

**WORLD TO THE PENTAGON**

**End colonial occupations**

**Bring the troops home now!**

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**FOLLOWING MADRID BOMBING**

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By Deirdre Griswold

One year after “Shock and Awe,” an international movement against war and occupation is shaking up capitalist governments around the globe. On March 20, millions of people spread over at least 60 countries will be in the streets again to tell the U.S., Britain and any government that sends its troops to be colonial occupiers that the people intend to resist.

All the lurid excuses for the assault on Iraq have been proven lies. There were no weapons of mass destruction—except the ones the Pentagon used to blast apart Iraq’s government buildings, electricity grid and bridges. The vastly increased suffering of the Iraqi, Afghan and now Haitian peoples grows directly out of the intervention of those claiming to “liberate” them. No puppet governments and high-blown “constitutions” written by the conquerors can change that fact. And so the wars go on as resistance movements rise out of the subject peoples’ anguish and outrage.

The real motive behind the Washington/London plan to reshape the Middle East can’t be concealed. It stinks to high heaven. It is control over the most vital resource in the world today: oil. Whoever controls the Middle East oilfields can dominate the planet, is how the corporate

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**Workers World Party to anti-war protests:**

**Stay organized, no matter what**

The fact that you are at the March 20 demonstrations shows you already know the importance of mass mobilizations. That’s how social change has always come about—through direct struggle by those who are defending the interests of the vast majority but are ignored, demonized or ridiculed by the authorities and the corporate media.

You must stand firm and STAY ORGANIZED.

The wars and occupations we are protesting today have no justification. Whether it is U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan or Haiti, or a U.S.-backed settler regime taking away the land and national rights of the Palestinian people, the aggressions of this country, with its enormous wealth and military might, have done grave damage and caused deep and lasting harm—first of all to the people

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# Housing subsidies for poor face new threat

By Heather Cottin

If the Bush administration has its way, millions of people will face homelessness very soon.

Congress is set to vote on sweeping changes in the program known as Section 8. Since its New Deal beginning in 1937, the program has provided assistance to poor people who cannot afford rent.

The first in the current wave of cuts in federal housing assistance occurred under the Clinton administration. The attack on Section 8 is the result of pressure from reactionaries intent on what they call "starving the beast." This means destroying government social programs by cutting funds, which are then handed over to the rich and the military.

In right-wing circles, within bourgeois-endowed organizations like the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute and the American Enterprise Institute, paid intellectuals generate propaganda campaigns to argue for these cuts. They have successfully and cynically decimated the welfare system, health and educational programs for poor children. They have slashed food stamps and Medicaid. Elders, orphans and the disabled face a reactionary full-court press against Social Security.

As a result of the worldwide capitalist crisis, attacks on the gains of poor people and workers have been unrelenting. The next goal is to eliminate the Section 8 voucher program that provides housing for the elderly, disabled and the poor. Section 8 helps over 2 million people afford rental housing. It provides up to 30 percent of rent money for people who have faced the precipitous rise of rental prices in the past 25 years.

Even as it stands, the Section 8 program is insufficient

for current housing needs. Housing assistance has declined dramatically since the Section 8 voucher program was initiated 30 years ago.

During the Ford administration over 400,000 Section 8 annual vouchers were granted. President George W. Bush's 2003 budget request calls for cutting this to 34,000, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

In February Bush released his 2005 budget, which contains a Section 8 cut of 40 percent over the next five years. This would result in a loss of 250,000 vouchers immediately.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that by 2009, were these cuts to go through, \$4.6 billion will have been taken from poor people who need housing assistance. The cuts will fall disproportionately upon people of color. The Section 8 cutbacks are widely seen as racist.

State and local housing agencies will have to reduce the number of families served by 600,000 by 2009. This is about 30 percent of the number of households presently served by the program.

Without Section 8 assistance, tenants across the country will have to come up with another \$2,000 per year by 2009.

On Long Island, N.Y., where over 2,650 people are homeless, local agencies are worried. They have stopped taking names for housing assistance. This is the story everywhere.

One executive of a community housing program told the March 11 *Newsday*, "Many of the extremely poor will wind up in shelters." In New York City the Housing Authority estimates that \$45 million will be lost, which will translate immediately into a loss of 5,500 homes. □

*This week ...*



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# End colonial occupations

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mind looks at it. It's no coincidence that the Bush dynasty has long been intertwined with the major corporations that profit from pumping, transporting and marketing oil, as well as building the facilities vital to the industry.

Control of the Middle East is also why the U.S. big-business government funds and supports Israel's suppression of the Palestinians, which has reached monstrous proportions.

But an appetite for global domination is not what motivates billions of people around the world. They want jobs, food to eat and potable water to drink, a roof over their heads, an education for the rising generation, and peaceful economic development to sustain a healthy and fruitful life.

Two different goals for the world. Imperialist institutions like the International Monetary Fund say they're compatible. They have been promising for quite a while now that capitalist globalization will help poorer countries prosper. Instead, it has brought global competition for jobs, the spread of substandard wages without ben-

efits, the destruction of indigenous industries in poorer countries, mass migration in search of work, and the looming threat of another, more dangerous economic crisis.

The global anti-war movement that is grappling with all this arises from the growing gap between possibility and reality. The means exist for global cooperation and prosperity. New technology doesn't have to bring misery and destruction. The movement's slogans say what should be happening: Money for education and jobs, not for war! Bring the troops home! Free, free Palestine! End racism and bigotry, embrace the world's diversity!

To the architects of empire, these are subversive words. They'll encourage the terrorists, says George W. Bush. Good gracious, says Donald Rumsfeld as he orders more troops to Iraq.

To the rest of us, these slogans spur the hope that humanity will not accept endless war and oppression. That is not our fate. The future lies with the struggle of the workers and all the oppressed. A much, much better world is possible, and billions of people know it. □

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## Mumia Abu-Jamal:

# A powerful voice against war and racism

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

*"The U.S. used the lie of weapons of mass destruction to unleash a war against a sovereign nation and now occupies a nation torn by conflict with a very real threat of civil war. Americans should reject the policy of pre-emption, which really means 'might makes right.'"*

*"If we have learned anything from history, it is that the strong are not strong for long; that empires rise and empires fall; that fates of nations are written in how they use their powers. The same class, and in some cases the very same people who supported the Iraqi regime militarily, damned them a decade later for using the very weapons they provided them with."*

*"They used the resolutions of the U.N. to justify a mindless cruel war of regional conquest. The people were right in spring 2003 when they demanded 'no war for oil.' They are right now. Let the world hear your demand, 'End the Occupation!'"*

—Mumia Abu-Jamal's excerpted message to March 20 protests

Since Sept. 11, 2001, African-American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has written scores of political commentaries focused on issues relating to war and U.S. foreign policy, while sitting in a small cell 23 hours a day on Pennsylvania's death row. For those who may ask, "What does Mumia have to do with the anti-war movement?" the answer is: everything.

This is a time when the link between U.S. wars and corporate profits could not be any clearer, and when infiltration, surveillance and intimidation of social movements, particularly those led by people of color seeking justice against the system, are heating up.

From the time he joined the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party as a teenager until he became a well-known political writer and commentator, Mumia Abu-Jamal devoted a great deal of attention to police brutality and racism. At a news conference in 1978, he challenged Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo's account of the killing of a police officer during an assault on the MOVE family that resulted in the false imprisonment of nine MOVE members. The FBI's COINTELPRO program conducted surveillance on Abu-Jamal for his political activities in similar ways that the government is targeting anti-war and anti-globalization activists working against U.S. foreign policy today.

"We would like to make it clear that our definition of war implicates not only U.S. foreign policy but U.S. domestic policy," says Teishan Latner, an organizer with the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia. "At its foundation, war is about power and control. War is bombs dropping on Iraq and Afghanistan, but war is also 2 million people in the U.S. prisons and the neo-slavery of corporate prison

labor where people of color and poor whites are better represented than in almost any other institution."

ICFFMAJ is organizing contingents for the March 20 protests, where they will demand freedom for Abu-Jamal, and justice for all victims of war, criminalization and oppression.

"We strongly believe that Mumia's struggle cannot and should not be separated from the conventional anti-war movement," Latner continued. "It is the same struggle, or should be. The movement for Mumia's freedom is a struggle against the war machine of prison expansion, police violence, the racist death penalty and the criminal injustice system, and the very arrangements of white supremacy and capitalism on which they stand—the same foundations on which the imperialism of wars on Iraq and Afghanistan rests. In the age of globalization, what happens in U.S. prisons and what happens in Baghdad streets are linked by corporations and powerful institutions of war and profit making."

### Legal injustice

Since Dec. 9, 1981, the United States has imprisoned Mumia Abu-Jamal, accused of fatally shooting Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. From the moment of his arrest and shooting by Philadelphia police, to his kangaroo-court-style trial by white supremacist Judge Albert Sabo, on through numerous appellate court reviews, the documented misconduct by police, prosecutors, and judges spell injustice with a capital I.

"Everything that is wrong with our legal system and death penalty is evident in this case," said San Francisco lawyer Robert R. Bryan, who is filing a new round of appeals for Abu-Jamal in Pennsylvania and federal courts. "I've

never seen a case with so many problems in 30 years of death penalty litigation."

On March 8, Bryan filed appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court asking whether it is permissible under the Fifth, Sixth, and 14th Amendments for a judge to preside over a capital murder trial in which he—Judge Sabo—was overheard saying during the proceedings in reference to Abu-Jamal, "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em fry the n\*\*\*\*r."

"Racism is a thread in this case from the point of arrest," said Bryan. His petition focuses on the political and legal repression in Abu-Jamal's case.

Abu-Jamal remains on SCI Greene death row despite a 2002 ruling by Fed-

eral Judge William Yohn reversing the death sentence—and despite the taped admission by former mob hit man Arnold Beverly that he, not Abu-Jamal, killed Faulkner.

On April 24—the eighth anniversary of President Bill Clinton's signing of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and in celebration of Mumia Abu-Jamal's 50th birthday—demonstrations will be held in Philadelphia, San Francisco, and outside the United States calling for freedom for Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. In Philadelphia, organizers are calling on everyone who has been touched by him, from former comrades in the Black Panther Party to those who know him from his writings and commentaries, to march in the streets in recognition of Mumia Abu-Jamal's heroic leadership in the struggle against war, racism and the brutal prison system. □

## Imprisoned Peltier is a 'warrior' hero

*Last year Daniel Yang, godson of imprisoned Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier, delivered an Eagle Feather to Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba—the highest honor AIM can bestow. Leonard Peltier has spent 28 years of a life sentence in prison for the fatal shootings of two FBI agents at the Wounded Knee reservation in 1975. Even though he has been turned down numerous times for parole, all evidence has pointed to his innocence. The following are excerpts from Yang's comments to Granma, the official newspaper of Cuba, last Aug. 27:*

Leonard Peltier is a symbol of the American Indian Movement. For the U.S. to release him and thus say he is not guilty they take on the guilt of the murder and exploitation of our people. Nobel laureates from around the world have demanded his release. Even the FBI ... has said they do not know who shot the two agents. For 500 years they have employed a policy of genocide against us but we will not lie down. This is why they will not release him.

President Clinton visited Pine Ridge Reservation while he was running for reelection and made a promise to release Peltier. ... We later found out that people from the Justice Department told Clinton that they had other indictments they could use against Clinton beside the Monica Lewinsky perjury case if he released Peltier. Leonard ... had packed his stuff ... the family was waiting for him at the penitentiary when we got the call on that final day that the release was not going through.



FREE LEONARD PELTIER

Leading up to that, 25 million signatures were collected around the world demanding his release. Unfortunately, Leonard is best known in Europe, Russia and areas of Latin America, but less so in the United States. The government has not allowed his incarceration to be discussed in the media.

The U.S. government from 1973-1976 was at Pine Ridge Reservation with the highest concentration of FBI agents anywhere. Over 300 traditional AIM members were murdered. Not one of the murders was investigated.

I owe everything to AIM. ... I'm a product of the movement as much as the [Cuban] Five are a product of the Revolution here in Cuba. It's important to show the world, the United States, that we will not give in to intimidation, we will always fight. We have fought the same imperialism, exploitation and colonialism. Our combined history is in our blood.

Solidarity lets him [Peltier] and others like the Cuban Five know they are remembered even if legal avenues continue to close. They can only be free through international solidarity. □

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For information contact the International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal call 215-476-8812 or email icffmaj@aol.com. For more information visit [www.mumia.org](http://www.mumia.org), [www.Millions4mumia.org](http://www.Millions4mumia.org) and [www.iacenter.org](http://www.iacenter.org)

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# The fallacy of the 'anybody but Bush' movement

By Fred Goldstein

All those gripped by the "anybody but Bush" fever should pause to reflect on the actual situation, stripped of fraudulent hype and false hopes.

To be sure, the Bush administration is one of the most reactionary regimes in recent years. Under the false slogan of the "war against terrorism," Bush has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq; expanded U.S. military bases in Central Asia, sent troops to the Philippines, Yemen, Africa and now Haiti; and given the Sharon government the go-ahead to step up its aggression against the Palestinian national movement. Bush pushed passage of the Patriot Act and engaged in wide-ranging repression against peoples of the Middle East and south Asia. Bush has threatened Iran, Syria, North Korea and Cuba. This is only a partial list.

But wait a minute. Who is the leading candidate to take Bush's place? John Kerry. What is Kerry's actual record? He is trying to out do Bush in his promotion of the so-called "war against terrorism"—the ideological premise for all the international aggression and repression of the Bush administration—and it has been adopted whole by Kerry.

Kerry voted for the war against Afghanistan and fully supports the present occupation of that country. Kerry voted for and fully supported the war in Iraq. His homepage declares, "Whatever we thought of the Bush administration's decisions and mistakes—especially in Iraq—we now have a solemn obligation to complete the mission, in that country and in Afghanistan. Iraq is now a major magnet and center for terror ... we must stay in Iraq until the job is finished." Thus he is for the occupation of both countries—the crimes begun by George W. Bush are fully supported by Kerry.

Kerry voted for the Patriot Act. While he might trim a provision or two here or there, he has not denounced John Ashcroft's witch-hunt or demanded the release of thousands being held in detention or facing deportation for manufactured or petty charges simply because they have been caught in the massive "homeland security" dragnet. He has not denounced the arbitrary search, seizure and prosecution of Muslim organizations on trumped-up charges across the country.

Kerry is a staunch supporter of Israel—and for the same reason that he is a supporter of the "mission" in Iraq. That "mission" is to seize the second-largest oil reserves in the world, set up strategic bases in the center of the Arab world, and guard the oil-rich Persian Gulf for the oil companies, U.S. capitalist industry and the Pentagon. On this question there is not a ray of daylight between Kerry and Bush, style and rhetoric aside.

Bush, of course, is the darling of Wall Street, the oil industry and all the corporate benefactors who have thrown money at him for his campaign—\$150 million and still rising.

However, it should be remembered that the U.S. Senate has long been known as the "millionaires' club" and Kerry is among the richest members of the club. Kerry and his wife Teresa Heinz Kerry have a combined fortune, according to the Center for Public Integrity, of anywhere between \$200 million and \$840 million, depending upon the valuation of their

portfolio. And it is not all Heinz money. Kerry comes from a wealthy background.

Kerry is a trusted agent of the ruling class, having been in the Senate for 19 years. He serves on the prestigious Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Intelligence Committee and Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. This latter committee regulates the auto industry and the communications industry. Kerry has been involved in the growing centralization of monopoly power in the media.

In these committees Kerry rubs shoulders day-in and day-out with many of the 50,000 corporate lobbyists who have a lock on Washington. He deals with representatives of finance and industry, with the CIA, the DIA, State Department officials and military officials, and in general has been groomed as a guardian of ruling-class interests.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, he has been the largest recipient of corporate donations in the Senate. In the last election cycle alone, he got large contributions from the health care, automobile and airlines industries, among others. His rhetoric against special corporate interests is pure demagoguery.

## Kerry to Wall Street: 'I'm pro business'

A Feb. 17 Wall Street Journal article entitled "Kerry Gets a Lifeline from Wall Street" described house meetings with financial big-wigs, including top executives from such firms as Blackstone Group, UBS bank, Citibank and others. Louis Susman, vice-chairperson of investment banking for Citigroup, is Kerry's national finance chair. Citigroup is one of the largest globalizing exploiters in the world and is the bank that helped finance the schemes of Enron, WorldCom and Parmalat, among others.

The article noted Kerry's problem of having to bash corporations in order to gain popular support at the same time that he seeks corporate money. "Kerry is using populist corporate-bashing rhetoric to woo the party's liberal base, even as a campaign adviser privately sends the reassuring message that the senator is really 'pro-business' and will be 'more nuanced going forward.'" Such is the cynicism of capitalist politics—and in particular Democratic Party politics, whose leadership is loyal to the imperialist ruling class but whose voting base is largely among the workers, the oppressed and progressive sections of the middle class.

What stands out clearly under a close examination of the politics, the finances and the history of Kerry is that the entire presidential election, as it is projected by the anybody-but-Bush ideology—as a race

between progressivism, liberalism or whatever sanitized label is used to justify voting for Kerry and the Democratic Party—is dangerously false and misleading.

Are there differences between Bush and Kerry, between the Republican and Democratic Party leaderships? Of course there are differences. Is the Bush administration further to the right than a Kerry administration might be? Yes. But what does this mean for the workers and the oppressed and all genuine opponents of reaction?

The Kerry forces would like to point to the domestic arena to differentiate Kerry from Bush. While it is true that Kerry is not as far to the right on social issues, it must not be forgotten that he voted for the joint effort by Clinton and Newt Gingrich to destroy welfare—the so-called Welfare Reform Act, which plunged millions of women, children and single men into the deepest poverty. Nor should his support for Clinton's Effective Death Penalty Act be forgotten—which set up a vast acceleration of executions across the country. Of course, Kerry is also firmly against same-sex marriage.

Just because Bush is a reactionary, that does not make Kerry a progressive. In fact Kerry, or whoever might have been chosen by the Democratic Party as a candidate to take over the running of the capitalist state, would be a solid representative of U.S. imperialism whose goal would be to strengthen and expand its domination on the world arena.

Kerry's attitude towards the Pentagon, U.S. militarism and the domestic repressive apparatus of the state is firm and unyielding. In his major "anti-terrorism" speech in Los Angeles, reported in the Feb. 27 Washington Post, Kerry denounced Bush for "doing too little" in the "war on terrorism." He attacked the "doctrine of unilateral preemption" as having "driven away our allies and cost us the support of other nations." He said Iraq is "in disarray," with U.S. troops "bogged down in a deadly guerrilla war with no exit in sight."

Kerry is not opposed to the Iraq War. He is opposed to the fact that the Bush group underestimated the Iraqi people's capacity for resistance and hatred of colonial occupation. Kerry has no intention of putting a stop to the drive towards world domination. Kerry and his faction in the ruling class feel that U.S. domination through multilateralism is preferable because it's more effective. He and his co-thinkers feel that the Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz grouping, by breaking up the old alliances with the imperialist rivals in Germany and France—by refusing to share the loot with the other thieves and derisively calling them the

"Old Europe"—and by their failures in Iraq and Afghanistan have actually demonstrated the weakness and dependence of U.S. imperialism, not its omnipotence.

The factions of the ruling class around Kerry feel that the U.S. military is overstretched; that the aggressive policies of the Bush administration have not been thought out; that the implications of trampling on alliances were disregarded, and that Washington had to humiliate itself when it sent its emissaries to try to raise funds for the occupation of Iraq and the Europeans sent them home empty-handed. They feel that vilifying the United Nations, such a historically and potentially useful tool for U.S. imperialism, was another blunder, because Bush now has to beg and cajole the UN Security Council to pull its irons out of the fire in Iraq.

## Kerry to Spain: 'Don't pull out'

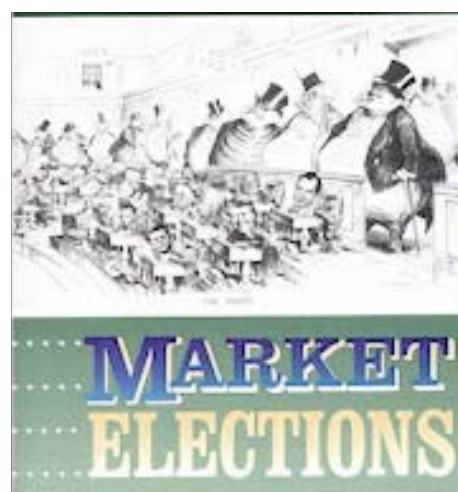
To show his dedication to the occupation of Iraq, Kerry criticized the newly elected Prime Minister of Spain, Luiz Rodriguez Zapatero, for declaring that he would pull Spanish troops out of Iraq. What Zapatero should have said, according to Kerry, is to declare "This increases our determination to stay until the job is done." So Kerry wants the Spanish imperialists to stay and help U.S. imperialism complete its "mission" of recolonizing the Iraqi people.

Kerry accused the Bush administration of stretching the military thin. Is his answer to pull the troops out? Not at all. He proposes adding 40,000 troops to the Army for "the remainder of the decade" so that he, Kerry, "would be prepared to use military force to protect our security, our people and our vital interests."

Kerry's criticism boils down to this: Bush's policies have weakened U.S. imperialism. And his program can be summed up in this: He will reverse Bush's mistakes and strengthen U.S. imperialism.

The ruling-class opposition to Bush has the view that alliances are essential to expanding Washington and Wall Street's global domination. Careful orchestration is necessary. The Bush experiment with openly declared "preemption" has failed. Better to follow the Clinton model in the war against Yugoslavia, or the Bush Sr. model in the first Gulf War of 1991. Round up the imperialist allies. Give them something for their efforts. Be dominant but not so openly arrogant that you engage in a policy of self-encirclement, self-isolation from your fellow bandits.

The masses of the world are too numerous and too formidable for U.S. imperialism to confront them all alone. Iraq and Afghanistan are early proof of that. Kerry proposes a renewed leadership which will



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BY VINCE COPELAND

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## 'LeiLani Dowell for Congress'

kicked off her campaign for Congress at a March 8 gathering.

Held at The Transfer, a bar in the LGBT community of the Castro district, the event was a fitting beginning to a campaign with dynamic possibilities to break through the media focus on the big business parties. Dowell, a 26-year-old lesbian of African American and Hawaiian descent, is running on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket against Congresswoman

Nancy Pelosi. Dowell is a member of Workers World Party, a youth organizer and media spokesperson for International ANSWER, and a labor-studies student at San Francisco State University.

Many people attended the kickoff who had not been at a Workers World event

before and they expressed enthusiasm for Dowell's campaign. Community activists and members of Workers World Party and the Peace and Freedom Party spoke about the importance of Dowell's run for Congress.

"It's important for the LGBT community to support LeiLani because she's a radical alternative," lesbian prison rights activist Judy Greenspan told the crowd. "San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom may have sanctioned gay marriage but he's outlawed the existence of the homeless."

Dowell pointed to Pelosi's anti-people track record. "She has never said anything about Haiti, she was for the war on Iraq and she is pro-Israel," Dowell said. "But my campaign is not just against Pelosi. We are also waging a campaign against the bankruptcy of the capitalist system. People ask me why I'm running in a bourgeois election. I'm not running to get in office but to build an independent movement of people." □

return to the cunning of old.

The workers, the union movement, all the people who suffer from one or another form of oppression in U.S. capitalist society have absolutely no stake in rushing to prop up Kerry in the hope that this will somehow bring them salvation. Right now moves are afoot in the labor movement, women's movement, the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement, and in many progressive circles to raise huge funds to pour into the Kerry campaign.

Kerry has reportedly already accumulated a \$70-million fund, more than \$40 million of it from the labor movement alone. The progressive, anti-Bush forces, instead of turning it over to a demagogic politician from the very establishment that is carrying out war, oppression and exploitation, could make use of even a small fraction of that money to mobilize the mass of the people into a militant fight-back movement that could take to the streets, in Washington and cities across the country. That is the way to answer the Bush reaction.

This war drive has nothing to do with Bush versus Kerry. It has to do with the profit system that they both serve. The capitalist system is in a constant state of crisis worldwide. Every day the financial managers of Wall Street study the economic numbers, hoping they will bring them some news of job growth. They are confounded by their own system, which drives them more and more to exploit workers, expand production, increase productivity and lower wages to bolster profits. This contradiction drives them to every corner of the globe, and that requires war, intervention and occupation.

Only an independent, mass working-class struggle against the evils of the system and against the system itself can push back capitalist reaction and war. □

By Brenda Sandburg  
San Francisco

The rich have their candidates, plenty of them. Now, in San Francisco, working and poor people have a chance to vote for one of their own. LeiLani Dowell officially

## Baltimore student strike

# 'We want our money!'

By Sharon Black  
Baltimore

On March 9, over 1,000 students and their supporters held a dynamic rally in front of Baltimore's City Hall chanting "We want our money" and "Education, not incarceration." Students then took their message to the streets and marched to the Maryland Department of Education.

Students from 10 high schools boycotted classes in response to a call for a one-day strike. They also attended the rally and march despite Mayor Martin O'Malley's televised message to stay in school and warnings that there might be violence.

This action was student-led and organized by the Algebra Project and the Math Literacy Workers, an innovative group of students who teach their classmates math. Jay Gillian, a local teacher and educational activist, helped found the group. His focus has been to promote student decision-making. The students met and planned the action in response to the growing crisis of funding for Baltimore's schools.

One of the youth leaders, 15-year-old Chantel Morant, told the Sun newspaper that much of what she believes comes from her mother, Mary Morant, a veteran transit bus driver. "My mother," Morant said with great fondness, "she makes me aware of my self-value. She's a very good person. She's an activist. She's part of the All Peoples Congress. She introduced me to the world of advocacy."

The students garnered support from teachers, the All Peoples Congress, ACORN, the Parent Teachers Association and other community groups.

The students' major demand is to enforce a court order that would provide \$260 million yearly in extra money as part of the Thornton Act settlement. This law was passed to equalize per-pupil funding of poorer schools, which are mostly but not exclusively in the city of Baltimore, and better-funded richer schools. The Thornton Act was aimed at eliminating racism in funding within the school sys-



Baltimore's students want equal school funding.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

tem. The state has refused to abide by it.

In February, 10,000 teachers, students and parents marched in Annapolis, Maryland's capital, to demand the state implement the Thornton Act. Baltimore/Maryland ANSWER mobilized support and distributed thousands of flyers.

The Baltimore city school system has reported a \$58-million deficit, fueling calls that the School Board resign. It also prompted Maryland's governor and the mayor of Baltimore to demand teachers take furloughs—unpaid time off—and wage cuts. It has prompted layoffs and fears of larger layoffs in the future.

At the rally, students addressed the issue of school workers in many of their talks, calling for support of teachers and cafeteria workers and others who have helped them. These possible widespread layoffs have the young people worried.

In an act of defiance, teachers have voted against accepting wage cuts and furloughs. This prompted a crisis for the city and state administrations. A struggle broke out on all sides. The Maryland government has offered to loan the Baltimore city schools money in much the same manner as the World Bank offers loans to poor

and oppressed countries—with strings attached. The state controls everything.

The racism and arrogance of the state government, represented by Gov. Robert Ehrlich, has prompted Baltimore's City Council to pass resolutions against the state's efforts to disenfranchise the city.

There has been much discussion in the press about corruption on the Baltimore School Board, which is primarily appointed by state officials—but the media have ignored the more thoroughgoing issues of widespread racism and the lack of real funding for education.

All Peoples Congress organizers and students have been quick to point out that the trillions spent on war over the last decade, and even the recently appropriated \$87 billion "supplemental" fund for the Iraq occupation, could provide a decent education, good schools, adequate books and decent salaries for teachers and school workers. Advocate groups in the city are calling for the schools to be run by teachers, students and parents—not the state.

The student strike, rally and march prove that students must and will play a very important role in this process. □

## CALIFORNIA

# 10,000 students fight tuition hikes

By Alexandra Phillips

On March 15, some 10,000 community college students from around California converged on the state capital, Sacramento, to demand an end to program cuts and tuition hikes.

Tuition was \$11 per unit last fall. It will rise to \$26 per unit this fall. This means that next semester, the average community college student will pay over \$300 to enroll.

Community colleges have traditionally been an affordable alternative for poor and working-class students, who received valuable job training and certification. Now some 200,000 students will be forced out of school because they can't pay the steep new tuition.

The march and rally to the State Capitol comes at a time when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has announced a plan to cut 8,000 incoming first-year students from the California State University and University of California system this fall.

Phillips is a youth and student organizer with the ANSWER coalition.

# Women's rights & Black liberation 'Ain't I a woman?'

By Leslie Feinberg

Women—Black, Latina, Native and white—were a significant activist force in the 18th and 19th centuries to abolish chattel slavery in the South of what is now the United States.

And women played a strong role against slavery internationally as well. Many of the 60,000 Irish people who signed an anti-slavery petition in 1841, for instance, were women.

In this country, women were often in the leadership of crowds that freed Black people in the North who had escaped enslavement and were being forcibly returned after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1793. A large group of Black women in Boston in 1836, for example, liberated two Black men from the custody of the sheriff who was returning them as “fugitives” to shackles in the South.<sup>(1)</sup>

Vigilance committees that united Black and white were organized throughout the North to stop bounty hunters and arrests, and to liberate those already in custody. Thousands—Black and white, women and men—took part in rescue attempts, many of them successful.

Black women and white women formed female anti-slavery societies. Some were all white and refused admission to Black women. Some, striving to unite against racism, had Black and white members and, in a few cases, supported the right of Black people—North and South—to self-determination. And Black women organized their own network of groups that had an anti-racist, as well as anti-slavery focus.<sup>(2)</sup>

While wealthy white women and relatively well-to-do Black women often played leading roles, poorer women activists—including Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frances E.W. Harper and Maria Stewart—were prominent leaders in the Abolition movement, as well. And the ranks of the burgeoning movement were filled with washerwomen, domestic servants and factory workers.

But all women who became active in the movement to end slavery faced sex and gender barriers that forced them to battle to expand their rights as women in political, economic and social spheres.

White women from all classes were trying to shatter the dominant, bourgeois ideals of “true” womanhood held aloft by the Northern patriarchal industrialist ruling class—the “cult of true womanhood.” Free Black women in the North were struggling, together with their entire oppressed nation, to overturn enslavement in the South and to fight for economic and social rights in the North under wage slavery. As a result, many Black women fought to shatter the vicious white-supremacist stereotypes of African women in relation to the “virtues” of white womanhood.

## Knocking over the ‘pedestal’

European colonialists had attempted to wipe out any knowledge of the more complex organization of sex and gender prevalent in Native and African nations as part of its cultural genocide.

Kidnapped African peoples represented many nationalities, spoke different languages and came from diverse cultures with beliefs about sex and gender that con-

tradicted the rigid and repressive dominant concepts in 19th-century North America.

The same was true for diverse Native nations. When the Spanish invaded the Antilles and Louisiana, “they found men dressed as women who were respected by their societies. Thinking they were hermaphrodites, they slew them.”<sup>(3)</sup>

Conquistador Nuño de Guzmán, describing his assault on indigenous people in 1530, wrote that the last Native person taken prisoner, who had “fought most courageously, was a man in the habit of a woman. ...”<sup>(4)</sup>

The group Gay American Indians has documented what they refer to as alternative gender roles in 135 Native nations on this continent.<sup>(5)</sup>

The tremendous organizing and actual battles to abolish slavery gave rise to the demand to win greater sex and gender freedom. It was like a fresh wind that lifted the heads of many who strived for progressive societal change.

The following is a description from the Nov. 21, 1866, New York Herald of those who attended the American Equal Rights Association, founded in May of that year

## PART 2

to weld the struggles for Black and women’s suffrage into one campaign. It’s raw and offensive, yet it describes the breadth of the movement at that time and in language not unlike that of right-wing pundits today.

“All the isms of the age were personated there. Long-haired men, apostles of some inexplicable emotion or sensations; gaunt and hungry looking men, disciples of bran bread and white turnip dietetic philosophy; advocates of liberty and small beer, professors of free love in the platonic sense, agrarians in property and the domestic virtues; infidels, saints, negro-worshippers, sinners and short-haired women ... Long geared women in home-spun, void of any trade mark, and worn to spite the tariff and imposts; women in Bloomer dress to show their ankles, and their independence; women who hate their husbands and fathers, and hateful women wanting husbands.”

## ‘Cross-dressing’ charge set back the movement

The Dress Reform movement in the mid-19th century, for example, challenged the law that declared only men could wear trousers. The Bloomer movement, which advocated replacing rib-snapping tight corsets and long skirts that dragged in the manure-filled streets with flowing pantaloons was met with violent outrage from the patriarchs of property.

It was literally labeled “cross-dressing.” Opponents quoted from the Bible, frequently Deuteronomy 22:5: “A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.”

While at least one of the leaders of the Dress Reform movement, Dr. Mary Walker, actually was a female-to-male cross-dresser, everyone who advocated rights for women became targets of anti-gay, trans-phobic and anti-intersexual bigotry. Alongside white supremacy, this divide-and-conquer attack thundered from on high, from the bully pulpit of newspaper editorials to the church dais.

When suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stant-

## Women’s History Month



Sojourner Truth

on wore bloomers to an 1852 women’s rights convention, a journalist accused her of dressing like a man.

But when organizers of a predominantly white, male, anti-slavery convention tried to deny Lucy Stone the right to speak because she was wearing bloomers, the noted Abolitionist Wendell Phillips successfully defended her against the gender-baiting. Phillips replied, “Well, if Lucy Stone cannot speak at that meeting, in any decent dress that she chooses, I will not speak either.”<sup>(6)</sup>

However, the inability to stand up to the storm of sex- and gender-baiting resulted in the decline of the Dress Reform movement. And this defeat was a setback for the Abolition movement, as well, in which women played such an important role.

## ‘Ain’t I a woman?’

But leaders of the most oppressed demonstrated great courage and clarity in the face of gender-phobic and trans-phobic epithets and anti-gay slurs.

The rumor that she was really a man disguised as a woman hounded Sojourner Truth. In Kosciusko County, Indiana, a white doctor who led the pro-slavery forces disrupted her from speaking at an anti-slavery event. “Hold on,” he shouted. “There is strong doubt in the minds of many persons here regarding the sex of the next speaker.” He demanded that this African woman, who had been stripped and whipped by slaveowners, bare her breast to the women present.

Sojourner Truth strode to the podium. She stood some six feet tall. Her voice was described as “rolling thunder.”

“I will show my breast, but to the entire congregation,” she told the gathering as she undid the buttons. “It is not my shame but yours that I do this.”<sup>(7)</sup>

Ministers who disrupted a women’s rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851 also baited her about being a man. Truth, the only Black woman present, reportedly rolled up her sleeve to exhibit the “tremendous power” of her muscles.

She silenced the room with her powerful challenge: “I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as any man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman?”

Abolitionist Frederick Douglass and the other 30 men who attended the first women’s rights conference in Seneca Falls, N.Y., were labeled “hermaphrodites” and “Aunt Nancy Men.”

But Douglass—who had escaped slavery only a decade earlier—never backed down. “I’m proud to be known as a woman’s rights man,” he wrote and said publicly, again and again.

*Next: The most oppressed fought in solidarity with women’s rights*

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WW PHOTO: IAN THOMPSON

## Women’s resistance celebrated

By Page Getz  
Los Angeles

On March 12, almost a century after 30,000 striking sweatshop workers stormed the streets of New York in what became the inspiration for International Women’s Day, the International Action Center here celebrated a history of women’s resistance through art, poetry, music, photography and the voices of today’s struggles for social justice.

The event featured LeiLani Dowell, congressional candidate for the Peace and Freedom Party and a member of Workers World Party.

Stefanie Beacham opened with a brief history on the origins of IWD. Special recognition was made of the recent struggle of the grocery workers in Southern California to defend health care. Of the 59,000 striking and locked-out union members, 60 percent were women.

Jean Chung, president of Historical Justice Now, talked about the ongoing campaign for justice and reparations for the brutal enslavement of Korean women during World War II. Chung brought to the event evocative paintings by women who

were victims of this sexual slavery.

Dowell addressed the struggles of women in the U.S., from the fight to defend women’s reproductive rights to the latest campaign for equal marital rights for same-gender couples and against the prevalence of sexual abuse in the military.

Muna Coobtee of the Free Palestine Alliance spoke about the empowerment of women through the national liberation struggle and the massive contributions Palestinian women make to the Intifada.

Ana Duarte of the International Action Center addressed the significance of women in the Cuban Revolution and women’s steady advancement in the workforce there, in contrast to the U.S.

Images from a year of unprecedented resistance here, captured in the photography of Julia La Riva, formed a backdrop to the event.

The program also included Noraageezi, a Korean women’s vocal group that seek to express the experience of immigrants through music. Mika moved the audience with poems by and about Japanese women who had come to the U.S. early in the 20th century as “picture brides.” □

## Civil disobedience to suits

# Same-sex couples battle for right to marriage

By Leslie Feinberg

District attorneys and legislators, police and presidential hopefuls are trying to retake the beachheads after activism and widespread civil disobedience have pushed forward the struggle for equal access to civil marriage.

In a March 12 news conference, Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney raised the possibility that he might try to block the state from carrying out a ruling by its highest court that Massachusetts must begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on May 17.

In New York, in an extraordinary move by the state, the Ulster County district attorney filed criminal misdemeanor charges on March 15 against two Unitarian ministers who performed same-sex marriages in New Paltz, N.Y.

The Revs. Dawn Sangrey and Kay Greenleaf, plus another minister for whom charges may still be pending, had married 25 couples on March 13. The two had also performed a dozen same-sex marriages a week earlier, after New Paltz Mayor Jason West was socked with 19 criminal counts for wedding more than 25 same-sex couples on Feb. 27.

A March 11 California Supreme Court order put a halt to issuing marriage licenses in San Francisco to same-sex couples, pending a court review in May or June. More than 4,000 couples had been married in City Hall in the city by the bay in the 28 days prior to the court intervention.

More than 2,200 couples obtained mar-

riage licenses in Portland, Ore., before the state attorney general there stepped in to put a halt to it.

The city of Asbury Park, N.J., stopped issuing licenses to same-sex couples on March 9, after an order from the state's attorney general. The city immediately sued the state to recognize the first marriage conducted there.

In both California and New Jersey, supporters of same-sex marriage access—including lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans couples and municipalities—filed counter-suits in the courts.

But as Tom Teepen wrote in a March 16 column for Cox Newspapers, "The crush at welcoming city halls may be pushed back for now, but in its brief season it exposed a huge pent-up pressure among gays and lesbians to see their commitments secured. A social eruption like that, once vented, can

very rarely be capped again."

And new fronts of civil disobedience and solidarity are opening up in the grassroots struggle to win equal access to civil marriage.

### 'Arrest us!'

African American leaders held a powerful rally and media conference on the steps of City Hall on March 14. One of the organizers, City Council Member Phil Reed, told reporters, "In the recent debate and discussion about same-sex marriage, the vast majority of images have been of Caucasian gays and lesbians.

"The truth of the matter is that there are hundreds of thousands of African American gays and lesbians, and many other groups, who are also supporters of same-sex marriage."

Organizations that took part in the rally

included the National Black Justice Coalition, African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change and Gay Men of African Descent.

The NBJC has launched a countrywide campaign opposing a federal constitutional amendment that would deny the equal economic and social rights of civil marriage to same-sex couples.

Latinos and Latinas rallied in front of the Bronx courthouse in support of same-sex marriage rights on March 14. Mark Reyes said in a March 13 statement, "As you know, last week, with the leadership of the Bronx Lesbian and Gay Health Resource Consortium, we held a counter-demonstration to a group of Hispanic evangelical ministers who stood on the steps of the Bronx Courthouse and not only supported President Bush's constitutional amendment, but also spewed bigotry against the gay community in opposing civil marriage rights as well."

A group of some two dozen clergy converged outside police headquarters in Manhattan on March 11, decrying the legal injustice of denying same-sex marriage access. "This is bigotry. This is discrimination," stated Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum. The group called on New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to press state legislators to legalize marriage for all sexes.

The clergy informed the cops that they had performed weddings for same-sex couples and challenged: "We say to the authorities of New York, 'Arrest us!'"

Other Jewish and Christian clergy

*Continued on page 15*



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

## Struggle for equal marriage rights continues in Massachusetts

By Frank Neisser  
Boston

Progressive forces are continuing to mobilize here to defend equal marriage rights for same-sex couples against attempts by legislators to pass an amendment to the state constitution that would take them away.

After years of inaction by the legislature on domestic partner and civil union legislation, last November the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the state constitution guarantees same-sex marriage rights. The court ordered the state to begin granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples by May 17.

In February the legislature failed to pass several versions of an amendment that would have barred same-sex marriage, and adjourned the constitutional session until March 11.

On March 11 a "compromise" amendment that would ban same-sex marriages but create civil unions passed some procedural votes. Opponents of same-sex marriage voted for the amendment to keep the session alive so they could amend it in a more reactionary direction later.

It is not clear whether any version of the bigoted amendment will have the votes for final passage when the constitutional session resumes on March 29.

Civil unions do not offer the same rights as marriage. They do not include the recognition that marriage carries in other states or the federal rights granted to married couples, including survivor rights,

social security and bereavement.

In the week leading up to March 11, forces in support of equal marriage rights rallied around the state and at the State House here in Boston, where 2,000 gathered on March 10.

Speakers included African American State Rep. Byron Rushing, labor union leaders and organizers from the Mass Equality coalition.

The following day, opponents of same-sex marriage rights were bussed to the State House from around the state and beyond. Their signs, chants and slogans were explicitly homophobic.

But the supporters of equal rights outnumbered them in the end. They were diverse, with young people and unionists, groups from schools and progressive supporters from all around the state.

Many rallied to the banners of the Boston chapter of the ANSWER Coalition, the Women's Fightback Network and the Stonewall Warriors of the International Action Center, which read: "Support equal marriage rights for all—discrimination and bigotry hurt everyone! An injury to one is an injury to all!"

Others from these organizations carried placards hitting George W. Bush, John Kerry and Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney for their opposition to equal marriage rights. Other signs from the groups linked the struggle for AIDS funding and health care to the fight against racism and war.

Many Workers World newspapers were distributed, along with a brochure written by Leslie Feinberg about why Workers

World Party supports same-sex marriage rights. ([www.workers.org/ww/2004/samesex0226.php](http://www.workers.org/ww/2004/samesex0226.php))

Participants eagerly took flyers for the March 20 anti-war demonstration in New York.

### Forum projects broader struggle

The Boston chapter of the ANSWER Coalition, Stonewall Warriors and the Women's Fightback Network distributed leaflets at several rallies calling for a meeting days later, on March 13, entitled "Broadening the struggle for same-sex marriage rights—Where do we go from here?"

The meeting was co-chaired by Mahtowin Munro of United American Indians of New England and Frank Neisser of Stonewall Warriors.

Dorothea Peacock, a leader of the Women's Fightback Network, spoke of her experiences as an African American woman growing up under Jim Crow in the South. She conveyed greetings from City Councilor Chuck Turner and cited other African American leaders on the national level who have come out in support of equal marriage rights.

Steve Gillis, president of Steelworkers' Local 8751, the Boston school bus drivers' and monitors' union, came out four-square in support of equal marriage rights. He called it a struggle for workers' rights and against the bosses' two-tier wage and benefit schemes. He saluted the upsurge of the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities surrounding city halls across the country,



WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

Leslie Feinberg

calling it an occupation and picket line that must be supported by all.

AIDS activist John Powell offered his insights as an African American gay man fighting both racism and homophobia. He linked the fight for equal marriage rights and against U.S. wars of occupation as "One struggle—against unjust wars and unjust laws."

The Rev. David Carl Olsen of the Community Church of Boston related how the lack of marriage rights meant that his late partner, who was Dominican, had to pretend to be Puerto Rican while he was dying of AIDS in order to avoid deportation. When Olsen tried to expedite a visit by his

*Continued on page 13*

**BUILDING INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AGAINST WAR**

# ANSWER activist meets anti-war movement in Netherlands

*Workers World interviewed Judi Cheng, an anti-war activist from the ANSWER coalition in New York who toured the Netherlands for a week, meeting with the anti-war movement there.*

**WW: What groups invited you to do the speaking tour in the Netherlands?**

JC: International ANSWER was invited to take part in a speaking tour of the Netherlands from Feb. 10 until Feb. 17, meeting with Dutch peace activists and holding political discussions. The tour was organized by the National Platform, a broad coalition that represents the anti-war and peace movement in the Netherlands. The National Platform includes the New Communist Party of the Netherlands, student activists, labor organizations, religious affiliations and immigrant-rights organizations. It has been actively organizing against what they call "the New War" since December 2001. The National Platform is organizing for the international demonstration on March 20 from cities all across Holland.

**Tell us what the tour was like.**

There were six public forums, one each day of the week, held in various

cities, including The Hague, Amersfoort, Zwolle, Arnhem, and Amsterdam. They were held in community centers where community members and activists came together to hear about the work that was taking place in the United States in preparation for the international march and demonstration on March 20.

The meetings drew up to 50 people of all generations, races, and levels of political consciousness. Generally, the Dutch activists were very aware of issues such as depleted uranium, the U.S. war against Vietnam, the power of media propaganda and economic/social issues facing the Dutch people.

Some of the organizers told me, however, that just as in our own anti-war movement, it is a continuous challenge to raise the level of political consciousness among the average Dutch citizens and to engage the Dutch people in activism against their own government, which has sent 1,100 Dutch military troops to Iraq.

Most Dutch citizens oppose their government's involvement in the U.S./UK invasion of Iraq. Before the invasion, on Feb. 15, 2003, the Dutch people sent a strong message to the government, as 80,000 people protesting the upcoming war filled the streets of Amsterdam, joining 15,000,000 people in 600 cities all around the world. The National

Platform is calling for the Dutch troops to be brought home.

**What kinds of questions came up in the discussions?**

The questions that came up most frequently were: What are people in the United States doing to mobilize against war and imperialism? Are people in the United States aware of the power of the media monopolies? Will the upcoming presidential elections have an impact on the situation in Iraq? What are the problems facing the working and poor people in the United States? Do the people in the United States see the relationship between U.S. aggression and capitalism?

**What did you learn about the situation for workers in the Netherlands?**

Although Dutch workers have more in the way of social services than we do, these are slowly being taken away as the government there puts more tax money into military build-up and uses tax funds to finance Dutch participation in the occupation of Iraq. Dutch society too faces issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, and economic issues such as unemployment.

During my visit, the Dutch government was discussing the plan to expel 26,000 undocumented workers. These



CREDIT: WIL VAN DER KLIFT, NCPN

Judi Cheng at meeting in The Hague.

workers typically hold low-wage, service-sector jobs. Rightists blame them for job losses and strains on the economy.

**What were your overall impressions of the Dutch movement?**

The Dutch anti-war activists that I met were extremely dedicated to the struggle against war and imperialism, working very hard to organize meetings, distribute leaflets. They were coming up with creative ways to get their messages out through alternative newspapers,

# International Women's Day in Japan

*Workers World interviewed Phebe Eckfeldt, an anti-war activist from the ANSWER coalition in Boston who toured Japan for four days around the time of International Women's Day.*

**Workers World: Who invited you to speak in Japan and what meetings took place?**

Phebe Eckfeldt: The National Federation of Women's Democratic Clubs of Japan invited us to speak at a series of meetings to celebrate International Women's Day. From March 5 through March 9 I spoke at four different meetings—in Sendi, Nagoya and two in Tokyo.

Representatives from anti-war groups, farmers fighting U.S. bases, youth groups, unions, teachers, survivors of U.S. bombings spoke at these meetings, which were well attended and had very enthusiastic audiences. Many participants were surprised to hear that the U.S. had an anti-war movement. The pro-government capitalist media has deliberately kept this quiet, so there were many questions about ANSWER's work.

The NFWDC is actively organizing for March 20 along with other progressive Japanese organizations. The main demonstration will be in the heart of Tokyo at Hibiya Park. Many, many cities and towns around Japan will hold actions on March 20.

**What is the women's group history?**

The NFWDC office in Sagami-hara City, Kanagawa Prefecture in Tokyo, is right across the street from a huge military base the U.S. military has occupied since 1945. They used it to ship and



CREDIT: NFWDC-JAPAN

Phebe Eckfeldt at Japan IWD rally.

repair military equipment and dispatch U.S. troops during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and now the war against Iraq. The base goes on as far as the eye can see, taking up acres and acres of prime land in the middle of the city.

Military drills and flight practice are conducted here regularly, creating noise and pollution. There are dangerous chemicals stored at the base. The women, some now in their 70s and 80s, have been fighting this base for many years. They recently staged demonstrations and sit-ins against the dispatch of

Special Defense Forces troops to Iraq, succeeding in convincing some of the Japanese soldiers not to go.

During the Vietnam War the base was a battlefield when the women helped organize anti-tank protests and for 100 days sat in front of the tanks, stopping the U.S. from sending them to be used in Vietnam. Their slogan was, "We won't participate in the Vietnam slaughter!" They built a tent city and unions, housewives, students participated in the struggle. The NWDC office was used as a hospital to treat injured activists beaten by the police.

**Is the issue of U.S. military bases important?**

It's at the forefront of the Japanese anti-war movement. Most people in the U.S. have heard of Okinawa—from which in February 3,000 U.S. troops were dispatched to Iraq—but most do not know that there are somewhere around 78 military bases in Japan. Japan is a densely populated island with very little open space. These bases take up a lot of land, land the Japanese people treasure and revere, land they could cultivate, so they are very angry about it.

One of the highlights of my trip was going to Mt. Fuji, much revered by the Japanese people and the highest mountain in Japan. It is a beautiful snow-capped extinct volcano but there is a U.S. Army training camp right there at the base of it! Live artillery training, with guns and shells exploding, goes on there constantly.

Mothers Against the Field Firing Practice at Northern Foot of Mt. Fuji have been fighting this base since 1960, holding on tooth and nail to their traditional lands. Their slogan at the beginning was, "Don't let them use Mt. Fuji for war in Korea or the Middle East!" They continue to use guerrilla tactics to stop the exercises, including digging holes in the firing range and staying there, building huts and towers in the middle of the firing range, sending their goats into the range with red letters sprayed on their backs, lying down in front of military vehicles, etc.

In November of last year, Marines who were going to be shipped to Iraq came there for firing practice. The mothers continued to interrupt their training. The majority of Japanese people were



# The anti-war movement and Palestine

By Richard Becker

Internet Web sites, and radio news. I thought they were very sophisticated in their political thinking and educated in their knowledge of world events. Many people were anti-capitalist and blamed capitalism for war. There were socialists, communists, anarchists, pacifists, and individuals who simply wanted to take a stand against the war against Iraq.

I was very warmly greeted by all, who clearly distinguished between the people of the U.S. and the government. Nearly everyone had previously heard of International ANSWER, and was excited to know that there were dedicated individuals like themselves fighting injustice, racism and imperialist war from inside the belly of the beast.

I brought with me a display of photos from demonstrations organized by people in the United States, and this got a great deal of attention. This week-long solidarity tour was an important step toward creating a truly international anti-imperialist movement.

## You had an opportunity to meet Philippine leader Professor Jose Maria Sison while in Amsterdam?

I had the honor of visiting with Professor Jose Maria Sison of the International League of Peoples' Struggle and with members of BAYAN International. We exchanged greetings and pledged international solidarity. The Philippines is under continuous threat of colonial occupation by the U.S., which aims to re-establish military bases there. ANSWER tries to combat these attempts. □

opposed to the U.S. invasion and war on Iraq. More than 80 percent of the population was opposed to Prime Minister Koizumi sending 1,000 Japanese SDF troops to Iraq earlier this year. The people are very upset because Article 9 in their Constitution specifically states that Japan will never go to war again.

## What are conditions for women in Japan?

Women workers in Japan are increasingly facing similar conditions as women workers in the U.S. Social services are being cut, leaving women to desperately struggle to find a way for their families to survive.

Giant sweatshops are cutting the work force, so that, for example, the work of 12 women is now done by five. Many women are being forced into part-time work that gives no benefits. The government is telling them it is now a sexually equal society and that women should actively work for the war.

## Is organized labor involved in the anti-war movement?

Representatives of two important unions that are actively opposing the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq spoke at the International Women's Day meetings: the National Railway Motive Power Union of Chiba or Doro-Chiba, which represents the Japan Railway workers, and the Japanese Federation of Aviation Workers Union, which represents the flight attendants. Doro-Chiba just conducted a two-day strike that shut down most of the railway to protest the war as well as U.S. attacks on North Korea. □

A joint statement put out this February by the two major anti-war coalitions in the U.S. organizing for the March 20 mobilization was a step forward for the progressive movement here. The ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition and numerous Arab American, Muslim and other organizations fought for and won the inclusion of the words, "We will march for an end to the occupation of Palestine" in the call for mass demonstrations on the first anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

While the statement is an important advance, the question remains: Why has it been so difficult for the anti-war and progressive movement in the U.S. to take a clear stand in support of the Palestinian national liberation movement? What underlies the movement's deep-seated problem in recognizing that the Palestinian struggle is as clearly anti-colonial as those in South Africa, El Salvador or Vietnam?

Without taking into account the colonial character of Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people—and the key role of the U.S. as Israel's prime sponsor—it is not possible to really understand the struggle that has been raging for more than half a century.

To address the struggle as an anti-colonial one, however, immediately calls into question the legitimacy of the Israeli state. Questioning Israel's legitimacy draws the wrath of the establishment here like few other political positions can. Even the mildest criticism of Israel is often answered with accusations of "anti-Semitism" from its defenders, a serious charge meant to intimidate and neutralize any opposition.

So, some in the anti-war movement advocate side-stepping the Palestinian struggle and focusing only on opposing the U.S. war against Iraq. They argue that the Palestinian-Israeli struggle is too controversial, and supporting the Palestinians will lead to a narrowing of support for the anti-war movement.

But artificially separating the U.S. occupation of Iraq from the U.S.-backed Israeli occupation of Palestine—only a few hundred miles away—does violence to reality. It ignores what the U.S. ruling class is trying to accomplish in the Middle East.

Washington is working to turn Iraq into a permanent colony and control its rich oil resources. But that's not all. The U.S. ruling class aims to subjugate and remold the entire region to fit neatly into its expanding empire.

The larger U.S. objective is predicated on destroying all opposition in the region. At the top of their list of targets are the Palestinian and Iraqi resistance movements. The Palestinian resistance, despite heavy losses suffered in decades of struggle against overwhelming odds, remains strong and deeply rooted in the population.

The Palestinian cause, moreover, is central to the overall struggle in the Middle East. Defeating the Palestinians would be a great victory for imperialism and a big setback for the Arab people as a whole.

## Soviet position on Israel

From the 1950s until its catastrophic collapse in 1991, the Soviet Union was known as a supporter of the Arab cause, and after the 1967 war as a strategic ally of the Palestinian national movement.

When Palestine was illegally partitioned by the United Nations in November 1947, however, the Soviet leadership supported the U.S.-led plan and the creation of the state of Israel. The population of the British colony, then about two-thirds Palestinian Arabs, was never consulted before the partition vote took place.

The support of the Soviet Union and its allies was crucial to the passage of the UN plan. The results were an unmitigated disaster for the Palestinians and for the position of the Communist parties (CPs) in the Arab world. All of the CPs in the Arab world, with the exception of the Iraqi party—then the strongest of the Arab CPs—supported the Soviet position, compromising them in the eyes of the Arab masses.

In the U.S., the Communist Party, then the largest left organization, also supported the creation of Israel.

What could have been the justification for supporting the establishment of a new European colonial/settler state?

The Soviet leadership apparently believed that Israel would be a friendly state. The Soviet Red Army, after all, had overwhelmingly been the force that defeated Nazism and liberated the concentration camps in Poland and eastern Germany. More than 27 million Soviet soldiers and civilians gave their lives to break the back of the Nazi war machine—as compared with about 250,000 U.S. casualties in World War II.

The Nazis massacred 6 million Jewish women, men and children in their genocidal plan to eliminate the Jewish population from Europe altogether. The racist Nazi war machine singled out tens of millions more for slaughter, mainly Slavic and Roma peoples as well as communists, trade unionists, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and others.

There was enormous sympathy with the Jewish survivors of the Nazi camps. After the war, the U.S. government, which had knowingly done almost nothing to stop the Holocaust while it was going on, cynically decided to channel that sympathy and the survivors toward the creation of Israel. (See the book "While Six Million Died," New York, 1967.)

The vast majority of Jewish survivors of the concentration camps who wanted to leave Europe wished to emigrate to the United States. The Truman administration, however, did not want to admit them, viewing many as having socialist or communist leanings.

From the very beginning, the leaders of the Zionist movement, which created Israel, had viewed their success as being dependent on the backing of one or more of the big imperialist powers, whose interests Israel would in turn support.

The fact that in the early years of its existence Israel received crucial support from socialist Czechoslovakia, in the form of arms, and from the Soviet Union, or that much of the Israeli population was pro-socialist and pro-Soviet, could not alter Israel's fundamental relationship with the imperialist West.

But the Soviet and world communist movement's support of Israel did contribute greatly to disorienting the progressive movement, especially in the U.S., with long-lasting effect.

## Democrats, Republicans support Israel

During the Vietnam War, when much of the U.S. military was tied down, Washington became increasingly depend-

ent on surrogates to carry out its imperialist plans worldwide. At the top of the list was Israel.

The list of Israeli interventions around the world is a long one. Israel's role was particularly important where it was politically inconvenient for the U.S. to act openly and directly. For instance, Israel came to the aid of apartheid South Africa (whose National Party leaders, ironically, had been jailed during World War II as Nazi sympathizers) against the people's movement, going so far as to help South Africa acquire and test an atomic bomb in 1979.

Israel supported the fascist Pinochet regime in Chile, and trained and armed the Guatemalan army as it carried out genocide against the Mayan people of that country in the 1980s and 1990s.

But nowhere was Israel's role as an extension of Pentagon power more critical than in the strategic and oil-rich Middle East. Domination of the region has been a fixed objective of U.S. policy since World War II. When the U.S. was tied down in Vietnam, Israel launched a 1967 military strike against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, a war designed to destroy the Arab nationalist regimes.

Israel intervened in the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s, then invaded that country to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1982, all with the full backing of the U.S.

In return for its indispensable role in policing the world on behalf of Corporate America, billions of dollars and seemingly unlimited quantities of high-tech weaponry flow into Israel every year.

Today, with much of the U.S. Army bogged down in the occupation of Iraq, Israel's military role in the Middle East has never been more crucial from Washington's point of view.

And "Washington" doesn't mean the Republicans any more than the Democrats. Both are parties of the rich, of the imperialist system. No matter which one is running the executive branch and international affairs at any particular time, they view Israel as a critical instrument.

Punctuating this reality is the statement recently released by Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry proclaiming that "the cause of Israel is the cause of America," and staking out a position even to the right of Bush's.

For the Democratic Party establishment, as for the Republicans, support for Israel is non-negotiable, because it is non-negotiable for the imperialist establishment as a whole.

Leaders of the anti-war movements who rest their hopes for the future on a Democratic victory in November are under heavy pressure to withhold support for the Palestinian struggle, or, preferably, to keep it off the agenda of the movement altogether.

But counting on the Democrats is counting on an illusion. Already, Kerry has stated that he believes the U.S. is "under-deployed," and needs to send at least 40,000 more troops overseas. Neither Republicans nor Democrats have any intention of giving up the newest addition to their colonial possessions, Iraq, until they are forced to.

Real hope for progressive change depends on building an independent people's movement, here and around the world. To succeed and grow strong, this new movement must stand with the Palestinian Resistance and all those who are confronting the empire. □

**CUBAN FIVE**

# Appeal hearing shows strength of defense case

By Gloria La Riva  
Miami

March 10 was an historic day for the Cuban Five as appeals attorneys presented their oral arguments in a hearing before a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court here in Miami.

Cuban Five supporters accompanied the attorneys at an impromptu press conference outside the courtroom. They said they were optimistic about the possibility of winning freedom for the Cuban Five and that the attorneys had made powerful and compelling presentations.

A decision is expected in several months.

The five prisoners appealing their convictions are Cuban nationals Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González. They were living in Miami, monitoring counter-revolutionary Cuban groups, trying to stop the ultra-right terrorist groups in Miami from carrying out violent actions against the people of Cuba.

The Cuban people have been victims of terror attacks by the Miami-based gangs, many of whom came from the wealthy class that left Cuba after the popular overthrow in 1959 of U.S.-supported dictator Fulgencio Batista.

The five Cubans are in prison because they were framed up in a political witch hunt and railroaded by the U.S. in a seven-month trial in Miami, where it was impossible for them to have an impartial and fair trial.

The written briefs for each of the five, filed in spring 2003, are extensive, with numerous points of appeal. The hearing's aim was to emphasize certain issues and answer judges' questions.

The five attorneys—Leonard Weinglass, Paul McKenna, Joaquin Méndez, Phil Horowitz and Bill Norris—sat together, accompanied by Richard Klugh, deputy chief of appeals for the federal public defender's office in Miami. The three who presented oral arguments were Klugh, Weinglass and Méndez.

The three federal judges chosen to hear the cases were Stanley Birch and Phyllis Kravitch of the 11th Circuit, and James Oakes of the 2nd Circuit Court in New York.

A series of news conferences around the March 10 date, a New York meeting of 400 people, and a full-page ad in the New York



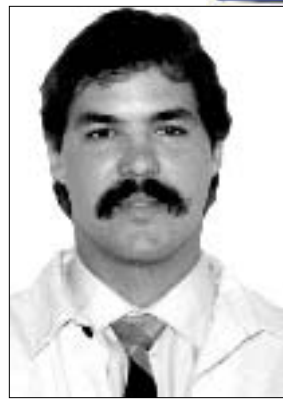
Gerardo Hernández



René González



Fernando González



Ramón Labañino



Antonio Guerrero

Times, published on March 3, raised interest in the case.

**Murder conspiracy charge**

Richard Klugh began the defense arguments by focusing first on the murder conspiracy conviction against Gerardo Hernández. Hernández has been falsely linked by the U.S. government to the Feb. 24, 1996, shutdown by the Cuban government of two Brothers to the Rescue (BTTR) airplanes from Miami.

The Cuban government's shutdown of the planes was an act of self-defense against BTTR's numerous incursions in previous months.

Before the shutdown, Cuba had publicly warned it would take direct action to stop any more invasions of Cuban territory. The U.S. government was warned by its own officials, including Richard Nuccio, who frantically tried to convey messages to President Bill Clinton's national security advisor, Sandy Berger, alerting him of BTTR's provocative plans. BTTR continually invaded Cuban airspace. U.S. authorities did nothing to stop it.

The prosecutor's claim at the trial was that Cuba had planned ahead of time with Gerardo Hernández to have the planes shot down over international waters, not in Cuban territorial airspace. But Cuba has provided radar evidence showing the planes were indeed shot down over Cuban waters.

Count 3, the murder conspiracy charge against Hernández for the deaths of the four pilots, came eight months after the arrest of the Five in 1998, even though Hernández had nothing remotely to do with the shutdown.

U.S. prosecutors concocted a bizarre theory: that Hernández plotted, while liv-

ing in Miami, to have the BTTR planes shot down in international waters. Why? Because, the U.S. said, he followed Cuba's instructions to tell the pilots NOT to fly. There was no evidence that he received such messages.

This background into Count Three is important in order to understand the irrationality of the charge.

At trial, even the prosecutors didn't believe they could win a conviction on Count Three. They went so far as to go before the 11th Circuit Court to appeal for a loosening of the judge's instructions (an "emergency writ of prohibition") in order to gain a conviction. The prosecutors lost the appeal. Still, the Miami jury convicted.

Klugh emphasized the insufficiency of evidence to convict on Count Three.

"The government's burden is heavy. It would have to show that a Cuban field agent knew the Cuban government had concocted a plan to commit extra-territorial murder. ... Cuba would for the first time in its history exceed its sovereignty and murder U.S. citizens."

He said it was unreasonable to believe that Cuba would deliberately plan to shoot a plane down outside its sovereign territory.

Klugh pointed out that former U.S. official Richard Nuccio acknowledged 25 warnings given to the head of BTTR, José Basulto, "an admitted terrorist wanted in Cuba."

Then, on Count Two, conspiracy to commit espionage, Klugh raised the issue of insufficiency of evidence, and excessive sentencing in the three life sentences given to Labañino, Guerrero and Hernández.

The mandatory life sentences came from the U.S. government's claim that the men were engaged in conspiracy to com-

mit espionage, causing "exceptionally grave damage" to the United States.

"The U.S. government rested its case on the fact that two of the agents were at military bases in Florida to count airplanes and determine whether there would be a build-up," said Klugh.

He said that the government at trial conceded that no top-secret evidence was gathered or sent to Cuba.

In his third point, Klugh said that the U.S. Classified Information Procedures Act greatly hampered the defendants' ability to defend themselves properly, because all their personal papers had been confiscated by the FBI and declared classified. They were not able to use their own possessions and documents to show they were not involved in espionage conspiracy against the U.S.

"What was taken from the defendants was significant to provide the whole picture of what they were doing. The question is how could they be sentenced to mandatory life terms when they did not collect any top-secret evidence," Klugh asked.

Leonard Weinglass addressed the important issue of venue and the failure to move the trial from the heavily biased atmosphere of Miami.

**Prosecution story weak**

U.S. Attorney Heck Miller next laid out the government's scenario on the murder conspiracy charge. Her descriptions of Hernández's role and Cuba's intent in the plane shutdown were as incongruous as the original charge.

Miller said he was more than a Cuban field agent, and described him as an officer and able to make policy decisions.

Judge Birch asked in response: "What is the importance of all that vis-à-vis murder?"

Miller said Hernández was "more knowledgeable, he knew more things than others."

Judge Kravitch asked, "What evidence is there that Hernández was involved?"

As the attorneys walked out of the courtroom into the Florida sunshine, they spoke confidently to the bank of television cameras.

Paul McKenna, Hernández's attorney, described the prosecutor as "on the ropes."

News coverage was extensive in Miami and southern Florida. A press conference by the Five's supporters was well attended.

It is impossible to predict the court's decision, which may come in a few months. But their supporters believe the hearing was definitely a step forward and showed the strength of the Five's cause and the lawyers' arguments, and the weakness of the U.S. government's position.

The Committee to Free the Five plans to step up the fight around the world, until the Five are freed and in their homeland. □



## 'Free the Cuban 5!'

On March 10 the National Committee to Free the Five held a news conference at the Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles. The conference was called to keep the pressure on as appeals in the case of the Five were being heard that very day in Miami. Speakers included Preston Wood, National Committee to Free the Five; Juan Jose Gutierrez, Latino Movement USA; Jim Lafferty, National Lawyers Guild; Younghi Kim, Korean-Americans For Peace; Walter Lippman, Los Angeles Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba; and John Beacham, International Action Center.

— Joe Delaplaine



WW PHOTO: JOHN BEACHAM

## After terror strike and gov't lies

# Voters in Spain expel pro-Bush rightists

By John Catalinotto

Three days after a March 11 terror bombing in Madrid, a national election threw out the right-wing Spanish regime. This same regime, led by Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, had hitched the fate of the peoples of Spain to Washington's endless war of conquest.

Now George W. Bush and Tony Blair will put the squeeze on the new social-democratic government of Juan Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Washington and London's diplomatic and economic threats will aim at forcing Zapatero to renege on his promise to the people to bring all 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq back home.

The new crisis unfolding in the Spanish state requires a careful analysis by the workers' movement worldwide, one that starts with the overall international situation.

The collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1989-1991 opened up a vast new area of the world to capitalist penetration and expansion. Imperialist ideologues promised a glorious future with the "end of history." But within a decade, the expansion had ended and the preaching turned toward "endless war."

Since the Asian financial collapse of 1997, the crisis in the world capitalist economy has grown deeper each year. Even where there is economic growth, there are job losses due to advanced technology and intense speedup. Competition among the imperialists has grown sharper.

This economic crisis is at the root of the heightened political tension that in turn has led in many cases to imperialist aggression. The Pentagon attacked and invaded Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq and intervened in Haiti, and now threatens "regime change" in People's Korea, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Despite the weakened and defensive position of the working class and oppressed nations worldwide, these attacks and especially the occupations have led to resistance. Popular resistance to imperialist rule is growing in Iraq and Afghanistan, and shows signs of beginning in Haiti. Palestinians continue to resist occupation by Israel, a U.S. client state.

In addition there have been suicide attacks and bombings of various kinds—from New York and Washington to Istanbul, Iraq, Bali, India, North Africa and now Madrid—that have been directed against civilian populations, with unclear political goals.

In trying to assess the significance of all these terrorist assaults, it is important to remember that the capitalist state apparatus holds a monopoly on information. The police, the army and the secret services control official reports, while propaganda about what happened is disseminated through a compliant media. For the world's working class, there is no reason to believe that they are telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

On the other hand, even this monopoly does not always allow them to control the fallout, as the latest development in the Spanish state has shown.

### Terror bombing in Madrid

On March 11 between 7:35 and 7:45 a.m., bombs destroyed four commuter

**Voters rejected rightist Aznar's pro-war party, but the struggle is still ahead to determine if the workers and youths will unhitch Spain from the U.S. war machine.**

trains traveling from working-class suburbs to downtown Madrid. According to media reports, 10 bombs exploded. The explosions killed over 200 people and injured 1,500. These were workers and students, people from 13 different nationalities, including immigrants from Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The bombs inflicted a horror on the people of Madrid. Progressive and working-class organizations, communist parties within Spain and around the world, guerrilla fighters in other countries—for example, the FARC of Colombia—all sent their condolences and solidarity to the victims in Madrid and condemned the bombing attack.

Some compared it to the suffering for the civilian population of Iraq caused by the Pentagon's bombing of Baghdad and Basra a year ago.

It is common for imperialist strategists to target civilians to advance their political ends and economic plunder in the world. Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state under President Bill Clinton, in 1996 stated outright on network television in an interview with CBS's Leslie Stahl that the sanctions deaths of half a million Iraqi children were worth it, if this would pull down Saddam Hussein.

In World War II, the imperialist countries on both sides—fascist and "democratic"—targeted each other's civilian populations. German planes and rockets bombed London and Coventry, Moscow and Kiev. U.S. planes bombed and incinerated Tokyo's working-class neighborhoods and Dresden even before the final atrocities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then, there has been horrific U.S. bombing of civilians in Korea and Vietnam.

But for Marxist working-class organizations, as well as for authentic liberation fronts, it would be a complete aberration to make a special target of working-class civilians. In Spain, the population targeted on the trains came from neighborhoods that support workers' organizations and were 90 percent against the Iraq war.

In addition, the expected result of such a bombing is for the imperialist governments in Europe to single out immigrants, especially Arab and Muslim communities, for increased repression. They will also attempt to repress left and anti-war mobilizations.

In Spain, another target is the population of the Basque country, one of the nations subject to the Spanish state. Indeed, for its own narrow reasons, the reactionary Aznar regime first blamed the Basque organization ETA for the terror bombings.

The Basques have been waging a struggle for self-determination for decades. Their political activists are tortured in Spanish prisons. Many media reports called the March 11 bombing the biggest terrorist act in Spanish history. They conveniently forgot that during the Spanish Civil War, German planes known as the

Condor Legion who were allied with the Franco fascists bombed the town of Guernica in the Basque country, killing 1,634 and wounding 889 people.

Perhaps state-sponsored terrorism is left out of the establishment media examination, even though Picasso's painting of Guernica captured this particular horror for the centuries.

### Political situation in Spain

Aznar's Popular Party government gave Washington and London's anti-Iraq crusade vital political support last year just as they were preparing to launch the criminal imperialist war. Aznar's strategy has been to bring Spain into the U.S. camp in the hope Spanish monopolies will share in the imperialist spoils. This could be seen in the recent failed mercenary adventure in Africa intended to overthrow the government of the former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea, as well as in Spanish support for Washington's anti-Cuba campaign.

Aznar's government was also known for taking a hard line against the Basque liberation movement and especially the ETA, its armed wing. Aznar must have thought that blaming the bombing on ETA would justify his hard line and rally support for him.

Until March 11 the Aznar group was projected to win the March 14 national election. Polls predicted a narrower victory than in 2000, but still a victory.

After the bombing, the first reaction of the Popular Party government was to blame ETA and only ETA, whatever the truth. Few believed them. The Madrid bombing was completely different from the usual ETA attacks on police, army, government or political figures. Also, the Basque organization had always taken responsibility for its attacks, and this time it repeatedly denied any involvement.

Even after police allegedly discovered clues pointing toward al-Qaeda type groups, the Spanish government tried to quickly minimize these and keep the focus on the ETA. The U.S. government supported its ally in this, wanting to help Aznar's party win the election. Even the UN Security Council condemned the ETA for terrorism.

### Anger turns against Aznar

On March 12, the masses in Spain poured out by the millions in a demonstration called by all the parties, and completely supported by the ruling Popular Party. The people wanted first of all to show solidarity with the victims of the bombing and their opposition to terror. But the demonstration had the potential of being turned in a reactionary direction, for example, against the Basque people or against immigrants.

Instead, the crowds that turned out began to murmur their anger at the government for lying to them and attempting to manipulate their grief.

At the present, there is no way for working-class and progressive organizations to



have an independent assessment of the facts regarding who planted the bombs. Similar bombings directed at trains and train stations in Italy in the 1970s turned out to be the work of a fascist grouping with connections to the Italian secret service and the CIA. The Spanish state—especially its police organs—is also riddled with fascist remnants and offspring.

Without independent means of discovering such connections, an analysis has to begin with the political repercussions, with the events as they are perceived. By March 14, election day, most people in Spain believed that an al-Qaeda type group carried out the bombing, and that Madrid was hit because Aznar had sent Spanish troops to occupy Iraq. More than that, they know that, for narrow electoral reasons and to suppress anti-war sentiment, Aznar was blatantly lying to them at a time when they desperately wanted to hear the truth.

### 'Your war, our deaths'

By March 13, thousands of demonstrators besieged the Popular Party offices, charging the government with lying and chanting "Your war, our deaths." It was apparent they believed the bombs had hit Madrid because the government had joined the imperialist adventure in Iraq.

At the election 3 million more voters came out than four years ago. They voted to punish the PP, which meant in general that they voted for Zapatero's Socialist Workers Party (PSOE). The PSOE raised its membership in the 350-member parliament from 125 to 164. The PP dropped from 183 to 148. Zapatero, who will form a minority government, has now said he will withdraw troops from Iraq.

The voters did not look to the parties to the left of the PSOE. The United Left, in which the Communist Party of Spain participates, lost four of its nine seats.

The important thing is not that Zapatero's PSOE will drastically change Spanish policy in a progressive direction. It is that the population has repudiated the vicious rightist and militarist policies of the PP.

The U.S. and Britain will put enormous pressure on Zapatero and the socialists to back off from his commitment to end Spain's participation in the Iraq occupation by June 30. And the workers in the Spanish state will pressure him to keep it. One can expect continued struggle over this issue in the coming months.

The first evidence of how this struggle will progress will be seen this coming March 20, the international day of protest. Anti-war and anti-imperialist organizations in all the different parts of the Spanish state—including the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia, and from the Canary Islands in the Atlantic to Mallorca and Ibiza in the Mediterranean—have redoubled their efforts to hold a strong demonstration to end the imperialist occupations of Iraq, Palestine and everywhere. □

# Capitalist greed behind aborted coup in Africa

By Monica Moorehead

Zimbabwean officials have announced that they will bring legal charges against 67 mercenaries detained March 7 after a plane full of the professional killers and their high-tech equipment touched down at Harare International Airport.

The leaders of the mercenaries have admitted that they were flying from South Africa to a secret military base in Cameroon, with the objective of kidnapping the president of nearby Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema. They intended to replace him with a leader of the Spanish-based opposition, Severo Moto Nsa. Equatorial Guinea is a former colony of Spain.

The mercenaries included South Africans, at least one of whom holds British citizenship, Angolans, Namibians, Congolese and one Zimbabwean, according to an official of the South African Foreign Ministry. The Toronto Globe and Mail reported on March 16 that “all were reportedly carrying South African passports, and are said to be ex-South African military or police personnel.”

Since the downfall of the apartheid regime, its former operatives have been a thorn in the side of the South African coalition government, dominated by Black representatives of the African National Congress. The South African government is reported to have tipped off Zimbabwe about the group’s arrival. It says they will be tried in Zimbabwe, although South African law does allow for citizens arrested in another country to be transported back to South Africa.

Since these arrests, the big-business media have focused a lot of attention on the so-called corrupt nature of the Nguema government in Equatorial

Guinea. But the United States, Britain, Spain and other imperialist governments have installed and supported many reactionary puppet regimes around the world.

Executive Outcomes, a British-based firm that provides mercenaries to private corporations, was an integral part of this ill-fated operation. According to the March 14 Sunday Herald of Harare, “The firm’s latest planeload of mercenaries included many former personnel of the notorious 32 Buffalo Battalion of the South African special forces and Civil Cooperation Bureau, which was responsible for the deaths of several anti-apartheid activists.”

It has been confirmed that U.S., British and Spanish intelligence agencies are the masterminds behind the aborted coup, on behalf of big-business interests. The British citizen arrested was Simon Mann, “an ex-Royal Scots Guard and troop commander with the British Special Air Services. He also has a lead role in Sandline International, a murky company with oil and mining interests, and ties to U.K. intelligence services. Sandline absorbed Executive Outcomes in 1998. Zimbabwe’s Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi says Mr. Mann was offered \$2.3 million and oil rights in Equatorial Guinea for the plot.” (Globe and Mail, March 16)

## Zimbabwe also target of imperialist destabilization

When these arrests first took place, there was justified suspicion that the United States and Britain were attempting to remove Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe from office. It is no secret that President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair are close cohorts in their efforts to economically and politically destabilize Zimbabwe.

They hate President Mugabe because he has publicly sided with dispossessed Black farmers who are seeking to regain ownership of the arable lands stolen by white commercial farmers over many decades of racist colonialism.

Bush and Blair claim that Mugabe stole the presidential election in 2002 from opposition forces that the West supported both financially and politically. Observer teams from Nigeria, Namibia and South Africa, however, stated that Mugabe won a majority of the votes fair and square.

Why were the mercenaries targeting a small country like Equatorial Guinea? Certainly one reason is that the imperialist secret agencies felt they could take advantage of the geopolitical situation. But the motive lies in the greedy nature of imperialism.

## Oil, oil and more oil

EG is one of the poorest countries in Africa and the world. It was a colonial possession of Spain for 190 years until its formal independence in 1968. Its population is less than 500,000; life expectancy is 50 years for women and 48 for men. The average yearly income is \$700. (World Bank, 2001)

EG’s territory includes the island of Bioko off the coast of neighboring Cameroon. Its capital, Malabo, is located there. Large deposits of oil and natural gas were discovered off Bioko during the mid-1990s. As a result, EG has become the third-biggest producer of oil in Africa, after Nigeria and Angola.

The abundance of oil has meant very little for the people of EG. In fact, as in the rest of Africa, the minerals and wealth are being sucked out by Western multinational corporations headquartered in the large imperialist countries.

The theft of Africa’s natural resources under colonialism and now neocolonialism—in which these countries’ economies are controlled through debt and “structural adjustment” programs devised by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank—has kept this long-suffering continent from economic development and, along with it, true independence.

The biggest exploiters of EG’s oil are all U.S. companies: ExxonMobil, Chevron-Texaco and the Houston-based Marathon Oil. The United States buys 28 percent of the country’s exports—mostly petroleum products. Spain buys 25 percent. (allAfrica.com, March 12)

The imperialists could not care less that the majority of the 600 million people on the African continent suffer from poverty, HIV/AIDS, civil wars and illiteracy. Any government corruption and mismanagement stem from having local economies undermined and destroyed by imperialist greed for profits.

Right now, the Pentagon is sending troops into all parts of Africa, especially the north and west, under the pretext of fighting al-Qaeda and “terrorism.” In truth, the most important reason is to protect the economic domination of U.S. foreign capital against its rivals in Europe and Japan.

Whether through open colonialism or setting up neocolonial puppet states, today’s imperialist powers got rich through the plunder and super-exploitation of Africa as well as Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean. The masses in those developing countries need international, revolutionary solidarity from the workers in the imperialist centers, especially through the demand that the exploiters pay long-overdue reparations for their theft. □

## Was it ‘regime change’?

# Huge protests in S. Korea over removal of President Roh

By Deirdre Griswold

Was it another “regime change” carried out under the intense pressure of Washington? Certainly many Koreans think so.

They poured into the streets by the tens of thousands on March 13 to voice their fervent protest. The crowds were so huge that the authorities immediately banned mass protests.

President Roh Mu-hyun had been impeached by the opposition-dominated National Assembly the previous day. However, this move only enhanced his popularity in the polls, which immediately jumped to 70 percent.

The charge against Roh was that some of his aides had accepted illegal donations before the 2002 election. The practice is so common in South Korean politics that Roh had offered to resign if it were shown that his campaign received more than one-tenth of the money received by the main opposition party, the conservative Grand National Party—which had the gall to ram through his impeachment.

David Scofield wrote in the March 13 Asia Times that “if every [South Korean]

elected lawmaker were to be investigated, most would be prosecuted and some might well be in jail, according to most observers and the conventional wisdom.

“Roh’s problem seems to be ... the powerful antagonism of conservative opposition parties to his ‘progressive’ policies, including his relatively flexible approach to Pyongyang,” the capital of North Korea.

Roh has been carrying out a “Sunshine Policy” of opening up toward the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea—the socialist northern half of the Korean peninsula. He is a former labor lawyer who was elected with the support of mass organizations. However, he offended his left flank when, under U.S. pressure, he agreed that South Korea would send 3,000 troops to Iraq in the near future.

For decades after the 1950-53 U.S. war of aggression in Korea—in which millions of Koreans were killed but Washington had to abandon its aim of conquering the socialist North—the South was under virtual martial law. Under its notorious anti-communist laws, South Korea had the longest-held prisoners in the world. Any contact with the North was banned, and even possessing a postcard showing

Pyongyang was a criminal offense. Millions of family members were separated from their relatives by the division of the country.

In recent years, however, more liberal governments in the South, seeking some independence from U.S. dictates, have allowed militant activism by labor unions and groups seeking the reunification of Korea and the removal of U.S. bases.

Nearly 40,000 U.S. troops have occupied South Korea since the end of the war. Their presence is so hated that in 2002, after a U.S. military court acquitted soldiers who had driven an armored vehicle speeding through a village, killing two schoolgirls on their way to a birthday party, the country was convulsed in anti-U.S. demonstrations.

The recent protests over Roh’s impeachment were the biggest since that time.

Some observers think this move by the right wing may backfire. Elections to the National Assembly take place in April. If there is a swing behind Roh’s party, he could return to office. However, the United States is sure to be encouraging the conservatives to take a tougher stand.

Even though the Bush administration is bogged down in Afghanistan, Iraq and now Haiti, it still has North Korea on its list of “axis of evil” countries—a sure sign that its plans for military action there are not on the back burner. And even though the Pentagon says it intends to pull its troops back from the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea, that can be seen as a threat rather than a peaceful move, since it would put them out of “harm’s way” if the U.S. military were to make an air strike against the North.

The Pentagon has been moving some of the new high-tech weapons it has tested in Iraq and Afghanistan into South Korea. And it plans joint military exercises with South Korea at the end of this month.

Also, with 60 percent of the U.S. Army—amounting to 320,000 troops—now deployed abroad, U.S. military personnel are stretched thin. So the Pentagon has announced it is offering a bonus of an extra \$300 a month to soldiers who sign up to stay in South Korea.

In such a threatening atmosphere, both the progressive forces in South Korea and the government of the DPRK are in a state of heightened vigilance. □

# Aristide in Jamaica, U.S. general in Haiti as Imperialist coup becomes an occupation

By G. Dunkel

March 16—Yesterday, one week after a delegation of solidarity activists from the U.S. managed to win access to Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was being held in Africa under virtual house arrest under orders of the United States and France, Haiti's president flew back to the Caribbean as the guest of Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson. The president and his wife had been abducted from Haiti against their will by U.S. troops and diplomats on Feb. 29 and flown to Bangui, Central African Republic, even as Washington was telling the world that Aristide had "resigned" his post.

In Haiti itself, people on the street told reporters they want their president, who had been twice elected with overwhelming popular support, to come back. But in Washington, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said that Aristide's arrival in Jamaica was "certainly not helpful to advancing democracy and stability in Haiti."

Behind this mild statement is the threat of U.S. military might. Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairperson of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, stopped in Haiti on March 13 after a five-day swing through Latin America and held a press conference with U.S. Ambassador James Foley.

Myers warned neighboring Jamaica that it was "taking a certain risk and a certain responsibility" by having Aristide there. Foley said Aristide's presence "will destabilize a very fragile and suffering country." An unnamed but high Bush administration figure made it ominously "clear" that Jamaica had better limit Aristide's stay.

In the name of restoring order in Haiti and bringing democracy, some 1,600 U.S. Marines, 510 French troops, 300 Chileans and 100 or so Canadians are patrolling Port-au-Prince, with brief forays outside the Haitian capital. As of March 14, the Marines had killed six Haitians and exchanged gunfire with Aristide supporters.

While the Aristides are formally in Jamaica to be reunited with their two young daughters, who have been staying with relatives in New York, Aristide said of his visit, "For the time being, I'm listening to my people."

"That would be the roar of distress," commented the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., "expressed most eloquently by Port-au-Prince slum dwellers threatening new protests to demand his return as Haiti's democratically elected president; they see the multinational force as a foreign occupation army."

On March 11, a large crowd of Aristide supporters had attempted to march on the Presidential Palace in Port-au-Prince. They were driven off by cops firing tear gas and retreated to the Belair neighborhood, a poor district of firm Aristide supporters. In the fighting that followed, two people were killed and six severely injured.

Bob Moliere, one of the leaders of the demonstration, told the Los Angeles Times, "We already voted, and we have only one president in Haiti: Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He was the victim of a plot. It was a kidnapping by Bush and Chirac."

Five days later, the CBC reported that "U.S. Marines and Haitian police conducted overnight patrols in the tense Belair neighborhood, an Aristide stronghold where Marines shot and killed two residents on Friday and where a Marine was shot in the arm late Sunday ..."

French troops, including soldiers from Guadeloupe and Martinique who speak a language close to Haitian Creole, have been assigned to patrol the poor La Saline neighborhood, where U.S. Marines killed two Haitians on March 14. The last time French troops occupied Haiti was in 1803, when they waged a genocidal war that only ended when the Haitian army of rebel slaves crushed the French at the battle of Vertière.

The U.S. is pretending hard that Haiti has a constitutional government. Gerard Latortue was installed as interim prime minister on March 12 under heavy U.S. guard, after being selected by a "Council of Seven Wise Men" set up by the U.S. Latortue is a southern Florida television personality and business consultant who was born in Gonaïves, Haiti, and has lived in Haiti for only four months since 1963.

Latortue is attempting to put together a cabinet and is working hard—so far unsuccessfully—to entice some members of Aristide's government so what is widely perceived as a U.S. puppet regime can be called a government of "national, non-political unity." He has promised elections in a couple of years, but is most concerned with disarming the population.

One of his first acts was to suspend diplomatic relations with Jamaica and pull Haiti out of Caricom, the 15-member Caribbean economic bloc that has criticized the U.S. coup.

The right-wing militaries are still operating in Haiti, but are keeping a lower profile. In Port-au-Prince, despite U.S. claims that life is returning to normal, dead bodies line the roadside in poor neighborhoods. A local missionary, Fr. Rick Burchette, spends a good part of his day going around and putting them in body bags. (Miami Herald, March 12)

The Haitian bourgeoisie has reopened closed markets and factories in the capital, but elsewhere schools are still closed and bodies lie by the roadside until local residents burn them for fear of disease. The few social services available before Aristide was forced to leave have vanished.

## Cuban doctors stay at their posts

In the midst of all this, and with over 200 people dead in Port-au-Prince alone, the 535 Cuban doctors working in Haiti have stayed and kept their clinics open, even when all others had closed.

Juan Carlos Chavez, who heads the Cuban medical mission, described how the Cuban doctors worked. "There were 22 gunshot victims on Feb. 29 and March 1 alone. And as the week progressed, Cuban doctors treated more than 100 people," said Chavez.

Wrote Tracey Eaton in the Dallas Morning News, "Looters rushed the hospital grounds at one point and stole six cars and trucks, but they left the Cuban doctors alone. 'The people have always protected us,' Chavez said. 'We're here to take care of people's health.'" (March 12)

Cuban Ambassador Orlando Requeijo Gual, speaking at the United Nations Feb. 26, pointed out that Cuban doctors have saved 86,000 lives in the five years they have worked in Haiti. He ended his talk by pointing out, "If all of the above is a proof of what a small and blockaded country is able to do for Haiti, other states with huge economic and financial resources will be able to do even more."

Venezuela is another country willing to defy the U.S. and help the people of Haiti. "We don't recognize the new government of Haiti," said President Hugo Chavez in a speech in eastern Venezuela. "The presi-

dent of Haiti is called Jean-Bertrand Aristide. ... Venezuela's doors are open to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide." He said Aristide had been kidnapped by "the troops of the country that preaches democracy to the world."

The visit of U.S. Chief-of-staff Gen. Richard B. Myers to Haiti, and the fact that the U.S. was able to line up a deal with France, another imperialist power with long-standing interests in the Caribbean, signal that Haiti is being used a laboratory for further imperialist penetration in Latin America.

In particular, Venezuela, Colombia and Cuba are obviously the current targets.

Haiti does not have great mineral wealth or a huge agricultural potential. It does not have a pool of highly skilled workers or a strategic position in the Caribbean. What it does have is a unique history. It is the only country ever to grow out of a successful slave revolt, and in the 200 years since then it has met imperialist neocolonial interventions with a stubborn, popular resistance. For example, it twice elected Aristide, a populist hated by the powerful and racist U.S. senator, Jesse Helms, who called him "a mean-spirited revolutionary and an anti-American demagogue." Helms's protege, Roger Noriega, is now in charge of Western Hemisphere policy for the State Department.

If the ruling class of the United States, militarily the most powerful country in the world, cannot dismantle popular resistance to its wishes in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world and by far the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, it is going to have great difficulties imposing itself on the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America. □

## Equal marriage rights for Massachusetts

*Continued from page 7*

partner's daughter from the Dominican Republic, the threat of involvement by the INS made that impossible. "I decided I had to call his daughter instead, to tell her what a wonderful man my husband was—her father."

Liza Green, also from the Women's Fightback Network, linked the same-sex marriage struggle to women's issues and fights against budget cutbacks.

### 'Health care and jobs for all!'

Leslie Feinberg, a leader in the LGBT movement and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, raised a perspective to broaden the struggle.

Feinberg stressed the importance of the leadership of the most oppressed sectors of the LGBT communities in this movement. And she called on anti-racist white organizers to show the utmost sensitivity by not just equating the struggle for same-sex marriage access with the struggle against Jim Crow segregation.

Feinberg pointed out that adding broader demands to the same-sex marriage struggle could help deepen solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples across the U.S. "For example," she said, "we can also say that we want to unite with all those who want to struggle for univer-

sal health care for all. With all those who want to fight for women's health by strengthening reproductive rights.

"We want money for AIDS, not for war.

"We can demand rights for LGBT immigrants who want to marry, while demanding the decriminalization of the lives of all undocumented workers and an immediate halt to the mass, racist round-ups and secret deportations of Arab, Muslim and South Asian immigrants in this country.

"We demand an end to all forms of legal discrimination, and bashing and lynchings."

Feinberg emphasized, "The roller-coaster ride of capitalist economic boom and bust means that this jobless recovery will result in an economic crisis. When that happens, the capitalist class tries to shift the burden onto the backs of workers and oppressed peoples and push back their movements for change.

"So most important of all," Feinberg concluded, "we need to broaden this struggle by demanding jobs for all!"

She called for activism to unite people across the country in solidarity with the struggle in Massachusetts. The crowd responded enthusiastically, and many signed up to plan concrete actions to press the struggle forward. □

## HAITI A Slave Revolution

The Haitian Revolution is a singular event in history. Never before or since has an enslaved people risen up, broken their chains, and established a new state. Haiti was a beacon of hope and inspiration to the enslaved Africans of the United States. It reveals the intertwined relationship between the U.S. and Haiti, and the untold stories of the Haitian people's resistance to the U.S. aggressions and occupations.

Includes Ramsey Clark, Edwidge Danicats, Frederick Douglass, Ben Dupuy, Paul Laraque, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Pat Chin, Greg Dunkel, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Maude Le Blanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morriveau-Leroy and Johnnie Stevens.

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FROM WORKERS WORLD PARTY

## To the March 20 anti-war protesters

Continued from page 1

and infrastructure of the nations targeted, but also to the people here, to the troops and their families, to the entitlements we have won, to the civil liberties we have fought for.

All claims that the U.S. political and military establishment decides on these interventions for altruistic reasons are lies.

These wars and occupations flow from the profit lust of big capital, whose leaders move back and forth among the government, the military and boards of directors. The result is wars of plunder that are cruel and barbaric, which is why they are being resisted so vigorously.

What comes next? These are perilous times, just like the 1960s. Unexpected events, spun by the corporate media, can create fear and uncertainty.

Whatever happens before and after the elections, this movement must stay together and in the streets.

Imperialism does not give up its military campaigns of conquest easily. The Vietnam War lasted through three presidents—Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon—and almost four terms. (Nixon got re-elected on a phony promise of peace.) Two Democrats and one Republican. And they all talked peace, trying to side-step the movement as it became more conscious and militant.

If only the people could vote directly on war and peace, the assault on Iraq one year ago would never have happened. But empty election promises are nothing new. What about health care, better education, jobs for all? If we

could vote these things in, we would have had them years ago.

This is an immensely wealthy country, yet millions are suffering from unemployment, poverty, imprisonment, poor health and education, huge debts and the terror of an uncertain future. These economic problems are compounded for the majority of the population who also are subjected to special oppressions, such as racism, sexism, and/or bigotry against lesbians, gays, bi and transgender people.

The movement against globalization that started even before the Bush wars was youthful and optimistic, raising the slogan, "Another world is possible." Indeed, the choices are even starker today. Which shall it be? Capitalist globalization that plunders and pollutes—or a society where the wealth belongs to all and the economy works to satisfy human needs, not corporate greed?

Capitalism is not a pretty word these days. A lot of people will tell you that capitalism stinks.

But you won't hear that in the presidential election. The burning issue of our time—how to stop the class of super-billionaires from wrecking more of the world in their frantic struggle to stay on top—will be ignored as politicking takes over the airwaves.

That's another reason to put our energy into building an independent movement, one that gives voice to all sectors who are fighting the ills of this system. We need a movement for socialism, for the workers and all the oppressed, not just one to slow down the deterioration of a thrashing,

## On International Women's Day

# Palestinian women march against wall

By Kathy Durkin

Palestinian women commemorated International Women's Day this year by defiantly marching in opposition to Israel's apartheid wall. Holding banners and pictures of relatives imprisoned in Israeli jails, they marched against the 26-foot-high concrete wall Israel is building to separate their West Bank village of Abu Dis from East Jerusalem, where many work, attend school or seek medical care.

Palestinian Minister of Women's Affairs Zahira Kamal addressed the demonstration, which was organized by the General Union of Palestinian Women and included international women activists. Kamal recognized the crucial role Palestinian women play in the decision-making process and in the just struggle for their people's rights.

On March 8, Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat made an impassioned plea from the West Bank city of Ramallah to the women of the world to support their Palestinian sisters by protesting Israel's horrific actions.

The Palestinian woman "who gives birth at an Israeli checkpoint or dies there with her baby urges all women in the world to do everything they can to put an end to Israel's despicable occupation," Arafat said.

In the spirit of many International Women's Day protests worldwide decrying violence against women, President Arafat called on Israel to stop its violence against Palestinian women—the killings, detentions and denials of checkpoint access.

He called for the freedom of all Palestinian women from Israeli jails. Currently, 73 women are incarcerated under inhuman, brutal conditions, often in solitary confinement. Some are forced to give birth in their cells; all are denied human and civil rights in violation of international laws.

The conditions of life for Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza have been worsened by the U.S.-backed Israeli military siege, continual incursions and attacks. Every aspect of women's lives is affected: healthcare, housing, nutrition, employment, education, safety, their children's wellbeing, even access to a clean water supply.

A report by the UN's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), issued on International Women's Day, stated that nearly 10,000 Palestinians have lost their homes in Rafah in the Gaza Strip due to Israeli demolitions or confiscations. Families have suddenly found themselves without food, clothing or furniture, ousted by

brute force from their homes.

Access to healthcare for nearly 40 percent of women has been severely restricted due to the occupation, curfew and lack of funds. Access to pre- and post-natal care has declined. Because of the checkpoints, home births have become more frequent and more women suffer medical complications.

OCHA reports that since 2002, 52 pregnant women on their way to medical centers have given birth while waiting to get through Israeli military checkpoints. Some 19 women and 29 newborn babies died at military checkpoints between September 2000 and December 2002 for lack of medical help.

Many women doctors and nurses have



been prevented from going to work, leading to the closing of health care centers for women and children. Women with serious illnesses have suffered and even died because of this, according to Reema Katana of the General Union of Palestinian Women. Often ambulances are blocked and emergency healthcare cannot get to people who need it. The apartheid wall worsens this situation.

Katana conducted a study on the effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian women. Their overall health is worsening; anemia is 74.2 percent for pregnant women and 45.4 percent for nonpregnant women because of the difficulties in obtaining food under the occupation and growing poverty.

### Unemployment, poverty, malnutrition

The AP reported on March 2 that unemployment rose to 70 percent in some areas of the West Bank and Gaza. Closing off access to villages, roadblocks, curfews and now the apartheid wall make it harder to even reach places of employment.

Katana says that Israel's "destruction of factories and deteriorating economic conditions led employers to let go of their employees, which include many women, especially those working in textile, food and medical factories."

Sixty percent of the 3.5 million Palestinians living on the occupied lands live below the poverty level of \$2.10 per day, according to a UN report from the Food and Agriculture Organization issued March 11.

Israel has confiscated much arable and high-income-producing Palestinian farmland to build the wall. Since many women farm, this action deprives many of the ability to grow nutritious crops for their families.

The jailings, deaths or unemployment of men in their families also make conditions more difficult for women.

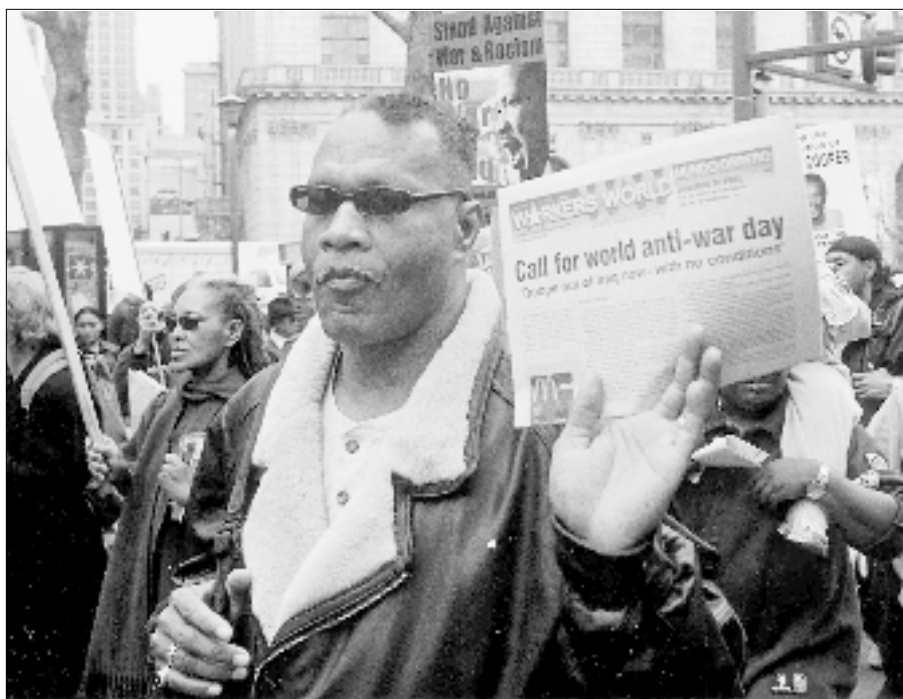
Women and girls also face sexual harassment, threats and constant danger at the hands of Israeli settlers and soldiers, forcing many to restrict their mobility to school, jobs and getting medical care. Women have been hurt when trying to cross roadblocks. Others have been beaten, jailed, even killed by occupation forces.

However, Palestinian women struggle mightily to take care of their families in the face of this adversity, while supporting and participating in the resistance movement. Their bravery and determination are stunning.

Within days of IWD, two young Palestinian women were killed by Israeli gunfire. Dalal AlSabagh, 22, from Jenin was shot when Israeli soldiers invaded her neighborhood with tanks. Eitimid Kullab, 34, from Rafah in the Gaza Strip expired from Israeli gunshot wounds.

Their names should be remembered by women and anti-war activists worldwide.

□



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# U.S. Latin American strategy focuses on Colombia

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Colombia today is more strategic to Washington's hegemonic plan in the region than ever before. It is no coincidence that the military component of the Free Trade Area of the Americas is called Plan Colombia.

Signed by President Bill Clinton with the cover of combating drug trafficking, this military aid package has given billions of dollars to the Colombian government for military equipment and training. This money reverts almost totally to U.S. arms manufacturers in the form of military contracts.

In the face of growing opposition to the agreement and to neoliberalism in general all throughout South America, the United States is desperate to impose a free trade area in whatever form possible. This makes Colombia—with its geographic location as the door to South America, its vast natural resources and the complicity of its President Alvaro Uribe Velez as Washington's junior partner—the perfect target.

For decades dozens of U.S. corporations have reaped huge profits from the cheap labor of Colombian workers. Occidental Petroleum, the main U.S. oil corporation active in Colombia, Coca-Cola, Dole, Drummond, Exxon Mobil and Monsanto are some of the best known corporations. But there are also less well known military contractors like DynCorp and Military Professional Resources.

Coca-Cola started in 1942 with a plant in Medellin with a \$10,000 investment. Over the course of 60 years the revenues have multiplied 65,000 times, making Coke one of the 10 most profitable companies in the country.

Coke has accomplished this not only with technological advances but also through extremely repressive anti-worker measures—often, for example, using violent methods to lower production costs.

## Right to marry

Continued from page 7

publicly vowed to wed couples on the steps of City Hall in Manhattan at 1 p.m. on March 18.

New Paltz Mayor Jason West has publicly vowed, "I will start conducting same-sex marriages again as soon as the injunction is removed." He reports that 1,000 of the 6,000 village residents rallied in defense at the courthouse on the day of his arraignment.

In Massachusetts, California, Oregon, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, Maryland, Wisconsin, Kansas, Washington, West Virginia and other states this demand—marriage in form, for economic and social equality in content—is being fought out on many fronts.

Legislative attempts to codify inequality in state constitutions are resulting in wins, losses and draws. A storm of suits and countersuits is raging in the courts. The issue has injected itself into the presidential elections, despite the fact—and because of the fact—that both leading candidates of both big business parties oppose same-sex marriage.

And in villages, towns and cities across the country, individuals are confronting the authorities, insisting that the state recognize their right to equal access to civil marriage by issuing licenses. □

Coca-Cola and other U.S. companies use the services of death squads—the paramilitaries, among them the Colombian Self Defense Units "AUC"—to terrorize workers and their families through threats, kidnappings, disappearances and murders. It's all in an effort to destroy workers' organizations and thus lower production expenses. It has been proven that the paramilitaries work in conjunction with the Colombian government.

The rush to open the Latin American market to U.S. finance capital with no restraints—what the imperialists call "free trade"—is bolstering Uribe's murderous, repressive policies. As a loyal collaborator, Uribe has imposed a series of "reform" measures along with a policy of "democratic security" that has intensified poverty among the Colombian masses and made any opposition to his policies a crime. U.S. capital could not have a better servant.

Plan Colombia has, particularly since September 2001, abandoned its supposed anti-drug cover to openly target the armed insurgency of Colombia, the FARC and the ELN, the oldest guerrilla movements in the hemisphere. Thus

Uribe refuses any negotiated political solution to the armed conflict.

Government, paramilitaries and corporations work hand in hand for the benefit of capital—mostly U.S. capital.

This repression has now made it next to impossible for any organization even remotely connected with the aims of the guerrilla movements to function in Colombia. Afro-Colombians, women's organizations, students and youths, religious and human-rights groups, non-governmental organizations, and especially labor unions are all being penalized.

With no evidence, corporations like Coca-Cola frequently publicly link labor leaders to the armed insurgency, making them targets of the criminal paramilitaries.

Washington thinks that if the repression decimates unions and other progressive organizations that oppose Uribe's policies and U.S. interests in Colombia, the United States can use that country as a cat's paw against the rest of Latin America—particularly against Venezuela, where President Hugo Chavez' Bolivarian Revolution is advancing and setting a glorious example for the neighboring countries.

It is no accident, then, that in the Arauca region in Colombia, on the border with Venezuela, paramilitary activity has increased. In the last few months the regime has carried out mass arrests of human-rights and religious activists.

It is also in Arauca where Occidental Petroleum's oil pipeline Caño Limón starts, guarded by U.S. and Colombian military. In this region paramilitaries often try to cross into Venezuela in an effort to help destabilize the Bolivarian process.

For these reasons it is urgent that progressives in the United States show the utmost solidarity with Colombian activists who face criminal actions against them coming from paramilitaries or state terrorism. They are mounting the most courageous resistance.

International observers are urgently needed to witness and accompany Colombian workers and activists, and expose to the world the crimes committed in the name of U.S. and other transnational companies and capital.

For more information about international delegations contact SINAL-TRAINAL the Coca-Cola workers union in Colombia at: areainternacional@sinal-trainal.org. □

## MUNDO OBRERO

# La delegación de solidaridad logra acercarse a Aristide

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saqueado inmediatamente después de su salida.

## 'Americanos armados y diplomáticos' lo secuestraron

El Departamento de Estado ha creado la impresión de que aproximadamente entre las 4 y las 5 de la madrugada del 29 de febrero, Aristide llamó a oficiales de los Estados Unidos y les pidió ayuda para salir del país. Pero Aristide dijo a Kim Ives que, de hecho, "Americanos armados y diplomáticos" vinieron a su residencia 12 horas antes y dijeron a 19 guardias de seguridad que han funcionado como el equipo de seguridad presidencial que debían abandonar sus puestos. Estos guardias de seguridad eran empleados de la Fundación Steele y mayormente son ex miembros de las Fuerzas Especiales de las Fuerzas Armadas de los EE.UU. Los oficiales estadounidenses les dijeron que no serían protegidos.

El Presidente Aristide afirmó que estos guardias de la Fundación Steele básicamente obedecieron los mandos de sus ex empleadores, el Pentágono. En la noche del sábado, fueron sacados por helicóptero del Palacio Presidencial, dejando a Aristide sin protección armada alguna.

Aristide dijo a Kim Ives que cuando le llevaron a un avión de los EE.UU. temprano en la mañana del 29 de febrero, sus guardias ya estaban allí. Todos ellos fueron llevados—incluso el hijo de un año de edad de uno de los guardias— a la República Central Africana. Después de pasar 20 horas en un avión volando hacia un destino desconocido, los guardias de seguridad fueron devueltos por avión a los Estados Unidos. El viaje les impidió revelar los detalles del golpe de estado hasta mucho después que Aristide estuviera fuera de Haití.

## EE.UU. actuó antes de que cualquier socorro pudiera llegar a Aristide

Ives reportó que "en el curso de las discusiones con el Presidente Aristide, se vio claro que la selección de la hora del golpe coincidió con varios sucesos internacionales que pudieran haber cambiado la relación de fuerzas a favor del gobierno de Aristide. Mientras el gobierno de los EE.UU. aumentaba las presiones sobre Aristide para que renunciara en esa última semana, el gobierno de la República de Sudáfrica había enviado un avión cargado de armas que se esperaba llegara el domingo 29 de febrero. Venezuela estaba en discusiones sobre el envío de tropas para apoyar a Aristide.

"Había un surgimiento de apoyo internacional y solidaridad para el mantenimiento de la democracia constitucional en Haití. Líderes africano-americanos estaban recibiendo más atención de los medios de comunicación al denunciar los esfuerzos hacia un golpe de estado. Dos delegaciones prominentes, una encabezada por el ex procurador nacional de los EE.UU. Ramsey Clark, conjuntamente con el Centro de Acción Internacional, y la Red de Apoyo a Haití, estaban por llegar en unos días.

"Podemos ver que habían varias influencias convergentes de ayuda que estaban a punto de llegar. Esto explica en gran parte por qué ocurrió el golpe de estado precisamente en ese momento. Esto explica el porqué EE.UU. tuvo que entrar rápidamente y sacar a Aristide", concluye Ives.

La situación de Aristide en la República Central Africana es delicada. Su meta es la de volver a Haití para cumplir con su período como presidente. Está siendo tratado respetuosamente por miembros del gobierno aquí, pero su libertad está limitada. No ha pedido asilo político y no acepta ser un exilado.

La madera y los diamantes de la República Central Africana enriquecieron a la clase dominante de Francia durante un siglo de dominación colonial, pero hoy la expectativa de vida es solamente de 45 años y la gran mayoría de la población no goza ni un sólo beneficio de la vida moderna. En el Río Odeubangui, que corre por la capital, todavía la gente viaja en canoas rudimentarias. La tasa de mortalidad infantil es de 93 por cada 1000 nacimientos vivos. Tropas francesas todavía permanecen en el área.

Ciertamente, si algún pueblo tiene el derecho de demandar reparaciones por una historia de explotación y opresión, es el pueblo de la República Central Africana—y de Haití. Uno de los crímenes de Aristide, en los ojos del mundo occidental imperialista, es que precisamente demandó esto.

Es un viaje de por lo menos dos días en vuelo comercial desde la República Central Africana hasta Haití, la primera república negra del mundo. Hay un vuelo por semana entre Bangui y París. El mejor hotel de Bangui carece de una conexión al Internet, y los teléfonos frecuentemente no funcionan.

Sin embargo, Aristide ha encontrado la manera de recibir noticias de su país. El apuntó que los Infantes de la Marina de los EE.UU. están acuartelados en lo que fue la escuela principal de medicina en Haití, cerrándola así efectivamente. "Haití tiene solamente 1.5 médicos por cada 11,000 personas", enfatizó Aristide, y ahora tendrá menos.

Nuestras reuniones con Jean-Bertrand Aristide y Mildred Aristide tuvieron lugar el 8 de marzo, Día Internacional de la Mujer. Johnnie Stevens les informó que en una conferencia de mujeres en Nueva York se iba a discutir la larga historia de lucha de Haití y lo que significa esta lucha para las mujeres. La pareja presidencial envió sus saludos más calurosos a las mujeres del mundo. □

¡PROLETARIOS Y OPRIMIDOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!

# MUNDO★OBRAERO

LÍDER HAITIANO ACUSA: LA CASA BLANCA DETRÁS DEL GOLPE

## La delegación de solidaridad logra acercarse a Aristide

Por Sara Flounder y Johnnie Stevens  
República Central Africana

Marzo 9—Agentes de los Estados Unidos secuestraron al Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide de Haití hace más de una semana y lo llevaron a esta ex colonia francesa en el corazón de Africa con la intención de aislarlo y mantenerlo callado sobre la verdad de lo que ha pasado en su país caribeño.

Pero no funcionó. Por sus propios esfuerzos y con la asistencia de una delegación solidaria que viajó rápidamente desde los Estados Unidos, Aristide ha podido decirle al mundo que él no abandonó su puesto, como lo ha dicho la administración de Bush, sino que fue forzado a dejar Haití después de haber sido amenazado de muerte él, su familia y sus miles de partidarios por el embajador de los Estados Unidos. A la misma vez, tropas estadounidenses tomaron posiciones importantes en la capital y conocidos asesinos colaboradores de Washington avanzaban en Puerto Príncipe comandando tropas fuertemente armadas.

Esta operación estilo mafiosa para derrocar al presidente democráticamente elegido de Haití e instalar un gobierno bajo la bota de los imperialistas estadounidenses y franceses ha implicado un montaje de la prensa en Haití y aquí en la República Central Africana.

La delegación de los Estados Unidos que logró el acceso a Aristide incluyó a tres personas en representación del ex procurador general Ramsey Clark: Kim Ives de la Red de Apoyo a Haití y del periódico haitiano *Haití Progrès*, Sara Flounders del Centro de Acción Internacional y Johnnie Stevens de la Red de Videografía Popular. También estaba en la delegación Brian Concannon abogado del equipo legal de Aristide y la productora de películas Katherine Kean.

Al comienzo se nos negó el acceso al presidente haitiano y a su esposa, Mildred Trouillot Aristide. Fuimos al Palacio del Renacimiento pero nos dijeron que no podíamos darle un mensaje o darle nuestro número telefónico, no podíamos entrar y él no podía salir a vernos.

### Aristide reemplazado

Pero después de que un comunicado titulado “Aristide bajo llave” fuera circulado por todo el mundo en una campaña masiva del Centro de Acción Internacional y la Coalición Internacional ANSWER por el Internet, el bloqueo se abrió. Las autoridades de este país africano nos dijeron que habían estado tomando órdenes del Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos y del Ministerio del Exterior Francés.

A la mañana siguiente todo fue diferente.

El Ministro del Exterior, Charles Wenezouï, quien rehusaba hablar con nosotros, organizó una reunión con nuestra delegación, y nos dijo que podíamos reunirnos privadamente con el Presidente Aristide y que luego Aristide tendría una conferencia de prensa.

En la reunión con el ministro del exterior, él nos dijo que la decisión de enviar a Aristide a su país fue tomada por los Estados Unidos y Francia. Ningún haitiano tomó parte en esta decisión. Al ministro le fue dicho que debía mantener contacto diario con Washington y París respecto a Aristide, y que su gobierno no podía hacer comentarios sobre la situación en Haití.

Después nos reunimos con el Presidente Aristide y Mildred Trouillot Aristide, quienes nos recibieron calurosamente. Luego almorzamos con ellos y con oficiales de la República Central Africana seguido de otra reunión con el Presidente Aristide.

Después de la primera reunión, Aristide finalmente fue permitido tener una conferencia de prensa en las oficinas del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores—su primera aparición pública desde el golpe. Nuestra delegación le facilitó un teléfono celular y él ha podido dar entrevistas telefónicas a la prensa internacional, incluyendo al programa de la cadena Pacífica Radio,

¡Democracia Ya!. Este programa fue el primero en dar la noticia sobre su abducción durante una entrevista por Amy Goodman con la representante estadounidense Maxine Waters del Caucus Congressional Negro.

En nuestras conversaciones y durante la conferencia de prensa, el Presidente Aristide fue muy enérgico al afirmar el hecho de que fue secuestrado y que su gobierno ha sido reemplazado por un régimen de ocupación con el respaldo de los Estados Unidos. El también dijo que solamente su regreso a Haití podría traer la paz y caracterizó a aquellos que llevaron a cabo la campaña contra su gobierno como “criminales internacionalmente reconocidos.”

Aristide dijo que él fue engañado por James Foley, embajador de Estados Unidos en Haití, quien le aseguró que lo llevaba a una conferencia con la prensa internacional y haitiana. Aristide aceptó dejar su casa bajo la condición de que él pudiera hablar con la prensa y que su hogar sería protegido de cualquier ataque o saqueo.

La conferencia de prensa nunca se dio. Fue forzado a montarse al avión que lo llevó fuera del país. Su hogar fue

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Johnnie Stevens  
Member, The International Action Center

PVN FOTO

Johnnie Stevens, que habla sobre Haití y Aristide en 'Like It Is' de Gil Noble.

## DECLARACIÓN DEL PARTIDO MUNDO OBRERO (WWP)

### A los participantes en la protesta del 20 de marzo en contra de la guerra y ocupación de Irak

El que estés participando en las manifestaciones del 20 de marzo indica que ya sabes la importancia de las movilizaciones masivas. Así es como siempre se ha conseguido el cambio social -por medio de la lucha directa de parte de l@s defensor@s de los intereses de la mayoría pero que son ignorad@s, demonizad@s o ridiculizad@s por las autoridades y los grandes medios de comunicación. Tienes que quedarte firme y MANTEN-ERTE ORGANIZAD@.

Las guerras y las ocupaciones que hoy protestamos no tienen justificación. Ya sea el caso de las tropas estadounidenses en Irak, Afganistán, o Haití, o el despojo de las tierras o los derechos nacionales del pueblo palestino por un régimen colonizador apoyado por los Estados Unidos, las agresiones de este país, con su poder militar y su enorme riqueza, han hecho un daño gravísimo ocasionando lesiones profundas y duraderas -antes que nada a los pueblos y a las naciones víctimas, pero también al pueblo aquí, a las tropas y a sus familias, al derecho a programas sociales que hemos ganado y a los derechos civiles por los cuales hemos luchado.

Todos los alegatos de que el establecimiento militar y político de los Estados Unidos hace las decisiones sobre estas intervenciones por razones altruistas son mentiras. Estas guerras resultan de la codicia de los grandes capitalistas, cuyos líderes se pasean entre el gobierno, el Pentágono y las juntas directivas corporativas. El fruto son guerras rapaces, crueles y bárbaras, razón por la cual están siendo resistidas tan vigorosamente.

¿Qué viene luego? Estos son momentos peligrosos, igual que en los años sesenta. Hechos inesperados, interpretados ideológicamente por los grandes medios de comunicación, pueden crear miedo e incertidumbre. Pase lo que pase antes y después de las elecciones, este movimiento tiene que mantenerse unido y permanecer en las calles. El imperialismo no abandona sus campañas de conquistas militares fácilmente. La Guerra de Vietnam duró bajo tres presidentes -Kennedy, Johnson, y Nixon- y por casi cuatro periodos presidenciales. (Nixon fue reeligido a través de una falsa promesa de paz.) Dos Demócratas y un Republicano. Y todos ellos hablaron de

la paz, intentando ignorar al movimiento mientras este se volvía más consciente y militante.

Si la gente pudiera votar directamente sobre la guerra y la paz, el asalto contra Irak nunca hubiera ocurrido. Pero las promesas electorales falsas no son nada nuevo. ¿Qué pasó con el servicio de salud universal, el sistema educativo mejor, o los empleos para todos? Si fuera posible votar por todas estas cosas, las pudiéramos haber tenido hace muchos años.

Este es un país inmensamente rico, y sin embargo millones sufren de desempleo, pobreza, encarcelamiento, mala salud y educación, deudas enormes y del terror de un porvenir incierto. Estos problemas económicos se agravan para la mayoría de la población que también está sujeta a opresiones concretas, por ejemplo racismo, sexismo y/o fanatismo contra lesbianas, gays, BI y gente de transgénero.

El movimiento contra la globalización que comenzó aún antes de las guerras de Bush era joven y optimista, elevando la consigna “Otro mundo es posible”. De hecho, las opciones hoy son más desoladoras. ¿Cuál va a ser? ¿La globalización capitalista explotadora que envenena el ambiente, o una sociedad donde la riqueza pertenece a todos y la economía funciona para satisfacer las necesidades humanas, no la codicia corporativa?

El Capitalismo no es una palabra bien vista hoy día. Mucha gente dirá que el capitalismo es un sistema que apesta.

Pero esto no se escuchará en los debates presidenciales. La cuestión más importante de nuestra época -el cómo detener la destrucción del mundo por parte de los súper billonarios en su lucha frenética para quedarse en el poder- será ignorada mientras la propaganda política presidencial se apodera de las ondas radiales.

Esa es otra razón para enfocar nuestras energías en construir un movimiento que dé voz a todos los sectores que están luchando contra los males del sistema. Necesitamos un movimiento socialista, para tod@s l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s, no sólo para frenar un poco el deterioro de un sistema capitalista, peligroso y salvaje. □