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ULTIMA PARTE 12



**KOREANS,
north and south,
want U.S. out**

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no gain**

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Scrooged**

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Workers' control
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All eyes on Washington

Time grows short to stop Bush's war

By Leslie Feinberg

As the U.S. war machine drives toward widespread military aggression against the Iraqi people, the urgency to coalesce a massive and powerful anti-war movement is rising.

It's a public "secret" that President George W. Bush and his brass are paving the road toward war with Iraq. Their combat timetable is no top secret, either. Numerous official and unofficial "leaks" to the media put the outbreak of full-scale Pentagon warfare against Iraq at sometime between late January and mid-February.

On Dec. 30 New York Times columnist William Safire predicted that Bush's drive toward war in that period was "on schedule."

The inspections in Iraq, a partly disarmed land now menaced by the country with the most massive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction on the planet, are scheduled to result in a report to the United Nations Security Council on Jan. 27.

Bush is scheduled to deliver his State of the Union speech the following day, one year after he first labeled Iraq part of an "Axis of Evil."

Media accounts in the United States and around the world openly quote unnamed, high-level sources who say the Commander in Chief is expected to announce the launch of an assault on Iraq following the UN inspectors' report. These news reports are strengthened by the fact that the Pentagon is moving its forces into position for war.

This means the slated Jan. 18-19 protest in Washington, D.C., may be the last chance for a national mobilization that can unite people of all nationalities, ages, beliefs, sexes and genders from campuses, towns and cities across the United States to raise their voices in tandem to demand: "U.S. hands off Iraq!"

On Dec. 31 the U.S. Army ordered the single largest ground deployment of troops to the Gulf region since the 1991 war. Soldiers from the Third Infantry Division in Georgia are headed for Kuwait, where they are joining 4,000 of their fellow troops who have been on maneuvers. This division, 15,000 troops in all, specializes in desert warfare.

Zilch, zip, zero

Polls attest that anti-war sentiment is deep and widespread across the United States.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan says he sees no basis at this time for the use of force against Iraq. (BBC News, Dec. 31)

One inspector, who spoke to the Los Angeles Times on condition of anonymity, said that they had found "zilch" to put into a report. "We haven't found an iota of concealed material yet," he said. (BBC News, Dec. 31)

The Bush administration has stonewalled reported public and private requests by the inspectors to "share the intelligence it says proves Iraq possesses prohibited weapons

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Cairo, Dec. 20. Demonstrators defy police pressure to show solidarity with Iraq and Palestine.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

SONNY CARSON

prominent Black nationalist

By Monica Moorehead
New York

Sonny Carson, an important figure in the Black nationalist movement in New York City, passed away Dec. 20. Carson had been in a coma since November after suffering two heart attacks brought on by years of suffering from asthma. He was 66 years old.

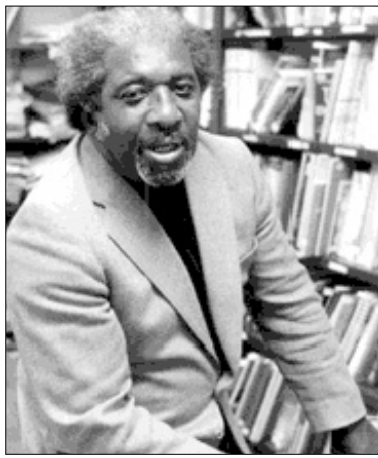
Carson, a Brooklyn native, became politicized while serving in the Army during the 1950s. He wrote an autobiography that reflected the life of painful survival that millions of Black youths are still forced to endure today. This included gang violence along with serving time for robbery in a juvenile detention center.

Carson's life story was transformed into a major motion picture in 1974 when blaxploitation films were popular. The film was called "The Education of Sonny Carson," the same title as his book.

Carson was one of a number of African American activists, including Al Vann and Jitu Weusi, who was instrumental in helping to launch the just struggle for community control of the schools during the height of the Black liberation era in the 1960s. This particular struggle began in 1967 in Ocean Hill/Brownsville, a poor section of Brooklyn.

The right of Black parents and educators to determine how public funds should be spent to educate Black children was a defining issue in the right to self-determination of Black people as an oppressed nation, not only locally but nationally.

Weusi, presently an assistant prin-



cipal in Brooklyn, says of Carson, "He was my teacher... He was a giving person. If you had a problem, he would be there to help you, sometimes to a fault. He was always campaigning for our people."

After leaving the military in the 1950s until the late 1960s, Carson was the Brooklyn chairperson of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He, along with others, eventually left CORE because of deepening political conservatism on the part of the leadership.

The racist establishment did everything they could to silence Carson because of his deep hatred of racist repression. During the theatrical release of "The Education of Sonny Carson" in 1974, Carson was arrested on charges of kidnapping, attempted murder and murder charges. He was convicted on the kidnapping charge and spent 15 months in Sing Sing prison.

Elombe Brath, spokesperson for the Patrice Lumumba coalition in New York, in response to racist attacks on Carson, stated, "It was per-

haps from these encounters (Ocean Hill/ Brownsville) that so much about Sonny was distorted by the media through selective quotes, the charges of him being anti-Semitic and anti-white. What we can say for certain is that he was an institution; a Black Nationalist who truly loved his people. He possessed a strong sense of loyalty, and he often taught by example."

Carson was outspoken whenever police brutality was exposed, and also in the aftermath of the shootings of four Black teenagers in the 1980s by racist Bernard Goetz. In explaining why Africans buried in Manhattan should be re-interred in Africa, Carson remarked, "Those are the bones of our ancestors, and they need a proper burial in their homeland."

During the 1980s, Carson initiated the organization Black Men against Crack to help bring attention to the genocidal epidemic of crack cocaine that has destroyed countless lives in the Black community.

In tribute to Carson's life dedicated to the liberation of Black people, Viola Plummer, leader of the December 12 Movement in Brooklyn, commented, "He never took a break from the fight against oppression: vacation was not a word in his vocabulary. Black self-determination was a constant in his life, and on this he was uncompromising. Sonny was the quintessential nationalist, who sincerely loved his people."

Quotes by Carson, Weusi, Plummer and Brath appeared in the *New York Amsterdam News*, Dec. 27. □

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No war on Iraq. Joint action with march in Washington, D.C. Gather 11 a.m. at Market Street and Embarcadero (Embarcadero MUNI/BART). March to Civic Center. 1 p.m. rally for info (415) 821-6545 or on the Web internationalANSWER.org

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat., Jan. 18

National March on Washington, D.C. No war on Iraq. Assemble 11 a.m. at the West Side of the Capitol Building. Become a volunteer. Endorse. Help get the word out. Bring people to D.C. Send a donation to the mobilization. For info on the Web internationalANSWER.org or phone (202) 544-3389 in D.C. or (212) 633-6646 in NYC.

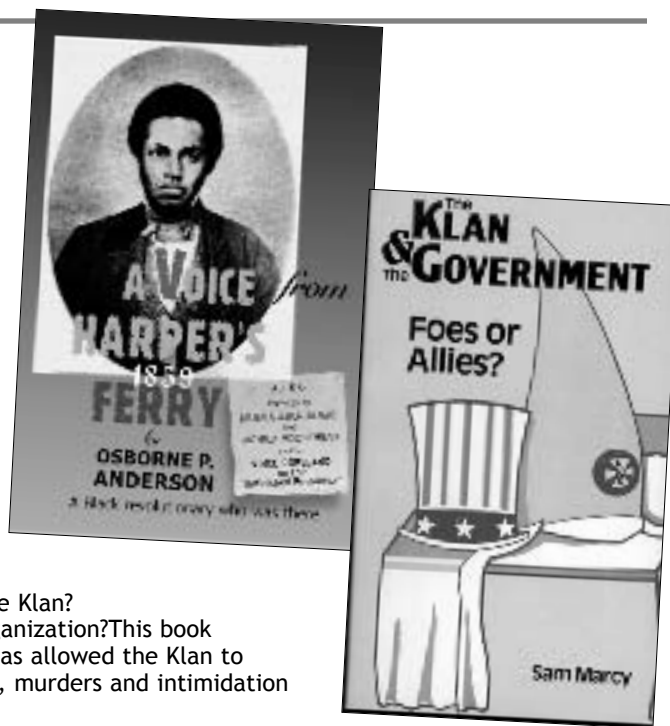
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A doctor for-profit leads the Senate majority

By Leslie Feinberg

Is there a doctor in the House? Well, there's one in the Senate. And he's no Marcus Welby.

Sen. Bill Frist of Tennessee officially picks up the gavel as Republican majority leader when the GOP takes control of the Senate in January. The mega-millionaire heart and lung transplant surgeon is the first physician in the Senate in 50 years.

Forty of the 51-member Senate Republican Caucus elected Frist their new leader in a reportedly unanimous voice vote during a 45-minute conference telephone call Dec. 23.

Frist replaces Trent Lott, forced to step down after his glowing toast to arch-segregationist Strom Thurmond was aired publicly. Lott's nostalgia for post-confederate apartheid rule was no secret. So who really compelled Lott to resign and why has not been revealed. But it's evident after two weeks of behind-the-scenes maneuvering that Bush got a Republican majority leader he can really work with.

Frist led the Republican campaigns that took the GOP from a minority to a majority within the millionaires' club called the U.S. Senate. "He will be the point man for President Bush at what could be his presidency's peak of power, with his party commanding majorities in the House and Senate," wrote the Dec. 22 USA Today.

Although Frist's home state borders Lott's, "The main thing that Frist represents that Lott does not represent, and what the Bush White House wants the most, is that Frist is a national person and a national political figure, as opposed to being a Southern political figure," noted David Bositis, senior political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. (USA Today, Dec. 23)

Frist "has been mentioned for posts in the Bush administration and even as a possible vice presidential nominee if Dick Cheney doesn't run again. He has a solidly conservative voting record and close ties to the Bush administration." (USA Today, Dec. 17)

"Conservative" is an establishment pundit's euphemism for the ideological right wing.

Sen. Frist has voted in favor of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Gulf of Mexico, school vouchers and tax cuts for the already affluent. He has voted against a series of NAACP-supported education amendments, technology centers for poor and minority communities, renewable energy, increased fuel standards for cars, bilingual education, workplace ergonomic standards and minimum wage legislation.

In a Dec. 23 statement, Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, wrote that Sen. Frist's "rabidly anti-choice track record indicates that he marches in lockstep with anti-choice extremists."

Now Republicans say that Frist and Bush will make health care issues a number one priority on the Senate agenda.

Health-policy consultant Robert Laszewski told the media, "We understand that the president is going to really stress health care in his State of the Union speech. To have Bill Frist backing him up is going to be a real plus." (USA Today, Dec. 23)

"Bush has an effective new partner on health care issues," USA Today waxes enthusiastic.

Bill Frist, scion of a multi-billion-dollar

health industry dynasty, is as much an advocate for patient rights as Trent Lott is an advocate for civil rights.

Frist do no harm?

Frist ran for Senate on a campaign promise to bring his "surgical personality" to the political body: to listen, diagnose and treat. Going into the 2002 Senate campaign he clarified his real skills to his GOP Senate peers. He told them he was trained "within 45 seconds to be able to cut out the human heart."

He has proven to be skillful.

Frist has blocked patients from acquiring more rights to sue their HMOs. He has voted against providing prescription drug benefits for retired people, a genuine patient bill of rights and increased global AIDS funding (107th Congress).

According to USA Today, "Frist figured in one of the final controversies of this year's congressional session. He was the author of a provision that blocks lawsuits by families claiming their children's autism was caused by vaccines containing mercury. The provision was added secretly to a bill creating a department of homeland security, but Frist denied any involvement." (Dec. 23)

This provision, slipped into the legislation at the 11th hour, was a financial boon for Eli Lilly, which produces the suspect dilutant used with vaccines.

The pharmaceutical giants have been good to Frist. In Frist's 2000 race for Senate, they generously coughed up \$260,000 to his campaign. (Opensecrets.org)

In the same run for office, Frist also ranked as a top senatorial recipient of donations to his war chest from hospital and nursing homes, insurance companies, health professionals, health services and HMOs. Other deep-pocketed contributions came from commercial banks, real estate, security and investment and law firms. (2000 Race Profile)

But Frist is not merely a well-lobbied politician. Like many in Congress—Republicans and Democrats—he is dizzy from the revolving door between the skyscrapers of corporate and banking headquarters and the marbled halls of political power.

"Some companies hire lobbyists to work Congress. Some have their executives lobby directly," journalist Robert Dreyfuss explained in a 1997 article. But the Frist family "has taken it a step further: They sent an heir to the Senate. And there, with disturbingly little controversy, Republican Sen. Bill Frist has co-sponsored bills that may allow his family's company to profit from the ongoing privatization of Medicare." (Mother Jones)

The hypocritical oath

Frist, born with a silver spoon in his mouth, never had to sit in health care clinic waiting rooms when he was sick. Frist's family fortune was amassed from the for-profit hospital dynasty Columbia/HCA, that derives a large share of its proceeds from federal health programs, Medicare and Medicaid. (USA Today, Dec. 22)

In the year 2000 he tied for 15th place in the annual Roll Call 50 Richest, a rough assessment of the assets of the wealthiest Republicans and Democrats on Capital Hill by The Business Group, based in Washington.

That year his financial disclosure forms inventoried a trust in his name valued at between \$5 and \$25 million, another in his wife's name worth more than \$1 million and several trusts in the names of his

children. Sundry other holdings included undeveloped commercial and residential land in Memphis priced at between \$500,000 and \$1 million, and real estate in Colorado, San Francisco and the Bush family's Lone Star state.

Today, although he has nudged up a bit on the roster of the rich, he's nowhere near the most moneyed patrician on the gilded Hill. But in reality he sits atop a much higher crest of capital. And Frist wields great power from that elevation.

His father, Dr. Thomas Frist Sr., was a founder of Columbia/HCA, the country's largest chain of for-profit hospitals. Sen. Frist disclosed in 1994 that his personal wealth included more than \$13 million in Columbia/HCA stock. His brother Tom, who runs Columbia/HCA, was worth \$950 million, according to Forbes magazine in 2000.

Robert Dreyfuss wrote in April 1997 that Columbia/HCA was already a \$20-billion health care conglomerate that included 340 hospitals, 135 outpatient surgery centers, and 200 home health care agencies in 38 states. (Mother Jones)

Columbia/HCA was operating 61 percent of private hospital beds by 1997, according to a report on state legislative trends and analysis

Columbia/HCA became known as the Pacman of the health care marketplace for its voracious gobbling takeovers. Robert Laszewski dubbed the health care giant the Microsoft of the health care industry.

Union-busting tactics by management at the health care Goliath were so egregious that in 1997 the National Labor Relations Board—which was loath to rule against an employer—decreed that Columbia/HCA had engaged in illegal and

unfair labor practices against nurses organizing at the company's flagship hospital in Louisville, Ky. (AFSCME News, April 2, 1997)

A 1996 New England Journal of Medicine article described the aftermath of Columbia/HCA takeovers as "less charity care, the replacement of senior health professionals with less experience (and less expensive) workers, and the risk of lower quality service as profit supersedes care."

Marc Gardner, former vice president of Columbia/HCA, was more blunt. He admitted he "committed felonies every day." (Nathanneman.org)

Gardner spilled more beans in a 1998 interview with ABC News, in which he called the health industry empire "an arrogant corporate culture in which meeting demands for profits became far more important than caring for patients or obeying the law."

He described policies that channeled illegal payments to doctors for sending patients to Columbia hospitals and offered monetary rewards for performing unnecessary surgeries. (Berkeley Medical Journal, Spring 1998)

Capitalism is hazardous to your health

The same week that Frist was chosen as Senate Republican leader, Columbia/HCA agreed to settle a long-running health care fraud investigation, including Medicaid billing swindles, with the Justice Department for \$880 million—far less than the \$1 billion or more that analysts had predicted. (Forbes.com, Dec. 18)

Jamie Court, executive director of the

Continued on page 4



The Spirit of Strom Thurmond

Sen. Strom Thurmond ran for president in 1948 as an open segregationist and has never repudiated his racist stance. Because Sen. Trent Lott praised the 100-year-old Thurmond at his birthday party on Dec. 5, Lott wound up losing the post of Senate majority leader, and everyone in the U.S. and awake in December became acquainted with Thurmond's racist record.

The picture shown above is that of a C-17 Globemaster III, a U.S. Air Force cargo plane destined to soon carry heavy equipment to the Persian/Arabian Gulf for use in a U.S. war of aggression against Iraq. It will help kill hundreds of thousands of Middle Eastern people. It will be part of an enterprise that leads to the death of U.S. troops, a disproportionate number of whom will be young people of color.

This is not just any C-17, but the 100th to "roll off the assembly line," as the story in Air Force Link News put it. (<http://www.af.mil/news/Dec2002/121202250.shtml>) And, on Dec. 12, a week after Thurmond's birthday, this plane was christened the "Spirit of Strom Thurmond" in a ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Thurmond was there as the C-17's name, painted over the crew door, was unveiled.

"It's a great honor that both the name and the spirit of a great American resides with this airplane," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper that day.

No further comment is needed.

—John Catalinotto

Scrooge, Part II

No extension for unemployment pay

By Gary Wilson

It's the Scrooge story, part two.

The TV news is filled with reports on how Wal-Mart and the other big retailers didn't sell as many goods this holiday season as they wanted. Their profits this year may not be as big as last year. Bah, humbug.

But what about the Cratchits—that is, the workers—who got more layoffs for the holidays? And then the Bush administration threw in a cutoff in unemployment benefits, just for good measure.

The White House and Congress knew that the cutoff was coming, but they refused to extend unemployment benefits before they went on their own well-paid holiday in December.

Consider that the country is supposed to be mobilizing for homeland security. What could be more important to security than the protection of jobs?

Yet the big bucks being doled out by the White House and Congress are going to big military contractors, big oil and other big businesses. The people, on the other

hand, are getting the big minus.

On Dec. 28, almost a million jobless workers were cut off unemployment benefits. Period. No more money. No job. Nothing.

This comes on top of reports that unemployment remains at 6 percent or higher. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said in November that there is a "stagnant job market" with "an unusually large number of people looking for work." November and December are a time when the jobless rate usually declines as retail businesses are hiring for holiday sales.

After the cutoff, Bush quickly got on the radio and announced that "one of my first priorities for the new Congress will be an extension of unemployment benefits." When will that be? Not before the end of January, more likely February. Try buying a loaf of bread at Kroger's supermarket with that promise.

The Bush administration is worried that a lot of people will start putting two and two together and come up with the answer that a war on Iraq isn't in their interests. It is a war by and for the rich

oil barons, like Bush and Dick Cheney.

The biggest war buildup in decades is taking place right now. If military spending could help a failing capitalist economy, then the U.S. economy should be booming.

Instead, the economy is down and not going up.

Globally, capitalism is continuing to contract. Germany, Britain, France and Italy are all in recession; Japan is in a depression.

The European and Japanese capitalists had put off some of their decline by moving more of their investments into the United States. But with the full-force recession hitting the U.S. economy, those investments are being pulled out before they lose even more.

Now, according to Antony P. Mueller, a professor of economics at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, European and Japanese capital are fleeing the United States because of the huge debt being incurred by the Bush administration in its war buildup. They believe that the war debt will sink

the U.S. economy even further.

Japan is turning its investments toward China, while Germany is turning its investments toward Russia and Eastern Europe.

According to Mueller, the countries of the European Union, which had invested more than \$107 billion in the U.S. in 1997, have reduced their investments so drastically that they will soon be near zero. Japanese investments in the U.S.—industrial, real estate and bonds—have seen a similar decline.

This has resulted in a strengthening of the Euro and of gold in relation to the U.S. dollar.

All this means that the recession in the U.S. economy is not going to end quickly. In fact, the wild military spending by Congress and the White House will surely make it much worse.

The movement to stop the war—there's a demonstration in Washington Jan. 18—looks like it is also the best way to stop the economic crisis and put people back to work. □

Health workers say no to smallpox vaccine

Look at: www.healthworkers.org

By Stan Kurtz

Health workers have begun to speak out against the Bush administration's plans, announced in early December, to give smallpox vaccinations to 400,000 health workers, along with 500,000 military personnel.

Many health experts believe there is no real public health justification for the vaccinations, which carry risk of serious side effects. They see the real aim of the project as spreading fear among people in the U.S. and promoting support for Bush's plan to attack Iraq.

Already two major teaching hospitals—Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond—have announced they will not join the program. The largest health workers union, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) with more than 750,000 members, announced opposition to the way in which the program is being administered without safety guarantees.

Smallpox was eradicated over 20 years ago. Not a single case has occurred in the world since that time. Thus many believe the danger of anyone getting smallpox is virtually zero.

The only known stocks of smallpox virus are in controlled laboratories in the United States and Russia. The Bush administration has tried to claim that Iraq or "terrorists" may have samples of the virus, but there is absolutely no evidence for this.

Other than the U.S. and Russia, few industrialized countries would have the technological capability to turn smallpox viruses into weapons, even if they had virus samples. Although Iraq never had this capability, the administration has timed its vaccination campaign to give the impression that this is a defensive effort tied to a war against Iraq.

Bush and the Pentagon claim that just the threat of Iraq having biological weapons is a reason for war. If people realized that Iraq doesn't have these weapons, they would know that the war

was just a grab for control of Iraq's oil. The vaccination program is an attempt to convince the people that the administration thinks a smallpox attack by Iraq is possible, even likely.

Possible serious side effects

Smallpox vaccine historically had more serious side effects than any other vaccine, including the rare possibility of death. Military personnel who are forced to take it and health care workers who volunteer will be risking their health just to support pro-war propaganda.

Over 50 million people in the U.S. with eczema, HIV/AIDS, cancer, lupus or other immune disorders are at special risk of serious side effects. While people with these conditions will not be given the vaccine directly, anyone who gets the vaccine can spread infection to someone else for up to three weeks.

Israel recently started a similar vaccination campaign. Four hospitalizations have already been reported. Of these, two did not get the vaccine themselves. One was an infant child and the other a spouse of inoculated persons.

Activist health care workers have launched a campaign of resistance by circulating a pledge for health workers to refuse to either get or give the vaccine.

A full description of the resistance appeal and the pledge, along with other relevant information and resources, can be seen on the website www.healthworkers.org. Visitors to the site can add their name by filling out a form online or sending an email to pledge@healthworkers.org.

Workers World spoke to health professionals involved in the pledge. Hillel Cohen, a doctor of public health, a delegate of 1199-SEIU and an organizer of the resistance effort, said, "Bush wants health

workers to risk their health and the health of their patients in order to support his war propaganda. Health workers can and should refuse to participate."

"When I discussed the vaccine with my co-workers," said Beverly Hiestand, a registered nurse and chief steward of CWA Local 1168 in Buffalo, N.Y., "there were questions about the motivation behind the vaccinations. Nurses are concerned that this may be really about promoting the war instead of promoting public health. Many of us will refuse to do it." □

BUFFALO, NY

Yemenis arrested in

By Bev Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

Federal authorities on Dec. 18 arrested three prominent members of the Yemeni-American community in Lackawanna, N.Y. These arrests are part of a continuing attack on this community by the Joint Terrorism Task Force of Western New York.

Mohamed T. Albanna, his brother, Ali A. Albanna, and his nephew, Ali Taher Elbaneh, are accused of illegally sending nearly \$500,000 to Yemen between October and December.

The media is trying to link this case with the arrest of six Lackawanna men in September who were accused of being part of an al Qaeda "sleeper cell." According to the government, the six

A doctor for profit: Frist

Continued from page 3

California-based Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, says Frist "is going to be the poster boy for how close the Republican Party is with corporate criminals." (USAToday.com)

True, Frist is steeped in the corporate climate of crime and cronyism. But this is a bipartisan reality.

Both parties represent the overall interests of big business and are paid handsomely for their efforts. Health care industry groups, for example, distribute about two-thirds of their campaign contribu-

tions to Republicans and about one-third to Democrats. (opensecrets.org)

This is what capitalist democracy looks like.

Remember how all roads in the Washington Beltway seemed to lead to Enron? In fact, all the major corporations and banks have two-way express lanes to Congress and the White House. That is where the great capitalist interests wrangle to exert their control over the process of writing and interpreting the laws of the land that guarantee their overall interests.

Private capitalist ownership of collec-

tively created wealth so dominates the body politic that it doesn't really matter in the long run whether these elite politicians are hired or elected. The political nomination process itself is more of an appointment. That's how the Senate remains a virtually lily-white male bastion of wealth and privilege.

And that's why it will take an anti-capitalist revolution from below, rising up by the millions who are sick and tired of exploitation and incredible campaign promises, to birth a government of, by and for those who do the work of the world every day. □

LOS ANGELES

Thousands rally to protest INS roundup

By Scott Scheffer
Los Angeles

Immigration and Naturalization Service arrests of hundreds of Iranian men in Los Angeles ignited a prompt and furious demonstration of over 6,000 people from the nation's largest Iranian community on Dec. 18 and a lawsuit by a coalition of immigrant rights and civil rights organizations. It also spurred a campaign to build an immigrant rights contingent in an upcoming Jan. 11 anti-war march and rally in the city.

The explosion of anger comes from the feeling of having fallen for a cruel trap set by the U.S. government. The men were arrested when they voluntarily abided by a directive to report to the INS to be fingerprinted, photographed and interviewed by Dec. 16. Many community organizations had encouraged immigrants to cooperate, and assured people that it was the right thing to do.

Gisroo Mohajeri, who is seven months pregnant, had urged her 16-year-old Iranian-born son to register. The day after the registration deadline, she sat on the steps of the downtown federal building and sobbed, "Why? Just because I followed the law. I made a mistake. I shouldn't do that." Her son may be deported.

The "special registration," as it is officially known, is part of new federal security guidelines instituted during the anti-immigrant hysteria whipped up by the Bush administration immediately after Sept. 11, 2001. Like Mohajeri's son, many of those arrested are now facing deportation proceedings. It is believed that an additional 500 have been arrested since November, when the directive was first made public.



Los Angeles, Dec. 18.

The demonstration—born out of an announcement by an Iranian AM radio station—was so large and so sudden that it seemed to take the INS and the media by surprise. It finally forced the story about the arrests into the establishment media here, but there has been little national coverage.

The INS said very little in response to media questions, finally claiming that only 227 were arrested and that they were treated humanely. But, according to Kayhan Shakib, a spokesperson for the Iranian-American Lawyers Association, "We don't know how many. We have estimated anywhere between 1,000 to 2,500 detained in southern California."

While being held, the men reported being subjected to strip searches, standing-room-only holding centers, freezing conditions, deprivation of blankets, shoes and socks, deprivation of vital medicines, and instances of brutality.

Most had valid work permits and paid taxes at their jobs. Many had applied for permanent residence, and had been notified verbally that approval was imminent. Most infractions were as minor as failing to report a change of address.

According to the American Civil

Liberties Union, by the time the last deadline passes on Feb. 13, it's possible that the arrests will total 10,000 or more.

Citizens or nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria were targeted during this roundup, and 13 more nationalities will be subjected to the same repressive measures over the next seven weeks. All fall into three categories: Middle Eastern countries, countries with large Muslim populations, or countries that have stood up for their sovereignty against U.S. domination, such as North Korea.

As part of its efforts to neutralize the rapidly growing anti-war movement in the United States, the Bush administration's two-pronged strategy aims to terrorize the immigrant population and prevent them from taking part while at the same time demonizing Muslims and people from the Middle East.

Said Hamid Kahn of the South Asian Network, "To justify a war overseas, they have to create an enemy. The U.S. government has a long tradition of attacking immigrants because they lack political muscle. Of course, immigrants are fearful of the consequences, but that doesn't mean they won't fight back."

"We've been in touch with other organizations of immigrants and we're getting a great response from people in the Korean, Latino and Arab communities in LA about the immigrant rights contingent on January 11. The best way to fight back is to let them know we're not alone." □

Gisroo Mohajeri,
outside the INS
office.



anti-Arab witchhunt

acknowledge that they attended camps in Afghanistan that the U.S. calls "al Qaeda training camps." But the defendants say it was only for religious schooling. They say they were unaware that the camps' purpose was to train participants for "terrorist activities," that they are not a sleeper cell, and have never participated in or planned any terrorist actions. (Buffalo News, Dec. 16).

Agents from the Customs Service, the Internal Revenue Service, the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration claim to have been investigating a "money trail" to Yemen that may be linked to funding terrorism.

U.S. Attorney Michael A. Battle has stated, however, that none of the money allegedly sent to Yemen by the three people just arrested was used to fund terrorism. Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy Lynch has admitted it is not illegal to send money abroad, and that the three men are accused only of failing to follow government regulations requiring special licensing. (Buffalo News, Dec. 18)

Nevertheless, the arrests have prompted scare headlines and an atmosphere of intimidation in this area.

'Man of the people' charged

Mohamed Albanna is vice president of the American Muslim Council of Western New York and has been a prominent spokesperson supporting the rights of the "Lackawanna Six."

As a wholesale food broker, he provides goods to about 120 mostly Arab-owned delicatessens in Buffalo, Lackawanna and surrounding areas. He has been described as a "man of the people" for his untiring work in his community. Albanna is a leader in the Muslim and Yemeni communities and a community activist who has spoken at countless School Board and City Council meetings.

A bridge builder between cultures, Albanna is highly regarded for his willingness to speak out on behalf of children and the needs of area residents. He has pleaded for better education, better city governance and a higher quality of living.

He has worked to break down the barrier of silence surrounding Arab immigrants who have made a home in the First Ward of Buffalo, an area surrounding the now mostly closed Bethlehem Steel complex.

"He's just sending money to his family; that is all," said Ali Selh, a resident of Albanna's Lackawanna neighborhood for 48 years. Friends and community members have complained that the government has targeted the three for the very common practice of sending money back home, a century-old tradition called "hawala."

American Muslim Council President Khalid J. Qazi says that "recent immigrants and first-generation Americans throughout history have sent money back to the home country. This is not unique to Yemen." (Buffalo News, Dec. 18) U.S. regulations make it very difficult for families in the U.S. who come from poor countries to transfer money home legally, as there are often no banks near where their families live.

Neighbors have complained about the way police and agency officials swarmed through the defendants' homes and neighborhoods, calling it propaganda to make the U.S. government look good. Many were enraged at the manner in which the raids took place, endangering children on their way to school. □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal
from death row



Anti-American or Anti-Imperialist?

What does it mean to be an American? That is the question that is pulsing through the country, especially as the nation embarks on the dark road to war.

A plethora of pro-imperialist writers (pro-imperialists can be of both the right or the so-called "left") have been busy promoting the suggestion that many of those who are firmly in the anti-war camp (such as this writer) are somehow "anti-American." Of course, they feel no need to define their terms, for they rely on the implicit understanding of the reader to follow their drift.

But such a charge has a long history in the United States, and seriously deserves an answer.

Decades ago, the U.S. Congress appropriated to itself the task of defining what "anti-Americanism" meant, and established the infamous HUAC (for the House on Un-American Activities Committee).

This group waged ideological war on communists, socialists and anyone who tried to organize social change in the repressive *status quo* of the United States. People barely remember the rednecks who sat on the side of the government, and who imperiously condemned those who came before them, but Paul Robeson, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, and the Hollywood 10 (actors and writers who were blacklisted during the period) are remembered with something akin to reverence.

Who were the "real Americans"? The rednecks and racists who stormed and raged and lorded it over those activists and artists? I stand with Robeson. I stand with DuBois. I would rather pitch my tent with the artists of the Hollywood 10, who stood for the right to create work that reflected the truths about this society, rather than with the racists and segregationist politicians who stood for silence in the face of repression.

Thousands of people lost their livelihoods, and some committed suicide in the face of this cruel government repression. Families were destroyed in this witch hunt of the 1950s that launched the careers of the Nixons, the Roy Cohns and the like.

The definition of American has been contested all throughout the history of this country, and when the State has been able to assert their meaning, it has always meant blind obedience to those in power, in government.

There are millions of people in this country who believe in another definition. They believe in the people. They believe that it is not the duty of people to obey the government, but the duty of the government to obey the people. They believe that everyone should have a say in that definition, not just the moneyed interests. They also do not believe in Empire.

To be an American also means that one is related to other peoples in the Americas. Like the Cubans. Like the Venezuelans. Like the Nicaraguans. Like the Brazilians.

They do not believe that it is the inherent right, or the "manifest destiny" of the norteamericanos to rule over them like New Rome.

They don't believe that it is right for American military or CIA or any other agency to destroy the leaders or popular organizations of neighboring states (or distant ones).

That definition of American is not anti-American, but the very best of what it means to be a part of the people of the Americas.

That kind of American is not represented in the halls of government or in the corridors of power in the Bush regime; but it is in the hearts, minds and souls of the people. It has not yet found true political expression, but it will.

They may be called anti-imperialists. But they may also be called "Americans." □

ANSWER youth action plans to inspect Bush's 'Presidential Palace'

By Julie Fry

Youth organizers for the International ANSWER coalition announced Dec. 26 that they are planning a youth and student action against war in Iraq for Jan. 19 in Washington, D.C. The action will be in conjunction with the Jan. 18 national anti-war demonstration.

The organizers are calling on youth to gather at the Department of In-Justice at 11 a.m. on Jan. 19 and then march to the White House for a "youth and student weapons inspection" of what they have dubbed the "Presidential Palace."

There is also a meeting planned for 6 p.m. on the evening of Jan. 18 at the Church of the Brethren in D.C. to prepare for the following day's activities.

Young people all over the country have been organizing to stop the war on Iraq and are expected to be a large presence in Washington during the Jan. 18 weekend. Youth make up over half of the 2,500 individuals and groups that have endorsed the demonstration so far.

In addition, a third of the organizing centers for Jan. 18 are based on either high school or college campuses. ANSWER organizers report that the call for a youth action on Jan. 19 has already sparked a tremendous response from youth around the country who have been calling and e-mailing ANSWER's D.C. office to find out how to get involved.

Youth mobilization across the country

Youth all around the country have been fighting back against Bush's attacks on

education and students. On many college campuses, students have started "non-compliance campaigns" to force their administrations not to comply with the FBI's racist demands to turn over information about Arab and Muslim students.

Students are also organizing against Bush's misnamed "No Child Left Behind" act, which requires high school administrators to turn over the names, addresses and telephone numbers of their students to military recruiters in order to receive federal grants for their schools.

The act requires parents to notify the schools if they do not want their children to be recruited by the military. But this military recruiting provision is such a small feature of this new law that most parents probably will not know about it until their children are already being contacted by recruiters.

High school students have been resisting this law. The city of Oakland, Calif., prompted by its students and the teachers' union, has refused to comply with the military recruiting provision of the "No Child Left Behind" Act. Students in San Francisco are pushing their administrations to do the same.

Students and youth are also resisting military recruiting in general. According to ANSWER organizers, one of the most common groups of people who want to get involved in the anti-war movement is working class and oppressed youth who were lured to the military and to ROTC programs with promises of a free education and job training. Instead, these youth are being trained to be killers, and to be killed, in a racist war for oil in Iraq.



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

San Francisco, Oct. 26 Youths take the front lines.

According to Tahnee Stair, an organizer for ANSWER in San Francisco, "Youth and students are seeing more clearly than ever that the billions of dollars that should go to jobs, job training and education for their futures are being used instead to teach youth how to slaughter their brothers and sisters in Iraq with high-tech weapons just to line the pockets of greedy corporate bosses."

Mobilize for Jan. 19

The Jan. 19 action will give youth and students from around the country the chance to come together to fight back against the attack on the Iraqi people and

against the government's attack on young people in this country. Sarah Sloan, a youth organizer for International ANSWER, says that it is important to have an action for youth during the Jan. 18 weekend because "Youth and students are going to be directly affected by the war and the long-term consequences of spending billions on war instead of jobs, education, and social programs."

As in all important social movements, youth have been at the forefront of the current anti-war movement. On Jan. 19, they will be a force to reckon with in Washington, D.C. □

13 countries and growing

International actions set for Jan. 18-19

By John Catalinotto

As of Dec. 31, anti-war demonstrations have been scheduled in at least 13 countries for the weekend of Jan. 18-19, which is the 12th anniversary of the first U.S. assault on Iraq. The appeal for these actions originated with the International ANSWER coalition in the United States.

ANSWER is organizing national demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco on Jan. 18 to demand "No war on Iraq." These are expected to be the largest such protest actions so far in the United States as the growing anti-war movement tries to stop a Bush administration hell-bent on war.

The 13 countries are Egypt, Belgium, Spain, Canada, Italy, Japan, Indonesia, Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and the United States. ANSWER organizers expect that anti-war movements in other countries will also take on this effort, especially as the threat of war grows closer. U.S. military bases are targets of the demonstration in several countries.

Groups from many other countries have sent statements of solidarity or have publicized ANSWER's call.

The call for the **Egyptian demonstration** comes from the Cairo Conference, held on Dec. 18-19, which

also issued a call for international demonstrations on Jan. 18-19. The International Action Center web site at www.iacenter.org contains a report on the conference, the conference declaration and other documents.

In **Belgium**, the Stop USA (United States of Aggression) Coalition has called a demonstration in Brussels for Jan. 19. The slogans are "No war," "No sanctions" and "Stop the bombardment." The Belgian demonstration also supports a Palestinian state and the resistance of the Palestinian people. More information and posters can be found at www.stopusa.be/.

In **Spain** at least two major actions are planned. On Jan. 19 a coalition of anti-war and social groups is holding a protest demonstration at the Torrejon airbase to "Stop the war on Iraq before it starts." It will demand "No more blood for oil," "No participation by the Spanish state" in the war, "No to NATO, bases out" and "Against globalization, a Europe run by capital and war." A national discussion of the threatened war takes place on the previous day.

In Zaragoza, Spain, on Jan. 18, a group of conscientious objectors to the war will present their pledge of resistance to the government of that city.

Anti-war groups plan demonstrations

across **Canada** on Jan. 18-19.

In **Italy** there have been various appeals for demonstrations. A coalition, also named ANSWER, has called a demonstration at Camp Ederle near Vicenza in northern Italy. Its statement says, "Our goal is to stop the war that Bush and his allies (among whom are our own Berlusconi) want to unleash at all costs against Iraq, with immediate repercussions in all of the Middle East. Their real goals are to continue to assert control of the oil resources of the region, and to have a free hand with the Palestinians, with Iran, with Syria, with the countries in the Caspian Sea region."

For more information, see: www.venetocontroguerra.net.

The Anti-imperialist Camp will support Jan. 18 demonstrations in Italy and **Austria** and "will organize or take part in sit-ins, demonstrations and meetings already planned."

In **Japan**, different coalitions will be holding regional demonstrations in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Fukuoka and other major cities on both Jan. 18 and Jan. 19. Some will also demand that U.S. bases leave Japan, especially Okinawa, where there is a strong popular movement against the U.S. occupation.

In **Indonesia**, an organization in Bandung, West Java, pledged to demon-



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Dec. 20, Cairo.

strate on Jan. 18. In Britain, there will be a regional demonstration in Yorkshire on that day, plus a weekend of protest and civil disobedience in London at the Northwood Military Base.

French groups that held a protest in Marseilles Dec. 28 protesting the passage of a U.S. battle group led by the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman plan to protest again on Jan. 18.

In **Germany**, a group in Heidelberg will demonstrate at the U.S. military headquarters. Web sites of groups based in Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Italy and other places around the world are publicizing the ANSWER protest. □

Cairo Conference backs Jan. 18 protests

Calls for solidarity with Iraq and Palestine

By Sara Flounders

An international conference of over 400 representatives of popular organizations from 20 countries met in Cairo, Egypt, from Dec. 18-19 and resolved to take action in solidarity with the people of Iraq against threatened U.S. aggression and in solidarity with the Palestinian movement for self-determination.

The conference, called the International Campaign Against U.S. Aggression on Iraq (ICAA), created a steering committee whose first order of business is to mobilize worldwide for mass demonstrations against U.S. war plans on Jan. 18.

This action is simultaneous with national anti-war demonstrations already underway in the United States in Washington and San Francisco and with many other actions already scheduled in at least 12 countries.

The committee will also promote actions for Feb. 15, 2003, a day chosen for demonstrations in Europe.

The Cairo Conference is one of a number of international gatherings and massive mobilizations in many parts of the world. What makes it so important is that it took place in the center of the Arab world in the face of Egyptian government efforts to stop it. It took place in a region where powerful mass movements in the last century shook off colonial bonds, and where just last year millions of people marching in the streets for Palestine forced the Pentagon to put its war plans for Iraq on hold.

U.S. plans for aggression are creating waves of outrage and opposition in every corner of the world. Because of advances in mass communication, those under attack everywhere are now able to see the broader picture of a global empire. They can more easily identify with others who share their conditions of life. This new technology lays a stronger basis for solidarity and common action.

The pervasive sentiment at the conference was that far more than Iraq is under attack, and that Washington has explicitly targeted every country attempting an independent course. All the speakers predicted that a U.S. aggressive war is imminent, even though Iraq has allowed "unconditional inspections" by the UN.

Some speakers said that the Bush administration wants to make an example of Iraq to further terrify the world into compliance and to divert attention from a collapsing global economy. Many described the coming war as a war for oil. Some connected it to the struggle for unfettered control of global markets.

The continuations committee of the conference undertook the challenge of mobilizing in Egypt on Jan. 18. Its first action immediately followed the conference on Dec. 20, when it mobilized 1,000 people for a public protest of U.S. war plans, despite the threatening presence of hundreds of Cairo police.

Until the last minute the Egyptian government tried to stop the conference from taking place. After political forces mobilized, the regime backtracked and permitted the assembly. Then the Sheraton corporation, part of a U.S.-owned hotel chain, canceled contracted space at two of its hotels in an effort to sabotage the conference. The conference was finally moved to the Conrad Hotel. The general feeling was

that the U.S. State Department was behind efforts to stop this international anti-war gathering.

The challenge of calling the conference and confronting the efforts to halt it was undertaken by the Egyptian Popular Campaign to Confront U.S. Aggression, a broad coalition including political leaders identified with the movement started by the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser and also both secular left and Islamic forces.

Among the prestigious world figures attending the conference were Ahmed Ben Bella, leader of Algeria's struggle for independence from France and first president of Algeria; Saad K. Hammoudy, Iraq's ambassador to the Arab League; former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Denis Halliday of Ireland, who was the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General heading the Oil-for-Food program in Iraq up through 1998; UN director of the Oil-for-Food program Dr. Hans Von Sponeck, and George Galloway, Labor member of Parliament in Britain. The 86-year-old Ben Bella presided over the conference.

Coordinators of anti-war groups attending included John Rees of the Stop the War Coalition in Britain, Christof Agiton of Attac in France, along with delegates from Cuba, Canada, Russia, Germany, Italy and more than 50 distinguished guests from Arab countries. The U.S. delegation included Sara Flounders of the International Action Center, Elias Rashmawi and Fadia Rafeedi of the Free Palestine Alliance and the ANSWER Coalition, Peter Phillips of Project Censored and Gary Leupp.

Ben Bella sets direction

President Ben Bella gave direction to the conference, predicting that a U.S. attack on Iraq, should it take place, would be only the first of a succession of wars by the U.S. against Arab and other lands of the Middle East. He was firm in wanting to mobilize the people of all Arab lands against U.S. plans to dominate the world, and called for a demonstration of 2 million.

Ben Bella also said it was up to the people of the United States to fight against its policies and that the struggle within the U.S. was vital.

Ramsey Clark, the only former high-ranking U.S. official to publicly oppose Washington's military adventures all over the world, said that "an attack on Iraq is obviously unlawful, it is criminal. Through years of sanctions, the U.S. is already committing genocide against Iraq... Another strike now by the U.S. builds toward world domination and it has to be stopped. It is an urgent issue because it can happen in the next three months, because the Pentagon will want to move before the summer heat sets in."

George Galloway mocked Washington's charge that Iraq holds weapons of mass destruction. "Every place visited by the inspectors so far has been completely empty," he said, calling Great Britain and the U.S. "imperial powers" who want to decide on "new kings, new countries, and new slave centers" in the oil-rich Middle East.

Denis Halliday, who resigned in 1998 to protest the effect of sanctions against Baghdad, said that Washington has accused Baghdad of "material breaches"



WWPHOTO

Ahmed Ben Bella and Sara Flounders at Cairo Conference, Dec. 19.

of the new UN resolution because it "plans to undermine the work of inspections and the work of the Iraqi government. The United States doesn't want a peaceful solution. They want an excuse to go to war, to conquer Iraq and control its oil," Halliday said.

Hans Von Sponeck, who also resigned his UN post in protest, called the 150-percent increase in infant mortality in Iraq since 1990 "genocide by the United Nations."

Ashraf el-Bayoumi, an Egyptian professor and one of the conference organizers, said Washington was preparing for "launching an attack on Iraq, occupying Iraq, usurping its natural resources, oil and otherwise, in order to continue being the solo superpower in the world."

Bush's problem

Sara Flounders said that Bush's big problem is the growing opposition to the war inside the United States, referring to the demonstrations of hundreds of thousands ANSWER called on Oct. 26 and its plans for Jan. 18, 2003. "The one power that the Pentagon today fears is the arousing anger of the millions of people, whose power is explosive when they are organized and mobilized. This is the one force that can stay the hand of the Pentagon," she said.

Elias Rashmawi, a Palestinian American, focused on the need for a strong anti-war mobilization from the U.S. He stressed that there is now the potential to build a movement that can effectively fight against U.S. war plans. "Our international coordination in mobilizing for January 18 will strengthen solidarity and will send a signal to the Bush administration that the world is united against the continuation of conquest and war."

John Rees referred to both the Sept. 28 demonstration of 400,000 in London against the war, and the almost million people who gathered in Florence, Italy, to demonstrate on Nov. 9 as part of the European Social Forum's anti-globalization actions.

Saad K. Hammoudy from Iraq connected U.S. military aggression with the drive to impose capitalist globalization on the world. With U.S. capital invested around the world, it requires its military to secure its profits. Hammoudy drew attention to the U.S. seizure of Iraq's weapons declaration from the United Nations, saying Washington altered the declaration to create an excuse for an invasion.

Mohamed Asad Kanaana, secretary general of the Abnaal El-Balad, People of the Homeland Movement within 1949 Palestine, described this as one of the most critical periods facing the Arab nation in its modern history. The U.S. is repartitioning the world, he said. Israel has decided that direct control—the return of colonialism—is the assured method to guard its interests. But the unipolar world of U.S. imperialism is not the destiny of humanity. People's movements will innovate new forms of struggle to confront imperialist arrogance.

Cairo Declaration

The Cairo Declaration issued by this meeting declares: "We, the participants, reaffirm our resolve to stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq and Palestine, recognizing that war and aggression against them is but part of a U.S. project of global domination and subjugation. Solidarity with Iraq and Palestine is integral to the internationalist struggle against neo-liberal globalization. The Cairo meeting is not an isolated event, but an extension of a protracted international struggle against imperialism, from Seattle and Genoa to Lisbon and Florence, to Cordoba and Cairo."

The statement goes on to "declare our total opposition to war on Iraq and our resolve to continue the struggle against U.S. policies of global domination. We strongly believe in the urgency of mobilizing against these policies."

It condemns the "U.S. military presence on Arab land" and calls for "pressuring the Arab governments that allow U.S. military bases on their territory to close them down, and not to provide air, naval, or land facilities."

There was great interest at the Cairo Conference in the potential of the new, young anti-war movement growing within the United States, where a movement of hundreds of thousands of people has been taking to the streets in organized opposition even before the war starts.

Solidarity built at gatherings like the Cairo Conference is a force that can bring millions of people into the streets. In the face of a criminal aggression, the people of the world are not powerless. The same explosive power that has reshaped history, brought down empires and ended past colonial domination is the power that can mobilize to confront U.S. imperialism. □

Venezuelan workers defy rightist oil blockade

By Andy McNerney

Since Dec. 2, Venezuela's economic elite have tried desperately to bring the popular government of President Hugo Chávez to its knees. The same forces that launched a failed coup attempt against Chávez in April—the bosses' Fedecameras federation, some corrupt union leaders connected to the old political elite, and some sectors of the military, with the support of the U.S. government—are now trying to force Chávez to resign. Their main target has been the state oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela*, the government's largest source of revenue.

They call the action a "strike." In reality, it is the bosses' attempt to blockade the Chávez government and the millions of poor and working people it represents. It is the same policy that U.S. imperialism has tried to dictate against Iraq and Cuba.

Chávez has vowed from the outset to weather the crisis. Thanks to popular support and mass mobilization of workers around the country, along with solidarity from across Latin America, the popular government has managed to resist the blockade and sabotage as the New Year arrives.

Big business news media in the U.S. have mainly served as cheerleaders for the right wing opposition, wildly inflating numbers for opposition demonstrations and not reporting pro-Chávez demonstrations at all. But some reports on the class character of the misnamed "strike" have begun to surface.

A Dec. 24 article in the Philadelphia

Inquirer had the headline, "Venezuela strike splits capital into haves and have-nots." "Thousands of holiday shoppers throng the streets of working-class western Caracas, where a general strike designed to oust President Hugo Chávez seems a figment of the imagination," the article states. "Meanwhile, in well-to-do eastern Caracas, the work stoppage is very real, with shops and restaurants closed, the sidewalks mostly devoid of pedestrians."

In the critical oil industry, managers and executives organize the "strike." But the Chávez government has won over the support of many oil workers, according to a Dec. 29 New York Times report.

Of a visit to an oil refinery at Puerto La Cruz, a New York Times reporter wrote: "Nearly a month into Venezuela's devastating national strike, all systems were back up and running close to normal this week at the refinery here that supplies gasoline to the eastern half of the country.

"Night shift workers were bursting with pride."

"We are prouder now than ever," said 17-year veteran oil worker Wilfredo Bastardo. "We have shown our supervisors that we can run this plant without them."

Speaking at a rally of pro-Chávez oil workers in Yaguas, Chávez declared, "We will move heaven and earth, but we will never leave the people in the hands of this savage and treacherous oligarchy."

Chávez is also benefiting from his foreign policy goal of promoting Latin American solidarity. Both Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago have sent shipments of gasoline to help Venezuela weather the

protests. The Dominican Republic has sent rice.

Oil workers in Colombia and Ecuador have volunteered their expertise in keeping the refineries open.

Masses mobilize to defend Chávez

Chávez's opponents accuse him of being a dictator. But his government has shown a degree of tolerance toward the plotters that would be unheard of by any of the capitalist "democracies" if they were facing such disruption from the organized working class. The rich elite in Venezuela use their control over the media to broadcast anti-Chávez propaganda. Rebellious military officers—so far a small minority of the armed forces—meet openly in the wealthy areas of the capital.

But demands are growing on the part of the millions of Chávez supporters—overwhelmingly poor and working people—to meet the opposition head on.

Over 300,000 Venezuelans have signed petitions calling for a referendum on suspending government concessions to private television stations "that have violated their code of ethics by blatantly slanting news events in an anti-patriotic manner, and are openly conspiring against the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela."

Thousands of others have signed petitions in support of *Petróleos de Venezuela* director of oil production Felix Rodriguez, who filed a motion asking the Supreme Court to declare the oil stoppage illegal. The Supreme Court did so on Dec. 19, but oil managers have

'We are prouder now than ever,' said 17-year veteran oil worker Wilfredo Bastardo.

'We have shown our supervisors that we can run this plant without them.'

continued their stoppage.

The oil executives' defiance of the Supreme Court order prompted Chávez to fire over 90 of them. The government is also considering arresting them for damages done to the economy.

The Bolivarian Circles, neighborhood-based organizations organized to defend Chávez's "Bolivarian revolution," have been the core of popular mobilizations against the counterrevolutionary mobilization. The circles have organized daily demonstrations in support of Chávez.

Some sectors of the Bolivarian Circle movement are openly preparing to defend against the next attempt to oust Chávez. On Nov. 9, the Associated Press interviewed Comandante Lina Ron, one of the most militant leaders of the Bolivarian Circle movement.

Describing the greed of Venezuela's rich ruling class, Ron said, "If that's the way things are, I am preparing for war. We will wage a scorched-earth campaign."

Ron organized a Christmas party in Caracas on Dec. 25, distributing gifts to poor children. Vice President Jose Vincent Rangel attended the event.

"Tonight is a night of understanding," he said. But the loudest cheers came with his next sentence: "But this doesn't rule out a firm hand." □

As imperialism plunders Africa

French troops intervene in Ivory Coast

By G. Dunkel

The French army has intervened in Ivory Coast, one of France's former colonies in West Africa, exchanging fire several times in late December with armed groups in rebellion against the country's current government.

According to a video from an Ivorian journalist carried on French television, French soldiers fired over the heads of demonstrators to break up a major popular demonstration in front of the French army's guard post in Bouaké. Demonstrators carried signs demanding that the "monsters of imperialism" leave. Bouaké is a major town in the country's North that the government lost control of in mid-September.

When the current crisis broke out in mid-September, both Washington and Paris sent special forces to the country for alleged "humanitarian" purposes. U.S. and French imperialism have been in competition for control of various parts of Africa.

French troops rushed in and were first to reach a school for U.S. children, mainly the offspring of U.S. missionaries in West Africa. They then turned the children over to U.S. air transport at the central airport.

Of course, the plight of the thousands of other foreigners in the country, from places like Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Burkina Faso, did not rate a mention in

either the French or U.S. media.

There are at least 20,000 French nationals living in the Ivory Coast. They are not just teachers and the managers of big French companies. They own restaurants and hotels, auto repair shops, trucking firms and pharmacies and have made up a significant portion of the country's petit bourgeoisie since it was an open French colony.

The French army has had difficulty pretending it was on a humanitarian mission since its troops started using light tanks and heavy mortars to shore up their positions.

Washington has been trying to supplant French and other imperialist interests in Africa, but right now it is on the road to war against Iraq and is threatening North Korea. It needs France's cooperation in the Security Council. Since U.S. troops pulled out of the Ivory Coast, the French government has been more compliant with Washington.

The U.S. media had ignored the developing situation in Ivory Coast, which involves three separate rebel groups. After the last confrontation between the French army and MPIGO (the Far West Ivorian People's Movement), the three movements issued a joint statement warning the French against aggression. This drew some U.S. media attention.

The statement came after French troops on Dec. 21 stopped MPIGO forces from advancing on the strategic town of

Duekoue in western Ivory Coast, a gateway to the country's economically vital cocoa belt. MPIGO claims that fire from French light tanks cost it six men and three vehicles, with 15 wounded.

The MPC (Patriotic Movement of the Ivory Coast), the MJP (Movement for Justice and Peace) and the MPIGO said, "The MPIGO, the MPC and the MJP declare that from this very day any French military attack against any of our positions will be considered an act of war," and would lead to "a general attack on all fronts." It warned French troops that any further "mismanagement" could trigger "widespread anti-French sentiment and serious and incalculable consequences."

Economic background of the struggle

The Ivory Coast was once one of the most prosperous countries in West Africa. Its economy was based on diamonds and cocoa, some oil and some manufacturing for the West African market. Now it is an economic disaster zone, like much of Africa. It is indebted to the tune of some U.S. \$9.4 billion, which exceeds its gross national product by more than 25 percent. The national government owes its suppliers arrears equal to 12 percent of its GNP.

Ivory Coast does not even control its own currency. It uses the CFA, which is used throughout the former French

colonies and is now linked to the Euro. It is controlled by a regional central bank dominated by French and European banks.

While the French have political and economic dominance in the CFA zone, all the imperialist powers, including U.S. imperialism, take part in plundering the resources of the region and pulling wealth out while the people there suffer.

A famous French-language novelist, Ahmadou Kourouma, who was born and lives in Ivory Coast, explained its economic situation to the French newspaper *L'Humanité*. "Its economic decline is linked to the unequal exchanges imposed not only on the Ivory Coast but on the whole of the Third World. Indeed, on all those placed under the domination of the capitalist financial sector. In France, farmers did not let this be done to them and grabbed some subsidies; the Third World, however, was plunged into destitution."

He went on to say that the role of the Third World in capitalist globalization must be studied, because "Each year the price of our products falls still lower to the greater profit of international finance capital, which fixes their level. At the end of the account, you find the dramas such as the one that the Ivory Coast is currently experiencing and suffering through." □

A question for the anti-war movement

Does Israel plan to expel all Palestinians?

By Richard Becker

There are some in the anti-war movement who advocate separating out the Palestinian struggle and focusing only on opposing a new U.S. war against Iraq. They argue that the Palestinian-Israeli struggle is too controversial, and addressing the issue will lead to a narrowing of support for the anti-war movement.

One can isolate the U.S. war on Iraq from the U.S.-Israeli war against the Palestinian people only by mutilating reality and ignoring what the Bush cabal is trying to accomplish in the Middle East.

Washington wants to conquer Iraq, turn it into a virtual colony and take control of its rich oil resources. But that's not all. The U.S. rulers aim to subjugate and reshape the entire region to fit neatly into their expanding empire.

This broader U.S. objective can only be achieved by destroying all opposition in the area. At the top of their hit list is the Palestinian resistance, which, despite heavy losses suffered in decades of struggle against overwhelming odds, remains strong and defiant. The Hizbollah movement that forced the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 is also on the list, as are the governments of Syria and Libya.

Because the Palestinian cause is so central to the overall struggle in the region, defeating the Palestinians would be a great victory for imperialism and a big setback for the Arab people as a whole.

The Bush administration has given more than a green light to the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon—an infamous war criminal and mass murderer—to carry out this assignment. The U.S. has supplied the F-16 fighter-bombers, Cobra helicopters and even the M-16 rifles to the Israeli army. Just as important, the U.S. has provided the political and diplomatic cover for Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

Now the Bush administration is contemplating a grant of an astounding \$14 billion in new military and economic aid to Israel, a country of just 6 million people. It is only thanks to the more than \$100 billion in U.S. aid over the past three decades that Israel is today ranked as the fourth-leading military power in the world.

Despite all the repression—the tens of thousands of Palestinians killed since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the hundreds of thousands beaten, tortured and imprisoned, the dispossession of the Palestinians from more than 90 percent of their homeland—the resistance has not been crushed.

Sharon's transfer option: expulsion in slow motion

How have the Palestinians been able to persevere under the extremely unfavorable conditions they face? Fundamentally, it is because the struggle is so deeply rooted in the population.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Palestinian resistance and the Palestinian people are one and the same.

The conclusion drawn by Tel Aviv and Washington from this reality is that the only way to destroy the Palestinian resistance is to destroy Palestinian society as a whole. And that is exactly what the Sharon regime, with the backing of Bush, Powell & Co., are attempting to carry out.

In 1948, to make way for the state of Israel as an exclusively Jewish state, 780,000 Arabs were expelled from the cities, towns and farms of Palestine in what is known as Al-Nakba, or the catastrophe. None of the expelled has ever been allowed to return, nor have they received a penny in compensation for their lost homes, lands and other expropriated property.

With U.S. backing, Israel has ignored United Nations resolutions calling for the Palestinian right to return. A second mass expulsion, of hundreds of thousands more Palestinians, took place following Israel's seizure of the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 war.

Today, about 3.4 million Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza and 1.2 million live inside the 1948 borders of Israel. The Palestinian and Jewish populations inside historic Palestine are now roughly equal.

A new wholesale expulsion of Palestinians, such as took place in 1948, would likely trigger a massive social explosion in the Arab world and beyond. What the Israeli government is now attempting, through a combination of extremely harsh repression and economic strangulation, might be termed expulsion in slow motion.

Taayush, an organization of Palestinian and Jewish activists in Israel, described the policy in this way:

"Transfer isn't necessarily a dramatic moment, a moment when people are expelled and flee their towns or villages. It is not necessarily a planned and well-organized move with buses and trucks loaded with people, such as happened in Qalqilyah in 1967. Transfer is a deeper process, a creeping process that is hidden from view.

"The main component of the process is the gradual undermining of the infrastructure of the civilian Palestinian populations living in the territories: its continuing strangulation under closures and sieges that prevent people from getting to work or school, from receiving medical services, and from allowing the passage of water trucks and ambulances, which sends the Palestinians back to the age of donkey and cart. Taken together, these measures undermine the hold of the Palestinian population on its land." (Haaretz newspaper, Nov. 15, 2002)

Gamla, a fascist Israeli organization made up of former military officers and settlers, has drawn up a plan for expelling the entire Palestinian population from the West Bank, Gaza, and inside the 1948 Israeli borders in 3-5 years.

The Israeli army has completely re-occupied the cities and towns of the West Bank, cutting off virtually all economic activity. An article in the Dec. 30 Los Angeles Times, entitled "Palestinian Towns Wobbling on Last Legs," by Tracy Wilkinson, describes the impact of the Israeli tactics on Deir Istiya, a village of 4,000 people:

"Across the West Bank, villages and towns like this one are dying a slow death. More than two years of closures, curfews and the pressure of Israeli army tanks have ruined the livelihood, the economy, the agriculture, the education and in some cases, the health of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian men, women and children.

"In Deir Istiya, hardly an adult male today has work. Barter has replaced com-



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Jenin, West Bank, after Israeli assault.

merce. The single clinic is overrun with patients but undersupplied with medicine. Children sometimes don't have enough to eat, and signs of malnutrition have crept into a population that was once relatively healthy.

"Dr. Yasser Qasin of Deir Istiya told the Times that births are down from 87 babies last year to 57 this year, nearly all delivered at home. If you want to take your wife to the hospital to deliver, it's impossible now, due to army roadblocks."

All roads in and out of Deir Istiya have been destroyed or blocked by the Israeli army. Many of the villagers, the Times story notes, have chosen not to plant crops this year, because there is no possibility of getting their harvest to market. In addition, the people of Deir Istiya and several neighboring villages had trouble harvesting this season because of attacks from Jewish settlers who claimed the groves were often used by terrorists as firing positions.

In fact, it is the settlers, armed by the Israeli military and illegally occupying Palestinian land, who are the real terrorists. The settlers have carried out hundreds of recorded attacks on Palestinian farmers and other villagers attempting to do their work. While the U.S. corporate media focuses sympathetic attention on settler casualties, it pays almost no attention to the Palestinian victims of routine settler violence.

The deliberate destruction of the Palestinian economy, health and education systems is part of an integrated strategy that also includes assassination (targeted killings) and mass arrest and imprisonment. Since the second Intifada (Uprising) began 27 months ago, more than 2,000 Palestinians have been killed and 30,000 wounded. In the same period, 690 Israelis have been killed. More than 5,500 Palestinians have been imprisoned, many held without specific charges and jailed for indefinite terms.

The assassinations and mass imprison-

ments aim to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian resistance organizations. The Israeli program as a whole is meant to persuade the Palestinians to leave en masse.

Sharon and the other Israeli leaders aspire to fulfill what the goals of the political Zionist movement have been since its origin a century ago: to turn all of historic Palestine into an exclusively Jewish state. A central tenet of the Zionist ideology is expressed in the racist slogan, "A land without people for a people without a land."

The U.S. leaders—Bush now and Clinton before him as well—want to pacify the entire region, which requires the elimination of the Palestinian resistance movement.

The U.S. and Israeli interests thus neatly converge in seeking the destruction of not only the Palestinian movement, but of the Palestinians as a people.

Under the Genocide Convention adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

Clearly, the U.S. and Israeli policy toward the Palestinians meets this definition.

Despite all the hardship and extreme violence inflicted on them, the Palestinian people are continuing their struggle for self-determination and liberation. The Palestinian resistance has been a major obstacle to the U.S. war drive in the Middle East.

Today, the anti-war movement here and around the world must stand with the Palestinians and their just cause. □



Challenge to Genocide: LET IRAQ LIVE

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and others who challenged the sanctions write about the devastating effect of U.S.-led economic sanctions on Iraq since the Gulf War. Rev. Lucius Walker writes. "I saw genocide in the mutilated bodies and anguished faces of the Iraqi babies, who were at the threshold of death because of U.S. sanctions."

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It wasn't all bad

Plenty of horrible things happened last year, and we could spend much more space than just this editorial column summing them up. But let's not. Let's look instead at some good things that happened in the year. And some bad things that didn't.

The right-wing, big-business coup attempt last April against the elected Chávez government in Venezuela failed, despite obvious U.S. backing. The people stopped it by taking to the streets by the hundreds of thousands. When was the last time anything like that happened? Not that the struggle is over. But it did show that Bush & Co. can make big mistakes.

An Axis of Good emerged in Latin America as governments more independent of U.S. dictates swept into office in Brazil and Ecuador. The vote was a repudiation by the masses of the neoliberal economic policies pushed by the IMF that have impoverished workers and bankrupted governments like Argentina's.

Cuban President Fidel Castro met with the National Black Farmers Association of the U.S. and agreed to purchase \$10 million worth of agricultural products directly from Black farmers. The farmers have been struggling to survive in an industry where the lion's share of U.S. government subsidies and loans go to huge agribusiness corporations.

U.S. dockworkers stood up to government intimidation. The International Longshore Workers Union didn't run scared when Tom Ridge, in the name of "homeland security," threatened to call out the National Guard in the event of a strike. Instead, they organized impressive

demonstrations of solidarity.

Transit workers in New York faced down the billionaire mayor, the millionaire governor, and the attack press, who threatened to break their union with Taylor Law fines. Like the dockworkers, they didn't win everything, but they got a contract they could live with after threatening to strike.

Nobody suggested cloning Donald Rumsfeld.

California, Washington, Connecticut, Oregon, Nevada and Oklahoma all said they might have to release many non-violent offenders and elderly inmates from prison because they haven't got the money to keep them in jail. The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and spends more money locking people up than it would take to give them a first-rate college education.

The biggest, broadest anti-war movement in decades mushroomed up all over the world in response to the Bush's administrations global threats and predations. Millions of people demonstrated, from London to Rabat to Washington, from Rome to San Francisco to Seoul. The common thread was rejection of U.S. imperialism's attempts to dominate and subjugate the world with its formidable military might.

Nobody suggested cloning Dick Cheney.

And, oh yes, Workers World web site—www.workers.org—got 27 million hits from all over the world, many of them after heavy red-baiting attacks on us in the U.S. media. As P.T. Barnum said to his critics, "Just make sure you spell my name right." □



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Bush's real crisis in Korea

North and south,

By Deirdre Griswold

More than at any other time in the last half-century, the people of Korea, north and south, are today united in their resistance to the United States occupation of their country.

They are appalled at the Bush administration's threats of war against the north, they want greater cooperation and contact between the two halves of the divided peninsula, and they want Washington to sign a peace treaty and remove its troops from the south.

In South Korea, this sentiment is being expressed in constant demonstrations of tens and even hundreds of thousands of people against the U.S. military presence there. It was reflected in the recent presidential election, where the candidate who promised to continue a "sunshine policy" toward the north, Roh Moo-hyun, won a decisive majority over Lee Hoi-chang, the candidate favored by Washington.

Roh's victory was made even more remarkable given the predictions of his defeat in all of South Korea's major media the day before the election. Chung Mong-joon, heir to the Hyundai fortune and head of the National Alliance 21 party, had pulled out his support for Roh just two days before the election. The reason he gave was a speech by Roh implying that South Korea would be neutral in any war between the north and the U.S.

Chung's support had been considered crucial by the big business media. But Roh

won anyway, with a decisive majority. The whole incident just heightened anti-U.S. popular sentiment, which has been growing in South Korea.

While the struggle against U.S. occupation comes primarily from the masses of people, it also reflects contradictions within the South Korean ruling class, exacerbated by Washington's arrogant demands and the desire of many Korean capitalists to do business with the north. Several large north-south construction and commercial projects have been underway, but they are now jeopardized by Washington's threatening stance toward the north, which was escalated last January when Bush included North Korea in a presumed "Axis of Evil" in his State of the Union speech.

Bush's real crisis is not nuclear

For the Bush administration, this growing rejection of its Cold War policies constitutes a crisis of the first order. The further the two Korean states proceed in knocking down the barriers erected between them, the more threatening is the stance taken by Washington.

The focus of media attention right now is the determination expressed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—socialist North Korea—to resume construction of two nuclear power plants. The Bush administration presents this as a terrible threat to the whole area.

Interestingly, "danger from the north" is not the view of the South Koreans,

Time grows short to stop Bush's war

Continued from page 1

programs." (Washington Post, Dec. 19)

Washington's warlords are demonstrating that they are hell-bent on all-out war.

The Pentagon and the White House, with their willing British ally, have continued to pummel Iraq with daily sorties that rain ordinance and terror on the Iraqi population.

The administration plans to escalate its military forces in the Persian Gulf even further in the new year. The buildup will include 50,000 combat troops, aircraft and armor, and a quarter of a million activated reservists. (Washington Post, Dec. 20)

An extensive article on troop and equipment buildup in the Dec. 20 Washington Post reported, "One senior defense official said the Pentagon had been moving heavy equipment for months as part of a buildup that was kept low key to avoid alarming the international community and creating the impression that the Bush administration had prejudged the UN arms inspection process."

The source explained, "But without a doubt, within the next week or so, you'll see more muscle movements than you've seen up to now. ... We've been below the threshold of pain of the international community. I think you're going to see a strategy change to one of demonstrated resolve, if not overt coercion."

The source was correct, as the latest news shows.

The U.S. has deployed an estimated 1,000 troops in Israel, reportedly to install

new Patriot missile batteries. Pentagon officials say these troops may not be withdrawn any time soon. (The Hindu, Dec. 31)

The Pentagon has already acknowledged placing 60,000 troops and 400 aircraft at bases in Turkey, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain. Two 62,000-ton cargo ships, the USNS Watson and the USNS Charlton, quietly steamed into the Gulf in early December. Ammunition, tanker trucks, helicopters, bridge sections and watercraft have been moved by the tons into the Persian Gulf.

And the buildup is more extensive than has been reported.

On Dec. 18 Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said on CNN's "Larry King Live" program, "We're flowing forces now. Every day that goes by, obviously, our capability to move faster and somewhat better improves."

That means the anti-war forces need to move fast, gain momentum and organize boldly and bravely, particularly in the United States—the belly of the beast.

That is what the International ANSWER coalition plans to do in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 18-19, with a sister action in San Francisco.

The time is short. Activists will need to button up their overcoats. Each voice is needed to deliver a strong, anti-war message so loud that it will be heard by the war makers and by people around the world who are waiting for a strong, grassroots, anti-imperialist movement to gather force in this imperialist center.

For more information, visit www.internationalANSWER.org. □

Koreans want U.S. troops out

whose capital, Seoul, is just a few miles from the demilitarized zone dividing Korea. They are calling on the U.S. not to make threats but instead to move toward normalizing the situation on the Korean peninsula.

President-elect Roh is expected to maintain the approach to averting a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula that was articulated by the Kim Dae-Jung government in December 1998. It involved four steps: (1) the United States lifting economic sanctions against North Korea, (2) the United States normalizing relations with North Korea, including opening diplomatic missions, (3) North and South Korea reaching an agreement on arms control, and (4) North and South Korea converting the current cease-fire accord into a permanent peace system. (Korea Times [Seoul], Dec. 8, 1998)

This stance paved the way for the historic north-south summit meeting between DPRK leader Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae-jung in June 2000. While the U.S. government appeared favorable to the summit, its subsequent actions show that it is doing everything it can to torpedo rapprochement between the two states.

The North Korean socialist state was born out of the Korean people's long struggle against Japanese colonialism. The U.S. capitalist establishment, however, has presented the DPRK as a dangerous threat to the world ever since its founding in 1948. This is how it has justified its more than 50-year military occupation of the south.

Cashing in on fear

Promoting fear of the DPRK has been a lucrative business for U.S. companies. South Korea for years was one of the largest purchasers of U.S. weapons in the world. For example, in November 1993 the Pentagon announced the U.S. intended to sell South Korea 317 air-to-air missiles, produced by Raytheon and Hughes Aircraft, for \$169 million.

The Japanese newspaper Daily Yomiuri on Sept. 17, 1997, reported that South Korea had imported \$1.7 billion worth of weapons in 1996, almost as much as China, which has more than 20 times the population. Most of those weapons came from the United States.

But when the Asian economic crisis hit South Korea in 1997, this enormous burden could no longer be sustained. The Far Eastern Economic Review of Feb. 5, 1998, reported that, due to the crisis, South Korea was postponing 220 military projects, including airborne early warning systems and submarine purchases.

In this period, the South Korean government had its hands full dealing with a militant labor movement that was resisting draconian measures forced on the country by the International Monetary Fund and the U.S. The workers were demanding jobs and a living wage, not missiles.

The U.S. had been putting intense pressure on the South Korean government to continue buying weapons. On June 11, 1997, the New York Times reported that the Pentagon was telling Congress that South Korea planned to buy 1,065 FIM-92 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and 213 launchers from the United States. However, South Korea's Defense Ministry denied that any decision had been made on the purchase, and said it had not decided between the French Mistral, British Starburst, or U.S. Stinger.

Some Korean officials reportedly believed that the U.S. made the announcement prematurely to give an advantage to the Stingers. The deal would have been worth \$307 million.

Of particular importance to the U.S. military-industrial complex in this period was the projected theater missile defense program. The Korea Herald of May 4, 1999, reported that Seoul had no plans to join the U.S.-led program. A high-ranking official said that "at this stage, [South Korea has] neither an intention nor ability to take part in the TMD plan, which requires a huge sum of investment and up-to-date technology."

Meanwhile, the U.S., which claimed it was in South Korea to protect it, was preventing South Korea from producing its own medium-range missiles.

During the 1990s, in response to this furious arming of the south, the DPRK was able to develop and manufacture missiles on its own at a much lower cost.

Why U.S. undermined Agreed Framework

What seemed to be the beginning of a relaxation of tensions between the DPRK and the U.S. had begun on Oct. 21, 1994, with the signing of the Agreed Framework. At that time, it was the view in Washington that socialist North Korea would not survive long because the Soviet Union and its allies had collapsed. Korea's legendary leader, Kim Il Sung, who led the anti-colonial forces during World War II and then established the DPRK, had died on July 8 of that year. The way the U.S. imperialists looked at it, it was just a matter of time before the socialist north would be absorbed by the capitalist south, similar to what had happened to the German Democratic Republic in Europe.

The year had begun with an announcement by the U.S. that it would deploy Patriot missiles in South Korea and would continue its annual nuclear war games known as "Team Spirit." It sent 48 launching ramps and 192 warheads to South Korea. With this club firmly in its belt, the U.S. then entered into the agreement with the DPRK. It seemed to open up a process that would end the official state of war between the two countries, which has existed since 1950.

With the signing of the Agreed Framework, the DPRK stopped construction of its graphite nuclear reactors, which the U.S. claimed could be used to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons, and agreed to allow in UN inspectors. In return, Washington was to help the DPRK build two light-water reactors (LWRs). The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was set up by the U.S., Japan, South Korea and the European Union to implement the agreement. In the meantime, the U.S. was to keep North Korea supplied with fuel oil until the reactors were ready.

It is now eight cold winters later. The DPRK has not collapsed. It has weathered extremely difficult material shortages but has consolidated its political structure and defense under the leadership of Kim Jong Il. It has also successfully reached out to South Korea in this period.

In these eight years, no construction has been done on the LWRs. By 2000, the ground for the sites had still not been prepared. The South Koreans in charge of the project cited "financing problems"—a euphemism for U.S. foot-dragging.

Nor has the U.S. lived up to the other part of the agreement. The DPRK has

complained that promised oil deliveries from the U.S. and Japan were frequently held back until the worst of the winter weather was over.

This November, just at the onset of cold weather, the Bush administration and the Japanese government both announced they were stopping oil shipments altogether.

This brutal move precipitated the current crisis. Without the promised light-water reactors or fuel oil, what was the DPRK to do? Lie down and freeze to death?

The Bush administration may act startled and alarmed by North Korea's announcement that it would resume work on its original nuclear power plants, and its order to the UN inspectors to leave, but it is obvious to any thinking person that Washington knew all along it was forcing the DPRK into a corner.

So the Bush administration is using the threat of war, famine and freezing temperatures, telling the DPRK that it can't build the reactors and tightening an economic blockade of the country.

Energy and defense

The DPRK, a far northern country that suffers severe winters, has decided it needs nuclear power. South Korea, with a somewhat milder climate, has 16 operating nuclear power plants and four more under construction.

The DPRK also needs to defend itself against the most destructive military machine the world has ever known. For over half a century, the U.S. has brandished its nuclear weapons to terrorize smaller nations into submission. The crisis Bush faces now is not that the DPRK will be a nuclear danger to the world, but that it may be able to develop enough of a retaliatory capacity that U.S. nuclear blackmail will cease to be effective.

Some in the U.S. ruling establishment are now advising Bush to resume a policy of "engagement" and tone down his rhetoric against the DPRK, at least until the war with Iraq has been resolved. In general, this administration has shown little patience with diplomacy and much desire to wield its big stick. However, despite all its insulting caricatures of the north as a "hermit kingdom" ready to implode, it is forced to reckon with the DPRK leaders' skill at defending the socialist base of their society even while opening political and commercial relations with the south.

Furthermore, the threats are not working. In fact, they seem to be having the opposite effect. After Bush's hints of a "preemptive military strike" on the reactors brought a strong rebuke from the DPRK and led to turmoil in South Korea, including a drop in the stock market there, the U.S. president on Dec. 31 tried to soften his rhetoric. Responding to a reporter's question on possible military action against North Korea, he said, "We can resolve this peacefully."

The aggressive grouping now running the White House has long trumpeted the ability of the Pentagon to fight two wars at the same time. However, they may have to put Korea on the back burner right now, while they focus on preparing a criminal assault on Iraq.

Why Koreans don't trust U.S.

Korea was the first battleground of the Cold War. An estimated 3 million Koreans and over 50,000 U.S. troops were killed there during the 1950-53

war. Terrible atrocities were committed by U.S. troops in both the north and south, as the recent exposures of the massacre at Nogun-ri confirm.

The Cold War strategists of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations saw this bloody conflict, in which the Pentagon came close to using nuclear weapons on China's border, as essential to rolling back the anti-colonial, anti-capitalist revolutions that transformed China, Korea and Vietnam after World War II.

The intense frustration of the U.S. ruling class with its inability to establish domination over all of Asia after the military defeat of Japanese imperialism led to a vicious debate within the political establishment over "Who lost China?" Even as the Korean War raged, Sen. Joseph McCarthy was unleashed to purge thousands of progressives from the unions, schools and government bureaucracy. In this witch-hunt atmosphere—some feared incipient fascism in the U.S.—there was little expression of the kind of anti-war sentiment that later emerged during the Vietnam War.

Now, however, progressives in the U.S. need to understand and sympathize with Korea's long struggle against colonialism and imperialism. It closely parallels that of Vietnam, another country divided after World War II that only achieved reunification after a bitter liberation struggle.

At least 37,000 U.S. troops have been stationed in the south ever since the Korean War ended in a cease-fire. During both the Carter and Clinton administrations, attempts to reduce the size of this military occupation and move toward normalizing relations with the socialist north were scuttled under pressure of the militarist far right in the U.S.

U.S. propaganda depicts the DPRK—with 25 million people—as a grave threat to world peace. It never mentions that this country has been ringed by U.S. nuclear weapons for more than half a century. Not only do nuclear-armed submarines cruise its coastal waters, not only have U.S. planes with nuclear bombs been constantly within striking distance, not only are long-range missiles focused on its cities, but for years the U.S. stationed nuclear weapons right in South Korea itself.

And they may still be there.

According to the Washington Times—a newspaper with strong ties to South Korea's right wing—President George Bush Sr. announced on July 2, 1992, that all 2,400 U.S. battlefield nuclear weapons in South Korea, made up of 500 tactical weapons from naval aircraft, 1,000 nuclear artillery shells, 700 Lance missile warheads, and 200 B-57 nuclear depth-charge bombs, had been removed to the United States for storage or destruction. (See www.nti.org, a very large database on nuclear issues set up by Ted Turner and Sam Nunn, for abstracts of this and other articles from the world press on Korea and nuclear weapons.)

Who can verify that everything in this huge arsenal was truly removed? Two years ago, U.S. forces in South Korea denied having depleted uranium weapons there, but had to retract that after being confronted with the truth by activists.

Have there ever been the kinds of obtrusive weapons inspections of U.S. military facilities in South Korea that Washington demands of Iraq?

More and more, the demonstrators in the south are asking these questions. □

COLOMBIA

Sindicatos contra la Coca Cola

Trabajadores desafían a los escuadrones de la muerte

Por Rebeca Toledo
Bogotá, Colombia

Última parte

El presidente de Sinaltrainal, Javier Correa explicó que el 5 de diciembre había sido escogido por el evento porque hace seis años en esa fecha Isidro Segundo Gil fue asesinado en su puesto de trabajo dentro de la planta de la Coca Cola en Carepa del Urabá, Antioquia. Gil fue un líder sindical en la zona bananera del noroeste.

Represión sangrienta de los trabajadores de la Coca Cola

Correa hizo un resumen de la historia sangrienta de la Coca Cola en Guatemala y la India, y más recientemente en Venezuela. También mencionó las prácticas discriminatorias de la compañía en Atlanta de Georgia en los Estados Unidos.

Él contó como el sindicato Sinaltrainal, como resultado de represión sistemática ha sido reducido de 5400 a 2300 miembros. Miembros de las familias de sindicalistas también han sido asesinados. Han hecho intentos de secuestrar hasta los hijos. Fuerzas paramilitares han dejado graffiti en las plantas amenazando a los sindicalistas.

“Coca Cola no ha hecho nada para frenar esta represión. Esta es la misma situación por todos los sindicalistas en Colombia,” él dijo.

Explicó que Coca Cola, como otras transnacionales, ha hecho mucho y contribuido al empobrecimiento del pueblo colombiano por sacar dinero del país durante todos los últimos 100 años.

El caso contra la Coca Cola fue presentado entonces.

Tomaron la palabra algunos sobrevivientes de la represión. Un líder sindical fue arrestado junto a dos otros en una fábrica de la Coca Cola y fue acusado del terrorismo. Los tres fueron detenidos por seis meses; ninguna acusación fue presentada contra ellos. La esposa de uno de los tres testificó que después del arresto de su marido, la familia perdió todos los beneficios, como por ejemplo lo del seguro de salud. Su hija fue hostigada en la escuela. La esposa fue permitida visitar al marido detenido una sola vez por semana; y los hijos solo una vez en el mes.

El temor primordial fue que lo iban a matar o hacerlo desaparecer”, ella dijo.

Otro sobreviviente habló de su tortura hace ocho años por los paramil-



FOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

Bogotá, el 5 de diciembre.

El presidente de Sinaltrainal, Javier Correa



itares. Dijo que todavía tiene dificultades durmiendo.

En una de las últimas intervenciones una persona dijo, “La meta del gobierno de Uribe Vélez es de abrir el país a los imperialistas y eliminar a los sindicatos para hacerlo más fácil para ellos promulgar el Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas”.

El tribunal cerró con adoptar un plan de acción y una declaración política.

Entre las demandas de la Coca Cola fueron que el 22 de julio sea declarado un día contra las transnacionales y la violencia, que la corporación pague reparaciones a los familiares de los victimas, limpiar el ambiente y desmilitarizar el lugar de producción.

La Conferencia Internacional Sobre las Corporaciones Transnacionales y los Derechos Humanos fue celebrada durante los dos días siguientes. Había paneles sobre la globalización, el neoliberalismo, los servicios públicos, la salud y la educación, los derechos de los indígenas, las finanzas, los recursos minerales y de energía, las violaciones de los derechos humanos y, por fin, la resistencia y planes de acción.

Uno de los oradores principales fue José Fernando Ramírez de la Comisión por la Paz y los Derechos Humanos de la Unión Sindical de Obreros (USO.)

La Co-Directora del Centro de Acción Internacional (IAC por las siglas en

Inglés) Teresa Gutiérrez dijo a la conferencia, “Es precisamente a beneficio de corporaciones como la Coca Cola que los EE.UU. intervienen en los asuntos internos de Colombia con Plan Colombia, que es la ala militar del ALCA”.

Ella elogió a los sindicalistas por su valor, por estar en las primeras trincheras de la lucha. Ella dijo que dieron a los delegados la fuerza y la inspiración para volver a los Estados Unidos a luchar contra la intervención del Pentágono en Colombia.

Sinaltrainal albergó una reunión importante por la delegación del IAC en el centro de administración del sindicato. La reunión que duró varias horas fue una inspiración para todos los participantes.

Comenzó con la presentación de un grupo estudiantil llamado, Focus, basado en la Universidad Nacional en Bogotá. Los tres representantes, llenos de energía y optimismo, recibieron calurosamente a los delegados.

Uno de los estudiantes nos dijo sobre como después del asesinato de Jaime Alfor Acosta Campos, un estudiante de la Universidad de Santander, los estudiantes intensificaron sus protestas. Los estudiantes de la Universidad Nacional montaron un campamento en la universidad para protegerse contra la policía y los oficiales de la universidad. Los oficiales respondieron con el cierre de la universidad el 28 de noviembre. Después de fuertes protestas estudiantiles, la universidad reabrió el 5 de diciembre.

Los estudiantes se mantienen inalterables contra la privatización y llevará a cabo más acciones el 10 de diciembre. Otro estudiante dijo a la delegación que todo el dinero que se ha utilizado para la represión en Colombia llegó de los Estados Unidos. Él dijo que los colombianos no quieren

una intervención por los Estados Unidos y que es un crimen que armas están siendo compradas mientras que el pueblo muere de hambre.

Los tres prometieron nunca para la lucha por la justicia, no importa lo que se tome.

‘No estamos solos’

Javier Correa resumió el significado de los tribunales: “Al comienzo estos tribunales eran solo un sueño. Lo que esto ha comprobado es la resistencia de los sindicatos nacionales, el apoyo incondicional por los grupos sociales en Colombia y la solidaridad internacional. La Coca-Cola y el gobierno nos habían dado por muerto. Pero les hemos mostrado que no estamos solos”

Y es esto lo que realmente les preocupa, dijo Corréa. En especial les preocupa el apoyo internacional porque los crímenes que ha cometido hasta ahora se convertirán en un escándalo internacional en el futuro.

Corréa dijo que el tribunal ha ayudado a incrementar la conciencia porque ha desafiado al estado colombiano, demostrando que el movimiento no acepta los niveles de terror que se han llevado a cabo con impunidad contra el pueblo. Él dijo que las luchas más difíciles contra el gobierno y la Coca-Cola están por venir. Él agregó después les gustaría enfrentarse a la Nestlé—que como la Coca-Cola—es un gran enemigo de los trabajadores.

Otro líder de Sinaltrainal dijo a los delegados: “Debemos encontrar un camino diferente para Colombia, porque el capitalismo y el neoliberalismo no son buenos para Colombia o el mundo. Nuestra lucha contra el capitalismo por el desarrollo de las comunidades donde el pueblo decida su propio futuro, donde el poder está con el pueblo.”

Él fue explícito: “Por cada vaso de Coca-Cola que compramos, estamos comprando una bala para asesinar a los colombianos. Nosotros no creemos las consultas con las corporaciones transnacionales. El imperialismo no solo quiere un pedazo de Colombia, quiere todo el país. Y no solo quiere a Colombia, quiere a toda América Latina. Quiere que nos arrodillemos y le dejemos continuar su explotación.”

Él dijo que agradece a la Coca-Cola por algo: Nos trajo a la delegación a Colombia. Él concluyó, “Ustedes han dado fuerza a nuestra labor y nos han ayudado a continuar nuestra lucha.”

La mitad de los delegados permanecieron en Bogotá unos días más para reunirse con más activistas de diferentes sectores del movimiento social. La otra mitad regresó a los Estados Unidos. Ellos se prometieron intensificar la lucha por el pueblo de Colombia. □

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