



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Slavery's economic and social legacy won't go away by itself. It takes concrete actions to make sure Black people get the jobs and education long denied them.

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AIRLINE CRISIS

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founder of Gay Liberation Front

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Sorry State of the Union

Cold comfort for workers in Bush war speech

By Leslie Feinberg

President George W. Bush used the annual “State of the Union” address on Jan. 28 as a bully pulpit to push closer to the brink of war against the people of Iraq.

In doing so, he managed to never once utter the word “oil”—the single word that sums up what millions of people in the United States fear is fueling the Pentagon war machine.

Instead, Bush just kept repeating the Big Lie. Mantling his militarism in moralistic oratory, Bush vowed that the United States will never “permit the triumph of violence.”

School children should know that the Pentagon bristles with more massive weaponry than any martial power on the planet. And millions of people of all ages in this country and around the world have marched and rallied to make this clear demand: “U.S.—hands off Iraq!”

Bush pulled out all rhetorical stops to try to sell Wall Street's war. The bogus “weapons of mass destruction” subterfuge has not proved to be a decisively successful weapon of mass distraction. So the Commander in Chief ran up the flagpole the suggestion that Iraq might have some as-yet undisclosed ties to “terrorism” and a murky connection to the 9/11 attacks.

There's no smoking gun to back up either of those allegations—either of which could have been used by politicians in both parties in the War Congress to sell their plan to re-colonize the oil-rich Middle East.

Instead, Bush alluded to “information” and “intelligence”—not proof—that he says Secretary of State Colin Powell will present to the Security Council on Feb. 5.

Arrogantly referring to imperial allies who are dragging their feet on this U.S. war of conquest, Bush stated unequivocally that he is ready to order the Pentagon offensive unilaterally.

Again and again Bush couched this war as pre-emptive. War is peace.

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Democrats—including presidential hopefuls—bolted the congressional chamber before Bush was even finished talking, in order to rebut his speech.

Yet the jockeying over who was the most patriotic, who had the most effective military course of action, and who could best administer the capitalist economy in a time of deep recession without any substantive solutions offered, was a sorry spectacle indeed for anyone who still held a glimmer of hope that the Democrats would lead the country out of its social, economic and military morass.

‘Beat plowshares into swords!’

By the time the first notes of “Hail to the Chief” echoed in the rotunda, Bush's speech was already crafted to a fare-thee-well. Cabinet members and corporate interests had all weighed in.

Last year Bush strode to the dais to deliver his infamous “axis of evil” speech, harbinger of his intent to wage endless war. This year, the chief speech writer for Bush's State of the Union address was Michael Gerson, described by the Jan. 28 International Herald Tribune as “the pencil-chewing evangelical Christian

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Anti-war chants echo off Times Square buildings as protest called by the ANSWER coalition on Jan. 29 answers Bush's State of the Union speech.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

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**WORKERS WORLD
NEWSPAPER**

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Redbaiting and the movement

Divide and conquer isn't working

By Deirdre Griswold

There has been a new flurry of broadcasts and articles in the leading media outlets of the capitalist establishment trying to divide and weaken the burgeoning anti-war movement. They are happening at the very moment that it is taking on enormous momentum and becoming a factor that even the Bush administration has to take into consideration, as it moves ahead with its criminal plans to attack Iraq.

The attacks are directed at the ANSWER coalition especially, which has organized the biggest anti-war protests since the Vietnam movement. ANSWER, which is made up of many very active groups in the areas of international solidarity and social justice, is being slandered as nothing but a "front" for Workers World Party. This denies the fact that many progressive currents with different political outlooks can come together on a principled basis—against the war, for instance—while maintaining their independence and integrity.

It is just a repeat of the old tactic of redbaiting that was used to break up the progressive movement and a lot of unions in the 1950s.

Workers World itself is being misrepresented as "Stalinist" and caricatured as mindless supporters of dictators around the world.

What seems to bother the pundits most is Workers World's refusal to give any credence to the U.S. imperialist government's claim that its interventions around the world are aimed at spreading democracy and development, or at least at overthrowing bloody and dangerous dictatorships. Workers World does not agree with all the political positions of every regime whose sovereignty and resources are under attack by imperialism. But it knows that an imperialist takeover is never the solution; that the installation of a neocolonial puppet regime, no matter how disguised and sanitized, is the death of self-determination and any genuine democracy for the people. It is up to the people of these countries, not the interventionist empire builders, to determine what kind of government they

want and who should be their leaders.

Those who are attacking WW have distorted this position, equating it with ideological servility to all the policies of the regimes and parties in question. Nothing could be further from the truth. Workers World has always had an independent, critical approach to the world struggle based on its understanding of revolutionary working class politics.

Here are some examples of the media coverage.

A column by Michael Kelly, dripping with venom and called "Marching with Stalinists," appeared in the Jan. 22 Washington Post. It actually was a right-wing attack on a New York Times editorial about the huge Jan. 18 anti-war mobilizations, called "A Stirring in the Nation." Kelly was furious at the Times for not having redbaited the ANSWER coalition, the organizer of the protests, and for not dissing Workers World Party in the editorial.

The Times was quick to seek forgiveness. It responded with an article by Lynette Clemetson on Jan. 24 called "Some War Protesters Uneasy with Others," in which she described Workers World as a "radical Socialist group with roots in the Stalin-era Soviet Union." (Not true.)

This article was very tricky because it pretended to be in sympathy with the anti-war movement, which it presented as being diminished by radicals in positions of leadership, especially from Workers World Party. In order to argue this point, it had to lie about the size of the Jan. 18 protests in Washington and San Francisco, saying that "tens of thousands" attended. This is off by a factor of 10. Even the San Francisco police now admit the protest there was at least 150,000, and estimates of the crowd in Washington range up to half a million.

In fact, the International ANSWER coalition has organized what even these newspapers admit are the largest demonstrations to date against the Iraq war and the biggest anti-war protests since Vietnam. It has done so by addressing all the issues related to

the Iraq war—such as U.S. aggression in other parts of the world, racism at home, and imperialist militarism's disastrous economic effects on the workers here.

The Times, pretending to speak in the name of others in the movement, says this diminishes the anti-war forces, who only want to focus on Iraq. But the newspaper has to lie about the numbers to make this argument.

Fortunately, many people both inside and outside of the ANSWER coalition have made public statements rejecting the redbaiting and the attempts to divide the movement.

The Times and the Washington Post, of course, do not speak for the movement. They have always been tribunes for the ruling establishment in this country. And this establishment has, until now, given the war its full endorsement. That could change as the anti-war movement around the

world grows more powerful and the economic situation at home worsens, especially if the war drags on. But for now there's no question that these

powerful interests want to divide and weaken the movement, not help it along by offering friendly advice on tactics.

It is interesting that a number of these attacks ridicule the reading of messages from Mumia Abu-Jamal at the protests. Mumia is reviled here, by the police especially, but he is recognized in the rest of the world as a U.S. political prisoner as well as an eloquent voice against the war from the Black community.

Despite the endless, foaming-at-the-mouth propaganda, the majority in this new movement are not going to bed at night worrying about Korea or Iraq or Cuba or Grenada or any other country ringed by U.S. nukes and troops. No, they are worried about George Bush and his power-drunk associates. They are worried about the Weapons of Mass Destruction of the Pentagon, and the dangerous propensities of this capitalist superpower as the economy worldwide begins to contract. □



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NATIONWIDE

Feb. 13-21
Week of anti-war resistance. Teach-ins, rallies, pickets. Coast to coast coordinated rallies on Feb. 15. For info on the Web internationalANSWER.org or phone (212) 633-6646 or (202) 544-3389 or (415) 821-6545 or (213) 487-2368 or (617) 522-6626.

NEW YORK

Thu., Jan. 30
Emergency anti-war mass meeting. Together we can stop the war. Sponsored by the ANSWER coalition and the MLK Peace Now Committee. At the House of the Lord Church, 415 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, between Nevins and Bond. A&C trains to Hoyt; 2, 3, 4, 5 trains to Nevins St. For info phone ANSWER (212) 633-6646 or MLK Peace Now Committee (718) 596-1991.

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From Bakke to Bush

Affirmative action comes under fire

By Monica Moorehead

Twenty-five years ago, in 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the infamous Bakke decision. The court ruled, five to four, that using racial quotas to help win some measure of equality in hiring and education was unconstitutional. Quotas are the setting aside of a certain number of openings, mainly for people of color and women, in the areas of jobs and education.

The Bakke case was centered at the University of California at Davis Medical School. Now the battleground has moved to the University of Michigan.

On Jan. 21, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that on April 1 it will hear one hour of oral arguments regarding another milestone case focused on the same issue of affirmative action. This case—actually two separate court cases combined into one—is known as Gratz and Grutter vs. Bollinger.

Jennifer Gratz and Barbara Grutter, both white, sued Lee Bollinger, former president of U-M, in 1996. They charged “reverse discrimination.”

Gratz and Grutter claimed they were denied entry into the undergraduate program and law school, respectively, because of U-M’s affirmative-action program, which sets aside some openings for Black and Latino students.

U-M’s affirmative-action program has implemented racial quotas to help create diversity by bringing students of color into its undergraduate and graduate programs. U.S. colleges and universities, private and state-run, that receive the most funding, remain predominantly white.

On Oct. 29, U-M filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court urging the court not to strike down its affirmative-action program that helps achieve diversity. The U-M News and Information Services statement stressed that a Supreme Court decision reaffirming Bakke “would produce the immediate re-segregation of many—and perhaps most—of this nation’s finest and most selective institutions.”

The statement continued, “A prohibition on the consideration of race in admissions could, for example, cut the representation of African American students at selective universities by more than two-thirds, and at accredited law schools by more than three-fourths.”

Bush administration intervenes

The Bush administration brazenly intervened in this legal battle when it asked the Justice Department to submit its own briefs to the Supreme Court supporting the abolition of the U-M racial quota programs.

In subtly racist remarks, President Bush said, “At the undergraduate level, African

American students and some Hispanic students and Native American students receive 20 points out of a maximum of 150, not because of any academic achievement, but solely because they are African American, Hispanic or Native American.”

The irony is that Bush himself is a product of a racial and class quota that affirmative action confronts head on. George W. got into Yale University even though his verbal and math Scholastic Aptitude Test scores did not meet Yale’s academic standards.

His secret? He was the son and grandson of affluent alumni.

Affirmative action and anti-racist struggle

When Allen Bakke, a white medical student, sued the U-C at Davis for “reverse discrimination,” it was the first time that a great majority of people in the United States had heard of affirmative action.

Even today many people are unaware that institutionalized racism has been rooted in U.S. society for many centuries. Today, unfortunately, its legacy is alive and well in housing, health care, criminal justice, under-representation in Congress, and many other areas of the economy and society.

The mass murders of Indigenous Native nations and the enslavement of African people carried out by the government on behalf of the expansion of the U.S. capitalist market are two vivid examples of institutionalized racism. Today, Latino, Arab, Native and Asian peoples are also victims of a U.S. policy of poverty, intense repression, marginalization and super-exploitation.

In the case of people of African descent, there has been an ongoing struggle for racial equality since the end of the Civil War almost 140 years ago. The revolutionary period known as Reconstruction was an attempt by the freed people to win complete equality with whites.

That period ended tragically and abruptly in 1877 with the “Great Compromise,” when federal troops were ordered by governmental decree to withdraw from the South, abandoning the freed slaves and rendering them defenseless in a semi-enslaved existence that included sharecropping.

This betrayal ushered in an era of counter-revolution. Southern Black people suffered unmitigated terror at the hands of ultra-racist, fascist formations like the KKK and the White Citizens Council, led by former Confederate officers and slave masters. Countless thousands of Black people were lynched; none of their murderers was brought to justice.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court—dominated by Southern and Northern racist judges—ruled that the policy of “separate but equal” was constitutional, thus giving



Demonstration in support of affirmative action, 1978

legal sanction to Jim Crow segregation.

After World War I, millions of Black people migrated to the North to escape economic and physical repression. They hoped to find equal opportunities there.

What they found was a different kind of racism: segregated housing, police brutality and low-paying jobs. Many labor unions collaborated with the bosses in denying Black workers training in better-paid, more skilled jobs. Anti-racist solidarity with Black workers by union leaders remained elusive.

When white workers went on strike, bosses often deliberately hired Black workers, who ordinarily couldn’t get the jobs, to cross the picket lines. They hoped to inflame racial antagonisms and defeat the unions. For the Black workers, as for many immigrant workers today, they had no choice. It was either work or starve.

Only a vigorous organizing effort by the unions to incorporate workers of color and a campaign of anti-racist solidarity can protect all workers’ jobs. But instead, conservative union officials like George Meany, the late president of the AFL-CIO, resisted opening up apprenticeship programs to Black workers as well as other workers of color and women.

Rebellions push open some doors

The massive Civil Rights struggles in the South and righteous rebellions of Black people against poverty and unemployment in the Northern ghettos, especially in 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles, forced the U.S. government to give more than just lip service to the idea of affirmative action.

Affirmative action in jobs had first been considered within the Eisenhower administration in 1953. Various commissions and agencies were later established under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Yet none of them instituted any program to redress the systematic exclusion of Black workers by racist employers.

Three years after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, African Americans composed just 8 percent of union construction workers. The electrical, asbestos, plumbing and elevator trades had an abominable number of only 1, 400 Black mem-

bers out of 330,000 total. (Equal Employment Opportunity News, Sept. 28, 1969)

It was during Richard Nixon’s presidency that racial quotas were first used as a concrete remedy on the federal level to address racist hiring practices. Assistant Labor Secretary for Wages and Standards Arthur A. Fletcher, who was Black, rewrote the Philadelphia Plan in June 1969. It required contractors in projects that received more than \$50,000 in federal assistance to hire Black and other workers of color “in good faith.”

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance, in consultation with Philadelphia contractors, was authorized to establish numerical ranges for hiring African Americans. For instance, they were to hire 5 to 9 percent Black iron workers, with additional increases each year after 1970.

Nixon, a right-wing, law-and-order, pro-war president, flip-flopped on the issue of affirmative action. Certainly the thought of another rebellion caused the government great consternation. Some believe Nixon also used the issue to try to win over Black voters.

During this same period, students of color carried out heroic struggles on campuses, including sit-ins and strikes. These battles won open admissions, Black and Latino Studies, and full scholarships for students who had faced doors shut tight because they were either poor or not white.

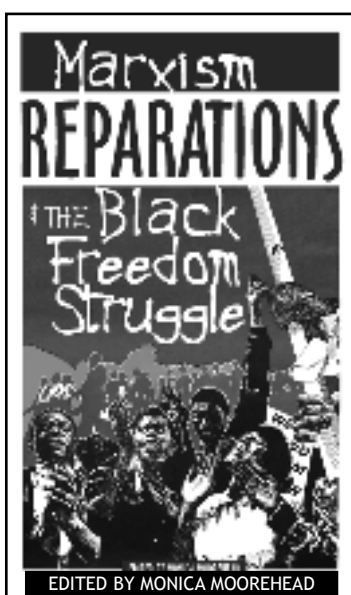
Erosion of affirmative action

Since the Bakke decision, there has been slow erosion of affirmative-action programs for people of color.

In 1996, the University of Texas admissions program was temporarily dismantled by a U.S. federal appeals court. As a result, the percentage of Black first-year students dropped from a range of 4.1 to 5.6 percent before the decision, down to 2.7 percent.

Affirmative action with quotas seems to become controversial only when racist whites scream “reverse discrimination.” It’s a false argument when you look at the sordid record of racist oppression in the United States. The place where “racial

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What workers need to know

Economic crisis in airlines deepens

By Michelle Quintus
Flight attendant & Local Executive
Council officer, Association of Flight
Attendants, New York Council 5

The crisis in the airline industry is deep and wide. Its source is the boom and bust cycles of the capitalist system itself.

Airline management expanded recklessly during the boom years. Now, as thousands of airplanes are parked, rusting and depreciating in the desert, bankruptcies and massive layoffs plague the industry.

This economic crisis is intensified by a number of other contributing factors. These include the U.S. government's policies of endless war and "Homeland Security," which threaten the airlines' very existence.

All this has led major airlines to declare Chapter 11 bankruptcy. On Aug. 11, for example, US Airways filed for Chapter 11. By Dec. 9, United Air Lines and its 80,000 workers had been forced to take the same path.

A federal agency, the Air Transportation Stabilization Board, was created to assist the airlines after Sept. 11, 2001. To date, the ATSB has given only one loan guarantee of \$1 billion to US Airways. The loan was conditional on a \$200 million "modified restructuring plan" that undermined its union contracts.

US Airways' "modified restructuring plan" includes a "war contingency." In the event that the United States invades Iraq, there will be an immediate 5 percent pay deferral for up to 18 months.

The corporate owners are already trying to protect themselves from their inevitable losses in the event of a war—protect themselves by making the workers pay.

"During this last week, almost every large airline has admitted that it has or is looking for bankruptcy lawyers," wrote Flight Attendants union leaders in a Jan. 24 update to members. "Of particular concern to industry experts are American and America West Airlines."

Intensified war on airline workers

"The prospects of a war with Iraq loom large over the industry. In the last Gulf War, there was a sharp drop in interna-

tional and domestic traffic," the update continued. "Once again, as the war frenzy intensifies and the economic crisis deepens, our members face more layoffs and deeper wage cuts in our wages and benefits."

As a result, airline workers have become more involved in the anti-war movement, joining other labor groups with anti-war resolutions. Like other workers, airline workers understand that the war on Iraq is not about protecting us, but about getting more access to the oil resources of the region.

The Flight Attendants' United Airlines Master Executive Council recently passed a resolution proclaiming that it "holds strongly the belief that an unprovoked war with Iraq, which causes many casualties amongst members of our armed forces and the Iraqi people, is not in the best interest of our Cabin Crew Members, other airline workers, or the vast majority of other workers of the world."

Rank-and-file airline workers were present at historic anti-war demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on Jan. 18, as part of the U.S. Labor Against the War contingents.

Big banks profit

While the U.S. government and President George W. Bush occupy themselves with plans for an imperialist war for oil, the airlines are left to the wolves of the big banks.

As each bankrupt corporation enters into Chapter 11 reorganization, it relinquishes its ownership rights. The debtors-in-possession—financiers, banks and speculators—demand exorbitant interest rates and ownership rights to the airline's property as collateral.

This enables debtor-in-possession financiers, in collusion with the bankruptcy court, to control the companies, which desperately need financing to operate during the reorganization process. The financiers then have the power to impose "covenants" on the airlines that specifically target the workers.

At UAL, for example, the financiers



demanding and got worker wage cuts of \$2.4 billion per year from 2003 to 2008—totaling \$12 billion in all.

The debtor-in-possession financiers' demands aim at unions and the lowest-paid workers, leaving most executives' seven-figure salaries intact. In fact, after extracting big pay cuts from workers, ranging from 8.4 percent to 35 percent, both US Airways and UAL filed for management bonuses in bankruptcy court.

Another 704 UAL flight attendants will be laid off as of Feb. 22—after they gave a 9-percent wage concession in January.

These pay cuts go directly into the huge profits of J.P. Morgan Chase, Citibank, Bank One and CIT—a \$60 billion group of speculators that have bankrolled UAL. Many of these same banks face criminal charges in the Enron and WorldCom cases.

Mismanagement, overproduction and corporate greed

At UAL, executive bonus packages have been termed the "Key Employee Retention Program." Most of these "key employees" were responsible for gross mismanagement during the airline's boom years.

They bought too many planes, expanded beyond market capacity, attempted mergers costing millions of dollars, and sold off profitable parts of the company to former UAL executives while taking in millions of dollars for themselves.

The workers did not share in the wealth of the boom years. Flight attendants endured an unprecedented 10-year contract with wage arbitration that resulted in 0-percent pay increases in some years.

Mechanics invested their retirement and took wage cuts to purchase stock at \$180 per share. It is now valued at under \$2 per share. Many of them are now at retirement age but cannot afford to stop working.

Airline restructuring that works

The airline CEOs and debtor-in-possession financiers are right about one thing: The airline industry needs "restructuring"—but not for more profits to CEOs and bankers.

The restructuring should be based on returning to airline workers the value they created—returning it in the form of secure jobs, living wages, safe work rules, and ultimately, an air transportation system that is accessible and safe for everyone.

At UAL, the workers still own over 50 percent of the company. We have \$9 billion in pension assets to validate our rights.

We have a union coalition capable of presenting our own restructuring plan that protects workers' jobs, wages and contracts. We have the experience, the skills, and the years of service to run the airline ourselves.

We have three union representatives on the creditors' committee of the bankruptcy court. But if this committee is to retain its rightful power under the threats of the financiers, it must be backed up by our 60,000 union members in a show of power and unity with rallies and demonstrations.

Class unity

Capitalist competition between airlines is fiercer than ever. Many airlines are using company loyalty to get concessions from the workers so "their" airline will survive. Many workers interested in saving jobs have given in to this pressure.

"Our flight attendant leadership again has demonstrated that it is resolute in its commitment to US Airways," said Jerry A. Glass, US Airways senior vice president of employee relations.

Airline workers don't yet understand the breadth of our unified power. Our interests are not about one airline surviving this crisis over another airline. The loyalty of airline workers needs to be with each other, not with our corporate exploiters. Airline workers will survive this crisis by asserting our rights as a class.

We don't survive by giving more and more from our wages and contracts. We will survive by asserting our right to be paid a living wage, reap the benefits of our own labor and ultimately own the means of production, and by claiming our property rights.

We must assert that the airlines do not belong to the banks and the greedy CEOs. The real owners are the thousands of workers who built them. □

BUFFALO UNITED FOR CHOICE

'Army of God' routed by women, gay community

By Beverly Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

An important victory against the ultra-right wing has been won here in the struggle to defend women's right to control their own bodies, as well as to protect the lives of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

On Jan. 22, the 30th anniversary of the hard-won Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, a gang of "Army of God" commandos descended on Buffalo. The Klan-like group has bragged about past bombings of women's abortion clinics and is virulently hostile to lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

The reactionaries came here to publicly throw their weight behind James Kopp, who is going on trial for the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian. Kopp has boasted of having shot Slepian, an obstetrician-gynecologist who performed abortions, in October 1998. Kopp's trial is expected to

begin in mid-March.

The right-wing extremists held a news conference Jan. 22 in front of the Erie County Holding Center where Kopp is being detained. They had threatened to mass at a large women's health clinic downtown and use whatever force was required to stop all abortion procedures in the city that day. They also reportedly issued threats against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Those opposed to the reactionary agenda of the "Army of God" began mobilizing immediately after the right wing's plans were made public. Buffalo United for Choice, a grassroots coalition that has twice defeated national right-wing mobilizations here—in 1992 and 1999—reconstituted itself as BUC 2003. Rainbow Peacekeepers, community-based self-defense squads, also re-formed.

By the day of the news conference, only a handful of the right-wing thugs—includ-

ing assassins and arsonists convicted of crimes against women's abortion clinics and anti-gay assaults—turned out for their media event.

Although it was a work day, the pro-choice, pro-LGBT forces outnumbered the bigots four to one.

By afternoon, the pro-choice forces held the ground in front of the clinic. The "Army of God" never showed up.

Police brass sent word to Rainbow Peacekeepers that a "deal" had been made with Army of God leaders. The cops said the reactionaries were leaving early, so the Rainbow Peacekeepers should "stand down" and not have a presence at the bars and clubs that night.

After community consultation, there was almost unanimous agreement that it was not wise to accept the assurances of the police or trust the Army of God. So Rainbow Peacekeepers proceeded to be present and defend the LGBT establish-

ments throughout the evening.

Despite the Army of God's menacing threats, pro-choice and pro-LGBT forces organized, held their ground and outnumbered the right wing.

But this is just the first round in this battle.

Broader right-wing organizations have said they are coming to Buffalo in March to use the trial of Kopp to promote their anti-woman, racist, anti-Semitic and LGBT-bashing agenda. They will also argue that Kopp is a "hero" for killing Dr. Slepian and that he should be acquitted.

Progressive people here will be organizing to boot these bigots out of Buffalo once again. Help from around the country will be deeply appreciated.

For more information, see the www.buffalounitedforchoice.org Web site, send an email to bufc@buffalounitedforchoice.org, or call (716) 875-1965. □

Saved Peltier's life

Death of Standing Deer saddens many

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Family, friends and comrades filled a funeral parlor room to overflowing on Jan. 26 as they honored Native activist and former political prisoner Standing Deer Wilson. Standing Deer was murdered in Houston on Jan. 20. His family, friends and fellow activists spoke out in remembrance of this man who had touched their lives so profoundly.

After serving over 25 years in some of this country's most brutal prisons, Standing Deer, a full-blooded Oneida/Choctaw, was paroled to Houston by the state of Texas on Sept. 4, 2001. Texas had previously rejected his five other parole appeals.

In his short year and four months of freedom, Standing Deer devoted his life to freeing his brother in the struggle, American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier. He was involved with the Indigenous community and marched and spoke at a rally here last summer for Peltier. The week he was killed, he was to begin working as a volunteer on the Native program hosted by the local Pacifica radio station.

Standing Deer had been active with the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee and recently joined the LPDC's Board of Directors, which issued a statement saying they were "saddened and greatly regret his passing."

Standing Deer came to know Peltier in prison under the most dangerous conditions. In 1978 at the federal prison at

Marion, Ill., he was offered his freedom in exchange for assassinating Peltier. After meeting the AIM leader in the prison yard and listening to him speak, Standing Deer realized that Peltier could give him more true freedom—the freedom to discover his Native heritage—than his release would. The two men formed an unbreakable bond.

The story of Standing Deer and Peltier is told in the book "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse" by Peter Matthiessen, which documents the government conspiracy and tells how Standing Deer exposed it, first to Peltier and then to the world.

Those closest to him believe that Standing Deer's murder very likely was planned. He had told me as well as many friends about a "suit"—a man not in a prison uniform but in plain clothes—who visited him in the Estelle Prison Unit in Huntsville on the day of his release and warned him not to get involved in political activity. He also said that at his most recent appointment with his parole officer, he was told that parole supervisors wanted him to stay out of activism.

Native activists will independently investigate the murder on their own.

A moving tribute

Vicki Larsen, Standing Deer's youngest daughter, will take her father's ashes back to his native Oklahoma, accompanied by his dear friend Judy Krull and fellow Native activist Jac Battise. They organized his memorial, with input from Anna Standing Deer, his ex-wife and very close friend who had spoken with him hours



PHOTO: JUDITH KRULL

Standing Deer (on right) with the youth he loved to mentor (left to right): Penina Partsch, Tristen Ahtone, Jason Socier and poet John Trudell.

before his murder.

As the smell of burning sage drifted through the room, the program began with words by an elder of the Alabama-Coushatta Nation in Texas.

Two young Native activists, Tristen Ahtone and Jason Socier, vowed to continue the spirit and work of a mentor they considered their family.

Virtually all spoke of his "beautiful smile," freely given to all his sisters and brothers in the struggle, and his wit and jokes.

Speakers represented the diversity of Houston.

Savea Partsch, born in the U.S. colony of Samoa, treasured the conversations he'd had with Standing Deer and said he would never forget his wisdom. Partsch's

family has performed dances and music at several progressive and anti-war events in Houston.

Kofi Taharka paid respects on behalf of the Houston chapter of the National Black United Front. Njeri Shakur and Lonnie X of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement recalled being strengthened by Standing Deer's message from behind the bars to a rally they had organized at the death-row prison of Huntsville.

The crowd was electrified by the reading of a document written by Standing Deer on how the government had hired him to kill Peltier.

Many ex-prisoners attended the memorial. Johnny Martinez of the Prisoners Defense Committee in San Antonio told of

Continued on page 6

MORRIS KIGHT

Early gay rights activist dies

By Joe Delaplaine
Los Angeles

Gay and civil-rights activist Morris Kight died in his sleep Jan. 19 at age 83. Morris had demonstrated and organized for more than half a century for peace, the rights of gay, lesbian, bi and transgender people, and to unite the struggles of the oppressed around the world.

In 1969, at a time when homosexuality was not publicly discussed, Morris co-founded the Gay Liberation Front. The GLF, named in wartime solidarity with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front's heroic struggle against the Pentagon, used acts of civil disobedience to educate about the oppression of LGBT people.

At Morris's insistence, the GLF also demonstrated in front of Dow Chemical Co. Dow manufactured the lethal defoliant Agent Orange, which killed and disabled so many Vietnamese people and U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam War.

The day before he died, Morris was made aware that the biggest anti-war protests since that war were taking place worldwide.

It's fitting that an anti-war rally scheduled to take place here on Feb. 15 will pass Hollywood and Highland, the site of the first Christopher Street West march. In 1970, Morris organized Christopher Street West—the first LGBT pride march in Los Angeles. The march was to commemorate the previous year's most public assertion of the demand for LGBT equality—the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion against police repression in Greenwich Village.

The Los Angeles Police Department announced it would arrest anyone who attended the 1970 Pride event. Police Chief Ed Davis compared LGBT people marching for their civil rights to thieves and robbers parading in the streets. Permits were issued, but the cost of insurance that the police required the march organizers to obtain was prohibitively high.

The city still uses this tactic, most recently to hinder the Jan. 11 demonstration of 30,000 people against war in downtown Los Angeles. But the marchers prevailed—then and now.

The heat of this struggle won a 1970 court ruling that LGBT people were equal citizens, entitled to protection under the law. It forced the LAPD to allow the Pride march to take place without any additional fee to the organizers.

Uncompromising and inspiring

Morris's life serves as a wonderful example, especially to young people, of how to keep the pressure on and never stop organizing to gain rights. His commitment was uncompromising and inspiring.

Years of struggle forged his determination.

He founded the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center in 1971—the first in the country and now the biggest. The Gay and Lesbian Center here was the first organization with the word "gay" in it to ever receive federal funding—but not without a fight.

My fondest memory is watching Morris frustrate an LAPD officer who

was trying to get him to stop demonstrating in front of Barney's Beanery, a local tavern in West Hollywood. At that time he was in his late 70s.

Morris was undaunted. He looked up from his wheelchair and let the cop have it: "This is a public sidewalk, I have every right to be here, there's still a thing in this country called freedom of speech!" The stunned officer remained silent.

He had won a 15-year legal battle to force Barney's Beanery to remove an anti-gay sign over its bar that let gay men know in no uncertain terms that they were not welcome. This sign was an example of the discrimination LGBT people faced daily.

Last year Morris spent his birthday testifying before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, demanding improved services for people with HIV/AIDS. Years earlier, he had created the Van Ness House to provide aid for LGBT people suffering from alcoholism and drug addiction.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Morris always tried to unite the struggle for LGBT rights with the struggles of all oppressed people.

At a meeting of Los Angeles Pride march sponsors in 1997, Morris invited a Latina to speak about immigrant labor. Some complained that the issue was "unrelated" to gay pride. But Morris knew many locally gay-owned restaurants hired immigrant workers. He asked patrons of the restaurants to pressure the owners to improve employee working conditions.

When it came to defending unions,

Morris would not be silenced. He helped organize the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union and built labor alliances throughout his life.

He began in 1977 what became a national Coors boycott to expose how the Coors Brewing Co. used its millions to finance union-busting legislation and anti-LGBT politicians. Morris infuriated organizers of Outfest, an LGBT film festival, the year Outfest accepted Coors funding. He organized a demonstration in front of the event, using the opportunity to educate the community about the ways anti-gay corporations try to clean up their public image by funding cash-starved LGBT organizations and events. He handed out fliers explaining that Coors bosses undermined unions, polluted the environment, degraded women and used racist hiring practices.

Morris persevered and Outfest no longer accepts Coors funding.

Not one to be intimidated, he also went to West Hollywood City Hall and shouted over festival organizers, sponsors, local gay bar and magazine owners as well as members of the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center who were eager to end the Coors boycott so they could receive money from the company without controversy. Morris embarrassed them for their greed and for accepting money from anti-gay and anti-union corporations.

Morris devoted his life to defending the rights of the disenfranchised and underserved. For this we say:

"Morris Kight, presente!" □

Washington & Big Oil vs. the world

By Fred Goldstein

The Bush administration has run into a series of hard bumps on its road to war. There is visibly mushrooming opposition to the war at home and abroad, as well as the sudden escalation of conflict between Washington and its imperialist rivals in Paris and Berlin. Bush's drive for war against Iraq is truly becoming a battle of Washington against the world.

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Washington, San Francisco and other cities on Jan. 18. Simultaneous demonstrations were carried out in dozens of cities on all continents. The worldwide movement is mobilizing for demonstrations on Feb. 15, which were initiated by the European anti-war organizations.

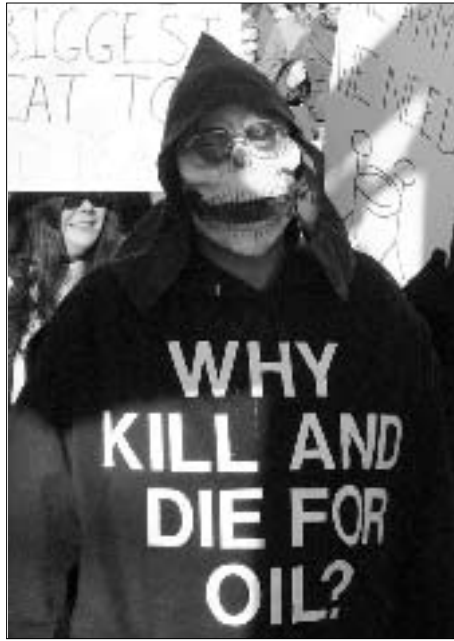
Bush's poll numbers in the U.S. have dropped precipitately, both on support for the war and on the economy. Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported on Jan. 25 that "the Bush administration has asked 53 countries to join the United States in a military campaign against Iraq, but so far the 'coalition of the willing,' in President Bush's phrase, consists of a handful of countries and even fewer commitments of troops, officials and diplomats said yesterday."

Bush's belligerent State of the Union speech was calculated to overcome this worldwide mass opposition and the crisis with the French and German governments. He combined threats to go it alone with a new barrage of lies to justify the war.

Bush's job was facilitated by Hans Blix, head of the United Nations inspections team, whose report handed Washington a gift of war propaganda by making a blanket denunciation of Iraq's attitude. Blix served the overlords in the White House and the Pentagon by what a Jan. 26 BBC report described as the "sandbagging of Iraq." But he covered himself by asking for more time for inspections and saying, give peace a chance.

Reviving a dead horse

A clear indication of the Bush administration's desperation to overcome mass resistance to the war and rope in reluctant regimes around the world was Secretary of State Colin Powell's charge, reiterated by Bush, that Iraq was linked to Al-Qaeda. The fact that Powell was the first to publicly level this charge, which he did at an



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

international meeting in Davos, Switzerland, was an ominous sign that the administration was united for war.

Beginning right after Sept. 11, the right wing in and around the Bush administration was clamoring for a declaration linking Iraq to the World Trade Center disaster and claiming links to Al-Qaeda. James Woolsey, former CIA director and a leader of the "attack Iraq" forces outside of the administration, rushed off to Europe to get the "proof." He went with the blessing of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, but the mission was undertaken without Powell's consent.

Woolsey came back with nothing but allegations that an Iraqi intelligence agent had met with Al-Qaeda in Prague. This was denied by the Czech government after an investigation. U.S. intelligence could not verify it.

The claimed Al-Qaeda connection was the battle cry of the go-it-alone, war-now grouping within the administration. Bush himself would not sanction the claim and Powell held to the position that there was no evidence. The ruling class generally resisted such claims, knowing they were a lie and could not be substantiated.

Now Washington, despite all its demonization of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government, is more isolated than ever. So it has finally played the Al-Qaeda card, and this time Powell is fully on board. Lacking any evidence of a connection to Sept. 11, Bush is attempting to tie Iraq to some future attack similar to the one on

the World Trade Center.

Oil slicks everywhere

This flimsy scare tactic will not deter the anti-war movement one iota. If anything, such flagrant and crude lies and patent war propaganda are bound to spur the movement on to meet the new war danger. More and more clear evidence about the true nature of this imperialist war of conquest is coming out daily.

The slogan "No Blood for Oil," one of the most popular slogans of the movement worldwide, expresses a large part of the truth about the war drive.

The London Sunday Herald of Jan. 26 carried a lead story saying that, "Tony Blair and George Bush have privately agreed to a joint strategy that will delay any possible war against Iraq for four weeks, during which time they will work tirelessly to achieve three key objectives:

"Firstly, they seek to persuade France ... not to carry out its threatened veto of a second UN resolution to allow the U.S. to intervene in Iraq.

"The French, along with Russia and China, also permanent members of the UN Security Council but not expected to vote, have extensive oil rights in Iraq and want those guaranteed before agreeing to any UN resolution."

In addition, Bush and Blair agreed in a "lengthy telephone conversation" to "ensure that all military personnel and hardware" are in place for a "likely attack at the start of March." They also agreed to "utilize every possible moment to win the hearts and minds of the American and British public to persuade them that war is justified."

Above all, "the U.S. is also understood to be ready to compromise its plans to monopolize the post-war oil industry in Iraq using only U.S. oil firms. The U.S. government's promise to hold Iraqi oilfields 'in trust' for the people of Iraq is now looking like an international, U.S.-led promise to spread the spoils between U.S., French, Chinese and Russian oil companies."

This report sheds light on both the war aims of the U.S. ruling class and the struggle that broke out with the French government, in a bloc with the German imperialists, over U.S. plans to go to war. According to the Wall Street Journal of Jan. 17, oil industry experts say that Iraq, "with serious investment," could be producing six million barrels of oil a day with-

in five years. By comparison, Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer, had output of 8.03 million barrels a day in December.

"The Bush administration," continues the Journal, "is eager to secure Iraq's oil fields and rehabilitate them, industry officials say. They say Mr. Cheney's staff hosted an informational meeting with industry executives in October, with Exxon Mobil Corp., ChevronTexaco Corp., ConocoPhillips and Halliburton among the companies represented. Both the Bush administration and the companies say the meeting never took place.

"Since then, industry officials say, the Bush administration has sought input, formally and informally, from executives and industry experts on how best to overhaul Iraq's oil sector. An industry expert said Tuesday that State Department officials met with as many as two major oil companies and an industry consultant as recently as last week."

Sharing some of the loot

The French oil giant TotalFinaElf has the promise of major oil concessions in Iraq, including the Masjoun fields near the Iranian border and Nahr Omar fields in the south. It has not been able to exploit these concessions because of the U.S.-imposed sanctions. Russian firms such as Lukoil have billions in contracts also.

The U.S., despite its importation of Iraqi oil in the last few years, has no oil concessions in Iraq because of hostile relations. The irony of the present diplomatic/military situation is that Washington, which has no concessions, is demanding the French, the Russians and China vote for a U.S. invasion which will leave the Pentagon, Wall Street and Big Oil in charge of Iraq's oil fields, putting the French, the Russians and the Chinese at the mercy of Washington. They are being asked to participate in a war to take away or drastically reduce their own holdings. Small wonder there is a last-minute rebellion by the French imperialists.

As for the German imperialists, they are not allowed into the Middle East, nor are the Japanese imperialists. Both ruling classes were defeated in World War II by U.S. imperialism. And although both are huge industrial economies with vast energy needs, neither has any holdings in the region. To a large extent, this disparity in spheres of influence was behind both

Death of Standing Deer

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meeting Standing Deer in the federal prison at Terre Haute, Ind., in 1979. Martinez and a hundred other Texas prisoners had been transferred there for their safety after giving testimony in the Ruiz lawsuit, which exposed the brutal prison authorities in Texas. "He was my friend," Martinez said quietly.

Two young Chicana/Indigenous activists, Annica Gorham and Binx, stood by the open casket and softly sang a Native-language lullaby to Standing Deer as mourners left the room. Many filled small squares of red cloth with tobacco and tied them into tiny bundles called prayer pouches, which will be with Standing Deer when his body is cremated.

Standing Deer's daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren hugged everyone as they left for Oklahoma. Daughter Vicki Larsen said, "I am so thankful for all of you down here who

loved my Daddy and shared your expressions with us."

Standing Deer grew up in Oklahoma, where racism against all people of color was very strong, with parents who tried to deny their Indian heritage. After marrying and having two daughters, Vicki and Susan, he was imprisoned for bank robberies, or, as he said, "While doing compulsory expropriations from banking facilities, I zigged when I should have zagged and was thus captured and sent to the Control Unit at the prison in Marion, Illinois."

Meeting Peltier changed his life. He became a warrior for his people as well as for all those oppressed by the system he despised. "From that day in Marion," he wrote, "I have thanked my lucky stars that [Peltier] re-centered my life. He put me in touch with my roots and started me on the road to recovering the humanity that had been buried all my life under the conditioning of the culture of greed."

Standing Deer always referred to freeing Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal as his goals in life.

He once wrote: "Some people say these capitalists are this way because they are evil and have bad thoughts in their heads. But that's bullshit. The reason they compete in building and destroying personal empires is because they are driven by the real material forces at work within the social system of production which they direct. And while some of them are good 'god-fearing' christians they will mash your guts in the street before they will concede one iota of the riches that they have stolen from the children of the poor..."

"Only when the people who suffer the immediate deprivations and punishments of this insane form of social organization are organized into a force that can physically wrest control of this society from the tiny minority of criminals who today 'own' all the mass technology and the means of

production, only then will freedom become a possibility."

In a message written to death penalty abolitionists and read by Martinez in Huntsville in 1998, Standing Deer said: "All of you who struggle in unity to abolish the heinous crime of state-sanctioned murder are heroes. Work like hell! Agitate, propagate, educate ... Let me express my profound thanks and solidarity to all of you who believe in our cause, and especially to all of you on death rows throughout the land. I extend to you the left hand of my left arm which is the closest to my heart. My love and strength are with you every step of the way! In the spirit of Crazy Horse, Standing Deer."

The outpouring of grief from around the country, and calls to fight on for Peltier and Mumia, showed that Standing Deer's love and strength live on in the hearts and actions of legions of people on both sides of the razor wire.

Standing Deer, presente! □

world wars and forms the basis for present and future conflicts.

All the oil companies are straining at the bit for the war and the takeover that they anticipate. The Deutsche Bank, in a special 35-page report to its clients, recommended that they buy ExxonMobil, despite its poor economic performance recently. The report, cited in the London Daily Mirror of Jan. 26, stated that "ExxonMobil's status as the largest U.S. oil company gives it major weight with the U.S. government. The company may find itself in pole position in changed-regime Iraq."

The Boston Globe revealed in a Jan. 26 report that "the Bush administration has compiled a classified strategic plan to protect Iraq's oil fields during war and then manage that oil for months or years afterward.... The Pentagon," continues the Globe, "which has many more planners working on the oil question than other parts of the government, will take over the role of protecting the oil facilities.... U.S. special forces have been on the ground inside Iraq since September, monitoring the oil fields and rigs.... U.S. spy planes also have continued surveillance of the oil fields in recent months."

The sudden bloc between the French and the Germans against Washington put Colin Powell, the advocate of coalition and diplomacy, on the spot. In the heat of this inter-imperialist struggle he shifted sharply to the right.

He will struggle to build a united coalition for Washington's unprovoked war of conquest in Iraq, and for its drive to take over the Middle East. And he may well succeed, by a combination of threats and promises to share the loot. But he has gone over to the hawks' position of go-it-alone if necessary. Thus he will be bringing a united position demanding adventurous aggression to the UN Security Council on Feb. 5.

But the struggle with the Germans and the French is not strictly over oil. These regimes, and the government of Tony Blair as well, and all the governments of the world for that matter, are caught between the imperious demands of Washington and the widening and deepening resistance to the war among the masses of people of the world.

Protests keep growing

Three quarters of the people in France are opposed to the war. Eighty percent of the people in Germany are opposed. Almost the entire Turkish population is opposed to the war, but the regime is being forced to take U.S. troops. The Bush administration's war drive is intruding on the agenda of the entire world, making every government subject to the hostility and distrust of its own population.

In particular, the European regimes have to face the coming Feb. 15 mobilizations, which promise to be massive. They will shake the political foundation of any regime that goes along with Washington's military plans.

And above all, the opposition in the U.S. is growing by leaps and bounds. Indeed, the French and German imperialists were well aware of the massive outpouring on Jan. 18 in Washington and San Francisco, and undoubtedly were encouraged in their challenge to Washington. It is the mobilization of the anti-war struggle on a broader and broader scale, moving toward resistance, that has helped cause a split in the imperialist camp and also has the potential to push back sections of the ruling class here at home.

The great mobilizations of Oct. 26 and Jan. 18 must serve as the basis for even greater mobilizing in the coming struggle to stop the war. □



Crowd at the end rally Jan. 18 at Washington's Navy Yard stretched all the way back to the Capitol.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Jersey City Municipal Council:

'No war against Iraq!'

By Michael Kramer
Jersey City, N.J.

On Jan. 22, Jersey City joined the growing list of U.S. cities whose local governments officially oppose the Bush administration's plans for war against Iraq. The Jersey City Municipal Council voted seven to one to support a "Resolution Opposing the War in Iraq."

The city is right across the Hudson River from the site of the destroyed World Trade Center. It is the biggest city in the state, with a population of over 225,000. It is known as one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the United States, with large African American, Latino, Arab, Haitian, Filipino, Latino and South Asian communities.

Anti-war sentiment is very deep in Jersey City. So the resolution victory made many people proud of their hometown.

It also strengthened the bonds between the different groups and individuals, who, after filling cars and buses to take part in the massive Jan. 18 anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C., have moved the struggle to the home front.

The resolution was drafted by Erik-Anders Nilsson of the Hudson County Coalition for Peace and Justice and Jamie Vazquez, a deputy mayor and director of the city Office of Veterans Affairs. Vazquez, a Marine during the Vietnam War, is a disabled veteran.

The resolution refers to the 500,000 Iraqi children who have died as the result of U.S.-imposed economic sanctions, and to the young people of Jersey City who are the prime candidates to be cannon fodder in a ground war. It points out that the financial costs of the war will harm the economy and have an impact on the "edu-

cational, health care, housing, employment, infrastructure and social service needs" of the population in this country.

It notes the "devastating effect on the ecosystem of Iraq and the entire region due to the use of weapons made of 'Depleted Uranium' and other modern weapon systems." And the resolution calls on the Bush administration and Congress to show "respect for human life in Iraq, the Middle East, the U.S. and throughout the world."

The Municipal Council meeting in a City Hall chamber was packed, standing room only, with hundreds of residents. When the anti-war resolution was moved up to become one of the first items on the agenda, residents who had come to press other issues, such as funding the Jersey City Youth Soccer Club or constructing a sewer overflow netting facility on Fisk Street, got to hear the discussion.

Speakers in support of the resolution included Nilsson; David Cline, a Vietnam veteran representing Veterans for Peace and Vietnam Veterans Against the War; and Sara Flounders from the International ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism. Supporters of the resolution had a strong multi-national and multi-generational delegation.

The captive audience began to pay more and more attention with each succeeding anti-war speaker. And the applause grew louder and louder as each speaker finished.

A handful of pro-war people failed in their attempt to use parliamentary maneuvers to stop the historic vote.

More than 40 cities have passed anti-war resolutions. The list can be found at www.ips-dc.org/citiesforpeace/resolutions.htm. □

More cities take anti-war stand

Listed by state, here are the cities that by the end of January had passed resolutions against a war on Iraq. The list was compiled by Cities for Peace.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| CALIFORNIA | Arcata Berkeley Oakland San Fernando San Francisco San Luis Obispo Santa Barbara Santa Cruz Sebastopol Topanga Canyon West Hollywood |
| COLORADO | Boulder Telluride |
| CONNECTICUT | New Haven Salisbury |
| IDAHO | Blaine County |
| ILLINOIS | Chicago, Evanston |
| INDIANA | Gary |
| IOWA | Des Moines |
| MARYLAND | Baltimore Takoma Park |
| MASSACHUSETTS | Brookline Northampton Somerville |
| MICHIGAN | Ann Arbor Detroit Ferndale Hamtramck Kalamazoo Traverse City |
| NEW JERSEY | Jersey City |
| NEW MEXICO | Santa Fe |
| NEW YORK | Danby Ithaca New Paltz Rosendale Syracuse Woodstock |
| NORTH CAROLINA | Carrboro |
| OHIO | Cleveland |
| OREGON | Corvallis Eugene |
| PENNSYLVANIA | Haines Township Philadelphia York |
| VERMONT | Burlington |
| WASHINGTON | Olympia Seattle |
| WASHINGTON, DC | |
| WISCONSIN | Madison Milwaukee |



Barbara Lee speaking at Jan. 18 rally in San Francisco.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Sorry State of the Union

Cold comfort for workers in Bush war speech

Continued from page 3

who put the evil in the 'axis of evil.'"

The Jan. 28 event was choreographed, too.

The atmosphere of war was in the air in D.C. on Jan. 28, literally.

The militarization of the Capitol was "unprecedented," according to the FBI. The Federal Aviation Administration doubled Washington's no-fly zone. Fighter jets streaked across the skies overhead. Blackhawk helicopters chopped the air near the Capitol dome.

Thirteen police agencies put their forces on the Capitol grounds, including 250 FBI agents and 1,500 U.S. Capitol cops.

Yet according to U.S. Capitol Police Chief Terrance Gainer, there had been no specific threats.

Bush hammered away at what he said was the Iraqi government's violations of civil rights and use of torture. This diverts attention from reports of U.S. torture of prisoners held illegally at Guantanamo, the racist mass disappearings of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian people in this country, and the concomitant trampling of hard-won civil liberties.

Bush didn't mention, and neither did any of the Democrats, that the prison-industrial complex seems to be the only workplace in which "affirmative action" is allowed to thrive, or that the United States use of the death penalty as a racist weapon of terror against the impoverished and disenfranchised is rightly seen as barbaric around the world.

In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush had sworn, "My economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs." Since then, the private sector has lost at least 181,000 jobs, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Unemployment is nearing its highest levels in more than 50 years. The states are facing massive budget deficits. Health care is priced out of reach for tens of millions. Social services are drying up while dammed-up wealth is being channeled into the military-industrial complex and Wall Street.

And what does the Bush administration offer as a solution? Speeding up the gigantic tax cuts for the already affluent. Billions to beef up police powers. And an endless budget to wage endless war.

Bush claimed that his Robin-Hood-in-reverse economic package would create full employment for anyone seeking a job. All it will take, he opined, was for more small businesses to hang out "help wanted" shingles. But Mom-and-Pop small businesses are going under.

Corporations won't hang up "Help wanted" signs at a time when the dizzying race for profits has resulted in capitalist overproduction and a sluggish economy. The tax cuts will be pocketed by the richest individuals, but they won't invest capital in a bogged-down market.

The 'stuff' that can't be deodorized

Before Bush delivered his State of the Union speech, Ken Khachigan—former presidential speechwriter for Nixon and Reagan—commiserated with the Commander in Chief's task: balancing domestic and international issues would be like forcing "10 pounds of stuff into a five-pound bag."

But the euphemism "stuff" didn't

explain why the content of the bag was so malodorous.

The president sounded like an impassioned environmentalist at the podium last night talking about protecting the air and the forests. This from an oil baron who has Mother Nature in his crosshairs. Bush is architect of the plan to open up protected lands in the Arctic for oil exploration. And he wants to give away the trees to the logging interests—supposedly to protect the vegetation from burning up in forest fires. His program to develop hydrogen-powered cars is a subsidy to the automobile monopoly. If the U.S. doesn't corner the market on these cars, other countries will.

Bush announced \$600 million next fiscal year in vouchers for people seeking treatment for drug addiction—triple the amount he was expected to call for. Who could quarrel with the great need for such programs?

Yet in reality, this is a hefty handout that augments his already generous "faith-based initiative" give-away. The tip off was Bush's homily about an addict who found recovery in a religious "treatment" center.

The new vouchers can be used in church-run drug programs that evangelize, convert patients to religious ideology and rely solely on bibles and prayers. They offer no medical, or other secular, approaches. Plus their staffs are not licensed for this work. (AP, Jan. 28)

Bush lightly touched on his aspiration to shunt Social Security payroll taxes into stocks and bonds—not a popular goal in the midst of a three-year bear market.

Characterizing Medicare as a "binding commitment of a caring society," Bush asked Congress to fork over \$400 billion over the next decade to reform the hard-won, 38-year-old health program.

Older people would do well to clutch their wallets and pocketbooks tight when Republicans or Democrats talk about Medicare "reform."

The plan is to lure seniors away from

Anti-war protest outside UN Jan. 27 as Hans Blix makes his report.



the relative security of Medicare into the free fall of health care delivered in the capitalist marketplace. Bush is offering prescription coverage as the carrot; Medicare does not cover any outpatient costs for drugs for the 40 million people enrolled.

But when these seniors get hit with the stick, they'll discover that they can no longer see a doctor of their choice. Instead, they'd be relegated to government-subsidized, privately owned HMOs that have submitted bids for the lucrative Medicare contracts and then offer the cheapest health care delivery possible.

The capitalist drive to "control costs" to hike health care profits already created a debacle for seniors, called Medicare+Choice. Initiated by Democrats and Republicans in Congress in 1997, it resulted in skyrocketing overall health care costs. (Boston Globe online, Jan. 28)

Elders still enrolled are now paying more for less care. A third, or about 33 percent, "pay \$50 or more in monthly premiums," the Kaiser Family Foundation found, "up from 3 percent in 1999. And about 70 percent have \$750 caps on prescription drugs, less than the average drug costs for seniors. Half of Medicare+Choice enrollees must use generic drugs."

Speaking of drugs, the pharmaceutical industry will get massive government "welfare" from Bush's new Medicare plan. And they stand to get the lion's share of Bush's African AIDS initiative that proposes \$15 billion over five years. The money won't be going to the people of

Africa and the Caribbean to design their own effective approaches to deal with the emergency epidemic.

Why is medical care such a high-priced ticket item? Isn't it because of the high profits of the insurance companies, pharmaceutical giants and hospital dynasties—like the one Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist was born into? No, according to Bush the problem is medical malpractice awards. While one might ask whether the race for profits doesn't lead to patients suffering as a result of malpractice, Bush wants a federal cap on damages.

"No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit," he quipped, trivializing patient pain and injury.

The president added that the problems in the health care industry, including the estimated 40 million people in this country who have no health insurance coverage, "will not be solved with a nationalized health care system that dictates coverage and rations care."

More double speak. HMOs—which Bush is proposing steering tens of millions of seniors into—dictate coverage and ration care.

Bush traveled to Grand Rapids, Mich., for the tradition "morning after" the State of the Union. There, he reportedly met behind closed doors at a hospital—Spectrum Health—with business owners, medical professionals and one patient. (ABCNews.com, Jan. 29)

Outside, hundreds of anti-war activists protested. □

From Bakke to Bush

Affirmative action comes under fire

Continued from page 1

quotas" play the biggest role is in the prison population and on death row.

By the end of the 20th century, close to one-third more young Black men were in prison than in college, according to the Institute of Justice Policy. State spending for prison construction was six times higher than state spending for higher education.

Racism and capitalism go hand in hand

A recent New York Times poll showed that more than half the U.S. population supports affirmative action. The truth is that affirmative action is just one small remedy in what should be an overall effort to overcome the centuries-old legacy of slavery and white-supremacist ideology.

Workers World to Larry Holmes about the current assault on affirmative action. In 1978 Holmes was co-founder of a national coalition to overturn the

Bakke decision and an organizer of a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., that drew 35,000—predominantly Black youths—to protest the Bakke ruling. He is also author of the pamphlet "Weber Was Wrong; the Steelworkers Were Right: A Case for Affirmative Action," about a struggle between the Steel Workers union and a white worker who charged the union with "reverse discrimination."

Holmes told WW: "What is happening at U-M is another round in the battle that oppressed people have waged to win a measure of progress. But that struggle has far greater potential today because people are mad as hell about Trent Lott's racism, about the threat of war against Iraq, about skyrocketing unemployment and poverty and the whole capitalist system. And all of this anger will be brought to bear against those who want to roll back affirmative action."

Capitalism is the root cause of racism

today because this profits-first system is based on divide and conquer, not unity and solidarity.

It is because of capitalism that, in this wealthy country, there are not enough good schools for all students who apply. Racism is to the advantage of the bosses, because it makes it easier for them to keep a huge section of the workers super-exploited in low-paying jobs.

Everyone should have the right to a decent job and education, regardless of their nationality, sex, gender, sexual preference, age and abilities. These rights, now matter how much is won, will always be at risk under capitalism.

The struggle for equality and justice can only be fully achieved under socialism. It requires the kind of social education and solidarity that come with an economic system that replaces big-business ownership and its drive for profits with social ownership and the planning of production to meet human needs. □

Jobless increase in U.S. and globally

By Heather Cottin

They're cutting 45 workers at the departments of labor and motor vehicles in Connecticut. Not many, you say? But this is in addition to 3,800 other jobs that state's government is eliminating this winter.

"This is the start of the next round of layoffs," an official told reporters.

This is just Connecticut. With all 50 states now facing budget deficits running into the billions of dollars, public-service workers all over the country expect devastating cutbacks.

According to the Census Bureau, 15 million people work for state and local governments, at jobs from teachers to transit workers, administrators to airport workers. Another 11 million people work for the U.S. government.

All these jobs are now in jeopardy.

States are cutting back public-sector jobs because they have less revenue. Over the past 20 years, new tax laws at the state and federal levels have given hundreds of billions of dollars to the wealthiest people and corporations in the United States. Now a capitalist economic crisis has settled in, further cutting tax revenues.

Even as the federal government has cut hundreds of billions of dollars in funds to the states, it has handed over comparable amounts to the military.

Public services are less profitable than the high-tech military-industrial sector of the economy. But because they are more labor intensive, they provide more people with jobs.

When the deindustrialization of the Midwest and other regions began in the 1970s, corporations and politicians promised workers there would be new jobs in the service sector to replace jobs in smokestack industries. Now the service workers—already lower paid—are under attack. Across the nation, services have been privatized or closed down and public workers fired.

Today's unemployment crisis didn't start in the public sector. It has become critical in the private sector as well. In New York City, with an 8.4-percent unemployment rate, holiday sales were a bust. Layoffs by airlines and brokerage firms have accelerated. Almost 175,000 jobs have disappeared from the city over the last two years, including 11,700 in December.

Unemployment plagues other areas as well. The number of workers employed in U.S. manufacturing has declined by 2.4 million since April 1998, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In capitalism's mad drive for profits, millions of jobs have been eliminated all over the world. The capitalists have closed down industries in the United States, Europe and Japan while expanding their operations in the Third World to exploit

cheap labor power. Since the collapse of the socialist bloc, this labor market includes Eastern Europe.

Eliminating higher-paid jobs

Capital is eliminating workers here in research, chip design, engineering, even financial analysis—jobs that have paid well in the United States but that, with the new Internet technology, can be done anywhere.

For example, the Bank of America is slashing over 5,000 jobs. Its spokespeople explain that in India, for example, "work that costs \$100 an hour in the U.S. gets done for \$20."

The Feb. 3 issue of Business Week magazine, in an article headlined "The New Global Job Shift," calls it "globalization's next wave." It means eliminating higher-paying jobs in the industrialized capitalist countries and moving the work to the Philippines, Hungary, Costa Rica, Bulgaria, China, Romania, Russia, the Baltic states and South Africa.

As information technology jobs flow abroad, layoffs decimate the work force here in banking and stock brokerage firms. This includes management-level jobs.

"You will see an explosion of work going overseas," says Forrester Research Inc. analyst John C. McCarthy. He predicts that at least 3.3 million white-collar jobs and \$136 billion in wages will shift from the United States, Europe and Japan to low-cost countries by 2015.

The only beneficiary of this trend is the ruling class. Once again, the capitalists are taking advantage of the poverty and insecurity their system creates to rob the working class—even some of its highest-paid members—of their lives and labor.

World unemployment at record levels

According to a Jan. 24 report issued by the International Labor Organization, unemployment around the world has reached a record figure of 180 million. That is 6.5 percent of the global work force. And, says the ILO, it is likely to continue rising.

The ILO describes the world employment situation as alarming.

Latin America is hardest hit by this capitalist scourge, but in some regions of Africa and the Middle East, 25 percent of young people are unemployed. Even university graduates cannot find work.

The ILO notes that the number of working poor—people earning less than a sin-

Unemployed march in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Jan. 28.



Homeless in Quincy, Mass., Jan. 21.

gle measly dollar a day—has risen dramatically, to 550 million people.

In Europe, the economic crisis has driven the average unemployment rate up to 7.6 percent.

The stores are filled with commodities. There is a glut of food. There is industrial overcapacity, plenty of factories, lots of inventory—in short, capitalist overproduction. But people cannot afford to buy the products of their labor.

What starts a crisis?

A capitalist crisis begins in the area of production, when the owners of capital are driven to expand tempestuously during a period of boom. But at the very peak of the boom, when everyone seems to be working two jobs and borrowing money to buy more on the expectation of even bigger earnings in the future, the crisis begins—usually in the area of capital goods.

The present crisis is now several years old. It began in the area of computers, software, communications, fiber-optic cables, excess commercial building space and other elements of the high-tech economy.

This in turn depressed the market for the materials used in these products. Now the crisis has spread to service workers—both those employed by the state and people in retail sales, food service and similar jobs.

Thus, at a time when science, technol-

ogy and human industry have created the possibility of decent lives for all workers, a world economic crisis entirely propelled by the irrationality of capitalism creates unemployment and misery for billions.

Acting in the interests of their billionaire cronies, the political establishments in Washington, Bonn, London and Paris keep military spending up to protect their irrational capitalist system by expanding their imperialist control over the rest of the world.

It is an irremediable system, designed to provide profits for one half of 1 percent of the population while the needs, rights and lives of billions of people are ignored.

Globalization is a contradiction in itself, with a potential to unite the working class. The global economy is in contraction, and the capitalists, riding upon the backs of the workers of the world, are heading into another economic crisis. The spurs of the international bourgeoisie and the governments that operate in their interests are digging into the workers' flesh.

Human productive activity can be put on a rational and planned basis so that human need, not profit, is the basis of the economy. But not under capitalism. Capitalism is at present exhibiting its most contradictory and brutal manifestations. Only the working class can intervene to get rid of this insupportable system of capitalist private property. □



French steel workers who lost their jobs due to privatization.



Unions take a stand

You would never know it from the carefully scripted pageant called the State of the Union address, which was intended to make the world think that Bush has rock-solid domestic support for his war program and his attacks on workers, but the opposition is growing broader and deeper by the day. The latest evidence of this comes from the labor movement, which in the past has generally abstained from taking a position against U.S. wars of aggression.

Now, however, at least seven national unions have "taken stands in opposition to the Bush administration rush to war and usurping of civil liberties at home," according to the labor Internet group, portside.

The seven are American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), Communication Workers of America (CWA), International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) and United Farm Workers of America (UFW).

Anti-war resolutions are being drafted and discussed in unions all over the country, spurred on by the recent formation of U.S. Labor Against the War, which had large contingents in the Jan. 18 protests. The contingent in Washington was led by members of 1199 SEIU Health and Hospital Workers, which brought 20 buses to the protest from New York.

One such resolution was passed without a dissenting vote at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor meeting on Jan. 27, the very day that Hans Blix was presenting an ambiguous report to the UN Security Council under enormous U.S. pressure.

The resolution categorically opposes the war, with no ifs, ands or buts. It describes the war drive as "a pretext for attacks on labor, civil, immigrant and human rights." It adds that "the Bush administration's drive for war serves as a cover and distraction for the sinking economy, ongoing corporate corruption and layoffs," and says that "the billions of dollars spent to stage and execute this war are being

taken away from our schools, hospitals, housing, and Social Security and services for the poor in the midst of the greatest economic crisis in recent memory, even as the Bush administration simultaneously plans even more giveaways and welfare for their rich supporters."

This resolution, which takes a firm class stand in such ringing terms, also responds to the government's "renewed assault on organized labor which includes use of Taft-Hartley against dockworkers, excluding over 50,000 federal airport screeners' right to organize, privatizing nearly 200,000 federal jobs covered by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and removing collective bargaining rights from these employees."

It also assails the USA Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act for serving "to undermine labor's right to organize and fight anti-immigrant attacks by expanding the government's ability to detain non-citizens, to conduct telephone and Internet surveillance, and to carry out secret searches."

A year ago such a clear, working class indictment of big business's political agenda, which has passed Congress with support from both capitalist parties, would have seemed inconceivable. But since then, the crisis for the workers referred to in this resolution has grown much more intense. The arrogance of the rulers has alienated the whole world.

George W. Bush has taken to accusing the Democrats of instigating "class war," something they have no intention of doing. It is he, in fact, who has opened a war at home against the workers at the very moment that he expects the youth of the working class to be the foot soldiers for his imperial ambitions. There will be no going back once this genie is out of the bottle. A new progressive tide is already beginning to sweep the country, and this time the workers, organized and unorganized, working and unemployed, immigrant and born here, people of all ages, sexes, genders and ethnicities, will shape its course. Those who have suffered the most are in the forefront of the struggle. □



Porto Alegre, Brazil

Around the world

Protests continue

By John Catalinotto

After the massive demonstrations on Jan. 18, and with preparations already underway for the next coordinated day of international actions on Feb. 15, anti-war forces worldwide have kept up a continuous wave of local protests against the looming U.S. attack on Iraq.

On Jan. 27, the day Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei were presenting the inspectors' report to the United Nations Security Council, tens of thousands of people were hitting the streets in Middle Eastern capital cities to protest the planned aggression.

The largest actions were outside UN offices in **Syria, Yemen and Bahrain**. There was also a rally in **Morocco**. An additional thousand people demonstrated in the streets of Bombay, **India**, where they blocked traffic in the financial capital of the Asian subcontinent.

Thousands of demonstrators in Damascus called Bush a "criminal and a butcher" and demanded he dump his plans to attack Iraq. "We sacrifice our souls and blood for Iraq," chanted young people in the Damascus streets. Most of the protesters believed the U.S. planned to weaken the Arab world and destroy Iraq "to control its oil," a student there told the media.

In the **Yemeni** capital, Sana'a, both government and opposition parties took

the leadership of the demonstration. Tens of thousands of Yemenis marched from a main square to the UN office to deliver a message demanding the UN prevent the war.

"No to an attack on Iraq. No to American arrogance," one banner read. There, too, a major point of the talks was that the U.S. was after Iraq's oil.

In the **Bahraini** capital of Manama, some hundreds of young demonstrators also demanded that the UN prevent the United States from launching a war on Iraq. Wielding banners saying "No to war in Iraq" and "Death to America," they delivered a letter asking the United Nations to fight poverty and illiteracy rather than provide authorization for a war on Iraq.

"If the United Nations doesn't have the power [to stop the war], then there is no reason for it to exist," one of the youth told the media.

In Baghdad, **Iraq** itself, close to 10,000 demonstrators marched past UN offices protesting U.S. plans to invade. They pledged to defend their country and burned a U.S. flag.

World Social Forum hits U.S. on Iraq

Just as the European Social Forum in Florence, **Italy**, last November became a magnet for those protesting Washington's plans to invade and occupy

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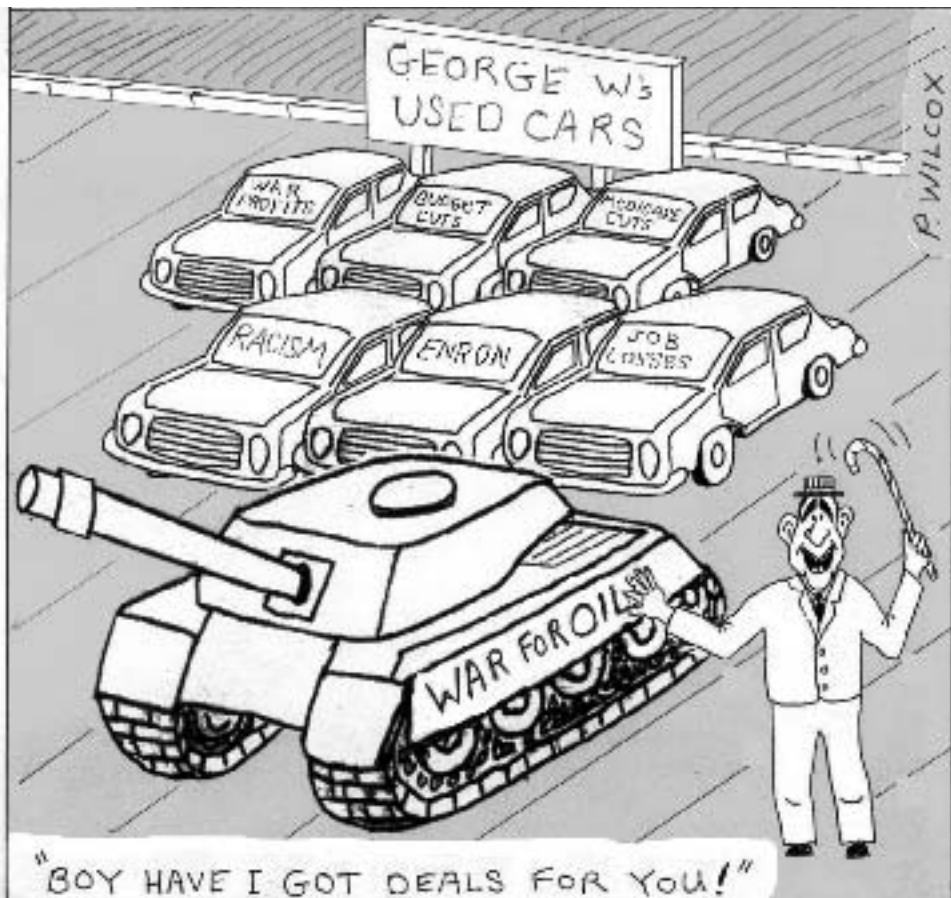
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Ankara, Turkey



Damascus, Syria



Filipino weapons inspectors swept U.S. Embassy in Manila for weapons of mass destruction.

against the war

Iraq, so did the World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre, **Brazil**.

With the forum's location in South America, it was natural that the 100,000 participants would focus on vital regional issues like Washington's plans to dominate the hemisphere's economy through the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). But many contingents in a march to open the forum's activities on Jan. 23 and in a later demonstration on Jan. 27 to protest the FTAA also raised solidarity with Iraq against U.S. aggression.

The Pentagon already has a large number of "advisers" in Colombia to help the oligarchy there fight the successful guerrilla movements of the FARC-EP and the ELN. Washington has openly supported opponents of the elected government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Those in the southern Brazilian city to attend the forum had ample reason to be concerned about stopping U.S. militarism on all continents.

Protests spread also to cities in the U.S. Some 3,000 people marched in Denver and another 5,000 to 10,000 in Pittsburgh on Jan. 25 against the planned war.

Even a small protest can be significant. In Gainesville, Fla., on Jan. 17, three people set up a protest action in a busy crossroads. In a region where anti-militarist protest is rare, three people felt they had enough passive support to go public with their political position against the war.

The large national demonstrations have changed the political climate and encouraged the widespread feelings against this war to come out into the open.

Military targets

The struggle continued on other continents, too. In **Germany** on Jan. 25 the movement reached a high point for this year in the North-Rhine Westphalia state. Some 400 demonstrators blocked access to a NATO base in Geilenkirchen for an hour. In Bochum the Peace Plenum held a protest. Also, some 5,000 people marched in Aachen near the Belgian border and some 10,000 marched through the inner city of Cologne, which had been severely damaged by bombing in World War II.

The demonstrators in Geilenkirchen called upon the German troops to refuse participation in a war against Iraq. There were smaller demonstrations in other cities.

Also in Germany, the anti-globalization organization Attac-Germany is holding a 10-day whirlwind tour of 14 universities with speakers from the anti-war movements of Italy, **Britain** and the **United States**. Law student Julie Fry, who helped organize student outreach for the ANSWER coalition's Oct. 26 and Jan. 18 demonstrations in Washington, D.C., is representing the U.S. movement. The meetings have attracted from 100 to 500 people at each stop, where dozens of bus tickets for the upcoming Feb. 15 action in Berlin are sold each night.



Cairo, Egypt.

British demonstrators are also focusing on military bases. They hit Northwood UK Armed Forces Command Center on Jan. 18, and aimed at Fairford on Jan. 26. At Fairford, it is expected that U.S. B-2 bombers will take off to carpet bomb Iraq. The protesters plan actions to disrupt the military machine.

In Japan, too, one focus has been the U.S. military, both on land and sea. The U.S. aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk landed at Yokosuka, **Japan**, where it was to leave for the Gulf and the war theater. After countrywide protests on Jan. 18 and 19, people demonstrated again in Yokosuka on Jan. 20 as the USS Kitty Hawk was setting sail. It left for Iou Island but then returned, only to depart again on Jan. 23.

On both days the demonstrators appealed not only to passersby but also to U.S. service people. According to one report from a demonstrator, "A GI, one of the Kitty Hawk crew, told us that 20 percent of the crew members of the Kitty Hawk won't go to Iraq and another 60 percent are undecided and feel uneasy." Many U.S. sailors showed their anti-war feelings to the demonstrators.

The experience of the Japanese movement again shows the potential of orga-

nizing among the U.S. troops as a direct way of stopping the war.

The Japanese movement plans actions on Feb. 14 and 15 and again on Feb. 23.

Regarding the Jan. 18 coordinated action itself, WW has received more accurate information with more details than were available in our last article. According to a release from the France "Not in Our Name" group, the total number of people demonstrating throughout some 40 cities in **France** that day was 200,000. They said, "No war on Iraq."

In **Canada**, about the same number must have been in the streets as in France. Reports from the main student group, SASWI, put "almost 20,000 in Toronto, 25,000 in Montreal, 20,000 in Vancouver, and lots more in about 32 other cities."

More than 1,000 people protested against U.S. plans to attack Iraq in Reykjavik, **Iceland**, on Jan. 18. The entire population of Reykjavik and surroundings is 180,000 people. There are also plans for a demonstration in Iceland on Feb. 15.

Further reports from Germany show that 500 demonstrated in Bonn on Jan. 18 and another 2,000 in the Bavarian city of Munich. □



Bombay, India



Athens, Greece

Mientras Bush avanza a la guerra: La oposición de las masas crece en el país

Por Fred Goldstein

Lo que sea que Hans Blix y los inspectores de armas digan al Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas el 27 de enero, es claro de que las políticas y diplomacia de las administraciones de Bush y de Tony Blair de Bretaña están estrictamente calculada para reforzar sus planes militares para una guerra no provocada y de agresión contra Irak.

Es igualmente claro de que el movimiento anti guerra debe urgentemente ampliarse y escalar sus esfuerzos para detener esta campaña de guerra catastrófica. La amenazadora acumulación de fuerzas de Bretaña y de Estados Unidos en el área del golfo, frente a la oposición mundial, se debe confrontar con movilizaciones masivas en todas partes.

Bush ha hecho a un lado cada una de las aseveraciones de los inspectores de la ONU. El ha descartado la oposición de Francia y Alemania—aliados imperialistas de los Estados Unidos, quienes temen a la guerra y no ven ningún logro en una campaña que dejará a Wall Street y Washington a cargo de Irak. El ha enviado a oficiales para que promuevan implacablemente la guerra para tratar de sobreponerse a los sentimientos anti guerra en los Estados Unidos que cada día crecen más y en desafío de la opinión de la gran mayoría de la humanidad.

La búsqueda clara por el imperio

La administración de Bush está haciendo las cosas muy claras a mundo entero de que la Casa Blanca y el Pentágono están en curso hacia una conquista. Ningún tipo de diplomacia, ninguna legalidad constitucional o internacional, ni tampoco verdades o hechos serán permitido a intervenir en sus planes. La campaña para conquistar a Irak—de tomar sus campos petroleros para las ganancias de los grandes monopolios y el complejo militar industrial y para montar una base en el Medio Oriente—domina sobre todas las otras consideraciones.

Los planes de la administración de Bush de una ocupación a largo plazo en Irak son nada más que intenciones colonialistas al estilo anterior a la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Esto es parte de una búsqueda clara por el imperio. El documento de la Estrategia de la Seguridad Nacional publicado el pasado septiembre hace claro las intenciones de Washington de gobernar al mundo. Este declara el derecho a una guerra con derecho preferente. Este además amenaza con que ninguna potencia o cualquier combinación de estas serán permitidas a desafiar la supremacía militar de los Estados Unidos.

Como consecuencia del colapso de la Unión Soviética y el retiro de las luchas de liberación nacional, Washington cree que su poderío militar lo hace omnipotente. Los militaristas y la clase gobernante están borrachos de poder y propensos a la aventura. Ellos creen falsamente que ellos pueden ser supremos por siempre que ellos tengan la superioridad nuclear y militar sobre todas las otras naciones.

Pero el tendón de Aquiles del Pentágono es la humanidad mundial, quienes no se someterán a una opresión pasivamente. Washington ha completamente desmentado la resistencia de las masas que



es seguro que provocará su agresión.

Y más que todo, este ha desmentado prematuramente el potencial para una resistencia aquí mismo en los Estados Unidos.

Oposición masiva es ahora indisputable

La extraordinaria efusión de cientos de miles de personas en Washington, D.C., San Francisco y otras ciudades de los Estados Unidos el 18 de enero fue un contra tiempo para todos los expertos y propagandistas que trabajan tiempo extra para socavar y esconder la oposición masiva popular a la guerra contra Irak.

Las manifestaciones, organizadas por la coalición Internacional ANSWER, fueron dos veces el tamaño de las protestas del 26 de octubre por la misma coalición. Estos eventos han mostrado de que ninguna cantidad de negatividad por la prensa capitalista puede detener el desarrollo de una profunda oposición popular a la guerra.

La máquina propagandista, incluyendo a las redes de televisión, servicios noticieros y periódicos, reportaron sobre los eventos del 18 de enero. Ellos temen perder toda credibilidad con el pueblo. Algunos quieren forzar a la administración Bush y a la clase gobernante a que tomen nota del potencial de una rebelión anti guerra que está creciendo desde abajo.

El periódico The New York Times, el cual ha apoyado los planes de guerra y el cual se considera un consejero del gobierno capitalista, aludió a esto en su editorial del 20 de enero titulado “Una Agitación en la Nación.”

“Un gran ingrediente ausente en los debates sobre la invasión contra Irak se mostraron en las calles de grandes ciudades en el fin de semana [el 18 de enero] a la vez que multitudes de manifestantes marcharon en demanda para que sus voces fueran escuchadas. Ellos representaron a los que parece ser un gran segmento del público americano que permanece no estar convencido de que las amenazas de Irak no autoriza el uso de la fuerza militar en esta coyuntura,” escribió el Times.

“Sr. Bush”, siguió el Times, “sería prudente considerar a los manifestantes como una señal clara que cantidades notables de americanos ya no se sienten obligados a aplaudir los planes de la administración en reacción a los sustos del 11 de septiembre y que muchos abrigan dudas serias sobre su marcha hacia la guerra”.

La declaración tibia y atenuada sobre la manifestación intenta orientar al movimiento en la dirección de moderación y

patriotismo. Pero el hecho es que los manifestantes en el 18 de enero estaban preocupados con los efectos horribles de la agresión de los EE.UU. en contra del pueblo iraquí.

Más que una protesta simplemente en contra de la guerra

Estuvieron preocupados con las sanciones genocidas; con los planes imperiales de Washington; el racismo del reclutamiento hecho obligatorio por la falta de empleos buenos; el envío de jóvenes pobres, oprimidos nacionalmente y de la clase trabajadora para matar o ser matado para extender el imperio de las empresas petroleras y el Pentágono.

Los participantes aplaudieron las llamadas por un fin a la agresión israelí auspiciado por los EE.UU. en contra del pueblo palestino. Aplaudieron las denuncias de la represión de miles de personas del Medio Oriente y Asia detenidos en redadas de la FBI y el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización. Gritaron su aprobación a favor de llamadas a forzar a los EE.UU. deshacerse de sus armas de destrucción masiva. Se vieron airados ante costo de la guerra con la obligación que paguen los pobres y los trabajadores.

La existencia de un movimiento nacional es resultado en gran parte de los esfuerzos organizativos decididos y persistentes de la coalición ANSWER Internacional (el nombre es una sigla que significa “respuesta” y representa las palabras: actúe ahora para poner alto a la guerra y acabar con el racismo) y un número que sigue incrementando de grupos aliados y amigos en todas esquinas del movimiento progresista y anti imperialista.

Es importante notar que este movimiento nuevo, que ha crecido tan rápidamente, ha emergido en un momento de plena reacción. El desastre del 11 de septiembre abrió la puerta políticamente por la agrupación militarista y derechista en Washington iniciar una ofensiva mundial. Salieron a todo vapor a implementar una campaña de expansión planeada hace mucho tiempo contra Afganistán, al pueblo palestino permitiendo a Ariel Sharon a atacar severamente a estos, contra las Filipinas y el Norte de África

Y abrieron su campaña para reconquis-

tar a Irak.

Todo esta guerra e intimidación ha sido apoyado, con un grado mayor o menor de entusiasmo, por una maquinaria monolítica de propaganda y la totalidad del establecimiento político de ambos partidos capitalistas. No se han producido ningún desacuerdo en la unidad de clase entre los patrones, los banqueros y sus representantes. Ningún sector disidente de la burguesía imperialista ha emergido

hasta la fecha dando una señal lo más menor de aliento o apoyo a los opositores a la guerra.

Entonces, este movimiento popular ha crecido resistiendo contra todo el peso de la opinión pública durante un período muy reaccionario. Manifestaciones espontáneas han sido organizadas en cientos de ciudades, pueblos y

campos universitarios, pero la existencia de un movimiento nacional ha sido ayudada indispensablemente por las iniciativas de la coalición ANSWER.

El movimiento es amplio y anti imperialista

El sello de la ANSWER ha sido de amplificar y unificar al movimiento por proporcionar una plataforma a toda voz genuina en contra de la guerra, no importa la perspectiva política. A la misma vez, sin embargo, ha garantizado que las voces de los negros, latinos, asiáticos e indígenas, así como los pueblos luchando por su liberación en contra del gobierno estadounidense alrededor del mundo sean escuchados, clara y fuertemente.

ANSWER ha demostrado en la vida real que no hay contradicción entre proveer una plataforma entre las luchas antiimperialistas y la acción de extender y ampliar el movimiento.

De hecho, para que tenga éxito este movimiento, tiene que aliarse con los trabajadores y los oprimidos del mundo, para que no se descarrile por el chauvinismo reaccionario y en pro de la guerra que Washington decida quien es el enemigo. Y tiene que aliarse con los trabajadores y oprimidos de este país, quienes sufren la crisis capitalista que lleva consigo la pobreza, las recortes, los despidos, el racismo y la represión.

El talón de Aquiles verdadero de Washington, a pesar de todo su poderío militar, queda aquí mismo en su casa.

Una guerra de conquista intensifica todos los aspectos reaccionarios de la sociedad capitalista. La clase dominante intenta forzar a las masas hacer el combate en la guerra, pagar por la guerra y subordinar a sus propias demandas por los derechos económicos, sociales y civiles a los intereses de la guerra.

Esto establece el trabajo preparatorio por una resistencia genuina masiva al impulso pro guerra, desde las comunidades hasta los talleres y los campos universitarios. El sentimiento anti guerra se está extendiendo. Organización decidida puede convertir un sentimiento pasivo en una oposición activa, efectiva, militante y amplia.

Esta es la única forma para poner alto a la guerra. □