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**FROM FIRESTONE TO JUNK BONDS**

**Capitalist plunder lurks  
behind Liberia's chaos**

**U.S. intervention is the problem, not the solution**

By Deirdre Griswold

What has the present desperate situation in Liberia got to do with junk bonds? Plenty, but you won't read about it in the corporate media.

The picture the world sees is one of desperation and chaos. Hundreds are being killed in a civil war that has people in Monrovia, the capital, calling for Washington to send "peacekeepers." Babies are starving, cholera has broken out because there is no clean drinking water, supplies of food and other necessities have been disrupted.

There are reportedly 4,500 U.S. troops in ships off the coast of Liberia, but the Bush administration is not rushing in to prop up the government of President Charles Taylor. It clearly wants him to leave, and has persuaded Nigeria to offer him asylum.

These are the developments that the U.S. and British media focus on. What they leave out is the history and context behind this grim situation. By not saying a word about how Liberia has been reduced to abject poverty by U.S. imperialist corporations, they fail to give people in the West any sense of why social and political tensions have reached the point of civil war for the second time in a decade. Instead, the capitalist press and media feed the racist myth that African people cannot be productive or govern themselves.

It is an outright lie, which is contradicted by the fact that African labor has been so productive that the capitalist

investors who plunder the continent have become enormously wealthy.

**Biggest rubber plantation in the world**

This article is about one particular company—the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.—which has squeezed billions in profits out of Liberia, beginning way back in 1925, when it virtually stole 1 million acres of land, paying the Liberian government only six cents an acre. It established the largest rubber plantation in the world at Harbel on the Farmington River, giving the company a route to the sea.

George Padmore, a communist from Trinidad and an Africa scholar, wrote that "... the company demanded the Liberian government accept a loan of \$5 million at the rate of 7 percent interest, failing which Firestone would not carry through its proposed development scheme. The Liberian people were reluctant to accept this heavy financial obligation but finally succumbed to the coercion of the great colossus of the north. Firestone was insistent that the government accept this loan in order that funds might be provided for the construction of railways and roads and to improve the harbor of Monrovia."

This "loan" began Liberia's indebtedness to the U.S. for building the infrastructure that U.S. corporations needed for their operations.

Firestone's huge plantation at first employed tens of thousands of workers. It drew young men from communal villages into the newly created money economy. The company put out

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**Pyongyang conference: KOREA IS ONE!**



North Korean people in traditional dress dance with guests from overseas as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War. Washington still refuses to sign a real peace treaty normalizing relations with North Korea.

PHOTO: KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY

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55 W. 17 St.,  
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**Atlanta** P.O. Box 424,  
Atlanta, Ga. 30301  
(404) 235-5704  
**Baltimore** 426 E. 31 St.,  
Baltimore, Md. 21218  
(410) 235-7040  
baltimore@workers.org  
**Boston** 31 Germania St.,  
Boston, Mass. 02130  
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Fax (617) 983-3836  
boston@workers.org  
**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
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**Chicago** P.O. Box 06178,  
Wacker Drive Station,  
Chicago, Ill. 60606  
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Fax (773) 761-9330;  
chicago@workers.org  
**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 5963  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
phone (216) 531-4004  
cleveland@workers.org  
**Detroit**  
5920 Second Ave.,  
Detroit, Mich. 48202  
(313) 831-0750;  
detroit@workers.org  
**Houston**  
P.O. Box 130322,  
Houston, Texas  
77219 (713) 861-5965  
houston@workers.org

**Los Angeles**  
269 S. Western Ave.,  
Room 110,  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004  
(213) 500-0529  
la@workers.org  
**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 9202,  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139  
(610) 352-3625;  
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**Richmond, Va.**  
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**Rochester, N.Y.**  
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2489 Mission St.  
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San Francisco,  
Calif. 94110  
(415) 826-4828;  
fax (415) 821-5782;  
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**Seattle**  
1218 E. Cherry #201,  
Seattle, Wash. 98122  
(206) 325-0085;  
seattle@workers.org  
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100 Grandview Rd.,  
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold;  
Technical Editor: Lal Rookh;  
Managing Editors: Greg Butterfield, John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson;  
West Coast Editors: Richard Becker, Gloria La Riva;  
Contributing Editors: Joyce Chediak, Pat Chin, Naomi Cohen, Shelley Ettinger, Teresa Gutierrez;  
Technical Staff: John Beacham, Rebecca Finkel, Adrian Garcia, Elena J. Peckham, Hank Sambach;  
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Internet: Janet Mayes

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## Bring the troops home

# Brooklyn anti-war rally builds momentum

By Heather Cottin  
New York

Support is growing all over New York for a major anti-war rally in Brooklyn's House of the Lord Church, for over 40 years a center of peace and justice activism in the Black community. The Rev. Herbert Daughtry and the MLK Jr. Peace Now Committee of his church have called the rally to "Bring the Troops Home Now."

Sponsored by International ANSWER, the rally calls for an end to the colonial occupation of Iraq: "No more lying or dying for oil. Money for jobs and human needs, not war!"

"I have spoken to a mother whose son came home dead. I spoke to a family whose daughter is missing in Iraq," Daughtry told Workers World.

His largely Black congregation is skeptical of the lies about the war. "We in the African American community are born skeptical. We live with lying presidents. We live with reneging presidents, and we live with terror. Terror didn't start with Sept. 11, 2001," said Daughtry, alluding to the terror that has plagued the Black community since the beginning of slavery.

"Now the larger population is becoming more skeptical, but this war was so unnecessary, so unjustified. It is so painful. We have been saying that all along. The war in Iraq started in 1991, and it never let up. Right-wing religionists have invoked 'God's blessings' upon the Bushites' war on Iraq.

"Now we are learning to unravel the lies about 9/11, about the non-existent weapons of mass destruction, the non-existent links between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. The administration said, 'We are doing this to liberate the people of Iraq.' The media abdicated any semblance of impartiality. And the people [in the United States] went along with it.

"We were beaten with the American flag. 'You have to support our troops.' Now our kids are being killed. Well, we say: Bring them home! We don't want to be there to support the oil companies.

"We were saying the war was wrong all along. We have invited Cynthia McKinney to come to the rally. She was blasted for telling the truth."

McKinney, who opposed Washington's war mobilization all along, lost her position as representative from Georgia in the U.S. Congress as a result of an unrelenting rightist campaign against her.

"We are getting a good response already for Aug. 19," said Daughtry.

This excitement is echoed by youth from International ANSWER and the anti-war, GI-support group SNAFU, which have been conducting street rallies around New York to get out the word about the Brooklyn event. These rallies feature anti-war speakers and the hip-hop sounds of Movement in Motion. The activists have been leafleting and "raising anti-war consciousness among working class people," according to Judi Cheng, one of the ANSWER orga-

nizers. "We are telling people about the dangers of militarism abroad and cut-backs and job loss in our communities.

"Recruitment is a poverty draft," said Cheng. "When we meet people in the streets, they are put off by the war. They're saying, 'No way, we're not joining the military.' We're saying to young people, 'Join the anti-war movement.'"

Movement in Motion singer David Rosen described a meeting in Harlem where they played music and passed out leaflets in front of an armed forces recruiting station. "We staged a die-in. People were really engaged with the music and the street theater. We are bridging the gap between the artists and the activists. After we sang, we all lay down and there were dolls covered in fake blood. One mother brought her kids up close and said, 'That is what our government is doing, you'd better stop and look at them.'"

Rosen said that Movement in Motion and organizers from SNAFU and ANSWER would be at Utica Avenue and Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn on Aug. 13 to perform and to leaflet for the Aug. 19 rally.

"We use our music as a tool for outreach, to let people know about events like the Aug. 19 and Oct. 25 rallies against the occupation," said Rosen. After a Saturday street meeting in the Bronx, Monica, another SNAFU activist, said, "We gave out all our literature. People were really positive and interested in the Brooklyn rally. This event is really building." □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

## Above all laws



If there has been any constant in the last several

millennia (besides change), it has been the raging appetite of empires to remake the world in their various images. All of them, the Roman, the Ottoman, the British, and even the newest one, the American Empire, have cut through that which existed before they formed, and sought to impose their interests on those unlucky enough to be their subject states. If history teaches us anything, it is that empires are inherently unstable, if only because they inspire enemies rather than allies, and people seek to live free of their influences.

They have also sought to become the sole source of Law.

In the horrific aftermath of the Second World War, many nations gathered together to try to erect a new set of rules and institutions that would head off another world war, because the last two such wars left the world drenched in blood and sickened by death. They sought to erect a world criminal court that could try armies and leaders that engaged in acts deemed violative of the 'law of nations' (international law), and protected human rights. If there has been one implacable foe to that idea it has been the United States.

For over half a century the U.S. chose to ignore the push for such an institution in Europe, and in many parts of the so-called "developing world."

Why, one wonders, would the U.S., the 'land of the free and home of the brave', dare oppose something like this? The Americans feared a non-U.S. tribunal would hold its soldiers under violations of war crimes laws, and for over 50 years, the U.S. opposed it. When former U.S. President Bill Clinton did sign a treaty in support of the International Criminal Court (ICC), it sought to have veto power over any of its prosecutions (the UN Security Council rejected that notion). Although signed by Clinton on 31 December 2000, the Bush administration some two years later announced it would "unsign" the global pact.

In the words of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, "[T]here is a risk that the ICC could attempt to assert jurisdiction over U.S. service members, as well as civilians, involved in counter-terrorist and other military operations—something we cannot allow."

When Belgian activists and attorneys filed an action against U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks and other U.S. leaders, Rumsfeld went ballistic, threatening to pull U.S. money from a planned construction of a new NATO headquarters in Brussels.

That U.S. threat may cost some \$115 million or so.

By the beginning of 2003 over 80 nations had voted for and ratified the ICC treaty. The world's biggest enemy?

The United States.

The ICC, and the Rome Treaty which was a precursor of the ICC pact, have been in the gun sights of U.S. military and political leaders for decades.

Nations may submit to international treaties, but for an Empire, such an option is utterly unthinkable.

Rome knew no master, save Rome; Byzantium bowed only to its own emperors; the Ottomans submitted to Ottoman caliphs. ... Empires find it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize any source of power external to itself.

Now is the time of "Pax Americana"; the age of the American Empire. And, as the Bush administration began its reign, it pushed to abolish virtually every treaty it was a part of.

Yet, who needs immunity from war crimes, but one who intends to commit them? Is the U.S. seeking clemency before its next My Lai massacre? Its foreign Wounded Knee?

We are watching an atrocity in embryo. Massacres are being hatched, in the name of "democracy," "freedom" and "human rights."

If we don't act to oppose this obscene growth, this imperial fever, all Americans may come to rue the day it burst forth. □

## BALTIMORE

# Right to protest victory

By WW Baltimore bureau

On July 28 all charges were dropped against eight community activists here who had been issued criminal citations for the use of a bullhorn a month earlier at a protest against a bus fare hike and cuts in service.

Twenty people, meanwhile, were on a picket line outside the court—in a good mood already, as the defendants anticipated a victory.

Sharon Ceci, an organizer for the All Peoples Congress and one of the eight people cited, said, "This is a clear victory in defense of the right to protest. It has come as a result of increasing public pressure in the form of protests, flyer distributions, emails and resolutions at City Council."

A big break in the case came when the defendants won the support of a majority of the Baltimore City Council at a July 14 meeting. The council required hearings and an inquiry into why the police arrested one activist and wrote citations against eight others during the bus fare protest.

"We have asserted our innocence from the very beginning," Ceci continued. "These arrests and the overwhelmingly large presence of police—including city, state and MTA along with SWAT teams and a helicopter dispatched to a clearly legal and peaceful

June 27  
protest in  
downtown  
Baltimore.

WW PHOTO: SHARON CECI  
protest—were clearly meant to intimidate and criminalize dissent.

"Police repression is also extremely costly. Our children in Baltimore need books and teachers. Workers and seniors need decent affordable bus service. City workers need health care.

"Defending our constitutional right to protest is even more important at a time when President Bush and the Pentagon are continuing their illegal and devastating occupation of Iraq and attacking workers' rights at home," Ceci said.

The APC said it would continue its campaign to have the charges dropped against Jeff Bigelow, a union organizer with AFSCME Council 92, which represents approximately 30,000 state and county workers. Bigelow and his supporters say he, too, is innocent. He faces assault charges.

The APC activists say they notice an increase in police repression in the city. Over the weekend, a candidate for mayor in the upcoming November election, Andrey Bundley, was arrested and



cited for allegedly putting his campaign flyers on parked cars. Police handcuffed the African American candidate.

"Being Black in America," Bundley's campaign strategist Julius Henson said, "is the only thing Bundley did that was wrong." (Baltimore Sun, July 29)

"As community and union activists," said Ceci, "we are requesting a meeting with the mayor of Baltimore, Martin O'Malley, to discuss defending the right to protest, and are joining with the National Lawyers Guild, which will be training legal observers for all protest activity in the Baltimore area.

"We will also host a citywide meeting designed to teach the public their rights both at demonstrations and in the community at large. This includes filing complaints against police abuses. We will contact Bundley's office to see what we can do in support." □

# IBM trampling workers—here and abroad

By G. Dunkel

Moves by major transnational corporations to hire technical, skilled staff in low-wage countries show that capitalist globalization affects all sectors of U.S. workers.

Recently, IBM's two top "employee relations" executives tried to secretly warn executives and managers throughout the company that IBM will be moving thousands of technical jobs—in engineering, program development, accounting and so on—to low-wage countries like India and Russia as well as China, where capitalist inroads in the economy have gone very far. They warned that this might spur IBM workers in the U.S. to join unions.

One angry IBM employee made a recording of the conference call available to the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, who then passed it on to the New York Times (July 22). WashTech is a Seattle-based group that has been trying to organize technology workers for the past few years with support from the Communications Workers and the Newspaper Guild.

Tom Lynch, IBM's director for global

employee relations, is heard on the recording saying, "Governments are going to find that they're fairly limited as to what they can do, so unionizing becomes an attractive option. You can see some of the fairly appealing arguments they're making as to why employees need to do some things like organizing to help fight this."

Lynch mentioned Alliance@IBM and WashTech, both affiliated with the Communications Workers of America, as the probable source of union activity.

IBM is not the only information technology company hiring low-wage staff where it can. Sun, Microsoft, Oracle, Accenture (a very large and prominent consulting firm) and HP (the former Hewlett Packard) have all hired technical staff in India and some have operations in the Philippines, China, Russia and Eastern Europe. The instant communications now available make this organization of the work possible.

All these transnational corporations have also invested heavily in automating administrative jobs that can't be outsourced or sent abroad. These include high-skill, highly paid jobs involved in

configuring and troubleshooting networks, the computers attached to them, "peripheral" devices like printers, scanners, tape drives, and so on.

An IBM employee, in response to the article in the New York Times, told this writer, "IBM workers need a union to protect their interests—pension, rehire rights, transfer rights. Management doesn't even have to warn us if our job is going away."

This New York-area technician didn't feel that a union could stop IBM management from hiring at lower wages elsewhere. But he hoped it could stop the company from trampling over its current workers.

IBM in the United States is essentially a non-union company. Its operations abroad, particularly in Europe, do have unions and those unions do occasionally strike, as they did in 1999 in France.

IBM workers here, especially those in higher-paid jobs, tended to consider themselves "middle class" instead of workers who need an organization to defend their rights. Now some are realizing that they have the same insecure relation to their jobs as manual workers and that a union might make it harder or more expensive for IBM to outsource jobs.

## Solidarity across national borders

But IBM is a corporation that functions

worldwide. To struggle against IBM, workers need to build solidarity across all national borders. To win this struggle they need to go far beyond the usual trade-union tactics.

To succeed, their approach will have to be free of any narrow nationalism that can split U.S. workers from foreign workers. A House committee hearing on information technology outsourcing on June 17 in Washington was an example of how reactionaries will intervene in this struggle. The Illinois Republican chairing the committee, Donald A. Manzullo, attacked outsourcing in pro-U.S., nationalist terms, while demagogically appealing to the workers whose jobs are threatened.

Even Manzullo had to point out that manual workers were lied to in the 1980s and 1990s. The corporations and the government told the workers that by retraining and becoming skilled in computer technology, they could wind up in better-paid, secure positions.

Besides building international solidarity, a struggle to save jobs and benefits will also have to confront capitalist globalization. The profit motive driving IBM and the other corporations pushes them to seek out the lowest labor costs globally to constantly increase their profits. □

## A Dickens novel for 2003

# Bush, Congress try to snuff Head Start

By Greg Butterfield

It sounds like a Charles Dickens novel: wealthy (mostly) men stealing education, medical care, and food from impoverished preschoolers.

But it's not fiction. It's the Bush administration's plan for Head Start.

Head Start is a modest but popular program won by the civil rights movement in 1965. Head Start centers provide tutoring, parenting advice, checkups and dental care for thousands of children of poor and working-class families.

Head Start also provides food for hungry kids and an alternative to costly day-care for many low-wage families.

Bush's plan calls for ending federal standards for Head Start and allowing states to use the money as they wish. At the same time, Head Start teachers would be required to get more education. The plan provides no additional money to help them.

It also encourages the privatization of Head Start through religious institutions, and allows them to discriminate in hiring staff—for example, against people who hold other beliefs or against lesbians and gays.

On July 25, a modified version of the Bush plan passed in the House of Representatives by 217-216. Under this legislation, eight states would be allowed to "bid" for the privilege of taking over Head Start for the next five years.

Now it goes for approval to the white millionaires' club called the U.S. Senate.

## Remember welfare 'reform'?

The plan to give the states power over Head Start is eerily familiar to anyone who watched the dismantling of welfare under the Bush Senior and Clinton administrations.

First a few gung-ho governors are given the go-ahead to privatize the program. Money is held back from helping the needy so that states can show they are "spending more wisely."

Workers servicing government programs are given unrealistic goals without the funds to meet them. This in turn is presented as evidence of the need for privatization.

Democrats present a tepid "opposition" to the Republican plan, especially with an election year in the wind. But they never seriously challenge it by mobilizing people to fight for their rights.

In fact, several Democrats have already voiced support for the Bush plan. Their opposition, they say, is only based on the need for more funding to train Head Start staff. (Washington Post, July 25)

Richard Gephardt, a leading Democrat in the House and now a presidential candidate, showed his contempt for families who rely on Head Start. Instead of returning to Washington to vote—his "no" could have caused a tie and the bill wouldn't have passed—Gephardt was on a two-day visit to South Carolina, chatting up contributors with deep pockets.

Gephardt later claimed it didn't matter, because the Republicans would have "persuaded another moderate to support" the bill. (Associated Press, July 26)

Head Start is a small program by Washington's standards. Its 2003 budget is just \$6.7 billion.

In contrast, it is estimated that the Bush administration is spending over \$4 billion PER MONTH to illegally occupy Iraq.

The bombs and bullets killing and maiming Iraqi children are also exploding across the U.S., endangering the lives and well-being of the most vulnerable children, especially in communities of color. □

## SAN DIEGO

# Pride in fighting war, racism

The march July 26 was the largest San Diego Pride Parade yet, with 218 contingents. And onlookers numbered well over 100,000 by all estimates. The San Diego ANSWER coalition was represented with a decorated stake-bed truck, two huge banners demanding "No to Occupation!" and "Bring the Troops Home!," and a striking eight by four foot oil portrait of Mumia Abu-Jamal, all carried by coalition members. Two more banners, reading "No Pride in War, Occupation, or Racism!" adorned the sides of the truck and ten Mumia flags fluttered above them. The message of resistance to U.S. aggression abroad and racist repression at home was cheered all along the march route.

—Bob McCubbin

WW PHOTOS: GLORIA VERDIEU



## Don't drink 'killer Coke'

# World campaign launched against soft-drink giant

By Susanne Kelly  
Washington, D.C.

Colombian trade unionists and their worldwide supporters launched the "Unthinkable, Undrinkable" Coca-Cola campaign across the U.S. and the world on July 22 with news conferences in Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco and Washington, as well as in Britain, Colombia, India, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Chile, Brazil, Australia and Venezuela.

Labor and community activists held demonstrations outside Coca-Cola offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and New York.

SINALTRAINAL, the food and beverage workers' union in Colombia, initiated the campaign. The union accuses the giant transnational corporation Coca-Cola of collaborating with Colombian paramilitaries in a horrific campaign of murder and human rights violations against union activists.

Eight SINALTRAINAL activists have been assassinated since 1989. Sixty-seven workers have been displaced and 38 have received serious death threats. There have also been raids of union offices and homes of members, mass firings, kidnapping and torture, jailing on trumped-up charges and violations of union rights. SINALTRAINAL represents 2,300 food and beverage workers in Colombia.

A number of North American unions have voiced support for the campaign against Coca-Cola. The Communications Workers, Longshore Workers on the West Coast, Plumbers and Fitters Local 393, Canadian Labor Council, Service Employees Local 73, South Bay Labor Council, and the San Francisco Labor Council have all passed resolutions in support of the campaign.

Teresa Gutierrez, a national coordinator of the International Action Center (IAC), chaired the Washington news conference. Gutierrez said, "Plan Colombia means billions of U.S. dollars going to fund a war on the indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, workers and peasants of



Chicago marchers help build a worldwide campaign against Coca-Cola's actions in Colombia.

WW PHOTOS: BETH SEMMER

worker after worker told of threats, torture, arrests, thefts and more that they have been subjected to.

LeiLani Dowell was a participant in the IAC delegation to Bogotá and in a West Coast press conference on July 22. Dowell said, "The paramilitaries that are murdering Colombian union organizers are being supported by the Colombian military, which receives millions of dollars a year from the U.S. government. Our goal with the Coca-Cola campaign is to raise awareness about the role that the U.S. government and U.S. corporations play in generating this terror campaign against trade unionists in Colombia."

Confronted with this worldwide campaign, Coca-Cola was forced to respond. The company, no surprise, issued a statement denying all charges. In Atlanta, corporate headquarters of transnational Coca-Cola, the Atlanta Journal Constitution reported that the Service Employees union, AFSCME and SINALTRAINAL were part of this effort and that "news conferences and demonstrations [were] held across the country."

The Associated Press, reporting on the press conference in San Francisco, quoted Hector Rincón, president of a food industry union in Colombia: "The workers' movement has lost some of its best leaders with these killings. Knowing there is international support for us is very important."

The Bush government has presented Plan Colombia as a scheme to help in the fight against drug trafficking. Groups like the IAC argue that in reality Plan Colombia commits U.S. money and troops to Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's right-wing government and its efforts to crush any progressive social



movements in Colombia.

Violence against union activists continues in Colombia. On July 15, Marco Tulio Díaz, president of the union of retired oil workers, ASONAJUB, was murdered at his mother's house and his brother was seriously wounded. Díaz had been a devoted leader in his union and was always in solidarity with the struggles of Colombian workers and community activists.

Javier Correa, president of SINALTRAINAL, says, "We want justice, we want people to know the truth about what is going on in Colombia against Coke workers. Now that you know, will you please help us?"

In Chicago on July 22, 100 people gathered for a rally in front of the Coca-Cola distribution plant in Chicago's predominantly Mexican neighborhood of Pilsen as part of the campaign.

The Colombia Solidarity Committee, the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee and the Mexico Solidarity Committee built the Chicago action. The rally was addressed by Colombian Coca-Cola trade unionist Luis Adolfo Cardona. Other speakers represented Service Employees Local 73, Jobs with Justice, DePaul University students and Chicago Day Laborers.

The rally received numerous honks of solidarity from workers driving by. The march that followed brought residents out of their homes to join in the chanting and to take leaflets that explained the campaign against "killer Coke."

Nathalie Alsop and Beth Semmer contributed to this article. □

## San Francisco protest targets Tom Ridge

Anti-war demonstrators confronted Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge in San Francisco on July 23 with a list of charges ranging from the violation of civil liberties to the illegal war against Iraq.

The demonstration was organized by the International ANSWER coalition (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), one of four groups that organized most of the massive protests this spring.

Outside the Mark Hopkins Hotel, several hundred protesters marched inside police barricades, waved signs and applauded speeches. Demonstrators supported a wide array of just causes, ranging from freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal to labor struggles and the 200th anniversary of the Haitian revolution. When Ridge was governor of Pennsylvania, he had twice signed Abu-Jamal's death warrant.

Speakers complained of Ridge's intervention in the 2002 dockworkers' lockout on the side of the Pacific Maritime Associ-

ation. He had threatened the International Longshore Workers Union with using troops to unload ships under the auspices of "homeland security."

They also protested that the INS had rounded up thousands of immigrants since 9/11.

ANSWER Coalition board member Richard Becker said, "We believe that the key to bringing about significant social change is the revival of a mass movement in the United States."

Becker said Ridge was greeted with similar protests in Seattle, Portland, Ore., and Juneau, Alaska. Iraqis lack consistent electricity and there is continued fighting. Becker said United States troops should leave the country now.

"Everything that is happening is confirming everything we said before the war started," said Howard Wallace, Vice President of Internal Affairs for the Harvey Milk Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Democratic Club.



Wallace said the war is being used as "an excuse to clamp down on civil liberties." He accused the Bush administration of using "a steady stream of lies" to justify the war and said the protest movement "is on the upswing again."

Speakers announced the next major anti-war demonstration, scheduled for Sept. 28, which is being billed as a "global demonstration against war, occupation and empire."

—Story and photo by Bernie Fox

# AIDS protesters target Karl Rove

The following is based on a July 25 news release from ACT-UP.

Chanting and holding signs reading "Dying for AIDS drugs? Karl says drop dead" and "Bush's lies kill, generic medicines now," angry AIDS activists staged a noisy disruption of an appearance by top White House advisor Karl Rove on July 25 at the National Conference of the College Republican National Committee at the Washington Hilton hotel.

"President Bush is breaking his promise to fully fund a \$3-billion global AIDS bill signed into law in June. Bush is breaking his promise that countries can put access to medicines and public health ahead of the patent rights of greedy drug companies. The deadly global AIDS fraud perpetrated by this White House has gone far enough," said Sean Barry, a protester.

"Rove pulls the strings in this administration, and Rove has the blood of people with HIV on his hands."

On July 23, lawmakers in the House of Representatives, under the direction of Rove's White House, opposed efforts to fully fund the bill President George W. Bush had signed into law in June that would provide \$3 billion in global AIDS funding in 2004, with \$1 billion for the nearly bankrupt Global Fund, the only multilateral program spending money on treatment for dying people with AIDS.

Experts point out that life-saving programs in the hardest-hit countries around the world could readily absorb the \$3 billion promised by Bush; the White House, on the other hand, claims funding the Global Fund with \$1 billion in 2004 would be profligate.

"President Bush just went to Africa, ground zero of the AIDS catastrophe, and is immediately breaking his promise to fund the Global Fund with \$1 billion in 2004," said Danae McElroy, a protester.

The disruption of Rove's speech comes on the heels of the global AIDS funding vote in Congress, and on the lead-up to crucial talks at the Cancun Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization on Sept. 10-14, where U.S. and drug company intransigence has blocked a deal on access to medicines in poor countries that lack capacity for efficient domestic manufacturing. Karl Rove has been linked to intense negotiations with U.S. drug companies in determining White House policy on what is considered a make-or-break issue for the Cancun Ministerial.

"While Bush lies about life-saving AIDS funding, he's preventing countries from implementing policy that assures they can maximize medicines access by purchasing low-cost generics," said Sasha Post, a protester. "The U.S. promised they would permit countries to put public health before patent rights. For killer Karl, that's just one more promise to walk away from."



South Africans sing in solidarity with Cuba.

WW PHOTOS: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

## New Cuba 5 campaign

# A fight to win the right for family visits

By Teresa Gutierrez

The National Committee to Free the Cuban 5 has launched an important campaign to win visiting rights for Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of René González and Gerardo Hernández, respectively.

Hernández and González, along with their comrades Fernando González, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero, were wrongfully imprisoned by the U.S. Justice Department in September 1998 for defending Cuba from terrorist attacks organized from the United States. The five were charged with espionage against the U.S., when in fact they were infiltrating the anti-Cuba, anti-Fidel Castro terrorist groups operating from southern Florida.

They were tried and convicted in May 2001 in Miami—the center for the anti-Castro right-wing terrorist groups. In December 2001 they were sentenced and sent to five federal prisons throughout this country to serve long prison terms—three for life terms.

Salanueva and Pérez have been denied entry visas by the U.S. three times and have been unable to visit their husbands.

Gloria La Riva, national coordinator of the committee, said, "For the families to win the right to visit their husbands will take the support of thousands of people, from the U.S. and around the world.

"This campaign," she continued, "has already gained tremendous momentum, not only in this country but around the world."

### 'When will there be justice?'

Olga Salanueva, wife of René González wrote: "I have requested a visa to visit René on three occasions. Three times I have been denied by the U.S. government authorities. In this manner, they have also deprived my little Ivette of any contact with her father.



Teresa Gutierrez of ANSWER mobilizes support for Cuba 5 at July 26 meeting in NYC.

"If every person in prison has the right to be visited by family members and should have their human rights and dignity respected, then why can't we be reunited even under these cruel conditions? Why do they keep a couple from holding hands as a sign of support, love and commitment?"

With the case of the Cuban Five, the Cuban people have once again learned the depths of the inhumane justice system in the U.S.

The wife of Gerardo Hernández, Adriana Pérez, stated: "The repeated denial of a visa has forced us into a major separation, to suffer the constant violation

of human rights and international law. It increases our anxiety and the perpetual punishment of not being able to see each other.

"With almost 15 years of marriage, I ask myself: When will we be able to look into each others' eyes? Who has the right to violate international law? When will there be justice?"

Many agree with these women. The campaign to win visas has attracted significant support here and around the world.

Ossie Davis, Ramsey Clark, Dolores Huerta, Jane Franklin, attorney Michael Smith and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton are some of the individuals who have signed on to the call to allow Salanueva and Pérez to enter the U.S.

In addition, the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, Bishop Gumbleton and the Rev. Lucius Walker have said that they would be part of a ministerial accompaniment for the wives.

Around the world, Cuba 5 solidarity committees have picked up the call for the visa campaign and are gathering signatures.

La Riva stated, "This is a winnable campaign. We are confident that we can mount the kind of struggle that is needed to make sure that Salanueva and Pérez visit their husbands."

To find out how you can help, contact the committee at (415) 821-6545 in San Francisco or (212) 633-6646 in New York. For more information or literature on the campaign, visit [www.freethethefive.org](http://www.freethethefive.org). □



René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino

## New York meeting on July 26

# Overflow crowd celebrates with CUBA

Was it really 50 years ago that Fidel Castro and a group of young heroes, many to become martyrs that day, took up arms against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba? For some in the audience at a New York event on the anniversary of that great revolutionary action of July 26, 1953, it still seemed like yesterday. But many others in the packed Martin Luther King hall—provided by the 1199 Health and Hospital Workers Union—had not yet been born when that daring attack on the Moncada army barracks surprised the world.

The 500 or so people who packed the hall, and the 200 more outside who couldn't even get in, participated in a solidarity evening that demonstrated the great love all oppressed people have for Cuba. Speakers and artists representing many struggles had words of praise in English and Spanish for the socialist island and its leaders.

Bringing the house down at the beginning of the program was a joyful singing group from South Africa led by Junior Mambazo and Cosbie Mbele. Cuba's help in South Africa's struggle against apartheid was acknowledged, as was its close relationship with those fighting for sovereignty and justice in Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Rafael Cancel Miranda, a revered veteran Puerto Rican leader for independence and long-time political prisoner, added a special passion to the meeting.

A message from the imprisoned Cuban 5 was read by Teresa Gutierrez, and a solidarity tape was played from Black revolutionary Mumia Abu-Jamal. Amiri Baraka, whose deeply political writing has won him the post of Poet Laureate of New Jersey over the objections of racists and reactionaries, read his powerful poem, "Somebody Blew Up America." Luis Miranda brought greetings from Casa de las Americas, long a progressive haven for Cubans living in New York.

Cuba's Ambassador to the United Nations, Bruno Rodriguez, reviewed recent hostile actions taken by the Bush administration against Cuba and its responses. He made it perfectly clear that the Cuban people are ready to fight to defend their sovereignty and their socialist system if the U.S. government dares commit aggression against them.

Co-hosts for the program were Rosemari Mealy and Frank Velgara.

— Photos and story by Deirdre Griswold



Puerto Rican patriot Rafael Cancel Miranda adds passion to the rally.

## President Fidel Castro to Bush:

# 'Your troops would face thousands of armies here!'

*On May 1, Fidel Castro ended his address with the following words, which are all the more telling now that the Iraqi resistance has shown what kind of obstacle U.S. imperialism faces in its attempt to use military power to conquer the world's resources.*

A shameless scoundrel with the poorly chosen first name Lincoln, and the last name Díaz-Balart, an intimate friend and adviser of President Bush, has made this enigmatic statement to a Miami TV station: "I can't go into details, but we're trying to break this vicious cycle."

What methods are they considering to deal with this vicious cycle? Physically eliminating me with the sophisticated modern means they have developed, as Mr. Bush promised them in Texas before the elections? Or attacking Cuba the way they attacked Iraq?

If it were the former, it does not worry me in the least. The ideas for which I have fought all my life will not die, and they will live on for a long time.

If the solution were to attack Cuba like Iraq, I would suffer greatly because of the cost in lives and the enormous destruction it would bring on Cuba. But, it might turn out to be the last of this administration's fascist attacks, because the struggle would last a very long time.

The aggressors would not merely be facing an army, but rather thousands of armies that would constantly reproduce themselves and make the enemy pay such a high cost in casualties that it would far exceed the cost in lives of its sons and daughters that the American people would be willing to pay for the adventures and ideas of President Bush. Today, he enjoys majority support, but it is dropping, and tomorrow it could be reduced to zero.

The American people, the millions of highly cultivated individuals who reason and think, their basic ethical

principles, the tens of millions of computers with which to communicate, hundreds of times more than at the end of the Vietnam war, will show that you cannot fool all of the people, and perhaps not even part of the people, all of the time. One day they will put a straightjacket on those who need it before they manage to annihilate life on the planet.

On behalf of the one million people gathered here this May Day, I want to convey a message to the world and the American people:

We do not want the blood of Cubans and Americans to be shed in a war. We do not want a countless number of lives of people who could be friends to be lost in an armed conflict. But never has a people had such sacred things to defend, or such profound convictions to fight for, to such a degree that they would rather be obliterated from the face of the Earth than abandon the noble and generous work for which so many generations of Cubans have paid the high cost of the lives of many of their finest sons and daughters.

We are sustained by the deepest conviction that ideas are worth more than weapons, no matter how sophisticated and powerful those weapons may be.

Let us say like Che Guevara when he bid us farewell:

**Ever onward to victory!**



## 'They're losing the hearts and minds'

# Why 'regime change' is a fiasco

By Fred Goldstein

The Bush administration and the U.S. military high command are urgently trying to change the subject from the Iraqi quagmire to the hunt for Saddam Hussein. In this endeavor they are being aided by a round-the-clock media campaign that breathlessly reports each new set of raids, each new "waterfall" of information, and each new capture of a family member or bodyguard of Saddam.

This is a follow-up to the brutal display of the mutilated bodies of Uday and Qusay Hussein shown over and over again on every television news show and widely displayed in the tabloid print media. The explanation for this display was ostensibly to convince the Iraqi people that the sons of Saddam were dead. In fact, the Bush administration made the decision—Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld himself publicly took personal responsibility for it—for a number of reasons.

First, it was an attempt to bolster the sagging political fortunes of Bush as the administration was coming under increasing fire for its lies about weapons of mass destruction, especially its false claims about an Iraqi uranium purchase from the African country of Niger.

Second, it was an attempt by the right-wing group in the Pentagon headed by Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz to regain the political initiative after being criticized for lack of military preparedness in dealing with the Iraqi resistance and bungling of the occupation.

And third, it was reminiscent of the Roman legions contemptuously bringing to Rome the heads of defeated enemy leaders, or of the British colonialists putting the heads of rebels on stakes. It was an act of pure triumphal, imperialist terrorism calculated to demoralize the anti-colonial resistance fighters and their sympathizers.

For the moment, the capitalist media have allowed the death of Uday and Qusay and the hunt for Saddam to heavily compete with, if not drown out, the fact that the Pentagon reported on July 29 that the number of U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq since May 1 has reached 108, of which at least 50 are combat deaths. At least 14 were killed just in the preceding week, and many more have been wounded in the 10 to 20 attacks per day on U.S. forces.

The U.S. military has stepped up its raids and is breaking into more and more houses, brutalizing more and more people, and making more and more enemies. The military has taken thousands of prisoners in the last six weeks of continuous and escalating raids.

### Task Force 20 and the Mansur massacre

As the high command stepped up its hot pursuit after the killing of Uday and Qusay Hussein, elite soldiers from Task Force 20 massacred five civilians who were driving in the area of a raid on the house of Prince Rabiah Huamed al-Habib's house in the wealthy Mansur district of Baghdad. Three separate cars simply driving in the area were fired on and passengers killed.

"The first vehicle to get unlucky," wrote the Guardian of July 29, "was a Chevrolet Malibu. For some reason the driver did not stop as he approached the road block and the soldiers opened fire." Two passengers returning home were killed. "Fifteen minutes later, a Toyota Corona

being driven by a man called Mazin, who was disabled and walked with the aid of a frame, arrived in the area. His wife was in the passenger seat and his teenage son in the back. ... Mazin made the mistake of turning right towards the roadblock. A bullet blew the right half of his head off. ...

"The next victim...was not even driving towards the roadblock," continued the Guardian. "Instead, he had been traveling on a main road more than 150 yards away when he slowed down to see what the commotion was. Two bullets hit him in the chest."

Task Force 20, which carried out this massacre, is a special favorite of Rumsfeld and the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Richard Myers. This task force is composed of Special Forces and CIA agents. It was responsible for the massacre of a number of Iraqis killed near the Syrian border recently in a highly secretive raid that yielded nothing.

CNN and other networks have carried quick shots of raids in the middle of the night that show prisoners blindfolded, hands behind their backs, and crying women and children. Sometimes the women's mouths are taped shut to keep them from screaming.

On July 28, U.S. troops moved into Baghdad University to evict students from two of their dorms. The military said the dorms could be used for "possible attack on their nearby compound." (www.news9sanantonio.com) Troops fired shots in the air, but the students refused to move. Instead they "shouted abuse at the troops" and blocked the entrance. They were eventually pushed out after being given 20 minutes to leave by heavily armed soldiers.

This pattern of brutality, driven by the high command, is spreading and reinforcing the anti-colonial hatred of the Iraqi people. Even as the U.S. forces went to kill Uday and Qusay, they sent missiles and bullets crashing through neighboring houses, angering the local population.

### 'It's not about Saddam anymore'

But the White House and the Pentagon are hoping against hope that if they can capture or kill Saddam Hussein, their problems will be over. This is in line with their thinking that the resistance is directed by "die-hard" Baathists fighting to hold on to the past.

However, Jonathan Steele, a reporter for the London Guardian who has been in Iraq throughout the war and the occupation, published a lengthy article on July 25 warning the U.S. imperialists. It was entitled "Resistance Has Its Roots in the Present."

"U.S. officials tend to argue that some Iraqis are hesitating to work with them out of fear that the old regime might one day return," wrote Steele. "The deaths of its leaders will lift the curtain of fear, it is claimed.

"Conversations with Iraqis undermined this argument. It was hard to find many who seriously believed the old regime had any chance of returning to power even before the events in Mosul," he said, referring to the killing of Uday and Qusay.

What is really driving Iraqis into opposition is "disappointment at the lack of security, the collapse of public order, problems with water and electricity, fear of unemployment, as well as the indignity of seeing foreign troops on their streets," wrote Steele.

"U.S. officials seem unwilling to accept or admit this in public. It is easier to claim that the resistance comes from 'remnants of the past' than recognize that it is fueled by grievances about the present and doubts about the future."

During a July 25 radio interview conducted by Amy Goodman on Pacifica radio's Democracy Now show, Robert Fisk, a widely read correspondent for the London Independent, talked about the aftermath of the killing of Saddam's sons.

"Everybody I spoke to today," Fisk told Goodman, "without exception, including the most mild-mannered middle class people, including the father of my own driver, who is a friend of mine, all said the Americans must go—they must go now. We don't accept occupational forces of this country. I noticed out at the Dora yesterday, which is a long main highway near the power station that runs along the Tigris River, a new graffiti had gone up in red paint—very close to the scene of an ambush of an American Humvee a little earlier on in the day. And it said on it, 'There are 27,000 warriors from the al-Jabura tribe—a tribe close to the clan of Saddam Hussein—who are ready to threaten and throw the Americans out of Iraq.'"

At the end of the interview with Goodman, Fisk summed up: "What I saw gave me the impression that they [the U.S.] were losing the hearts and minds, not winning the hearts and minds. At the end of the day, that is what the Americans are going to deal with—a hostile population. It's not about Saddam anymore."

### Flawed concept of 'regime change'

The fixation on eliminating Saddam as the ultimate solution to the problem of stabilizing the occupation, and the illusion that this will ultimately secure Washington's colonial rule over Iraq, flows from the original flawed conception of "regime change" promoted by the right-wing neo-conservative grouping that is driving the empire-building foreign policy of the Bush administration.

The conception promoted by the Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Richard Perle grouping, a conception which was actually embodied in the military plan, was that the use of massive air attacks directed strategically at "regime" targets and causing "shock and awe" would so terrorize the high command that the effect would be to "decapitate" the political and military structure. Generals would defect and bring over their troops. Perhaps they would assassinate Saddam in order to save their own skins.

The vast majority of the people hated Saddam, according to this theory, and, finally given the chance, would welcome the imperialist armies with open arms as liberators. The anti-Saddam masses would rise up against the government, particularly in the south. A highly mobile U.S. ground force would take the airfields, rush to Baghdad and secure the capital, while the British would march to a warm welcome in Basra. Special Forces would play the decisive role in securing the oil fields and in taking out "regime targets" based upon intelligence. The whole process would be coordinated from central command using complex computer networks.

The high-tech "precision bombing" of "regime targets" would minimize civilian casualties, making it politically easier to

occupy the country. It would also minimize damage to the infrastructure, reducing the cost of post-war reconstruction and facilitating the economic takeover.

A set of chosen political leaders would be imported to join up with collaborators inside the country. They and a host of Iraqi elite technicians and administrators, organized and trained by the State Department and the Pentagon, would advise in running various ministries and other public institutions revamped to serve the new colonial arrangement.

But as soon as the invasion started, so did the resistance. It took over a week to take the port of Um Qasr, a municipality of 4,000 which the U.S. had expected to overrun in less than four hours. And it went that way all the way up to Karbala and beyond. As Lt. Gen. William Wallace, at that time commander of the U.S. Army's 5th Corps, which supplied the ground troops, said, "We did not war game for this" and "We had to fight every inch of the way."

A debate immediately broke out about the level of U.S. forces. Charges were hurled at Rumsfeld that he had "underestimated the number of troops needed." That was a false way to pose the question then, just as it is now, under the occupation. All the civilian and military authorities that drew up and agreed to the plan really underestimated the Iraqi masses. And that is what led them to make a run to Baghdad without securing their supply lines, having to fight their way across bridges and past towns and villages.

By the end of the invasion thousands of civilians had been killed, even though Baghdad itself was taken without a great deal of resistance. Schools, hospitals, public buildings and residential areas had been bombed or shelled from the ground. The phone system was destroyed, the electrical system was out; the water system was inoperable and fuel lines were destroyed. The infrastructure was in ruins.

### Regime versus the state

All the projections based upon a surgical "regime change" were up in smoke. Despite the failure to defend Baghdad, there was no formal surrender by anyone. Troops melted away and sections of them regrouped to organize the resistance.

As a matter of revolutionary strategy, Marxists pay close attention to the distinction between a regime and a state. In the matter of colonial conquest, this distinction turned out to be crucial for the neocons. What the U.S. imperialists found in their Iraqi adventure is that they could not simply change the government to one of their liking and reorient Iraqi society towards imperialism and "free market" capitalism. Nor could they just change the form of the existing state.

They could not simply get rid of Saddam and his close allies and then proceed to take over the administration of Iraq using the remaining bulk of the state structure. In order to conquer Iraq they had to destroy the entire state, including not only government leaders but the military and the state administration. And they discovered that, whatever the attitude of the Iraqis toward Saddam, the vast majority are united in opposition to the U.S. occupation.

The Iraqi state as it existed before the U.S. invasion pre-dates the regime of Saddam Hussein. Despite its many changes and the ebbs and flows of Iraqi



politics, it was based on a deep-going anti-colonial revolution. During and after the revolution of 1958, the remnants of the old monarchy, the pro-imperialist elements tied to British and U.S. imperialists, were largely destroyed. Feudalism was rooted out and landlordism was weakened through land distributions. Above all, the natural resources, including the oil, were taken over and used for national development after decades of exploitation by British, French and U.S. oil monopolies.

This revolution took place 10 years before Saddam became president. Despite the reactionary character of many of his domestic policies and his war against Iran, and after years of unsuccessful attempts by Washington to undermine and overthrow him for motives that included seizing oil and military bases and undermining the Palestinian struggle, the Iraqi state still remained the final bulwark against a U.S. takeover of the country.

The effect of the 1958 revolution, even though it remained within capitalist confines, was to lift Iraq from the condition of dire poverty, underdevelopment and colonial dependence to the status of political independence under a bourgeois nationalist regime. The revolution laid the basis for modernization, education and a rise in the standard of living of the masses after conditions of super-exploitation under British rule.

Now Washington is struggling to construct a completely new state—one which must have some semblance of independence in order to succeed, but will, at the same time, be completely subordinate to the interests of the U.S. transnational corporations and the Pentagon. It has to do this and at the same time cultivate a broad social base in a population that is growing more hostile every day.

This is a far cry from the simple “regime change” contemplated by the Bush administration.

This perspective will take vast resources and a protracted, iron-fisted military occupation. Putting an end to Saddam is not going to solve these monumental problems. If the U.S. should succeed in doing away with him, it may just be the beginning of greater problems for the occupation. The forces that will continue to drive the Iraqi people to resist in larger numbers over time are deeply rooted in material conditions and historical tradition.

And, looking down the road at the empire-building plans drawn up by the Bush administration and its ruling class backers, it should be pointed out that all the other governments on the top of Washington’s hit list are likely to pose even greater difficulties for U.S. imperialism.

The Iranian people, despite contradictions within Iranian society, remember all too well who put the Shah on the throne in the CIA coup d’etat of 1953 and built up the Savak secret police torture regime that enforced the rule of the U.S. military and oil companies in that country.

The people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea remember who divided Korea and waged a war that killed millions, destroying every building over one story in the country from 1950 to 1953. They still face daily threats of renewed war from U.S. troops in the south and from the Pentagon air and naval forces, armed with nuclear weapons, that surround their country.

The same goes for the people of Cuba, whose revolution put an end to 60 years of U.S. corporate domination and poverty for the mass of the people. They remem-



Pyongyang, DPRK, July 27.

PHOTOS: KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY

## International conference declares ‘Korea is one’

By Monica Moorehead  
and Maggie Vascassenno  
Pyongyang, DPRK

Here, in the capital of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Korean Committee in Solidarity with the World’s People hosted activities July 22-28 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Korean War. These activities included an International Conference for Peace on the Korean Peninsula and the second International Tribunal on U.S. War Crimes in Korea. The first tribunal had been held in New York by the Korea Truth Commission in June 2001.

In addition to Koreans, 63 delegates representing 43 organizations and 26 countries participated in these events. A U.S. delegation included representatives from the KTC, Veterans for Peace, International Action Center, Korean Quarterly magazine and Workers World Party.

The delegates visited the Sinchon Museum, a painful reminder of U.S. military atrocities inflicted upon the civilians of Sinchon Province during the war; Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where the body of the DPRK’s founder and great leader Kim Il Sung lies in state; and the U.S. spy ship Pueblo, which was captured by the DPRK in 1968.

ber the tyranny of Fulgencio Batista, the U.S. puppet and butcher who enforced the rule of the U.S. sugar companies and the rest of the corporate vultures who plundered Cuba for so many years.

All these countries are the product of historically recent revolutions, socialist in the case of Cuba and the DPRK, bourgeois nationalist in the case of Iraq and Iran. None of them will simply submit to “regime change.” The masses and the cadres of these countries have arms, military training and hatred of imperialism.

The Bush Doctrine of regime change (a fancy phrase for “overthrowing the government”) and pre-emptive war has run into the resistance of the Iraqi people. Even if the Pentagon, through massive repres-

sion, is able to temporarily push back the resistance, it will become clear to everyone that what the U.S. administration came for is the oil and the markets and cheap labor and military bases and all the things that led the masses to throw out the British colonialists in 1958. But this time around the people are on a much higher level—culturally, technically and militarily.

The delegates participated in a solidarity march and rally to the Three Charters for National Reunification monument, where thousands of people greeted them. Hundreds of youngsters and teens gave an extraordinary performance at the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren’s Palace that included traditional Korean songs and dances as well as revolutionary renditions.

On July 27, in a festival of music, dance and fireworks, tens of thousands poured into Kim Il Sung Square to celebrate their victory over the U.S. and to reaffirm their determination to defend their sovereignty.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, and ended on July 27, 1953, when the U.S. was forced to abandon its goal of conquering socialist North Korea and signed an armistice agreement. The war resulted in the deaths of 4 million Koreans, most of them civilians, and over 50,000 GIs. It left Korea divided along the 38th parallel. Millions of Koreans and their supporters are demanding that the U.S. sign a peace treaty with the DPRK that will lay the basis for peaceful reunification of north and south Korea, along with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and nuclear weapons from the south. □



Pyongyang conference on unification of Korea.

While all signs are for a deepening crisis in Washington, the ruling class has a strong tendency toward adventurism and aggression. The Bush administration may be prone to lash out and expand into a new adventure as a way of overcoming its present predicament.

But, as an experiment in empire-building, the U.S. adventure in Iraq should give

pause to the ruling class. This war is bringing growing discontent among U.S. troops, who have been thrust into a sea of militant resistance and popular hatred. They are being forced into the role of occupation storm troopers.

Meanwhile, at home, states are going bankrupt, unemployment is rising despite the so-called “recovery,” big business is defaulting on pension plans, social services are being cut, and GIs will be coming home to gain respite from the resistance in Iraq only to find economic hardship. Such conditions can only lead to resistance and struggle by the working class, which is being forced to not only fight the imperialists’ wars, but pay for them, too. □



## The 28 pages

**Y**ou've got to hand it to the thieves and liars of the Bush administration. They do learn from experience. After the documents they had provided as "proof" that the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein was seeking weapons-grade uranium from Niger were exposed as crude forgeries, there must have been some long faces in the White House, Pentagon and State Department. Secretary of State Colin Powell had been set up and presented them to the UN Security Council, even though the CIA knew they weren't worth the paper they were forged on.

If only the cabal had been a little more cautious with their "proof"! Maybe just alluded to documents, but not really showed them to the world. That might have worked for a while. Or maybe show them, but ink out the "sensitive" parts in the interests of "national security."

Yes, yes! That's the way to do it! Then nobody can get into the details and track things down and show that the whole thing is a ridiculous fabrication.

So now comes the report from the congressional committee that investigated 9/11. It has a section saying that the Saudi government knew the attacks were going to happen. After the war on Iraq, this is like putting a gun to the head of the country with the richest oil fields in the world.

The section is supposed to be based on intelligence information—just like the documents on Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction." But nobody is allowed to know what any of that "information" is. It's all been inked over in the interests of—you guessed it—"national security."

It was an amazing day, indeed, when Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Faisal rushed to Washington to plead with Bush that the 28 obscured pages in the report be declassified so his government could rebut them. Request denied. Even though it came from wealthy rulers so anxious to be loyal allies of U.S. imperialism.

The Bush gang must figure that their refusal to present evidence, instead of making public phony charges that can be torn to pieces, has worked pretty well so far on the domestic front. How many thousands of immigrants have been thrown behind bars without knowing why—and seemingly there's nothing they can do about it? All it takes is the magic words "national security" and the criminals in power appear able to get away with anything.

The wheels of justice grind too slowly, but the furor and indignation that this bunch of imperialist thugs is building up all over the world will surely bring a day of reckoning. □

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# Rubber, starvation wages & junk bonds

*Continued from page 1*

slick brochures about how it provided housing, roads, clinics and schools for its workers.

But the reality was something else. Over the years the workers organized and struggled hard to try to improve their wages and working conditions. Their struggles were met with violence, shutdowns and, in recent years, wholesale layoffs.

By 1997, the work force on the plantation had shrunk to 8,000. The workers went on strike, demanding better social protection, improvements to their living and working conditions, and the redeployment of some 8,000 former employees of the company, according to a French Press Agency report of Sept. 10 of that year that was circulated by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The strikers also accused Firestone of closing nine of its 45 units to reduce staff.

At least six workers were wounded when the strikers were fired on by government security forces and "peacekeepers" from ECOMOG. ECOMOG is an army of the English-speaking West African countries, in which Nigeria plays the dominant role. The Pentagon wants ECOMOG troops to be part of any intervention in Liberia today. From the point of view of U.S. strategists, it is an important weapon in the inter-imperialist struggle between the U.S. and Britain on one side and France on the other for control of lucrative African markets.

### Junk bonds and \$2.53 a day

Four years after this strike of the Firestone workers, the workforce had been further reduced. Firestone, which had merged with the Japanese company Bridgestone, was getting out of the plantation business and moving its capital elsewhere.

David Goodman wrote in the May/June 2001 issue of Mother Jones magazine that "The 5,600 workers at the plantation are supposed to receive free housing. ... A walk around the Firestone plantation last November confirmed the dire living conditions of many workers. Among the densely packed homes were cardboard-and-metal shanties held together by scrap wood and wire. A group of houses faced a stinking trash dump in which children played. Families were living in the charred shells of homes destroyed during the war, some of which lacked roofs. None of the homes had water or electricity. The workers' housing sits just out of sight of the neatly manicured antebellum estates of company managers.

"The housing crisis has only added to the grievances of Liberian

**Bridgestone/  
Firestone  
plantation  
in Liberia.**



workers. With the nation's unemployment at 85 percent, they note, Firestone can pretty much do as it pleases. According to union officials, the rubber tappers earn \$2.53 a day, and work eight hours a day, six days a week. 'It is very difficult to live on these wages,' says union president Richard S. Fatorma. In addition, the union says, Firestone has nearly halved its workforce in the last decade—doubling the workload without increasing pay.

"Workers also complain that they feel ill from spraying trees with Difolatan, which enhances latex production. In the United States, federal health officials list Difolatan as a 'known or suspected carcinogen' that can cause asthma and skin irritation."

After all those years in which the Firestone corporation paid tens of thousands of workers just pennies an hour—and had them shot down if they organized and fought back—what did this corporation do with all the money it made?

One thing it did was get into the junk bond market. In the 1960s, Firestone made what one analyst called "a large cash infusion" into the fading Drexel Bank of Philadelphia, which then became Drexel Firestone. By 1973, after a merger, the firm had morphed into Drexel Burnham Lambert. It was a shooting star on Wall Street for over a decade until its most notorious officer, Michael Milken, was convicted of insider trading and went to jail. The company folded in 1990.

Money that had been squeezed penny by penny out of Liberian rubber workers went up in smoke.

There was great indignation on Wall Street over the way Drexel Burnham Lambert had squandered rich people's capital with its double dealing and risky investments. This was considered immoral and unconscionable, as well as illegal. But not a thought was given to where that original Firestone money had come from: African workers getting starvation wages.

Firestone had gotten so hooked on squeezing high profits out of its Liberian operations that it wanted nothing less than the spectacular yield promised by the junk bond market.

What the people of Liberia need is not more "peacekeepers" sent to suppress the workers and maintain exploitation, but real sovereignty and reparations from the billionaires and their corporations who have bled the country dry. □

## Posibilidades de resistir para soldados

*Continua de pagina 12*

falta de empleos y la poca posibilidad de una vida civil decente, muchos jóvenes, más que su proporción en la población general, están atraídos a las fuerzas armadas. Entonces hay una contradicción entre el escepticismo extenso sobre la justificación de la guerra en la comunidad africana americana y el porcentaje que sigue subiendo de tropas africana americanas en las fuerzas armadas.

Pero esta contradicción se resuelve cuando más de la población abraza una actitud antiguerra en el medio de una terrible guerra imperialista y ocupación como está ocurriendo en Irak. La actitud de los efectivos africano americanos desplegados en Irak muy rápido se vuelve en la extensión del sentimiento antiguerra de la comunidad africana americana en general, y cesa de ser una contradicción. Es muy posible que los soldados

negros sean los organizadores principales de la resistencia.

El Rev. Herbert Daughtry, pastor de la iglesia Casa del Señor [House of the Lord en Brooklyn, Nueva York] aliado estrecho de la coalición antiguerra ANSWER, se impresionó por el aumento de ira entre la gente negra que tiene familiares en las fuerzas armadas, especialmente en Irak. A sugerencia suya, la coalición ANSWER está co-auspiciando lo que será tal vez la primera protesta grande que demande que las tropas regresen a casa. Esta será en su iglesia en el corazón de Brooklyn el 19 de agosto. Además de líderes comunitarios y del movimiento antiguerra, esperamos tener parientes de soldados actualmente estacionados en Irak.

Esperamos que el evento contribuya a nuestros planes de organizar una protesta nacional masiva el 25 de octubre en Washington D.C. en contra de la ocupación y para traer las tropas a casa. □

## U.S. moves to 'share' casualties

# Why Japan is sending troops to Iraq

By Leslie Feinberg

A divided Japanese parliament voted 126-102 on July 25 to deploy 1,000 armed troops to beef up the Pentagon-dominated military occupation of Iraq. This vote, tallied after a brawl on the floor of parliament, ushered in a new era of Japanese militarism. Not a single Japanese soldier has fired a weapon in combat since 1945.

Tokyo is not the only imperial power considering such a move. Rival imperialist vultures, circling Iraq's plundered wealth, are anxious to swoop down for a share of the loot now monopolized by U.S. finance capital. And the Bush administration, worried about ongoing guerrilla warfare, is cautiously willing to offer a chunk to those who share the casualties by dispatching troops there.

France and Germany—NATO allies that opposed the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. and British "Coalition of Two"—don't want to be cut out of their portion of the spoils of war.

However, while both France and Germany are reluctant to send troops to Iraq, one senior German official quoted in the July 29 New York Times stressed, "We do not want the American occupation to fail." Despite their internecine competition with the U.S., the citadel of capital, a victory of Iraqi political resistance against re-colonization would be a defeat for all the imperialist powers.

India's government announced on July 14 that it was rebuffing the Bush administration appeal to send troops to occupied Iraq. Polls in India report that some 87 percent of the population rejects the idea of dispatching forces.

The Japanese government was the first major imperialist power to offer troops. And Washington quickly hailed the decision.

The payoff for Japanese capital began immediately. On July 28, the ink dried on an agreement by Mitsubishi to buy Iraqi crude oil. Financial Times called it "a sign that Japanese companies may reap commercial rewards for their country's backing of the war." (FT.com, July 28)

Mitsubishi cut a deal to import 40,000 barrels a day of Basrah Light crude. Delivery could start as soon as August, and is planned to end in December. But Mitsubishi management admitted that the guerrilla war in Iraq—politely referred to by company spokespeople as "unstable security"—could push the start date back.

This deal may seem like small potatoes. But it opens the door for the export of Japanese capital—at least that's what its ruling class hopes. "Industry analysts said the deal's significance for Mitsubishi and other Japanese companies outweighed the size of the contract," Financial Times noted. "The deal could open the way for more Japan-Iraq contracts and help Japan in its pursuit of alternative sources of oil, for which it relies heavily on Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates."

Hajime Furuya, trading companies analyst at USB investment bank, concurred. "This transaction by itself has a small impact in business terms but it may have a far greater impact politically and strategically. It may be the signal for Mitsubishi to enter into other businesses in Iraq, such as pipeline or gas-plant construction. It could also open the way for other Japanese companies to go into Iraq."

Japanese companies had feared being iced out of capital investment in Iraq by U.S. and British big business.

Before the 1990 Gulf War, trading houses Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Marubeni had significant dealings with Iraq in infrastructure, construction machinery, energy and pipelines. After more than a decade of U.S.-led sanctions aimed at economically strangling Iraq, the July 28 Mitsubishi agreement is Japan's first commercial oil deal there in 13 years.

Now Mitsubishi and other trading houses and energy-related companies are analyzing "commercial possibilities" in Iraq, on the brink of entering negotiations once Japan reinstates long-term export credit insurance to protect its investments. (FT.com)

But although a deal like the one sealed by Mitsubishi is reported as a putative agreement with "Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization," it's really a transaction with Washington and London.

Iraq's oil and its profits could not start flowing into the world's imperial-controlled pipelines until the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution on May 22 that gave the U.S., and to a lesser extent its British junior partner, legal cover as literally "the Authority" in Iraq, the occupying power in control of the country's lucrative oil and banking industries.

### Capitalist laws: Made to be broken

Japanese rulers had to bend the iron bar of their Constitution in order to dispatch armed troops to Iraq. Under Article IX, Japan is bound to reject warfare and the threat or use of force. The country's post-WW II army was named the Self Defense Forces.

The U.S. as victor in that bloody inter-imperialist aggression imposed the pacifist constitution. But the national charter was buoyed up by powerful popular support from the Japanese population, devastated by war wounds.

As a result, Tokyo has never before shipped its troops overseas without the cover of a United Nations mandate. Japan has only been able to deploy small numbers in UN "peacekeeping operations" (PKO) in Mozambique, Cambodia, Zaire, the Golan Heights and East Timor.

However, the PKO law mandates that Japan's soldiers can only be dispatched under UN cover to post-war countries and if the host country "requests" international troops. The Pentagon has dismantled Iraq's government. So Tokyo had to partially rely on the May 22 colonial mandate, rubber stamped by the United Nations, which gave Washington the right to "invite" other imperialist armed forces into Iraq.

But the Peace Constitution remained a domestic obstacle.

During the spring, fierce opposition from Japan's working class met attempts to excise the pledge of pacifism from the constitution. Polls convey that more than



PHOTOS: ANTI-WAR JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

Only 33 percent in poll support sending Japanese troops to Iraq. Protest here is in Tokyo.

half the Japanese population opposes deployment of its country's troops to Iraq.

Yet legislation authorizing the dispatch of 1,000 armed troops passed the full upper house of Parliament after midnight on July 25.

The bill, backed by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's three-party coalition, passed despite a melee in an earlier upper-house committee, when angry opposition legislators traded blows with ruling-party lawmakers after the latter had cut debate short.

The new law also permits the government to deploy forces around the world on missions without UN support.

Koizumi maintains that the soldiers will only be engaged in non-combat activities in "safe areas." But the growing Iraqi resistance to colonial occupation is making it clear that there is no safe area for armies of conquest. And U.S. officials "have also made it clear that they want their allies to carry arms and ammunition." (The Guardian, July 26)

Koizumi claimed this legislative victory would distance his administration from "checkbook diplomacy."

During its decades of economic boom, Japan, the second-richest country on the planet, had exported capital as "foreign aid" that returned domestically as profit.

During the 1991 Pentagon-directed Persian Gulf War, Washington took Tokyo to task for "checkbook diplomacy" when the Asian power would only ante up \$13 billion to back the military onslaught.

But then Japan's capitalist bubble burst. And now U.S. markets have been shrinking.

This spring, Tokyo's political support for the full-scale war unleashed by the U.S. and Britain alienated it from Middle Eastern countries on which it depends for 90 percent of its crude oil imports—the lifeline of Japan's economy. Reportedly in response, in late April Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi shifted the destination of her diplomatic trip from France and South East Asia to the Middle East. (Mainichi, April 24)

Japan's diplomatic declaration of support for the U.S. position at the UN Security Council on Feb. 18 had ignited a firestorm of domestic anti-war outrage.

Yet at a May summit, Tokyo publicly assured Washington that it would play a vital part in "rebuilding" Iraq.

The pressure wasn't just internal.

It's no secret that Japan's rulers aspire to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Last September, according to Japan's leading English-language newspaper, "Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage turned up the heat under Japan's rulers prior to the Iraq invasion."

He referred to Japan as an economic superpower with an eye on a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, and said it should give the United States active support when it strikes Iraq. (Mainichi Shimbun, Sept. 8, 2002)

At that time, NATO allies like Germany and France were balking at military action. Japan had provided logistical backing for the Pentagon war against Afghanistan, but was cautious about being dragged into a U.S.-led strike on Iraq.

### NATO for Asia?

After World War II, the U.S. built up Japan as a capitalist economic rampart, but not a military bastion, during the Cold War as part of Washington's Asia strategy. The Pentagon held military hegemony, stationing its troops in bases across Japan—especially on colonized Okinawa.

Today, more than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Cold War warriors in the Bush administration are trying to cobble together an Asian alliance as part of their military pressure against both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China.

Japanese imperialism and the Indian ruling class are vital to this strategy.

More than three years ago, a private report co-authored by Richard Armitage "called on Japan to revise its Constitution to be able to field an army, and to accept a larger share of the alliance's defense burden." (New York Times, May 9, 2001)

But sometimes Japanese politicians give voice to elements in their ruling class that don't appreciate always playing second fiddle to Wall Street and the Pentagon. In 1999, then-Justice Minister Shozaburo Nakamura attacked Washington's policy of using military threats to protect U.S.-based economic interests. Nakamura was one of the politicians arguing at that time for rewriting the pacifist Japanese Constitution to permit military intervention abroad.

So like NATO, the idea of an alliance is built on a rocky foundation of cutthroat inter-imperialist competition in a period of deepening domestic economic crisis in the foremost hubs of imperialism.

And anti-war sentiment, which flooded into the streets of cities and towns across the world last spring when the full-scale military aggression began, will inevitably reassert itself as the foot soldiers in the army of conquest—whatever country they come from—return home in pine coffins and body bags as the Iraqi population continues to resist occupation and colonization. □



Entrevista con organizadores de la era de Vietnam:

# Posibilidades de resistir para soldados en Irak

Por John Catalinotto

El año pasado en la edición del 31 de octubre de nuestro periódico, Mundo Obrero, sección en inglés, entrevistamos al ex presidente del Sindicato de Soldados Americanos, (SSA), Andy Stapp. Él nos dijo entonces que “es difícil decir que pasará en una guerra corta, y mayormente aérea. Pero si hay una ocupación prolongada de Irak y Afganistán con lucha de guerrillas y muertes continuas, es posible que surja un movimiento real de oposición dentro del ejército.”

Stapp, quien fue reclutado durante la Guerra de Vietnam después de haber quemado su tarjeta de reclutamiento, adjunta el rango de “Privado E-1 (jubilado) a su nombre. E-1 es el rango más bajo con el que un soldado puede dejar al ejército e indica la extrema desaprobación de los oficiales con su servicio.

Mundo Obrero recientemente continuó su discusión sobre el estado del ejército con Stapp y otro experto contra el militarismo y privado “jubilado”, Larry Holmes. Holmes fue un organizador del SSA en los años 1972 a 1975, y actualmente se encuentra en el comité directivo de la coalición contra la guerra ANSWER.

**MO:** ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el estado moral de las tropas de Estados Unidos ahora?

**HOLMES:** Era sólo una ilusión que la guerra iba a ser corta. La guerra “convencional” fue corta, pero ahora la verdadera guerra ha comenzado. Esta es ahora una guerra entre la fuerza ocupante de los EE.UU. y un ejército de guerrilla que tiene el apoyo y la simpatía del pueblo iraquí.

En cuanto al estado moral de las tropas, nunca en realidad fue “bueno”. La moral de varios cientos de miles de soldados enviados allá ya estaba baja aún antes de comenzar, cuando su mayoría esperaba en Kuwait.

La moral pro guerra estaba baja porque muchos de estos soldados tienen acceso al correo electrónico, a la comunicación instantánea con sus familias y también a las noticias. Y supieron antes del comienzo de la guerra que había grandes manifestaciones contra la guerra.

Una de las razones del porqué el movimiento contra la guerra tiene una buena idea del estado moral del ejército es por la revolución en los medios de comunicación. A diferencia de otras guerras, el estado de los soldados se puede comunicar instantáneamente.

Cualquiera que tuviera familiares en el Golfo sabía lo que los soldados se estaban preguntando a sí mismos, “¿Qué estamos haciendo aquí si todos están contra la guerra? Después las cosas empeoraron. Una vez que la invasión corta terminó, comenzó la ocupación.

**STAPP:** Obviamente se ha tornado en una guerra de guerrilla contra las fuerzas de ocupación de los Estados Unidos, habiendo ya quizás miles de bajas, entre muertos y heridos, desde el comienzo de la guerra. Los soldados están agotados. Se les dijo entre otras mentiras, que no estarían allá por mucho tiempo. Ellos con-

testaron: “Díganle a Rumsfeld que nos mande a casa.”

A los soldados se les dijo que estarían liberando a la gente, quienes les tirarían flores en gratitud. En vez de eso los iraquíes vieron a las tropas como una ocupación hostil. Ahora las guerrillas atacan a los soldados 25 veces al día. Y los oficiales no reportan la mitad de los ataques.

Los generales dicen que las “pérdidas son aceptables.” Esto es muy típico de los oficiales de alto rango. Mientras tanto, los soldados comienzan a desconfiar de los iraquíes: “Ellos te sonríen pero en realidad te quiere enterrar un puñal por la espalda,” dicen ellos, o “los niños nos tiran piedras.”

En redadas los soldados registran las villas, sacan a la gente de sus casas y disparan. Esto lleva a la ira a la población iraquí, más reclutas para las guerrillas, más ataques contra los soldados y más redadas. Los generales hablan como si hubiera una cifra limitada de personas atacando a los soldados, y que unos ataques continuos podrían acabarlos. Pero eso no es cierto. Nuevos voluntarios llegan diariamente a la población.

**HOLMES:** Es correcto. Además, el gobierno le vuelve a mentir a los soldados. Por ejemplo a la Tercera División de Infantería apostada al Fuerte Stewart en Georgia. Esta división encabezó el asalto contra Bagdad y es una de las principales divisiones que están encargadas de la ocupación. Primero los oficiales dijeron que volverían a casa pronto. Después, el día que esperaban por la orden para regresar, se dieron cuenta que se quedarían por más tiempo.

Hay todo tipo de rumores, incluso que algunos soldados hablan de motín.

**MO:** Ustedes mencionaron que el General Abizaid exigió que los soldados descontentos cesaran las críticas públicas contra sus comandantes. ¿Cuál es su reacción?

**STAPP:** El ejército suprime la libertad de expresión. Los soldados tienen que vivir bajo una jerarquía de órdenes. Esto es antidemocrático. Es obvio que todos quieren regresar a casa. Ellos deberían regresar. El movimiento contra la guerra y sus familias recibirían esto con mucho agrado. Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, hubo grandes manifestaciones que forzaron a los generales a enviar a los soldados a casa después del fin de la guerra.

**HOLMES:** El Pentágono está aterrado con la perspectiva de que los soldados estén hablando en contra de la ocupación. Ellos temen que lo que comienza hablando podría rápidamente tornarse en una resistencia organizada.

También algo que el Pentágono teme es el movimiento de “enviar a las tropas a casa” que ha surgido entre las familias de los soldados. Tanto con las familias y con los mismos soldados, el instinto del Pentágono ha sido de contrarrestar con amenazas de castigo. Pero habría que ver si esto aplacará ese movimiento. Incluso podría tener un efecto opuesto.

El grupo de apoyo y contra la guerra SNAFU ha emitido una declaración en

apoyo al derecho de las tropas y sus familiares a hablar contra el ejército y la guerra y el derecho a demandar que se envíen a sus hogares.

**MO:** En una conferencia que asistimos en Europa, algunas personas llamaron a los soldados “mercenarios” porque los Estados Unidos tiene un ejército totalmente voluntario. ¿Cuál es su reacción a esto?

**HOLMES:** Este punto requiere una discusión seria. Siempre argumentaremos que las contradicciones de clase entre los soldados y sus oficiales saldrán a la superficie. Pero este es un súper ejército de alta tecnología del siglo 21, donde muchos de los ataques son hechos a distancia. Esto comprueba la teoría nuevamente.

Pronto descubrimos que la tecnología más actualizada no solamente no garantiza la victoria, tampoco cambia la estructura de clase en las Fuerzas Armadas.

¿Habrá oposición importante entre las filas? ¿O se han marginado las tropas de las masas populares?

Es mejor dejar que los sucesos hablen por su propia cuenta. Ya hemos visto suficiente resistencia para disipar cualquier duda. Cuán desafiante sea para el Pentágono todavía queda por verse, pero la oposición sí existe.

**STAPP:** La revista Time en una edición a principio de julio tuvo 12 páginas de anuncios pagados pidiendo que los lectores se unieran al Ejército. El argumento del Ejército es que nadie más tiene dinero para la educación, y no hay empleos. Se presenta como un programa de trabajos. Pero la verdad es que los reclutas serán enviados al otro lado del mundo para ser blancos de tiro.

Técnicamente, es verdad que muchas de las tropas se unieron a las Fuerzas Armadas por dinero o por educación. Pero esto esconde la naturaleza de clase de las Fuerzas Armadas. Durante la época de la Guerra de Vietnam yo asumí que los que fueron reclutados forzosamente estarían más opuestos a la guerra que aquellos que se unieron voluntariamente. Después de un tiempo noté que no había diferencia o muy poca entre los dos grupos, y si existía tal diferencia, los voluntarios estaban más opuestos que los que fueron reclutados por obligación.

**HOLMES:** Durante el comienzo del movimiento contra la Guerra de Vietnam, muchos consideraron que los efectivos eran equivalentes a mercenarios. Afortunadamente, ya cuando el movimiento había alcanzado su apogeo a fines de la década de los sesenta y principio de los setenta también hubo una resistencia organizada bastante grande entre los mismos soldados. Los elementos más sofisticados políticamente y conscientes de su clase social entre las filas del movimiento antiguerra deliberadamente forjaron una red civil de apoyo a los soldados.

**MO:** Ustedes dos han mencionado la naturaleza clasista de las fuerzas armadas, ¿pueden explicar más?

**HOLMES:** La estructura de clase en el ejército es un microcosmo de la estructura de clases sociales en la sociedad. La alta

gerencia, los jefes ejecutivos corporativos, son como los generales. Los demás ejecutivos conforman la casta de oficiales militares, los oficiales no comisionados son como los capataces. Los trabajadores son como los rangos más bajos entre los soldados. A veces es posible que no parezca así, pero los intereses de clase de los soldados ordinarios están diametralmente opuestos a los de los oficiales.

**STAPP:** Las Fuerzas Armadas como institución, funciona en general a beneficio de los bancos y empresas petroleras. Estas industrias, es decir sus dueños, lo dirigen todo. Los reclutas son mayormente trabajadores blancos, negros, latinos, indígenas y asiáticos. Los rangos superiores en su mayoría están compuestos de personas de la alta clase media. Hay una línea divisoria absoluta entre los reclutas y los oficiales.

Lo que pasa es que la gente adinerada está enviando a la gente trabajadora a la guerra y las personas comandando a las tropas pertenecen a una clase social más rica. Esto produce antagonismos, sin duda alguna. En Vietnam, la mayoría de los soldados estaban en contra de la guerra, pero todo el mundo odiaba a los oficiales. Muchas tropas se pusieron a mi lado porque luché en contra de los oficiales.

Las parejas y familiares también son de la clase trabajadora. Ellos no ven el por qué deben desear mantener la ocupación. No es como entre Cheney y la Haliburton.

**HOLMES:** Hay otra cosa importante. Cuando uno habla de luchas sociales que amenazan la existencia del sistema capitalista, o de la clase en el poder, o que incluso amenacen la capacidad de funcionar del sistema, el ejército es y siempre ha sido la institución principal, la última y más importante arma para defender el sistema utilizando la represión.

Como dice el refrán, alcaldes, gobernadores, presidentes, congresos, hasta las formas de gobierno vienen y van, pero los militares se quedan. Allí permanece el poder verdadero. El entender quién es la gente en las Fuerzas Armadas y cuáles son sus intereses verdaderos es imprescindible para los que pertenecen al movimiento para cambio social revolucionario y progresista.

Tarde o temprano el captar bien esto será crucial para el éxito. Dicho sencillamente, si te ganas la confianza de las tropas al movimiento social la posibilidad de victoria aumenta por un 10.000 por ciento. Pero si la vas a ganar hay que creer que sí es posible.

**MO:** ¿Cuál es la reacción en la comunidad africana americana o en otras comunidades de de color a la ocupación actual de Irak?

**HOLMES:** Más que cualquier otro segmento de la población, la comunidad africana americana no quedó engañada por mucho tiempo. Ve a la guerra de Bush como una guerra de ocupación contra un pueblo moreno, para apoderarse de su petróleo y robar sus recursos y su tierra.

La contradicción es, por supuesto, que por razones puramente económicas, la

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