of purposely targeting anything that people need for health and life. This included water and food supplies, the electrical grid necessary in an urban society, hospitals and schools.

Thomas Nagy, professor of expert systems at George Washington University, has drawn public attention to declassified Defense Intelligence Agency documents showing that the Pentagon knew what havoc the destruction of Iraq's civilian infrastructure would cause. It was part of the plan.

Nagy's findings appeared in the Sunday Herald of Sept. 17, 2000, and the September 2001 issue of The Progressive magazine.

The latest figures show that the 1991 war and subsequent sanctions caused the premature death of 1.8 million Iraqis.

Attacks on the Iraqi drinking water supply and on the health-care infrastructure are violations of the Geneva Convention, which forbids targeting the civilian population.

This time, Ali hopes some of the precautions the government is taking might avoid the 100,000 deaths from illnesses the attacks caused throughout 1991.

The government has more than doubled the free food ration for the last three months so that many basic necessities can be stockpiled in every home. Families



WW PHOTO SARA FLOUNDERS

Ali and his brothers run a fish shop in Baghdad. He says the family hopes to stay together when the missiles fall.

have now received five months of extra rations.

The food rations mean survival for that large section of the population unemployed since the last U.S. war. Over the course of 12 years the U.S.-imposed sanctions have kept most industry shut down.

Iraqi families are stockpiling kerosene for cooking and heating, candles for light, and endless containers of water. Families with some resources are buying small generators.

Today many families are digging wells in their back yards. The water will be untreated, but it may be better than drinking straight from the Euphrates River.

A long resistance?

Besides helping the population to survive, the government is mobilizing them to fight the invaders.

When many millions around the world demonstrated to stop a war on Iraq on Feb. 15, people in Iraq were also in the streets—hundreds of thousands in every major city. In each of four different sections of Baghdad there were massive demonstrations of the Iraqis' will to resist.

A council of both Shiite and Sunni Islamic clerics has signed a "fatwa" or religious edict calling for total resistance

Lesbian, gay, bi, trans

Coming out against war

Wherever people have come together to protest the U.S. war against Iraq, the racist roundup of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians, and the trampling of civil liberties, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people have been there. LGBT activists have been organizers, leaders and speakers at the major anti-war protests.

On Feb. 15-16, LGBT people organized into contingents, marching under their own banners.

In Cleveland, the newly-formed Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgendered People for Peace led off the entire march of 1,000 people, chanting, "Don't ask, don't tell, war and bigots go to hell" and "Stonewall the war."

Significant LGBT contingents marched in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Chicago and other cities in the U.S.

More than 130 LGBT endorsers, including more than 80 organizations, have signed onto an open letter calling for active and creative opposition to the U.S. government's "war on terror" and impending war on Iraq. It was initiated by the Audre Lorde Project and the National LGBT Program of the American Friends Service Committee.



Yu-Rong Chen, Gender/Sexuality Rights Association of Taiwan

Internationally, sizeable LGBT contingents were an integral part of protests in Toronto and Montreal, London, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brazil and Sydney, Australia. In Rome, more than 1,000 LGBT anti-war activists demonstrated on the Via Marco Polo.

In Taiwan, the Gender Sexuality Rights Association and other LGBT groups took part on Feb. 15, proclaiming "minorities united against the war, LGBT against the war."

—Leslie Feinberg

BAY AREA

High school students walk out against war

By Tahnee Stair
San Francisco

On Feb. 21, the anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X, 300 students walked out of Berkeley High School. The action was in response to a call by ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—for acts of non-compliance to protest the war in the spirit of Malcolm X.

In San Francisco over 100 students from Mercy High walked out to picket a military recruitment office at a nearby mall. Nine activists, one a youth, chained themselves to a military recruiting office.

Student and Youth ANSWER organized the walkouts.

At Berkeley High the administration locked the gates and threatened students with expulsion if they walked out. When students nevertheless marched around the school encouraging others not to be intimidated, dozens more joined in.

They carried signs with pictures of Malcolm X that said “Stand Against War and Racism” and gave the web site: www.internationalanswer.org.

Sade Bonilla of Berkeley High had also organized a two-day teach-in against the war as part of the ANSWER coalition’s call for a week of resistance. The newly formed Berkeley High ANSWER club is now organizing for emergency walkouts if the war starts.

“Nothing school administrations do can stop us from expressing our strong feelings against the war. Walking out is

to foreign occupation. This did not happen in 1991.

There is a popular volunteer army the Iraqis say is 7 million strong, drawing from almost every family in Iraq. It has received basic training in military tactics, street combat and resistance.

Almost every family has been issued small arms for the home.

People know they can’t stop U.S. cruise missiles with rifles and pistols. No one can predict what kind of battle this people’s army can wage. But in working out war scenarios, the Brookings Institute put its estimate of possible U.S. casualties at 5,000 dead and 30,000 wounded, should the urban population resist. There are already news reports that the Pentagon has quietly ordered tens of thousands of body bags to be shipped to the area.

Beyond the initial attack lies the prospect of a long U.S. occupation. This is a colonial war to steal the resources in an area where nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment is very strong. The population is educated and conscious, and nearly everyone is armed. □

one of the few political actions we can take to show we’re against it. We have a responsibility to young people here who Bush wants to send to fight, and the people he wants to kill in Iraq, to do whatever we can to stop the war,” said Natividad Carrera, an organizer with Student and Youth ANSWER.

Across the Bay in San Francisco, over 100 young women walked out of Mercy High School, which is Catholic. They gathered to picket a military recruiting office at a mall near San Francisco State University.

“Mostly high-school students joined the pickets at the military recruiters’ offices today,” said San Francisco State University student LeiLani Dowell, another organizer with Student and Youth ANSWER. “They’re leading the way for the student anti-war movement.

“Students just out of high school are the ones being sent to fight in Iraq—disproportionately youth of color. Many join the military because they cannot find a job. For the sake of U.S. GIs and Iraqis, we have to stop this racist war. The next major demonstration is on March 15 and young people will be there in force.”

At a downtown military recruiting office in San Francisco, other activists gathered to protest a new war. One locked himself to the door. Eight others chained themselves to him, blocking the entrance to the building. All were arrested; the eight adults were held in jail for two days.

Student and Youth ANSWER in San Francisco meets every Wednesday at 5 p.m. at 2489 Mission St., Room 24. □

Dissent on the court

Manhattanville basketball player Toni Smith is courageous on the court and off. She has stood up to 300 flag-waving midshipmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy who chanted at her “U-S-A” and “Leave our country.” Why the full-court press? Because Smith has been refusing to salute the flag at the beginning of the game. She gives a quarter-turn away and looks at the floor instead. In a written statement, she explained: “For some time now, the inequalities that are embedded into the American system have bothered me. As they are becoming progressively worse and it is clear that the government’s priorities are not on bettering the quality of life for all of its people, but rather on expanding its own power, I cannot, in good conscience, salute the flag.”



Above and below, photos taken in Afghanistan in defiance of Pentagon ban.

News direct from Pentagon —on every channel

By Gary Wilson

In early February, with great fanfare, a group of U.S. reporters was put through a “boot camp” in preparation for a war on Iraq. These reporters are to be sent in with the troops invading Iraq.

This is supposed to give the impression that the real news will be reported during any invasion of Iraq. No notice should be taken that the news media itself will be 100 percent censored—either directly by the Pentagon or through the self-censorship that the big media conglomerates impose on most reporting in the U.S.

In fact, the media have been the primary promoters of the war, acting as publicity agents for the Bush administration and its war plans. Television news has “acted as if the decision to invade Iraq has already been made, and have in effect seen it as their job to prepare the American public for the coming war,” New York Times columnist Paul Krugman wrote on Feb. 18. “Some media outlets—operating in an environment in which anyone who questions the administration’s foreign policy is accused of being unpatriotic—have taken it as their assignment to sell the war...”

If you want to know what reporting from Iraq will be like, all you have to do is look at the reporting on the war in Afghanistan. Remember that war? It’s hardly a blip on the TV screen anymore. There are no more reminders of what is actually going on there.

But the reality is that a bloody U.S. war of conquest is continuing right now in Afghanistan. There is no end in sight.

Civilians are being bombed and shot at every day by U.S. soldiers as the Pentagon attempts to impose a U.S.-made dictatorship on the people of Afghanistan.

You may not know that because you haven’t seen it in the U.S. media. From the beginning of that war, there has been almost no reporting from Afghanistan. What little there was went through pre-censorship by the Pentagon.

In fact, the Pentagon made sure that it didn’t get reported. According to New York Times reporter Chris Hedges, Wash-

ington Post correspondent Doug Struck attempted “to investigate civilian casualties in Afghanistan by the U.S. military. He was made to lie down with a gun pointed to his head.” (Editor & Publisher, Feb. 26) Needless to say, there were few reports on civilian casualties in Afghanistan as the result of the U.S. invasion.

Want to know what is happening now in Afghanistan? Jane’s (www.janes.com) in London is a research and information agency that is an arm of the military-industrial complex. Not a news agency, Jane’s is an insider’s news service that reports frankly to its war merchant readership. Subscriptions to its services can cost thousands of dollars a year. It is not meant for the general public and its information is rarely if ever heard on the mass communications networks.

Here’s what London-based Jane’s Terrorism & Security Monitor reported on Feb. 24:

“U.S. forces have used tactics that are offensive to Afghans. They treated every Afghan with suspicion as if he was a member of Al-Qaeda; they entered houses without permission; they body-searched women—a taboo in the Muslim world, especially in Afghanistan; and they bombed innocent civilians and arrested and mistreated people, all because of mistaken identity or misinformation. They did not show sensitivity to Afghan culture.

“Perhaps the most serious tactical error was the restoration of warlords in Afghanistan,” the report continues.

It concludes, “U.S. forces brought the warlords back, arming, financing and guiding them back to their lost thrones. Worse yet, they even created some new ones, the so-called ‘American warlords.’”

That’s a picture of an imperialist occupation army. It’s the reality, but not what is seen in most of the U.S. media. This and much worse is in store for the people of Iraq, but you won’t see it on CNN or Fox News.

To find out what is really happening, people across the U.S. are turning more and more to the independent, anti-war media that can be found on the Internet. □



PHOTOS BY HIROKAWA RYUICHI

World unions take stand against war

On Feb. 19, over 200 unions from all over the world and representing over 130 million members issued a joint statement rejecting a war on Iraq. They said the U.S. has no convincing reasons to start a war. No link has been proven between the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the government of Iraq, nor is there any immediate threat from weapons of mass destruction. The unions pointed out that a war would be fought over-

whelmingly by the sons and daughters of workers, and that war hysteria is being used as a pretext for attacks on labor and to cover up the effects of a sinking economy worldwide. The appeal ends by calling on labor to organize opposition to the war in every country. Now many unions, especially in the European countries supporting Washington, are discussing general strikes if the war happens.



Secret treaties

The open haggling over terms for Turkey's participation in U.S. aggression against Iraq has opened another beam of light on the dirty business behind Washington's war plans. U.S. imperialism has a death grip on the failing Turkish economy. Its power to block Ankara's access to loans puts the Turkish capitalist regime in Washington's power.

Still, 95 percent of the Turkish people oppose the war. The military-backed Turkish regime knew it needed to bring home some sort of plunder before allowing the Pentagon to station 60,000 troops there and launch a second invasion of Iraq, this one from the north. So Ankara held out for a better price. Or maybe, as Paul Krugman writes in the Feb. 25 New York Times, the Turkish rulers didn't trust the Bush gang to pay up later and wanted the cash up front.

The haggling raised new questions. Besides cash payments, are there secret treaties regarding future control of northern Iraq? This area is sensitive for Turkey, both because it contains rich oil reserves and because it is populated by Kurds, an oppressed nation spread across three countries. Kurds make up 20 percent of the population in Turkey.

In considering this question, it is useful to bring up an historical precedent. British and French imperialism, though allied with that tyrant the Russian Czar, claimed they were fighting in World War I for democracy. German imperialism

said it was fighting for "civilization." But these claims were exposed as mere covers for dirty economic interests by what turned out to be the best-organized and most combative anti-war movement in history.

On Nov. 7, 1917, the workers and peasants seized power in Russia. Their government, led then by the revolutionary communist Lenin, got Russia out of the war and declared an end to secret diplomacy. They renounced all the goals of the czarist regime to seize territory and annex oppressed nations. And they proceeded to publish in their press and in pamphlet form for world distribution all the secret treaties and memoranda devised by the Russian, British and French governments from 1914 to 1917.

These secret agreements had been made while European workers were dying by the millions in the trenches. The treaties were nothing but robbers' pacts to divide up the territories and resources of Central Asia, Europe and the Far East. One of them, the Sykes-Picot treaty, carved out Kuwait and Iraq.

The Bush administration—a gang of robbers with their hands on the greatest killing machine in human history—is back to the same old colonial game. Using threats, bribes and who knows what secret treaties, it is trying to line up a coalition of unpopular regimes to defy their people and give Washington a green light for another war of plunder. □

Unnatural disasters

The tragedies in Chicago and Rhode Island nightclubs. The gasoline explosion off Staten Island. These are not "natural" disasters. Capitalist greed fueled these catastrophes.

In Chicago, at least 21 people were trampled or crushed to death and 57 injured on Feb. 17 after security guards reportedly sprayed either Mace or pepper spray in an overcrowded African American nightclub. Bush and Ashcroft's "Code Orange" campaign has created great potential for panic if people fear they might be under attack.

The building was in violation of fire codes and had a past history of code violations. The club, E2, was supposed to have been shuttered last July for safety violations. City officials said the owners knew they were not allowed to open. One of the reasons was the club's failure to provide enough exits. Panicked clubgoers reportedly found many exits locked. Club owners often do this to make sure that everyone pays admission.

A similar use of pepper spray at a nightclub in Pullman, Wash., last September also set off a panic. But hundreds escaped unharmed through an unlocked back door.

A fire at The Station in Rhode Island on Feb. 20 claimed the lives of 97 people and left many others critically burned. It was ignited by an indoor pyrotechnic display. Since insurance companies charge an estimated \$2 million in liability insurance, many smaller clubs or venues don't take out policies. They don't adhere to basic safety regulations that would save many lives: ample and accessible exits commensurate with crowd size, sprinkler systems, up-to-date inspections, speci-

fied distance between performer and audience, flame-retardant materials, a trained pyrotechnic expert, a trained medic and stand-by fire engines. These safety requirements cost money, so out they go.

In this era of deregulation, the chase for the almighty dollar is relatively unimpeded.

And the capitalist profit motive connects these needless tragedies to the Feb. 22 explosion that rocked Staten Island. A barge unloading 118,000 barrels of gasoline at ExxonMobil Corp.'s Port Mobil terminal detonated, killing two Bouchard Transportation Co. Inc. workers and injuring one ExxonMobil employee.

The huge explosion sent shock waves of fear through the population of New York and New Jersey.

The facility, the largest in the country, can store up to 125 million gallons of oil. It sits adjacent to several residential communities.

Bouchard, the country's largest independent tug and barge operator, has a history of oil and gasoline spills in recent years.

And last March, ExxonMobil paid \$11.2 million in an out-of-court settlement for allegedly mishandling benzene-contaminated waste at Port Mobil. Benzene is a dangerous carcinogen.

Deregulation and a sluggish economy are incentives to cut corners on safety to rake in profits.

And profits are what capitalism is all about. The barge explosion sent heating oil futures soaring to a near all-time high and natural gas futures to their highest price level in two years on the New York Mercantile Exchange. □

What Korea has accomplished

By Tom Scahill

With George W. Bush threatening military intervention to stop North Korea from resuming its nuclear energy program, and at the same time blaming the Koreans for their economic difficulties, it's important for people in the U.S. to understand the accomplishments made by North Korea despite generations of colonial occupation, war and threats of outside intervention.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist states in eastern Europe, North Korea as well as Cuba lost many of their trading partners. Meanwhile, there had been huge investment in the buildup of South Korea as an import-export economy by the United States and other advanced capitalist countries.

North Korea continues to face many difficulties, but in some areas its achievements have been amazing. Here are some statistics from the Illustrated Book of World Rankings 2001, 5th edition, for South Korea, North Korea, and a few for the United States, as well as for Myanmar (Burma), a nation in the region that, like Korea, has a colonial past. Figures are for 1998 unless otherwise indicated.

It should be kept in mind that the population of South Korea is almost twice that of the north, which has a harsher climate than the south. Myanmar's population, 45 million, is about the same as South Korea.

Gross national product: South Korea ranked 11th in the world at \$485 billion. Myanmar ranked 58th at \$55.7 billion. North Korea ranked 64th at \$22 billion. However, many goods and services in North Korea, like health care, education and housing, are virtually free.

Percentage of income spent on housing: Myanmar ranked 87th at 10%, South Korea 140th at 4.1%, North Korea 164th at .8%.

Percentage of income spent on health care: The U.S. ranked first at 17%, South Korea 35th at 5%, Myanmar 92nd at 2.4%. North Korea was not listed. Health care there is free.

Hospital beds: North Korea was third highest at 135 per 10,000 population; the U.S. was 85th at 41 per 10,000, South Korea was 95th at 34 per 10,000, and Myanmar was 200th at 6 per 10,000.

Population per physician: Myanmar's ratio is 3,485 people to 1 doctor, South Korea is 784:1, North Korea is better at 370:1, and the rich U.S. is practically the same: 365:1.

Infant mortality: Myanmar had 79 deaths per 1,000 live births; North Korea had 23 per 1,000, South Korea was lower with 10 per 1,000.

Life expectancy in both North and South Korea was the same: 69 years. The U.S. wasn't much higher—72 years, while Myanmar was 58 years.

Of the three Asian countries, North Korea had the lowest death rate—5.3 per 1,000, while in Myanmar it was 9.9 and in South Korea 6.4.

North Korea did fantastically well on literacy: 95%. The U.S. had 95.5% and South Korea 98%. Myanmar was 83%.

Population with access to safe drinking water (1994-95): North Korea is listed with 38 other countries at 100%. Only 90% of people in the U.S. have access to safe drinking water, according to these figures. In South Korea, the number is 89%, and in Myanmar, only 39%.

Military personnel (1997): The U.S. has the second-largest armed forces in the world, 1,447,000, of whom 37,000 are stationed in South Korea. North Korea is fifth in the world at 1,055,000. South Korea is sixth at 672,000.

Military budget (2000): The U.S. is ranked first at \$343.2 billion, more than the next 16 countries combined. South Korea is ranked 12th at \$12.8 billion. North Korea is 32nd at \$1.3 billion.

It is obvious that North Korea tries to compensate with human power for what it may lack in military hardware.

The importance of trading with Western developed countries was expounded by Kim Il Sung as early as 1975. In 1984, the DPRK officially launched an open door policy of trade with the West and in 1988 began to trade with South Korea, expanding joint ventures in 1993.

In the late 1980s, while trade with the United States was virtually nonexistent, nearly 60% of North Korea's trade came from the Soviet Union, followed by China and Japan. Today, North Korea's main trading partners are Japan, China and South Korea, as well as some countries in western Europe.

South Korea received \$4 billion in grant aid from 1953 to 1974 from the U.S. Some 60% of all investment in South Korea before 1968 came from the U.S.

Its external debt grew to \$46.7 billion in 1985 but fell to \$23 billion in 1991. (Library of Congress country studies) According to the CIA fact book for 2001, South Korea's debt in 2000 was \$137 billion while North Korea's was \$12 billion.

In 1989, North Korea's total foreign debt was \$6.78 billion, with \$3.13 billion owed to the Soviet Union. Historically, loans to North Korea as compared to South Korea have been negligible.

Between 1980 and 1989 North Korea provided a total of approximately \$26.4 million in aid to Third World countries, of which almost 74% went to African countries in the form of technical agricultural assistance. (Library of Congress country studies)

These are Western-compiled figures and may not do justice to North Korea's accomplishments. However, they do show that, if unthreatened by imperialism and allowed to grow into a united nation, the achievements of the Korean people would be monumental.

As the threats from Washington grow ever more serious, it is up to the anti-war movement to come to the defense of the Korean people. □

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'Revolutionary offensive' in Venezuela

Arrest bosses who sabotaged oil production

By Andy McInerney

"These opposition leaders tried to destroy the country. Now they must be punished."

Tomás Ordoñez, a taxi driver in Venezuela's capital of Caracas, was explaining why he was in the street celebrating the Feb. 20 arrest of Carlos Fernández, head of Venezuela's business federation, Fedecamaras. Fernández was a main leader of the two-month attempt to shut down the Venezuelan economy, which ended in failure in early February.

The Venezuelan bosses' two-month effort—deliberately misidentified as a "strike" in the U.S. press—collapsed on Feb. 3. Since then, poor and working people have been clamoring for President Hugo Chávez to strike back at the cabal of coup plotters and saboteurs who have repeatedly tried to turn back Venezuela's "Bolivarian revolution."

This time, President Chávez seems to be listening. His moves are being portrayed as "anti-democratic" in the big-business press around the world. In fact, they are the most democratic expression of Venezuela's working classes in their efforts to determine their own fate.

Chávez has declared 2003 "the year of the revolutionary offensive."

"The coup-mongering, fascist opposition had their turn at bat and they have struck out three times," Chávez said. "Now

it's our turn to bat." (New York Times, Feb. 7)

Aiming at reviving production in the crucial oil industry, the government has fired 10,000 managers and executives who engineered the shutdown of the giant PDVSA oil conglomerate—the main source of Venezuela's wealth. PDVSA's president is Ali Rodríguez, once a commander in a leftist guerrilla movement, who was appointed by Chávez to regain control over the country's most vital industry. Rodríguez warned that these bosses would not return to work.

"Those people got their jobs back or got better positions" after the April 2002 attempted coup against the Chávez government, Rodríguez said. "They took advantage of that policy." (New York Times, Feb. 1)

During the shutdown, oil production fell from 3 million barrels a day to 300,000. Thanks to the heroic work of Venezuelan oil workers who operated the industry without their bosses, production is now up to 2 million barrels a day. It is projected to reach pre-shutdown levels by mid-March.

In another move aimed at hitting the core of the U.S.-backed opposition's power base, the Chávez government implemented currency restrictions on Feb. 18, centralizing the distribution of foreign currency like U.S. dollars. Most of the businesses that participated in the

shutdown depend on U.S. dollars to keep afloat.

Chávez also announced price controls on food items ranging from milk to beef and rice. When some producers threatened not to sell at lower rates, Chávez announced firm consequences.

"If they close the plants I'll take them away from them again," said Chávez. "Here and now I order the armed forces and the defense minister to start drawing up plans to seize the plants." (Associated Press, Feb. 17)

Chávez also announced plans to limit the interest rates banks could charge.

The Venezuelan government has also ordered investigations of the five main private television stations and their role in fomenting both the April coup attempt and the most recent attempts to strangle the Bolivarian revolution. The big-business media, owned by the likes of multimillionaire and rabid rightist Gustavo Cisneros, are accused of broadcasting "propaganda aimed at subverting public order."

The Feb. 20 arrest of Fedecamaras head Carlos Fernández is the Chávez government's first effort to bring the opposition to justice. A warrant was also issued for Carlos Ortega, the corrupt head of the Venezuelan Labor Federation, CTV. The CTV leadership is dominated by officials of the Democratic Action party, one of the two parties set

up by Venezuela's traditional ruling elite.

State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher called the moves "very worrisome."

Chávez was elected president in 1998, breaking the Venezuelan elite's monopoly on political power. In 2001, after carrying out a series of democratic reforms of the country's political structure, Chávez embarked on a series of economic moves designed to direct more of Venezuela's wealth to the 80 percent of the population living in poverty.

The Chávez government also encouraged the formation of "Bolivarian circles." These are neighborhood groups organized to defend the Bolivarian revolution and implement many of the revolution's social tasks.

As the revolution has deepened, the Venezuelan rich and their backers in Washington have become increasingly frantic. The tiny elite, overwhelmingly white as opposed to the overwhelmingly Black and mestizo working class, has organized racist gangs, frequently attacking pro-Chávez demonstrations.

After defeating the two-month attempt to strangle the country, the Bolivarian revolution is stronger than ever. Efforts to rout the U.S.-backed reactionaries deserve the support and solidarity of progressive and working-class organizations around the world. □

'War in Colombia'

Many voices speak out against U.S. intervention

"War in Colombia—Made in U.S.A.," published by the International Action Center, New York, 2003. 297 pages with index, chronology and appendix. Edited and compiled by Rebeca Toledo, Teresa Gutierrez, Sara Flounders and Andy McInerney. \$19.95.

By Leslie Feinberg

On Feb. 13, a U.S. government plane was downed by gunfire over southern Colombia and crashed into the jungle below. Forces from Colombia's largest revolutionary army took three survivors prisoner, all U.S. citizens. A fourth U.S. citizen and a Colombian Army sergeant were reportedly shot and killed at the scene of the crash.

President George W. Bush did not preempt network television to rattle the sabers for full-scale war in this hemisphere. Nor did his generals conduct live Pentagon briefings so the networks could proclaim a "hostage crisis."

Why such low-key coverage? The flight was carrying out a secret intelligence mission. U.S. officials refuse to identify the missing personnel or admit what government agency employs them, but there is speculation that it is the CIA.

The rebels are offering a prisoner exchange.

While Bush and his generals prepare to lay all-out siege to the Middle East, Colombia is their quiet war. But it is no less dirty.

The anti-war movement in the United States and around the world needs a clear view of the Pentagon's "Plan Colombia" and its impact on this hemisphere.

Now that information is available in a book from the International Action Center: "War in Colombia—Made in U.S.A." Many authors contributed to the book.

Section I, "U.S. Intervention in Colombia," debunks the "war on drugs" excuse and shows how massive aerial chemical defoliation of farmers' cropland, first employed by the United States in Vietnam, is itself a violent act of war.

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark writes that the multi-billion-dollar Plan Colombia, announced in September 1999 by the Clinton administration, was meant to "eradicate the four-decades-old revolutionary struggle of the poor in Colombia, bring drug cartels under government control and reinforce small oligarchies subservient to U.S. economic and political interests in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela."

Journalist Andy McInerney analyzes the world political context for Plan Colombia and its continuation, Bush's Andean Regional Initiative.

IAC Co-Director Teresa Gutierrez shines light on the real terrorists in Colombia: the U.S./paramilitary alliance. More than 35,000 Colombians have been murdered in this reign of Klan-like terror over the last decade.

Part II, "Voices from Colombia," lends

this extraordinary book even greater power. It speaks directly from front-line trenches of this war—the jungle, the shop floor, the tilled land.

The reader hears from Manuel Marulanda Vélez, founder and commander in chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP); Antonio Garcia, over-all military commander of the National Liberation Army (ELN), the country's second-largest guerrilla movement; women commandants; Javier Correa Suárez, a leader of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (Sinaltrainal); the Lawyers Collective Corporation; the peasant organization of coca and poppy growers; a joint statement by 60 Colombian social, human-rights, non-governmental and peace organizations. And more.

Part III analyzes how U.S. intervention in Colombia affects the region.

Cuban President Fidel Castro Ruz explains that the United States "simply wants to take possession of the markets and natural resources of the Third World countries, including those that were part of the former Soviet Union ... It is already almost the master of the great oil reserves of the Caspian Sea. It wants to play the role of a new Roman world-wide super-empire, which, of course, will last much shorter than the Roman Empire—and it will meet with universal resistance."

Venezuelan Minister of Education Dr. Aristóbulo Istariz lays bare the vivid events of the unsuccessful right-wing coup

attempt in his country orchestrated from Washington in April 2002.

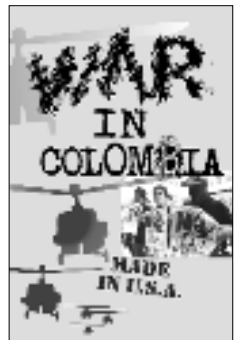
The wide impact in this hemisphere is also examined by President Lucio E. Gutiérrez of Ecuador; former political prisoner Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques; and Dominican activist and poet Narciso Isa Conde.

Part IV contains documents from many international gatherings rejecting Pentagon intervention in Colombia.

In the last section, "The People of the U.S. Say No," we hear from former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney, Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, Sen. Paul Wellstone, and School of the Americas activists the Rev. Roy Bourgeois and Linda Panetta. There is also a statement supporting Colombian labor unionists by the AFL-CIO national executive council.

Access to the book's contents is aided by a chronology of Colombian history, appendix documents and an index.

Co-editor Rebeca Toledo, a Latina lesbian activist who contributed her skills in many aspects of the book's production, took part in the Tribunal Against the Violence of Coca-Cola in Bogotá in December 2002. □



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EDITORIAL

La pasión de Corea

En una actividad educativa reciente de activistas organizada en Nueva York por el grupo ANSWER (una sigla que en Inglés significa: Actúe Ahora para Poner Alto a la Guerra y Acabar con el Racismo) una mujer surcoreana contó con orgullo intenso como la gente en su país por fin puede manifestar una resistencia en los millones para demandar un alto a la ocupación militar de los Estados Unidos. Pero su orgullo fue mezclado con dolor insoportable. Lagrimas rebosaron de los ojos y ella habló con dificultad recordando los decenas de miles de sus compatriotas encarcelados y torturados, especialmente durante los largos años de dictadura militar, porque hablaron a favor de la auto determinación y la soberanía de Corea.

Fue un momento que debe haber sido grabado y dado en todas las redes televisas en Norteamérica. Si la gente pueda ver su pasión sincera, comenzaría obtener el sentido de lo que está pasando actualmente en Corea.

Pero en vez de eso, la gente escucha las mismas mentiras que siempre repetidas sin parar. Las mismas frases gastadas están reutilizadas de cadena de televisión a cadena de televisión, de periódico a periódico, por gente que no sabe nada de Corea. Pero si saben que es su oficio: convencer al público de la justificación de una guerra sangrienta que mató a millones de coreanos y a la vez justificar a los 50 años de ocupación militar de los Estados Unidos que siguieron.

Parece que nada escandaliza tanto a los derechistas de este país como la idea que Estados Unidos debe salir de Corea. Cuando había debate por un rato breve durante la administración de Carter sobre la posible reducción de la cifra de tropas estadounidenses allí, altos oficiales del Pentágono amotinaron. El Gen. John Singlaub, que encabezó esta rebelión derechista fue despedido de su mando, sin embargo volvió en un favorito de la "Liga Mundial Anticomunista", establecida por el notorio Rev. Sun Myong Moon, él mismo una creación de la CIA.

A pesar de que Singlaub se jubiló forzosamente, los militaristas ganaron. La fuerza militar en Corea no fue reducida, ni siquiera por un solo soldado, y es esto que está provocando aún otra crisis más en el mundo de hoy.

Si la Guerra de Vietnam hubiera terminado con la división de ese país, sin duda alguna hubiera sido un grupo de presión igual en los EE.UU. presionando a mantener esa ocupación permanentemente. La ocupación militar de parte de los EE.UU. en cualquier parte del mundo proporciona comercio bueno para toda clase de especulador. Afortunadamente, eso no ocurrió. Estados Unidos "perdió" a todo Vietnam. Pero no fue ninguna pérdida para la gente acá. Fue la comienzo de una fase nueva en la lucha que solo va a avanzar mientras que la clase billonaria intenta empujar el pueblo en aventuras militares nuevas.

El movimiento antiguerra de los años 1960 y 1970 no fue ninguna mera "síndrome". Requirió tiempo antes de que el pueblo volvió conciente de la historia de Vietnam, su lucha larga en contra de la ocupación colonial, y el deseo profundo del pueblo vietnamita por la autodeterminación. Pero al fin las masas del pueblo acá entendieron la falsedad del "efecto dominó" y todas las demás justificaciones dadas por la guerra. Por los millones, apasionadamente rechazaron el papel de asesinos a sueldo y soldados obedientes y prescindibles de las corporaciones billonarias y los bancos. Ahora el movimiento es más grande que nunca, y si el blanco próximo de agresión militar es Corea, va a educarse sobre este tema también. □

Bolivia se revela contra régimen pro E.U. y FMI

Por Andy McInerney

La ola de protestas que ha venido cubriendo a América Latina, amenazando a los clientes regímenes de los Estados Unidos desde Argentina hasta Colombia, ha alcanzado a la nación andina de Bolivia. En recientes semanas miles de trabajadores, estudiantes, y campesinos han llevado acabo huelgas, barricadas y batallas en las calles contra el gobierno del Presidente Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada que goza del respaldo del gobierno de los Estados Unidos.

Las protestas han ya tenidos dos efectos importantes. Primero, el aparato estatal boliviano—las fuerzas armadas que protegen a una pequeña clase gobernante y los intereses de los Estados Unidos allá—se han dividido. La policía está tomando el lado de las manifestaciones populares mientras que el ejército se mantiene leal al gobierno.

Segundo, la oposición de la clase obrera, incluyendo a los campesinos y estudiantes, se han combinado en un "Cuerpo General Administrativo del Pueblo Boliviano," unido en la sola meta de desplazar a Sánchez Lozada.

La ronda de protestas actuales tiene sus raíces en acciones coordinadas que comenzaron a mediados de enero. Los campesinos que cultivan la hoja de la coca se han enfrentado a las tropas del ejército en las barricadas que se han puesto para exigir al gobierno que permita el cultivo de la coca para un uso limitado, no para narcóticos, y que de fin a la campaña de defoliación contra los cultivos de la coca.

Los campesinos han cultivado la droga en las montañas Andes por siglos. La planta es parte de la cultura indígena. El mercado de drogas internacional ha hecho de esta hoja un artículo, pero los miles de millones de dólares en ganancias producidos por la venta de esta nunca llegan a los campesinos que la siembran.

A la misma vez que los campesinos interrumpieron las carreteras principales desde Cochabamba a Santa Cruz, unos 10.000 jubilados se reunieron en Calamarca para interrumpir las carreteras entre la capital La Paz y Oruro, una conexión a los

puertos de comercio Chileno en el Océano Pacífico. Los jubilados estaban protestando la baja en el valor de las pensiones debido a una espiga que conectan a estas pensiones al dólar estadounidenses.

Los manifestantes también protestaron los planes del gobierno boliviano de unirse al Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas. El ALCA es el propuesto mercado dominado por los Estados Unidos que eliminaría la habilidad de los países en la región para proteger sus economías de la dominación de los Estados Unidos.

Bolivia está entre los países más pobres de América Latina. El setenta por ciento de la población vive bajo el nivel de la pobreza. Muchos sobreviven con menos de un \$1 dólar por día.

Los jubilados lograron obtener algunas concesiones del gobierno. Pero la protesta de los campesinos continuó, atrayendo el apoyo de los líderes de las comunidades Indígenas Aymara.

El 9 de febrero, Sánchez de Lozada le tiró más leña al fuego. Él decretó un nuevo programa económico de austeridad que recortaría los gastos del gobierno en un 10% y aumentando los impuestos. El programa económico fue diseñado para reducir el déficit del gobierno de una 8.5% a 5%, un requisito mandado por el Fondo Monetario Internacional.

El plan de austeridad provocó respuestas de ira. "El gobierno prefiere que los pobres aguante la crisis", dijo Evo Morales a la Prensa Asociada el 10 de febrero. Morales, un diputado Congresional del partido Movimiento Al Socialismo, (MAS) y ganador del voto popular para la presidencia de Bolivia en Junio del año pasado, es un líder de la protesta de los campesinos.

Otras fuerzas se unieron al movimiento de oposición. Los líderes de sindicatos convocaron una huelga de un día. Y aún los líderes de empresas protestaron el incremento propuesto de los impuestos.

El 12 de febrero, la policía en La Paz, se separó del gobierno y se unió a los manifestantes. La policía se tomó el edificio de viviendas y el ministerio del extranjero y se unió a la manifestación y puso en sito al

palacio presidencial.

Los policías amotinados lanzaron proyectiles de gas lacrimógeno a los destacamentos de fuerzas militares gubernamentales desplegados en contra de las protestas. Por lo menos 17 personas fueron matadas en confrontaciones con el ejército.

Entre días, Sánchez de Lozada retiró el plan de impuestos impopular. Pero el MAS, la Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), y otros grupos siguieron presionando por la dimisión del presidente.

El Centro de la oposición ahora es el Estado Mayor del Pueblo Boliviano, formado en los fines del enero pasado. El Estado Mayor fue organizado por el "MAS, el COB, y el sindicato de maestros, campesinos y estudiantes", según un reporte del 20 de enero de la agencia Interpress.

Una declaración del 15 de febrero por el Estado Mayor hizo un análisis de la lucha actual.

"Las organizaciones sociales, sindicales y políticas abajo firmantes denunciamos a la opinión pública en general la actitud asesina del gobierno de Sánchez de Lozada al haber ordenado la represión cruel por parte del ejército contra la policía y el pueblo que expresaban su oposición al impuestazo presentado por el gobierno al poder legislativo, el mismo que obedecía a las imposiciones del Fondo Monetario Internacional y el capital transnacional", comienza el manifiesto.

El manifiesto sigue demandando la dimisión del gobierno de Sánchez de Lozada y la formación de un gobierno de transición para cambiar el modelo económico neoliberal, reasumir el control de los recursos nacionales y una redistribución de la tierra.

La administración de Bush reaccionó a los sucesos en Bolivia con alarma. Bush mismo fue "profundamente preocupado", según el vocero de la Casa Blanca Ari Fleischer el 13 de febrero. Una declaración del 14 de febrero del Departamento de Estado llamó por "todos bolivianos deben respetar el gobierno elegido constitucionalmente y desistir de la violencia". Un oficial del Departamento de Estado fue enviado a Bolivia para reuniones con el gobierno el 17 de febrero.

Mucho está en juego en Bolivia y esto es amplificado por el hecho de que el país es un eslabón en una cadena de países latinoamericanos donde las elites políticas tradicionales se han comprobados incapaz de imponer los mandos de Wall Street y el FMI sobre las espaldas de la clase trabajadora. Millones de trabajadores a través del continente—desde Colombia a Argentina, desde Venezuela a Ecuador y Brasil—sienten la lucha de los bolivianos como si fuera su propia. □

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