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BUSH POUNDS THE BULLY PULPIT

By all rights a bolt of lightning should have struck the President in Thief when he took the podium in Florida to talk about fair elections ... in Cuba! But the tirade boiled down to property: Who should own the wealth that collective Cuban labor creates? 3

DEATH ROW MUST GO!

When prison police, local cops and county sheriffs didn't intimidate protesters, the state of Texas brought in squad cars filled with state troopers. But these activists would not be cowed. 5

LAW & DISORDER

Television courtroom dramas like "The Practice" and "Law and Order" portray prosecutors as flawed but noble guardians of the criminal justice system. That's fiction. Political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and his legal team are fighting to expose the truth. 5



DEFEND IRAQ!

Bush's spin-doctors tout the "new" UN sanctions against Iraq as more humane. Humane? U.S.-led sanctions have claimed some 1.5 million Iraqi lives. And the Pentagon has leaked its own plans to brutally invade the oil-rich country. So what's behind Bush's latest maneuver? 7

All they needed was a pretext

War plans were ready before 9/11

Bush administration waited for a catastrophe

By Fred Goldstein

The latest political crisis of the Bush administration over what it knew about an impending attack on U.S. targets in the late summer of 2001 has commanded the attention of the people. Anti-war activists, especially, are rightfully suspicious and skeptical about the behavior and explanations of the war makers in the White House.

Ever since May 15, when CBS News revealed that the CIA had briefed President George W. Bush last Aug. 6 about possible plane hijackings—five weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks—the air has been thick with charges and accusations. They have ranged from negligence to incompetence to bureaucratic rivalry between the FBI and CIA to systemic problems of "not connecting the dots" because the administration did not act on FBI alerts of July 10 and Aug. 13.

It is notable that in this scandal the Democrats have finally broken with the Bush administration—but not over the war. The prospect of the spoils of office in the coming elections has finally overcome their subservience. Their demands for investigations and inquiries dovetail with the demands of sections of the capitalist establishment who are truly appalled and want to get to the bottom of the matter so that it does not happen again.

But the last thing in the world the anti-war movement, or for that matter the workers and the oppressed, should do is follow the path of the Democratic Party leadership and make the issue in this crisis the question of "who knew what, when" about intelligence information. This question sidesteps the most fundamental issue of significance to the vast majority of the people at home and abroad. It also

plays into the hands of those who want to strengthen the repressive forces of the state.

The real issue that needs exposure is the conspiracy of the Bush administration and the ruling class behind it to enter a new bloody era of expanding war around the globe. During the debate over what Bush knew and should have done, there have been momentary references to a war plan that was drawn up and on his desk on Sept. 10. This was put forward briefly when National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was defending him, and it has been cited a few times in the big business press, but never really was followed up from an anti-war point of view.

There is little information about this plan, but the veil was slightly lifted in a sanitized version as part of a lengthy series in January in the Washington Post by Bob Woodward and Dan Balz. The series recounted the immediate post-Sept. 11 day-by-day decision-making process in the Bush administration that led to the war on Afghanistan.

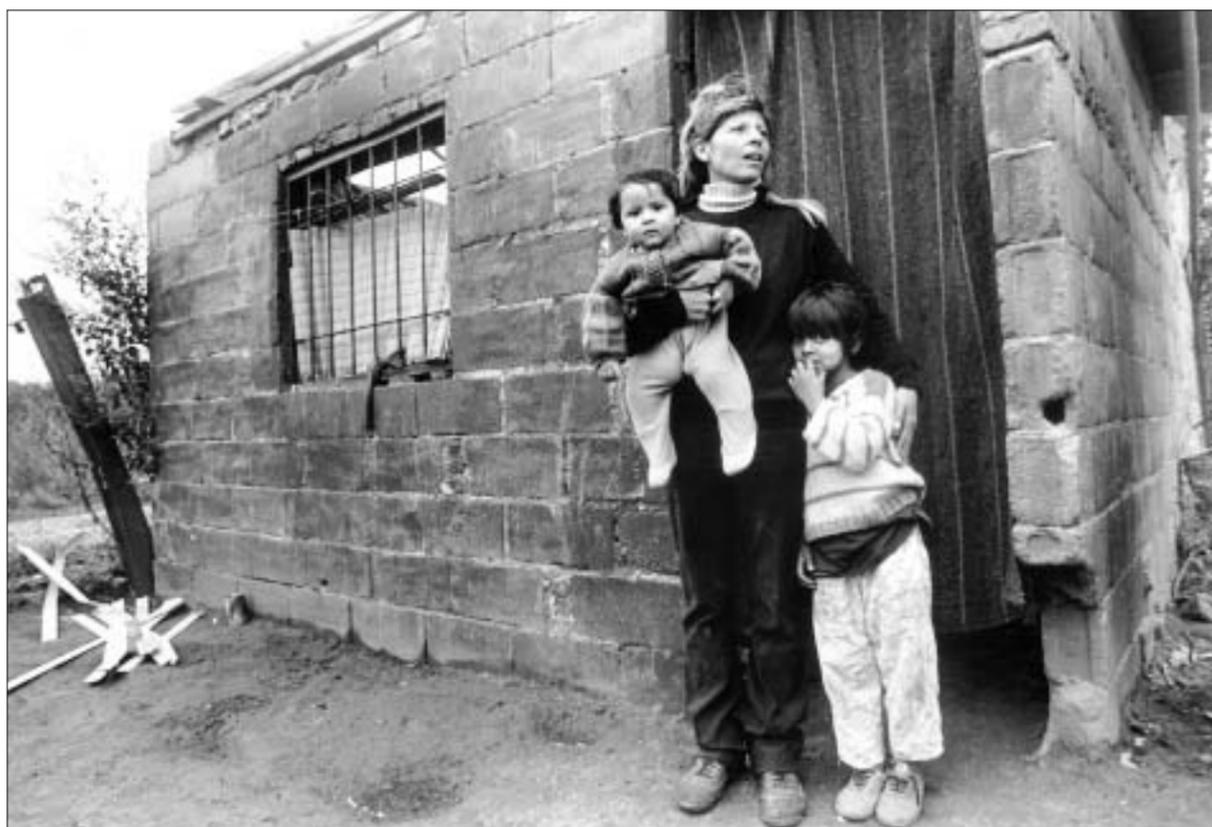
CIA takes the lead

According to Woodward and Balz, CIA director George Tenet played the lead position in the planning. Tenet was the only holdover from the Clinton administration at such a high level in the Bush administration. He had all the strings to global operations and fit right in with the Bush forces. At a crucial meeting at Camp David on Saturday, Sept. 15, after a series of previous morning meetings of the "war cabinet," Tenet showed up "with a briefcase stuffed with top-secret documents and plans, in many respects the culmination of four years of work."

"The briefing packet he handed to President Bush and

Continued on page 6

General strike looms in Argentina as IMF-imposed poverty grinds population 9



This family in Cordoba, Argentina, receives no government assistance. Their home has no roof

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

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From Workers World Party:

See you at the June 1 anti-war conference!

By Deirdre Griswold

War is the ultimate resolution of the deep inner contradictions that periodically throw the capitalist system into economic crisis. Again and again in modern history, the governments controlled by big business have roped in huge numbers of workers and herded them into battle, invoking all the old clichés of patriotism while using these young lives and bodies to extract concessions from capitalist rivals and surrender from subjugated nations.

How to resist the war drive has been of the utmost importance to Marxists ever since World War I. In 1914 the social democratic parties of Europe, which had been so successful in organizing the workers that the socialists commanded large blocs in the parliaments, saw their solidarity shattered in a few days when war broke out.

With only a few courageous exceptions, these deputies, who for years had declared in international congresses that they would never support a capitalist war for the division of spoils, caved in to the patriotic frenzy. The result was the worst slaughter the continent had ever seen. Trench warfare was so bloody that on just one day—July 1, 1916—in one battle at the Somme River, British troops suffered over 57,000 casualties when their officers ordered them to storm fortified German positions defended by machine guns. A third of them died.

The trenches are gone now, replaced by weapons whose horrendous possibilities were not envisioned even by the science fiction writers of those days. But the capitalist system of production for profit remains, and it is showing once again the irrational compulsion to shore up profit margins through military aggression, no matter the cost.

Workers World Party is looking forward to the June 1 national anti-war conference of the ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—coalition for signs that the movement coming together today in response to the Bush administration's far-flung military plans has the staying power to resist and eventually shut down what the generals predict will be an open-ended conflict that could go on for years.

In 1962, just three years after the founding of the Party, its youth arm or-

ganized the first demonstration in the United States against the Vietnam War. Youth Against War & Fascism soon became known around the country for its bright orange banners and bold tactics. Unlike some of the other anti-war groups of that time, YAWF supported a variety of forms of resistance to the war: mass demonstrations, militant street actions, refusing to be drafted, and organizing inside the military. It worked in coalitions, and struggled to move those coalitions to the left, counterpoising the demand for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam to the weaker "Negotiate now" slogan of the traditional peace groups.

The Vietnam War eventually stimulated not just a resistance to military aggression but a broader social movement that wanted to change U.S. society. This was particularly strong in the Black, Latino and Native communities, which experienced racism from the officers in Vietnam as well as inside the U.S. itself.

YAWF saw building solidarity with the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords and other revolutionary organizations of the oppressed as central to the anti-war struggle. The heaviest government oppression came down against these groups, just as today the Bush administration is using extraor-

inary measures against the Arab and Muslim communities as it focuses its war drive on the oil-rich lands of the Middle East and Central Asia.

The 1960s became so turbulent, and the Vietnamese were so determined to fight for their independence at any cost, that the ruling class of the U.S. split over what to do. Eventually, it was forced to withdraw totally from Southeast Asia or face widespread mutiny in the armed forces and at home.

Today a new generation of Workers World Party members is engaged once again in anti-war work. They recognize that the problem is not just a mistaken policy or a clique of ultra-right politicians, but the much more deadly flaw of an imperialist economic system driven by its own irrational contradictions.

They have seen the U.S. political establishment—Republicans and Democrats alike—launch missiles and bombs against Iraq, Yugoslavia, Sudan and now Afghanistan. They have seen U.S. tanks, helicopters, missiles and ammunition taken into battle against the Palestinian people by Israeli occupation forces.

And they have responded by working hard in a common effort with others to build a strong, united, anti-imperialist movement that can stay the hands of the war makers.



- ➡ **NO NEW WAR AGAINST IRAQ**
- ➡ **FREE PALESTINE**
- ➡ **U.S. out of Colombia, the Philippines and Korea**
- ➡ **Defend Arab and Muslim communities and civil rights**
- ➡ **Money for jobs, education & housing—not for war**

Bush has declared it's war time all the time. After the massive bombing in Afghanistan, the escalation of intervention in Colombia, the brutal U.S.-backed Israeli invasion of the Occupied Territories of Palestine, the Bush administration has now declared they are preparing for a major ground and air war against Iraq. Tens of thousands will die unless we act now. The people of the world can stop this war before it starts. Join us at the June 1 national conference to plan a comprehensive anti-war strategy.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1
9AM—8 PM
NEW YORK CITY WEST 27TH ST & 8TH AVE (F.I.T.)
www.InternationalANSWER.org 212-633-6646

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WW CALENDAR

NEW YORK

Sat., June 1
 National Anti-War Conference. Join hundreds of anti-war activists and organizers from around the country. Panels & workshops. Special panel: Palestine, the fight for freedom. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. At FIT, 27th Street and Eighth Avenue, Manhattan. For info (212) 633-6646.
 www.internationalANSWER.org or e-mail answer@internationalanswer.org.

HIGHLAND, N.Y.

Sun., June 2
 "What is Bush up to in Latin America?" Hear WW editor Deirdre Griswold on the White House plan to deepen its military involvement in Latin America. Sponsored by the New Paltz-based Caribbean and Latin America Support Project. Admission free. Potluck dinner at 6 p.m. Meeting begins at 7 p.m. At Boughton Place meeting hall, 150 Kisor Rd. For info and directions (845) 691-8289.

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Bush on Cuba

Would anyone buy a used blockade from this man?

By Deirdre Griswold

It was impossible when listening to George W. Bush's speech on Cuba not to think of those weird characters that comment on old films on Mystery Science Theater 3000. Every sentence cried out for a sarcastic rebuttal. So here goes.

Welcome to the White House for the 100th anniversary of Cuban independence.

Come on, George. You wouldn't catch Cuba's early leaders celebrating their independence in the White House. They had just endured four years of U.S. military occupation and the imposition of the Platt Amendment into Cuba's Constitution. The Platt Amendment of 1901 legalized U.S. military intervention at any time, forced Cuba to turn over Guantánamo to the U.S., and put Washington in charge of Cuba's foreign policy. No wonder the great independence leader, Gen. Máximo Gómez, had written in his campaign diary during the war for independence: "The Americans' military occupation is too high a price to pay for their spontaneous intervention in the war we waged against Spain for freedom and independence. The American government's attitude toward the heroic Cuban people at this history making time is, in my opinion, one of big business. This situation is dangerous for the country. ..."

Cuba's independence ... was the result of determination and talent on the part of great statesmen such as José Martí, and great soldiers such as Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez.

Martí, like Maceo and Gómez, wouldn't be moved by your flattery. He said that, though fighting Spain, he also sought "to prevent the United States, with the independence of Cuba, extend-

ing itself through the West Indies and falling with added weight upon our lands of America."

The United States has no designs on Cuban sovereignty.

Let's see—43 years of economic blockade, an invasion organized by the CIA, nuclear threats, more than 100 attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, harboring and abetting numerous anti-Cuba terrorist groups, harassing U.S. citizens who go there, putting Cuba on the "terrorist" list. Just good, clean fun. No harm intended.

In fact, the United States has been a strong and consistent supporter of freedom for the Cuban people.

Like the period 1917 to 1923, when U.S. Marines occupied Cuba and put down strikes and demonstrations? Or maybe the years 1925 to 1933, when dictator Gerardo Machado, nicknamed "The Butcher," looked after the interests of U.S. sugar companies? Or what about the 25 years, from 1934 to 1959, when dictator Fulgencio Batista, a friend of U.S. organized crime, stuffed his own pockets while letting the Yankee casino and plantation owners get the lion's share?

All elections in Castro's Cuba have been a fraud. The voices of the Cuban people have been suppressed, and their votes have been meaningless.

Ah, the poor Cubans. They don't have multi-million-dollar political campaigns. And they don't have a Supreme Court to choose the winner. They actually vote for people from their jobs and neighborhoods instead of creations of Madison Avenue. How they must yearn to be like ... Florida?

All political prisoners must be released and allowed to participate in the election process.

Great. Let's start with Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

The 2003 elections should be monitored by objective outside observers.

You are talking about Dade County, right?

If Cuba wants to create more good-paying jobs, private employers have to be able to negotiate with and pay workers of their own choosing, without the government telling who they can hire and who they must fire.

Now we're gettin' down to it. Bosses can't hire and fire without pesky interference? That's downright unAmerican! As bad as affirmative action and union contracts and environmental regulations that are crippling our economy and stealing our precious bodily fluids!

If Cuba wants to attract badly needed investment from abroad, property rights must be respected.

The cat's out of the bag. Property rights. The right to profit off someone else's labor just because you own property and they don't. It's the curse of capitalism that gets handed down generation after generation. It has doomed humanity to an agonizingly polarized world—until more and bigger Cuban revolutions wipe the slate clean and allow everyone to share equitably in the wealth we have created collectively.

Today I'm announcing a series of actions that will directly benefit the Cuban people. ... The United States will continue to enforce economic sanctions on Cuba, and the ban on travel to

Cuba, until Cuba's government proves that it is committed to real reform. We will continue to prohibit U.S. financing for Cuban purchases of U.S. agricultural goods, because this would just be a foreign aid program in disguise, which would benefit the current regime.

Let's see. Continued economic sanctions. Ditto with the travel ban. Preventing U.S. farmers from selling their food there. And all for the benefit of the Cuban people. Did that pretzel do some brain damage?

Today, there is only one national leader in our hemisphere whose position of power owes more to bullets than ballots.

By George, we thought you'd never admit it.

They're still waiting

Here's a book we found in a dusty corner of our library the other day: "Castro's Final Hour," by Andres Oppenheimer. It's a weighty tome, 475 yellowing pages, and published exactly 10 years ago by Simon & Schuster. How the author must wish he could change that title. If only he had written "final decade," or maybe "final century." Final millennium? Actually, none of them would have been right. The euphoria of U.S. capital in the early 1990s over Cuban socialism's imminent demise has soured. Wonder what happened to that \$10-billion investment fund that Jeb Bush started back then to cash in on Cuba going capitalist? Those stocks must be deader than Enron's by now.

—D.G.

NEW YORK CITY

'Palestine will be free!'



They marched, 350 strong, from the Con Edison plant at 14th Street and Avenue C to Sixth Avenue to support Palestinians' right to return to their homeland, and to commemorate the Palestinians' expulsion from that homeland in 1948.

Al-Awda of New York/New Jersey—the Palestinian Right of Return Coalition—called this march in honor of Palestinian children. Many children, with their families, came to chant, "Free, free, Palestine!" and "Sharon, Bush you will see, Palestine will be free!"

—G. DUNKEL
PHOTOS: J. DUNKEL

Hershey, GHI strikes

Health-care costs dominate labor issues

By John Catalinotto

Who will pay for health care: bosses or workers? That dominated two strikes that began in April—one in New York and one in Pennsylvania.

The strike of 1,200 workers at Group Health, Inc.—itself a health-care insurer, mostly of government employees—ended May 13 when workers accepted a new company offer.

Some 3,000 workers at the chocolate and candy-bar manufacturer Hershey in Pennsylvania were still out May 21 as the strike entered its fifth week.

Through most of the second half of the 20th century, a standard union contract at a big U.S. corporation guaranteed health insurance as a worker's benefit. Even non-union employees usually got the same health coverage.

Health-care costs and health-industry profits continue to rise rapidly, led by an almost 20-percent annual increase in prescription drug costs. Faced with higher costs, bosses have chosen to make their workers pay for health-industry profits.

In both strikes, management reopened the health-care issue by

demanding cuts in benefits workers had won in past struggles.

Health insurer cuts health benefits

At GHI there were the usual conflicts over wages. Management offered a 9-percent increase over three years. The union, Office and Professional Employees Local 153, asked for 14 percent over three years or 19 percent over four years.

Many workers in Local 153 are single mothers and most are women. The company's attack on their health-care benefits drove them to risk a strike. GHI wanted workers to begin making co-payments of \$10 to \$15 for doctor visits, and to begin paying premiums of \$91 to \$444 a year, depending on the number of dependents.

The workers waged a strong strike. Their noisy, militant picket lines attracted the attention of anyone passing GHI's 34th Street and Ninth Avenue offices. And they won some concessions from GHI management.

Wage increases are 19 percent for four years. The contract guarantees that current employees will never have to contribute

for health-care costs in the future.

But the union conceded that new employees will have to begin paying \$8 to \$10 for doctor visits, and from \$70 to \$345 a year for family health benefits.

Local 153 President Michael Goodwin told the May 14 New York Times: "Some members would undoubtedly be upset because the union had accepted a two-tier contract, with new employees put in a worse position than current workers. We don't like two tiers, but we don't consider it selling out because of the small price new employees will have to pay."

Chief Shop Steward Neysa Griffith told Workers World that the current workers are pleased to be back at work after a month out on strike.

Chocolate strike grows bitter

The chocolate maker's new chief executive officer, Richard Lenny, recently told a stockholders' meeting that he has to keep Hershey's costs down to increase its market share and profits. As with GHI, the point of attack was on health-insurance costs. Management demanded that Hershey workers pay for

part of their health insurance and make co-payments for care.

On April 26, Chocolate Workers Local 464 went out for the first time since 1980. Workers were already angry that Lenny had closed three Hershey plants and a warehouse and laid off over 700 workers. They have been willing to strike despite the cost in lost wages.

Hershey is still the number one U.S. candy company. In 2001, its sales rose 8 percent and its net income 14 percent. Lenny was paid \$4.7 million last year, excluding stock options that in the future could be worth more than \$10 million.

"He should take \$1 million from his pockets to pay the increased health costs," said chocolate-molding machine worker Ann Webster. (New York Times, May 18)

Hershey management's proposal would raise premiums for most workers from 6 percent of the cost of coverage to 10 percent in the second and third years, and to 12 percent in the fourth year. This could add up: \$684 to \$1,495 over the four years depending on the health plan chosen.

Talks resumed May 16 but broke off that same day after Hershey management barely improved the offer.

BALTIMORE

Community group protests utility office closings

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

Community activists gathered in front of the downtown offices of Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. May 18 to protest plans to shut down the last two customer-service offices. The group gathered signatures of passersby on a petition to demand a public hearing and say "no" to the closings.

Renee Washington, a spokesperson for the All People's Congress, said: "BGE is channeling customers to ACE checking to pay bills. ACE checking is a rip-off. They are in the business of payroll loans that reportedly charge some customers 400 per-

cent interest. Those most vulnerable will fall prey to these loans when they get shut-off notices."

She continued: "On top of this, the rates we are charged include customer service. BGE will now pocket the money saved by closing the offices. We feel this is illegal."

Union activist Jeff Bigelow said at the protest: "Workers are losing their jobs. We are demanding that public hearings be held and a full community investigation be held before the closings are final on July 1, 2002."

The All People's Congress led protests last spring demanding a rollback in rates when gas prices doubled and tripled. The group plans future protests.

Mass layoffs continue

By Greg Butterfield

According to the media, happier economic days may be around the corner. But as President George W. Bush continues his "endless war" abroad, workers in this country are still reeling from economic assault on the domestic front.

In April the official U.S. unemployment rate hit 6 percent—the highest rate since 1994. In May mass layoffs continued unabated.

International Business Machines announced plans to cut 7,950 to 9,540 workers. (Reuters, May 10) A Boston securities firm told its clients that IBM plans to lay off 1,500 people in Burlington, Vt., and sell off its huge microprocessor plant there. (Boston Globe, May 14)

On May 17, aerospace giant Boeing issued 1,500 pink slips. The layoffs take effect July 19.

Last September Boeing announced

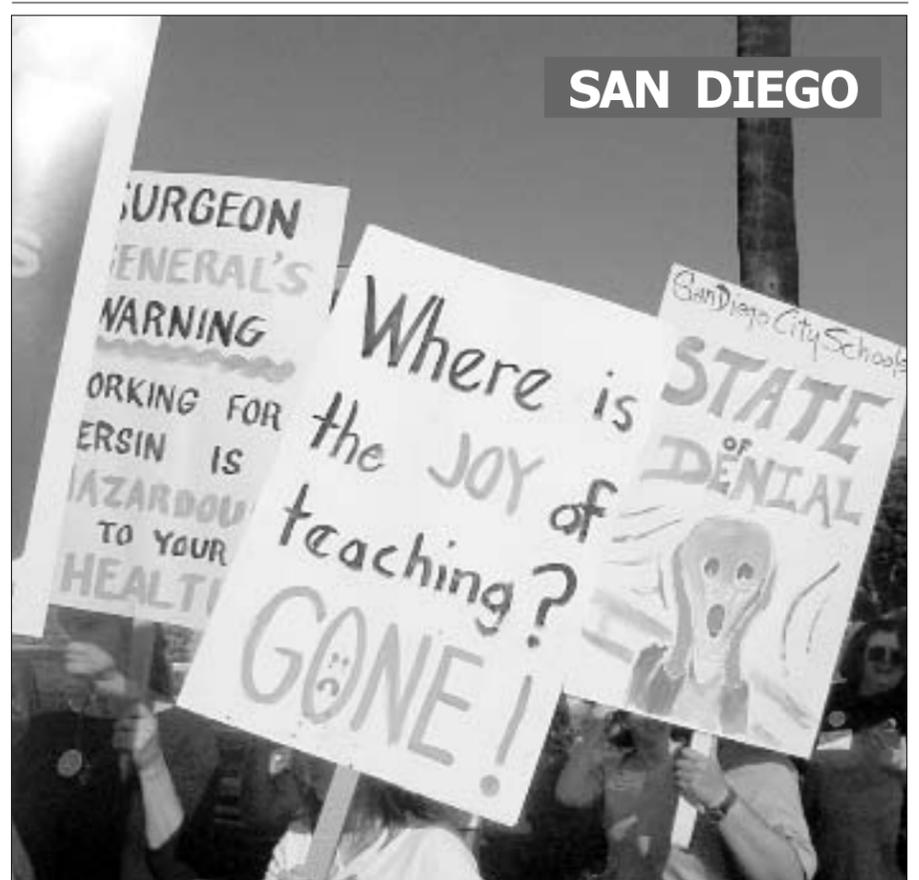
that it would slash 25,000 to 30,000 jobs by the end of 2002. (Associated Press, May 17) Unions are fighting the layoffs. They have charged the company with using the Sept. 11 disaster as an excuse to push through already-planned job cuts.

On May 14, SBC Communications of San Antonio, Pacific Bell's parent company, announced 1,000 job cuts in addition to 8,000 previously announced. SBC left open the possibility of more cuts later this year. (San Francisco Chronicle, May 15)

Other recent layoffs include Bell South—5,000; DuPont—2,000; and Winn-Dixie—5,300.

"Companies are far from finished when it comes to thinning out their ranks," said John Challenger, chief executive of Challenger, Gray and Christmas, a company that monitors job trends. (Reuters, May 2)

SAN DIEGO



Protest draws angry teachers

By Gloria Verdieu
San Diego

After weeks of planning, a May 14 teachers' union protest drew teachers here—from San Diego's poorest neighborhoods to its wealthiest. More than 2,000 teachers rallied outside a public meeting called by the school board. Their picket signs showed the anger and frustrations of teachers in the San Diego School District about the policies of Superintendent Alan Bersin.

A petition circulated at the rally also demanded the recall of two board members who voted for an academic curriculum that does not meet the needs of all students despite the objections of parents, grandpar-

ents, teachers and students. The "Blueprint for Student Success" does not require students to read to state standards, deprives students of balanced curricula and equal opportunity to earn a high school diploma. It also fails to provide students with sufficient math, science, and arts electives to get into the colleges of their choice.

A message from the San Diego Education Association distributed at the rally stressed that the district administration had unilaterally announced it would allow only a 1.3 percent raise for teachers this year and that there would be no raise the following year. The SDEA added that the administration has stalled negotiations on this year's raise for six months.

Texas state troopers couldn't scare off death row protesters

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

After seven weekly demonstrations by activists in front of the Polunsky Unit—the Texas prison that houses death-row prisoners—to condemn conditions there, the state of Texas showed its true colors.

On May 18, Texas state troopers arrived in three squad cars to threaten, harass and ticket protesters, passersby and the goat farmer who allows demonstrators to park their cars and hold protests on his property directly across from the prison driveway.

The prison police, local Livingston police, Polk County sheriffs and the prison's Internal Affairs Police from San Antonio had all threatened activists in previous

weeks. Yet none of these agencies deterred a single protester, stopped a single rally or silenced a single chant in front of the prison or the warden's house.

Prison officials' latest tactic is to use the Texas state troopers.

The goat farmer told activists that before they arrived on May 18, state troopers visited him and warned that "there would be trouble today with the protesters." The farmer said he got angry with them and asked if any of them had read the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights lately. He told them that these documents still apply to Texas.

As activists arrived, troopers were consulting with the prison police. They then drove up and down the highway, making

U-turns and coming back by again and again.

They ticketed one young woman who was visiting because she pulled over to talk to activists. The troopers ordered the protesters not to talk to any visitors going into the prison.

When that didn't intimidate activists, the troopers harassed and pulled over any driver on the highway who slowed down to read protest signs or give activists a thumbs-up sign. Troopers gave out more than half a dozen tickets and threatened to arrest protesters who videotaped their actions.

"Yahoo! We must be doing something right to get this kind of reaction from the state! They sure don't want us supporting

the prisoners' struggle to change conditions," exclaimed Joaquina Rodriguez, a member of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the group that began the protests in March. "We're exposing the crimes of the prison system."

Bonnie Caraway, who attends the weekly protests with her children, vowed: "We'll be back next week with more people and with the news media. The behavior of the cops was unbelievable. I saw it with my own eyes and still can't believe it."

An American Civil Liberties Union lawyer is trying to locate those who received tickets in front of the prison and is offering to represent them as victims of state harassment.

The war at home

Law & disorder

By Greg Butterfield

Popular television courtroom dramas like "The Practice" and "Law and Order" portray prosecutors as flawed but noble guardians of the criminal justice system. Helen Gamble or Jack McCoy might be a bit overzealous sometimes. But after the commercial break, the innocent are usually freed and the guilty are punished.

That's fiction. Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and his legal team are fighting to expose the truth, and it's very different from the TV script.

On May 17, Abu-Jamal's attorneys filed a motion in Pennsylvania State Supreme Court to take testimony from one of the court's own judges: Ronald D. Castille. An assistant district attorney in Philadelphia during Abu-Jamal's murder trial in 1982, and later the city's chief prosecutor, Castille helped block a 1998 post-conviction appeal by the former Black Panther.

Abu-Jamal, a renowned journalist and activist, was convicted and sentenced to death for the 1981 killing of Daniel Faulkner, a white Philadelphia cop. He has always maintained his innocence. State and federal courts have so far refused to hear new evidence of Abu-Jamal's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly, who says he shot Faulkner.

In December 2001, Federal District Judge William Yohn struck down Abu-Jamal's death sentence, but not the murder conviction. Yohn made his ruling based on a legal technicality. He refused to review the new evidence presented to him.

Abu-Jamal's legal team—Marlene Kamish, Eliot Lee Grossman, Nick Brown and J. Michael Farrell—have launched the new appeal to Pennsylvania's high court. They want Supreme Court Judge Castille to testify under oath about his responsibility for an official videotape to train Philadelphia prosecutors on how to keep African Americans off juries.

The tape is nicknamed the "McMahon video" after the assistant district attorney who conducted the racist "training."

In their motion, Abu-Jamal's lawyers point out that the videotape "bears the official seal of Philadelphia, the name and title 'Ronald D. Castille, District Attorney,' and identifies the videotape as having been produced by the district attorney's television production department, 'DATV Productions.'"

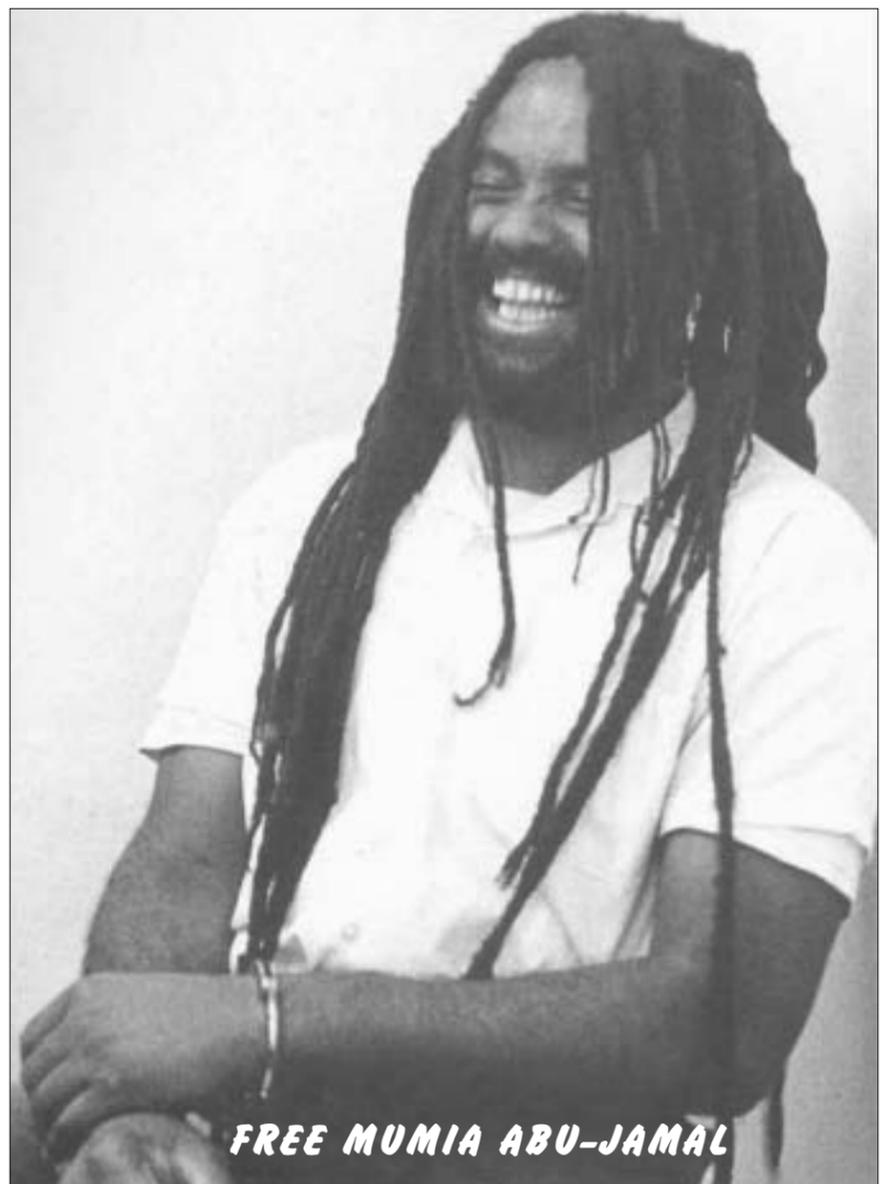
Prisoner Harold Wilson wrote in a July 24, 2000, article for Philadelphia Spotlight: "McMahon's consciousness of the race-based nature of his prosecutorial misconduct, and the legal impropriety of such, is evidenced by his advice to the young assistant prosecutors in how to create a pretextual race-neutral explanation for the removal of Black jurors to satisfy *Batson vs. Kentucky*."

On the tape McMahon states: "In the future, we're going to have to be aware of 'Batson,' and the best way to avoid any problems with it is to protect yourself . . . And on this little sheet that you have, mark something down that you can articulate later if something happens . . . So let's say you strike three Blacks to start with, the first three people, and then it's like the defense attorney makes an objection saying that you're striking Blacks. . . . Well, you're not going to be able to go back and say, 'Oh,' and make up something about why you did it."

The 1986 U.S. Supreme Court case "*Batson vs. Kentucky*" established that using peremptory challenges to intentionally exclude all people of color from a jury violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution. Peremptory challenges are those for which no reason must be stated unless the state is eliminating a juror based on race. If the reason were deemed "race neutral and legitimately related to the outcome of the trial," the exclusion would still be permitted.

Other choice statements by McMahon include: "People from Mayfair are good and people from 33rd and Diamond stink . . . You don't want any jurors from 33rd and Diamond." Mayfair is a highly segregated white neighborhood, and 33rd and Diamond is a low-income Black neighborhood.

Again: "Let's face it, again; there's the Blacks from the low-income areas . . . you don't want those people on your jury . . . You know, in selecting Blacks, you don't want the real educated ones . . . In my ex-



perience, Black women, young Black women, are very bad." And so forth.

Exclusion of African American potential jurors was one of 29 constitutional violations during Abu-Jamal's trial, sentencing and post-conviction proceedings, according to a brief filed in federal court in 1999. Although Castille was not district attorney at the time of Abu-Jamal's conviction, the illegal policy of excluding jurors based on race clearly continued during his term.

Bias against Black jurors was also part of Abu-Jamal's state appeal for post-conviction relief. When the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, including Castille, ruled against that appeal in 1998, the former prosecutor never disclosed his conflict of interest or the McMahon tape that bears his name.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Pennsylvanians may have been illegally convicted and sentenced during Castille's tenure as district attorney. What's not known is how many of the 2 million prisoners throughout the United States suffered similar constitutional violations dur-

ing their trials. One thing is for sure: the McMahon tape is the tip of the iceberg.

Unless you're on a New York film shoot or a Hollywood soundstage, the system doesn't work—especially if you're poor, young, working-class, or a person of color. Mumia Abu-Jamal and his attorneys are doing all they can to expose prosecutorial hypocrisy. But the only way to win justice for Abu-Jamal and Castille's other victims is through mass political action that can shake up the status quo.

There will be an opportunity to take action July 4 in Philadelphia at the annual protest marking Abu-Jamal's conviction in 1982. The demonstration will be held at Washington Square Park, a former slave-auction site two blocks from the Liberty Bell. Protesters will also oppose Secretary of State Colin Powell, who is scheduled to receive the "Liberty Award" from Greater Philadelphia First, a regional business group.

More information about the protest will be available after May 23 on the Web sites www.mumia.org and www.millions4mumia.org.

CORRECTION

The article entitled "Death penalty under fire" in the May 23 issue of *Workers World* mistakenly identified death row prisoner Napoleon Beasley as "mentally disabled."

The real scandal

War plans were ready before 9/11

Continued from page 1

other members of the war cabinet carried a cover sheet entitled 'Going to War.' Tenet flipped past the cover to the first page, which read 'Initial Hook: Destroying Al Qaeda, Closing the Safe Haven.' The haven was Afghanistan." (Washington Post, Jan. 31)

The series had explained two days earlier that, "Tenet's concept called for bringing together expanded intelligence-gathering resources, covert action, sophisticated technology, agency paramilitary teams and opposition forces in Afghanistan. They would then be combined with U.S. military power and Special Forces into an elaborate and lethal package.

"Tenet said that the United States already had a 'large asset base,' given the work the CIA had been doing in countries near Afghanistan.

"The unmanned Predator surveillance aircraft that was now armed with Hellfire missiles had been operating for more than a year out of Uzbekistan to provide real-time video of Afghanistan. ... In addition the U.S. should seek to work closely with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Pakistan to stop the travel of Al Qaeda leaders and 'close all borders.'

"A key portion of Tenet's briefing," continued the Post, "covered operations inside Afghanistan." He described mobilizing the Northern Alliance, which was "a potentially powerful force but was desperate for money, weapons and intelligence." He also described the creation of a "northern front, closing the safe haven," and how the U.S. "would move first against the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif" and open up the border of Uzbekistan.

Tenet also "described a role for the opposition tribes in the southern part of Afghanistan, groups hostile to the northern opposition forces but crucial to the campaign. ... Tenet said the CIA had begun working with a number of tribal leaders in the south the previous year. ... Some would try to play both sides but once the war began, they could be enticed by money, food, ammunition and supplies to join the U.S.-led campaign."

Bush takes Pentagon option three

The Post described how, at the Camp David meeting, "Tenet then turned to another top secret document, called 'Worldwide Attack Matrix,' which described covert operations in 80 countries that were either under way or that he was now recommending. The actions ranged from routine propaganda to lethal covert action in preparation for military attacks.

"The final presentation of the morning came from Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had also brought a big brief case to Camp David." Shelton described three options to Bush, each one more deadly than the last.

The third option, which Bush chose, "combined cruise missiles, manned bomber attacks" and "boots on the ground." It also included U.S. Special Forces and possibly Army and Marines being deployed inside Afghanistan.

In other words, Tenet and Shelton described a long-planned, ground and air campaign in all its precision, including the battle of Mazar-e-Sharif—which later took place, prompting a great massacre carried out by the Northern Alliance. In the campaign in the southern region, the present puppet president, Hamid Karzai, played the key role of liaison with the CIA. The

diplomatic groundwork with neighboring states; the use of smart bombs and cruise missiles; the use of the Predator as a key instrument of war; and many other minutiae—all these elements had required lengthy planning.

Condoleezza Rice, referring to the plan when she was defending Bush against charges of negligence, made it appear that it had been hurriedly thrown together as a response to warnings in July and August. Woodward and Balz, however, said they had learned that for several months before Sept. 11, as part of the administration's review of its policy, "Tenet and Rice and other officials had been working on a plan to vastly expand covert action in Afghanistan and throughout the world."

Bush at the Citadel: Pentagon's war dreams

During the election campaign Bush had given an outline of his belligerent military policy in an infamous speech at the Citadel on Sept. 23, 1999. It was written by Richard Armitage, now undersecretary of state, who was then bucking for the post of secretary of defense. In it Bush foreshadowed the Pentagon's dreams that were to be carried out over the bodies of the Afghan people.

Bush spoke of how "our forces in the next century must be agile, lethal, readily deployable, and require a minimum of logistical support. We must be able to project power over long distances, in days or weeks rather than months. Our military must be able to identify targets by a variety of means—from a Marine patrol to a satellite. Then be able to destroy those targets almost instantly, with an array of weapons."

Bush continued, "In the air, we must be able to strike from across the world with pinpoint accuracy—with long-range aircraft and perhaps with unmanned systems."

From this perspective the U.S. destruction of Afghanistan can be viewed as a weapons and strategy testing program for the Pentagon.

All the information coming out now about prior warnings of an attack on some U.S. installation only confirms the theory that the warlike group of Bush, Tenet, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, with Colin Powell reluctantly tagging along behind, knew full well that there would be a strike. They were coiled like a spring, waiting for it to happen, so they could use it as a pretext to open a massive worldwide offensive.

Rumsfeld: discipline the world

The Post articles described how "many months earlier, in the formative stages of his new administration, Bush had talked with his prospective secretary of defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, about their shared belief that America's deterrent strength had been eroded through misapplication of the country's military power. Rumsfeld recalls saying to Bush that whenever the United States was attacked or threatened, the Clinton administration had followed a pattern of 'reflexive pullback.' Rumsfeld said he believed that U.S. power was needed to help discipline the world."

They considered President Bill Clinton's 1998 bombing of Afghanistan with 48 cruise missiles and the destruction of a pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan with another cruise missile as "weak and provocative," according to the Post. The massive bombing of Belgrade and other Yugoslav cities by Clinton in a flagrant war of aggression was limited child's play to

the Bush group, although Tenet was a Clinton appointee.

Waiting for a catastrophe

The fact of the matter is that Sept. 11 did not cause the war in Afghanistan. As horrendous as it was, Sept. 11 turned out to be only a pretext, one the Bush forces knew would come sooner or later. They were all cynically waiting for a catastrophe in order to pounce.

The war was followed by the declaration of an "axis of evil"—Iran, Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

This was followed by the leak of plans called the Bush Nuclear Posture Review, which threaten the development and use of battlefield nuclear weapons.

Then came the U.S. backing of Israel's massive offensive against the Palestinian Authority and the attempted destruction of the Palestine national movement.

Meanwhile the FARC liberation force in Colombia that has been fighting the U.S.-backed death squad government for 30 years was declared a "terrorist" organization; \$1.3 billion was given to the Colombian government to fight them.

Some 3,000 U.S. troops are now on the ground in the Philippines fighting and guiding puppet forces in a war that is really against the liberation forces of the New People's Army; the fight against the miniscule Abu Sayyef group is just a cover for intervention.

U.S. Undersecretary of State John Bolton recently accused Cuba of having the capacity to manufacture and distribute biological weapons material.

Washington sponsored a coup d'état against the popular government of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, but it failed.

When the smoke cleared after the initial big offensive in Afghanistan, the Pentagon had new military bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It has the dominant position in the oil rich region of the Caspian Sea. It has expanded its power to the southern rim of Russia and the southwestern flank of China. And it is in a strategic position to dominate the Arabian Sea and wage long-range war in the Persian Gulf if it has to.

Equally important, the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex got a massive infusion of present and future profits from a trillion-dollar five-year spending plan—a plan which comes at the expense of schools, housing, child care, medical care and every other social need of the workers.

It is only possible to evaluate Sept. 11 fully in light of what followed. To be sure, it is highly probable that the Bush forces had no idea that such devastation to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon would result from sitting and waiting for a military pretext. But as disastrous as those attacks were, with all the death and destruction they caused, the Bush forces went to war not because innocent lives were lost but because they were hell bent on expanding the world domination of U.S. imperialism. They wanted to terrorize the world and send a threatening message of destruction to any government or force that even contemplates resisting that domination.

Don't fix the forces of repression—fight them

Seen in this light, it would be folly to jump on the bandwagon and demand to find out "who knew what" in the government. What they knew is that they wanted to go to war against the oppressed people of the world. If there is going to be any in-

The Democrats are deliberately missing the point. What's scandalous is not a 'failure of intelligence.' It's that the Bush administration wanted a big war and knew its policies would sooner or later provoke an incident that would provide an excuse

vestigation, it should be of the conspiracy to go to war.

As far as improving the efficiency of coordination among the FBI, the CIA and the Pentagon, in the name of protecting lives, any such proposal should be rejected out of hand. The FBI is a proven racist force that was behind the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover waged a vicious campaign against King and the entire civil rights movement.

The FBI under President Richard Nixon carried out COINTELPRO, which murdered and framed up Black Panther Party leaders and members. It also attacked the Young Lords, the Chicano movement and the American Indian Movement, sentencing Leonard Peltier to jail for life. In the 1980s the FBI carried out a campaign of frame-ups against Black elected officials. It is now engaged in a witch-hunt against people of Middle Eastern descent. During the 1950s the FBI carried out a similar witch-hunt against communists and progressives, particularly in the union movement. It is now coordinating with local police departments in an "improvement" of repressive efficiency.

As for the CIA, it is akin to an international Murder Incorporated, carrying out assassinations and attempted assassinations of leaders; overthrowing popular governments from Guatemala to Iran, from Congo to Chile. It was part of the recent coup attempt in Venezuela through the National Endowment for Democracy.

The Pentagon, of course, is the enemy of the world's people.

Any effort to improve the "efficiency" of these repressive institutions can only increase their efficiency in repression of the movement worldwide. Not only should the movement shun any attempt to improve these institutions, it should have as its aim to push them back, to interfere with their functioning through mass mobilization against all forms of repression and, ultimately, to break them up and replace them with a popular power.

Washington, Wall Street and the World Trade Center

As far as protecting the safety of the people in the U.S., it must be recalled that, however misguided and condemnable the Sept. 11 attack was, it was nevertheless the result of decades of aggression against the peoples of the Middle East by the U.S. and its proxy Israel. The U.S. war in the Persian Gulf killed 200,000 Iraqis. The cities of Baghdad and Basra as well as villages and towns were mercilessly bombed. The U.S.-imposed sanctions have killed 1.5 million people, including hundreds of thousands

Continued on following page

U.S. war strategy menaces Iraq

Behind Bush's maneuver at the UN

By Brian Becker

It is essential for progressive people, and especially the working class whose sons and daughters constitute the majority of the Pentagon military forces, to understand the real politics behind a recent U.S. initiative at the United Nations regarding economic sanctions against Iraq.

The UN Security Council voted unanimously May 13 to reorganize the economic sanctions on Iraq.

The major media in the United States reported that the new sanctions would be "smarter" because they will supposedly permit Iraq to import many previously banned goods that are essential for the well-being of Iraqi civilians.

After the UN vote, Bush administration officials raced to the microphones to declare that if civilians continue to suffer they will have only Saddam Hussein to blame. They asserted that the new sanctions only prohibit Iraq from receiving military goods or "dual use" products—goods that could potentially be used for either civilian or military purposes.

Part of a war strategy

Does the UN decision usher in a new era of "smarter" and more humane economic sanctions? Having lost more than 1 million people to disease and malnutrition as a result of 12 years of virtually airtight sanctions, won't the new sanctions policy relieve some of the suffering of Iraqi civilians?

And as a consequence, shouldn't the vote be considered a step forward? Isn't any "humanitarian" reform of the sanctions better than nothing?

This, unfortunately, has been the position of some groups and leaders in the anti-sanctions movement.

The May 13 UN vote was not humanitarian at all. It is actually part of a fairly complicated war strategy by the Bush administration.

The real reason the United States initiated the new sanctions with a "human face" was to prevent the actual complete lifting

of sanctions at the very moment the Bush administration is preparing for all-out war on Iraq.

If sanctions were entirely lifted—which is the official position of almost all countries—it would mean an end to the so-called Oil for Food Program. This is a UN program that is dominated by the United States.

The program allows the United States, rather than the Iraqi government, to exercise strategic control over Iraqi oil revenues. The Bush administration considers this program a central element in its favor as it prepares for war against Iraq.

The OFP purports to be a humanitarian enterprise. The Iraqi government agreed to it in 1996 after having rejected it for several years. The OFP permitted Iraq to resume selling oil for the first time since August 1990. But the revenues from all its oil contracts were placed under the control of the UN Security Council.

Of course, this scheme was a thinly veiled form of looting by the U.S. and British governments, the Kuwaiti monarchy and many of the biggest Western corporations.

Between January 1997 and 2000, Iraq sold \$40 billion worth of oil. All this money was deposited into an account controlled by the UN. Only \$9.6 billion, less than 25 percent of the revenue, was distributed to Iraq to purchase food and medicine.

The rest went to the Kuwaiti monarchy and other "victims" of the 1991 war. Last year, for example, \$200 million of OFP funds was given to ExxonMobil. The corporation was listed among the "victims" of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Worse still, the Oil for Food Program constituted a major setback for Iraqi sov-

ereignty and independence. The transfer of its oil revenues to de facto U.S. control provides the imperialists with strategic leverage at the core of Iraq's economy.

The Iraqi government resisted the Oil for Food Program for several years. U.S. conservatives and liberals alike routinely pilloried Saddam Hussein for rejecting this form of "humanitarian aid." The Iraqis only relented after sanctions had brought the economy to its knees.

By 1996, economic sanctions had plunged Iraq's relatively affluent society into stupefying poverty. In April 1998 UNICEF reported, "The increase in mortality reported in public hospitals for children under five years of age (an excess of some 40,000 deaths yearly compared with 1989) is mainly due to diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition."

Iraq was well aware that the imperialist powers were unlikely to ever relinquish control over its oil resources once it accepted the OFP, but it had little choice given the raging sanctions-induced genocide of 1991-1996.

The May 13 vote for "humane" sanctions is, plainly put, the only available method to maintain U.S./UN economic sanctions and, as a consequence, the Oil for Food Program.

Will there be additional civilian goods available to the Iraqi population? That is a possibility. But the new UN resolution also contains a 332-page listing of all the commodities that could be still banned as "dual use" products. In the past this criterion has led to banning ambulances, chlorine, piping, pumps and filtration equipment used in water purification, x-ray machines, all computers, etc.

Even if it turns out that Iraq is able to import more goods, however, that is not the decisive issue for the Bush administration. The Bush administration and the Pentagon have made it clear that they are preparing to massively bomb Iraq and invade the country with ground troops.

No war for Big Oil

Maintaining the Oil for Food Program is part of the Bush war strategy. If Iraq had sovereign control over its own oil it would undoubtedly use the funds derived from the sales to rebuild its economy and infrastructure and to prepare to defend itself against the Bush administration's planned aggression.

In this context, the May 13 UN vote is not a humanitarian step forward. It actually assists the U.S. war effort against Iraq. Even the countries that succumbed to U.S. pressure—including threats, no doubt—and voted for the resolution essentially denounced the move.

The Russian and Syrian ambassadors, for instance, called for the full lifting of the sanctions—immediately after they voted for the U.S.-backed resolution.

If the United States has its way, in the coming months thousands of its soldiers will be sent to kill and be killed to fulfill imperialist ambitions to replace the Iraqi government with a puppet regime.

It is not about "weapons of mass destruction" or getting a more democratic government in Baghdad.

It will be a dirty war for oil. A war for ExxonMobil, Texaco, Citibank, Chase and the corporate capitalists who are hell-bent on returning Iraq to its former colonial status.

Pentagon still killing civilians in Afghanistan

By G. Dunkel

When a single U.S. soldier was killed May 19 in eastern Afghanistan, it made national news in this country.

But there's very little news about the fact that the United States is still killing civilians in Afghanistan. Ten were killed May 16 by a U.S. AC-130 attack plane, sometimes described as a flying heavy-machine-gun nest. The circumstances were reported in wildly different ways.

The Australian media talked about a two-day running battle with Al Qaeda-Taliban forces that nearly overran their patrols, set ambushes for the forces that came to relieve them and put up a bang-up fight until the British sent in about 1,000 troops.

One Afghan press report described a struggle between two tribes over some trees and land, where a few shots were exchanged until the U.S. plane came blazing in. Another Afghan report described a wedding celebration where some rifles were fired into the air.

Whatever the circumstances, they all agreed that the United States killed at least 10 civilians.

On May 12, when U.S. Special Forces troops raided a small village in central Afghanistan, the hometown of a major Taliban leader, five farmers hiding in a wheat field were shot dead and 20 others taken off to a U.S.-run prison.

According to Marc Herold, an econom-

ics professor at the University of New Hampshire, U.S. bombs killed at least 3,780 civilians between Oct. 7 and May 14. Herold, who makes clear that he opposes the U.S. war in Afghanistan, uses corroborated reports from aid agencies, the United Nations, eyewitnesses, TV stations, newspapers and news agencies from around the world.

According to a study by a journalism school in New Zealand, Herold's figures are sometimes too low. (The Herald, Jan 17)

Currently, 4,600 troops from 19 countries are serving under British command in Afghanistan, according to the May 16 Ottawa Citizen. But U.S. Gen. Tommy Franks is still the overall commander.

Troops from Canada and 18 other countries currently in Afghanistan provide a fig leaf for the role of the U.S. as hit man in this bloody war against an impoverished country. But the U.S. Air Force flies most of the combat air missions. The United States is spending some \$30 million a day on its military missions in Afghanistan.

The "global war on terrorism," according to the Pentagon, has cost \$17 billion since Sept. 11. (The Scotsman, May 17)

Gen. Maurice Baril, a former chief of defense in Canada, released a heavily censored interim report May 14 that offered almost no insight into what happened



U.S. soldiers from the 101st Airborne leave a helicopter at Bagram air base north of Kabul.

about a month ago when a U.S. jet killed four Canadian soldiers during a night exercise. Senior Canadian military leaders told the Canadian media they do not expect a full accounting, purportedly because of the need to preserve the safety of troops still battling Al Qaeda and Taliban resistance.

A few days after the Baril report, Gen. Franks talked to about 400 members of the regiment that was involved in the incident. He congratulated them on the success of their latest mission, which involved digging some bodies up from a cemetery where the bodies of suspected Al Qaeda and/or Taliban fighters were supposed to be buried, and crushing the bones to extract the DNA. The headline in the May 16 Ottawa Citizen read: "Bone-crushing" Canadian mission wins praise.

Bush and the Pentagon need to pretend the war against Afghanistan is finished so they can focus on Iraq.

War plans

Continued from preceding page

of children.

The U.S. government has backed the hated dictatorship of the feudal monarchy in Saudi Arabia for decades and made the country into an oil and military satellite of Washington and Wall Street. For decades the U.S. backed the hated dictatorial Shah of Iran. Washington has supplied and financed the 50-year enforcement of the cruel Israeli occupation of Palestine, including many massacres of Palestinians carried out by Ariel Sharon. It financed the 1982 Israeli attack on Lebanon in which 14,000 people died under Israeli bombs.

U.S. oil companies control the vast oil wealth of the Persian Gulf while only a few rich monarchs, emirs and sultans live high and the mass of the people live in poverty. U.S. warships and military aircraft are everywhere threatening all who rebel against this intolerable situation.

Under these conditions it is clear that the safety of the people of the U.S. can only be guaranteed by the withdrawal of the U.S. government, its military and the multinational corporations from the region. The safety of the workers here at home can only be guaranteed when the people of the Middle East are safe from U.S. domination.

Report from Mexico conference

'Long live Palestine, free and sovereign!'

By Teresa Gutierrez
Mexico City

More than 500 people from across Latin America and the Caribbean, and from many other nations around the world, participated in the Second International Conference in Solidarity with the People of Palestine here May 15-17.

The conference was sponsored by the Organization in Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the Workers Party of Mexico, and several Mexican solidarity and political organizations.

The theme was: "Long live Palestine, free and sovereign!"

Although hidden by the capitalist media, there is a

large and growing movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people throughout Latin America. One of the most important pieces of information resulting from the conference is that there have been countless demonstrations and events throughout the continent in solidarity with Palestine.

Activists reported that demonstrations of 5,000 to 20,000 people have taken place in many countries throughout the region. These include Mexico City; Panama City; Caracas, Venezuela; San Salvador, El Salvador; Santiago, Chile; Guatemala City; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

High-level delegations from many countries came to the conference, an indication of the priority the progressive and revolutionary movements are placing on Palestine.

Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front political leader Shafik Handel from El Salvador spoke at the conference. So did Miguel D'Escoto from the Frente Sandinista Liberacion Nacional from Nicaragua.

A representative from Venezuela read a message of solidarity to the delegates from Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Revolutionary Cuba sent representatives, including members of the Communist Party of Cuba, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People, several journalists and others.

Other nations in attendance included Brazil, Spain, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Mozambique, Laos, Libya and Tunisia.

Messages of solidarity were read from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of

Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP)—and the National Liberation Army (ELN). The Mexican government, in yet another

sign that the Vicente Fox administration is taking orders from Washington, recently closed down the FARC office in Mexico City.

And several delegates reported they incurred serious problems entering Mexico at customs. One Guatemalan activist said that she had traveled to Mexico dozens of times and had never had any problems. But on this trip she was held several hours by customs agents.

The presentations made by the Palestinians were a highlight of the conference.

Palestinian Ambassador to Mexico Dr. Fawzi El-Masheni expressed his solidarity and heartfelt thanks to the organizers of the conference and all those in attendance on behalf of the Palestinian people.

The representative of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine said: "The actions carried out by the Israeli government in the cities, towns and refugee camps can only be characterized as war crimes. This requires that Ariel Sharon and his heads of military be tried in an international court."

"The DFLP calls on the international community to take on the responsibility to demand that Israel withdraw immediately from Arab and Palestinian lands occupied since the June 1967 war."

The representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said: "On behalf of the International Relations Department of the PFLP we are here to express our recognition and gratitude for the growing solidarity of the people you represent here today. Today the Palestinian cause is not just a cause of the Palestinians or Arab peoples; it is a worldwide cause. Our heroic people confront, and will continue to confront, this genocide with determination and revolutionary decisions to struggle and win no matter what price they have to pay or sacrifice."

"Our revolutionary people who are anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist reject and condemn all U.S. and Israeli plans and maneuvers. It is worth remembering the famous phrase made by Commander Ernesto Che Guevara: 'You cannot trust the imperialist enemy—not even a little bit.'"

A running theme throughout the three days was a strong defense of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, and unconditional support of their right to carry out any form of struggle against the U.S.-backed Israeli regime.

Several speakers placed the complete onus of the current war in the region on the Bush/Sharon regimes. Many pointed out the complicit relationship between Israel and the U.S. government: The settler state would not stand a day without the \$10 million handed over daily to Israel by the United States.

Several speakers called for a boycott of Israel and demanded that Israel be expelled from the United Nations.

A representative of the Benito Juarez Award announced that the prestigious

award would be presented to Yasser Arafat.

The final conference declaration read in part: "The participants to the 2nd International Conference of Solidarity with the Palestinian People have analyzed the dramatic situation of the Palestinian people who, subjected to a criminal genocide by the terrorist government of Israel, are heroically struggling and resisting under extremely difficult conditions without giving up their legitimate and just rights."

"The participants have confirmed that such a criminal and derelict attitude of the fundamentalist government of Israel would not be possible without the absolute support given by Washington, which, besides granting billions in economic and military aid, provides political and diplomatic protection."

"The Conference has asserted with great consternation and indignation the fascist character adopted by the actions of the Zionist government of Ariel Sharon against the Palestinian people and the accomplice indifference found in most of the Western governments."

"Likewise, the participants in the Conference agree to denounce the distorted imperialist Zionist campaign that intends to present as terrorists the Palestinian patriots who justly struggle to recover the territory illegally seized by Israel, which belongs to them according to innumerable UN Resolutions."

"In the same regard, they denounce the role of the media that silences and distorts the events, as it did during the Gulf War, the Afghanistan war or during the fascist coup d'etat in Venezuela; it constantly emphasizes the desperate actions carried out by the Palestinian youth who commit suicide, because they cause the death of civilian Israelis, without explaining that the ones to blame for those actions are the Zionist extremists and terrorists who have

The Bolivarian circles:

Critical step in Venezuelan revolution

By Andy McInerney

Every social revolution has its own unique characteristics. But there are certain tasks that all have in common. By definition, a social revolution involves the overturning of one set of property relations, transferring the ownership of industry and resources from one social class to another.

In order to do this, one of the central tasks in any revolutionary process is the creation of organs of popular power. For example, during the Russian Revolution of 1917, councils called soviets allowed the workers, peasants and soldiers to defend their own class interests and ultimately seize state power. During the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party organized a Red Army that served as an embryonic workers' and peasants' state until it broke the back of the imperialist-backed Chiang Kai-shek government in 1949.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro's July 26th Movement formed an armed nucleus that served as a lightning rod for popular discontent against the Batista dictatorship, culminating in the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Key to the continued success of the revolution is

the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, organized on a neighborhood basis to both provide services to the community and to defend against counter-revolution.

The fundamental problem facing the progressive government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela is that it is based on an electoral victory. In and of itself, it does not reflect the successful conquest of power by Venezuela's working classes—a conquest that can only take place in the course of intense class struggle by battle-tested organizations based on the working class.

But the Chávez government does describe itself as a revolutionary government. And true to its word, it has embarked on a process that clearly separates the Chávez movement from any of the bourgeois nationalist regimes that sometimes take progressive positions against imperialism but are opponents of the working class.

That process is the creation of the Bolivarian circles. These committees played a major role in reversing the April coup against the Chávez government by U.S.-backed elements in Venezuela's ruling class and military. The circles also are the key to extending the Venezuelan revolution to address the interests of the working classes.

After Chávez was elected in 1998, his government addressed what it called a "peaceful, democratic revolution" toward reforming the corrupt political establishment. A popularly elected National Assembly wrote a new constitution. Chávez led Venezuela, at the time of his election the single largest exporter of oil to the United States, to an independent foreign policy no longer dominated by Washington.

He embraced Cuban President Fidel Castro, providing oil to Cuba at preferential terms. He expressed solidarity with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and openly defied the U.S. blockade of Iraq.

But Chávez was elected on his promises to address the needs of the 80 percent of Venezuelans who live in poverty. In June 2001, his government began to address these concerns.

Over the next several months, Chávez proposed a series of 49 laws aimed at addressing the economic needs of the big majority of the Venezuelan people. He proposed a land reform, turning over land held by absentee landlords to people who would work the land. He aimed at strengthening the role of the state in the oil and fishing industries, with the goal of using the re-

sources for the benefit of the people.

This was the background to the creation of the Bolivarian circles. The circles were to be popular, neighborhood-based organizations to defend the revolution. They are named for the great Latin American liberator Simón Bolívar.

A supporter of the Chávez government, Guillermo García Ponce, described the initiative to set up the circles in the June 4, 2001, edition of the Caracas newspaper El Universal: "The Bolivarian circles are the organized people in the neighborhoods, the townships, the projects, every place in Venezuela, in order to strengthen the revolutionary process, to bring the people into the activity of the government, to make participatory democracy effective, to carry out the Constitution and to defend it."

"We have now finished with the electoral aims and the creation of a new [political] institution. We have now entered on a thrust toward the economy, toward social solutions. For that the greatest unity of political force is needed."

By the time President Hugo Chávez officially announced the creation of the circles at a ceremony in December, there were

Continued on page 10



As misery grows unbearable

Argentine workers seek to shake off IMF

By Alicia Jrapko

been denying the Palestinian people their right to existence for over 50 years.

"The Conference issues an appeal to all parties, political, mass, professional, social organizations and NGOs, personalities from different walks of life and, in general, to the International Community, to mobilize in order to prevent the continuous commission of crimes against the Palestinian people, to denounce and pressure the governments of Israel and the United States to put an end to barbarism and genocide.

"It is equally important to demand that Israel be submitted to inspection by the relevant International Agencies to put an end to its illegal arsenal of nuclear and mass destruction weapons. The governments of the Western powers must act in an ethical manner and abandon their silent complicity. ...

"The Conference concludes that the only way to put an end to violence is the just solution to the conflict, based on the UN Resolutions, especially Resolution 194 of the General Assembly establishing the right of the Palestinian refugees to return; and Resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council demanding the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied in 1967. This will allow the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, with Arab Jerusalem as the capital, a just aspiration that has almost the total support of the International Community."

Several plans of action were agreed upon, including international demonstrations on Sept. 17, the date of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, and on Nov. 29, the International Day of Solidarity with Palestine.

Gutierrez participated in the conference as a representative of the International Action Center. She reported to participants about the historic April 20 protests in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco that drew a total of some 130,000 demonstrators. A major theme at the White House and San Francisco protests sponsored by the ANSWER coalition was Palestinian freedom and an end to the U.S.-backed Israeli war. Gutierrez reports that many participants at the Mexico City conference had been inspired by news about the historic April 20th actions.

Argentina is on an economic death row. Latin America's third-largest economy was put there not by judges, but by International Monetary Fund and World Bank bankers and financiers.

Despite concession after concession, the only hope for a stay of execution for the government-by-default of President Eduardo Duhalde is an economic bailout by the very robber barons that put them \$141 billion into debt in the first place. It has been months since Argentina has been able to make any payments on the debt due to the economic collapse that began in December.

The financial pages in the U.S. corporate media have been conspicuously silent as the situation for millions of Argentine workers grows worse daily. Some Argentines are now charging that the strategy of the Wall Street vultures is to do nothing until the crisis is so great that they can come in and take over the vast resources of Argentina for virtually nothing.

Selling off the country—literally?

Juan Gabriel Labak, a former union leader and member of Duhalde's Justicialist Party, presented a complaint this month in a Buenos Aires court alleging that some lenders were raising the possibility of exchanging Argentine territories to pay off the foreign debt. He charges that the IMF, the World Bank and the U.S. government want to collect or retrieve their debt this way.

The text of the complaint alleges the existence of a campaign initiated by the U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill to allow the crisis to continue with the purpose of making the "Argentines believe that they are incapable of governing themselves." He charged the "permanent insinuation of methods that will allow to pay off the foreign debt in exchange for territories and ecological reserves," including the province of Chabut and areas of Antarctica currently part of Argentina.

Residents in the Patagonia region recently protested a survey being circulated by the consulting firm Giacobbe and Associates in Chubut and three other provinces. The survey polled people's willingness to pay the Argentine foreign debt with some of the country's territories.

The president of the company was vague when asked who hired his firm. The ques-

tionnaire not only asked about paying the foreign debt with sovereign land, but also probed people's reaction to a suggestion that Argentina be administered economically by a functionary of the IMF or other international institution.

At the same time, the IMF is demanding that the Argentine government modify the Bankruptcy Law and eliminate the Economic Subversion Law as a condition for disbursing millions of dollars in loan payments.

The international bankers are demanding that the Bankruptcy Law include a mechanism known as "cram down" that allows a lender or a third person to appropriate a bankrupt enterprise or business to pay their debt. According to local experts, this maneuver will allow U.S. capital to take advantage of the depreciation of the Argentine currency to take over national and European enterprises.

To protest this law, legislator Alicia Castro in mid-May planted a U.S. flag over the table of the legislature's presidency.

The Economic Subversion Law, which the IMF wants to see repealed, was created under popular pressure in the wake of the December collapse to punish owners of enterprises, executives, managers and administrators who were responsible for wrongdoing. It was particularly aimed at the banks, under suspicion for having shipped millions of dollars out of the country before the implementation of the freeze on bank accounts known as the "corralito." A number of former government officials were arrested under this law. Its elimination could lead to their release, including that of former economy minister Domingo Cavallo. His name has become synonymous with the massive corruption of previous governments, beginning with the regime of Carlos Menem in the 1990s.

Deepening misery

The Bush administration advises the Argentine government to bow down to IMF demands, which have brought an ever-increasing desperation for the workers and unemployed, who make up the great majority of Argentines.

Half of the 36 million Argentines now live under the poverty level. The percent of poor people grew faster than ever before in April, when the cost of goods increased by almost 18 percent. The crisis is greatest in the north of the country, in provinces like Corrientes, Formosa, Misiones and Chaco, where two of every three inhabitants are poor.

While the consumption of food and medicine is decreasing, unemployment has spiraled to an official rate of 30 percent.

Malnutrition and hunger are rampant, with six of 10 children in Argentina living in poverty. These children were born in a country with great natural and industrial resources to provide food and basic needs for the entire population. Instead, they are suffering from the strangulation of neoliberal policies demanded by the IMF and World Bank.



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

25,000 march in Cordoba, Argentina March 23 to mark anniversary of 1976 military coup.

One of the greatest ironies of neoliberalism can be seen every night at 2 a.m. in front of the McDonalds on the popular Corrientes Street in Buenos Aires. Young children fight for leftover thrown-out food from this hated U.S. food chain.

Mounting mass pressure

The Duhalde government is grasping for ways to respond to the IMF demands while at the same time deflecting the pressure from the masses. They know very well that if they comply with all the IMF demands, they may face the same fate as their predecessors. Duhalde himself took power after angry masses of workers, unemployed, and wide sectors of the middle class toppled the previous government. Millions are still trying to access their frozen bank accounts.

One stopgap solution Duhalde is considering is to compensate savers with state properties.

The only real force that is preventing the Argentine government from beginning a fire sale of the country to foreign capitalists is the current struggle being waged by the workers, unemployed and all the progressive forces. These forces are organizing themselves into mass Popular Assemblies.

On May 20, tens of thousands of workers took to the streets in Buenos Aires and across the country to demand food and jobs. On May 23, thousands of picketers are scheduled to block roads and stage rallies across the country.

These protests are leading to a general strike called by the Federation of Argentine Workers (CTA) for May 29. The 24-hour general strike, the first since Duhalde took power, is meant to protest against hunger, unemployment and the economic policy of the current government.

The solution to the problems of the great majority of people in Argentina is not renegotiating the debt with the IMF. It is a government where workers are in power and where the wealth of this rich South American country is distributed to everyone and not just to a rich few.

Jrapko recently returned from an extensive trip to Argentina.

Chávez removes coup generals

The Miami Herald reported on May 19 that 106 generals and admirals who had supported the coup against President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela have been removed from their posts. Only six of them have actually been charged, however. The others remain in the military but without command authority.

Venezuela has had 260 generals and admirals—a huge number of high-ranking officers for a country of 24 million people that has not waged a war in many years. That's about three times as many general officers per person as in the U.S. Obviously, Chávez inherited a large num-

ber of high-ranking officers promoted in years past by the oligarchy for reasons of patronage and privilege.

"Another 500 lower-ranking officers were sent home under suspicion of supporting the coup or failing to back the president on April 11," says the Miami paper. They included the commanders of the barracks in Caracas, who allowed the coup members to take over the presidential palace until a mass mobilization of hundreds of thousands forced them to flee. In that confrontation, most rank and file soldiers defied their officers and came over to the side of the people.

—D. Griswold



Crime & punishment

It's not every day that the country's "newspaper of record" exposes the blatant class discrimination of the capitalist state on its front page. But the May 22 New York Times inadvertently did just that with two articles on crime and punishment.

One reported how Merrill Lynch and Co., the investment banking and brokerage firm, paid a \$100 million fine to New York and other states to get the state government to stop investigating further into its practices. Its brokers had told investors that stocks were great when they knew these stocks were—in their own words—"dogs." Indeed, that's what they wrote about the stocks in emails to each other. The company apologized for the emails.

This is not just a case of the rich stealing from the rich—they do that, too. But many of the investments are in mutual funds, which inevitably mean the losers include pension funds. So because Merrill Lynch and its brokers were lying to get filthy rich, many workers will have smaller pensions.

To many working-class people, \$100 million in penalties may sound like a stiff fine. But it's less than 20 percent of Merrill Lynch's \$573 million net income. No perpetrator faces jail time, nor do Merrill Lynch's managers or top executives for promoting such thievery.

Consider the other article. New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg, in Rudy Giuliani fashion, has ordered the city's prosecutors, police and probation officials to "crack down" on "as many as 9,700 people," who he alleges repeatedly commit "quality of life" infractions: "petty crimes like prostitution, public drinking and drug use, but serve little jail time." Bloomberg wants these non-violent "career criminals" put away.

These are individuals who have not stolen a penny from any retired people's pensions or wiped out anyone's savings. Is there any chance that the Merrill Lynch executives will make it to this list of 9,700?

No. Bloomberg is rich. Very rich. He knows the wealthy only get punished for robbing from more powerful wealthy people, and then only with a slap on the wrist. Real punishment is reserved for the exploited and impoverished victims of capitalism.

Speak out against an Israeli invasion

A fact-finding delegation, including legal and public-health experts and human-rights activists from the United States, went to the West Bank and Gaza on May 16 to investigate the conditions of the Palestinian people living under harsh Israeli occupation. The delegation was organized by the coalition known as International ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism.

It includes two members of ANSWER'S steering committee—Richard Becker, the West Coast coordinator of the International Action Center, and Carl Messineo, attorney and co-founder of the Partnership for Civil Justice—as well as Sara Flounders, co-director of the IAC, and Hillel Cohen, doctor of public health and epidemiologist and delegate of 1199 National Health and Human Services Employees Union. The delegation will report its findings on its return.

However, because of the imminent danger of an Israeli invasion into Gaza, it issued a preliminary report appealing to people of conscience to protest such military action.

The report says that, given the conditions in Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas of the world, a new Israeli incursion would lead to a major human-rights catastrophe.

It explains that occupied Gaza is undergoing urgent preparations for a possible all-out attack similar to the Israeli offensive in the West Bank that began on March 30.

The delegation met with doctors, nurses and medical staff of the Union of Health Work Committees on the preparations underway at Al Aqsa Hospital in Jebalya Camp. It interviewed Dr. Mona Al-Farra of the Union of Health Work Committees and Dr. Abu Sitta, who explained in detail that any attack in densely populated Gaza would be catastrophic.

For example, on March 20, Israeli tanks indiscriminately opened fire on homes in Jebalya Camp, leaving 22 Palestinians dead and 83 injured in a matter of minutes. Earlier, on Feb. 28, an Israeli missile

killed two children and injured 12 more with flying shrapnel in an operation aimed at assassinating a Palestinian resistance leader.

Doctors at Al Aqsa Hospital reported the use of nail-filled cluster-type bombs. The use of these weapons, which maim and kill indiscriminately, constitutes a war crime. Scores of nails recovered

from victims' bodies have been transferred to the International Red Cross as evidence.

Given the density of the population, any military operation would inevitably lead to many indiscriminate civilian casualties.

The Gaza Strip is a narrow, sandy strip 30 miles long, totally surrounded on all sides. It has been walled off by the Israeli military and segmented into separate sections. Even fishing boats from Gaza are restricted to an area close to the shoreline.

More than 1 million Palestinians are crammed into 60 percent of this tiny area while 6,000 Israeli settlers—and the Israeli military acting as their private security force—have confiscated and currently occupy more than 40 percent of the Gaza Strip. In the past year and a half, since the second Intifada—the Palestinian uprising known as the Al Aqsa Intifada—began in September 2000, this occupation has intensified.

A trip on the road from Erez into Gaza, which extends all the way to the far tip of Gaza in Rafah, now takes many hours or even days. In the past people could make the trip in 35 minutes.

Thousands of trees—date palms, orange and olive trees—have been uprooted along every roadside and in huge swaths surrounding every Israeli settlement. Even strawberry fields have been obliterated.

In Jebalya Camp, more than 120,000 people are packed into two square kilometers. In 1972, under Ariel Sharon's direction, the Israeli Defense Forces drove tanks into the narrow streets of Jebalya, crushing homes and bulldozing 12 wide avenues—known as "Sharon Boulevards"—to make it more



Critical step in Venezuelan revolution

Continued from page 8

estimated to be 8,000 around the country. Each circle is composed of 7-12 members.

By April, that number had mushroomed to 70,000, and by May, Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello estimated there were 130,000. That amounts to over a million people organized in the Bolivarian circles.

The May 1 Miami Herald gave a description of the circles: "Elena Raspollo, 54, a widow, said her Circle in the Caracas slum of Chapellin runs a low-cost day care center for the children of single mothers who work in overnight jobs such as garbage pickup and office cleaning.

"Painter David Bello, 50, is part of a Bolivarian Circle that offers after-school art classes to children in the Libertador district. Teodoro Ruiz belongs to another that runs a sports program for school dropouts.

"Other Circles run low-powered television and radio stations financed by the government to broadcast neighborhood news, and still others deliver food to the needy and transport the elderly to and from clinics."

A Dec. 4 article in the Washington Post gave a feel for the political level of the circles: "Venessa Yarce, 20, who with [Bolivarian circle organizer Henry] Navas helps run the No Turning Back Social Network, an umbrella group of community organizations, belongs to a circle in the hillside town of La Guaira [near Caracas]. The circle works on children's issues—how to clean up a neglected community park, how

to raise money for new playground equipment. ...

"This is about community struggle," Yarce said. "But there are still people who will not accept change."

"While the movement formally has no ideology, there is a left-leaning feel to it. Posters of Che Guevara ... watch over the rooms used by the circles. Yarce, who calls herself 'progressive,' wears a T-shirt denouncing 'Yankee imperialism' in Colombia."

'Comandante' Lina Ron

The spread of the Bolivarian circles is an effort to unleash the power of the masses, to bring the working people into the political arena. One immediate effect of that effort has been the emergence of new, popular leaders—a clear challenge to the view promoted in big business media that the Chávez movement is based on the president's popularity alone.

On March 30, Colombian daily El Espectador described one such leader: "The most outstanding figure in the Bolivarian revolution, outside President Hugo Chávez, is a 42-year-old woman from Anaco [about 100 miles from Caracas], who speaks forcefully and firmly. She is never patient. She is always on the offensive. It is Lina Ron who takes to the streets to defend, with blows if necessary, the Chávez government."

Lina Ron is a leader of the Bolivarian circle movement in Caracas, a spokesper-

son for the popular organization Gustavo Altuve Network of Popular Culture and a leader of the People's Power Network. Her supporters call her "Commander." She compares herself to "Tania"—Haydee Tamara Bunke—the famed internationalist hero from Argentina who fought with Che Guevara in Bolivia.

Days after the Sept. 11 attacks, when most of the left was disoriented, Ron was burning a U.S. flag in Caracas's main square. In February, Caracas police arrested her for confronting an anti-Chávez student demonstration.

Chávez defended her as a political prisoner, "a soldier who deserves the respect of all Venezuelans." Bolivarian circles responded to her arrest by organizing people's street tribunals aimed at rightist leaders.

In a March 13 interview with the Caracas daily El Nacional, Ron discussed her expulsion from the main pro-Chávez party, the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR). "We are very involved with the MVR," she said. "I never received the letter of expulsion, but that's not relevant right now, because the MVR is not the *non plus ultra*, the high chic, the *crème de la crème* of the revolution. That is the people, simply the people. And we are with the people."

In the same interview, Ron called for arming the Bolivarian circles to defend against the counter-revolution.

One thing is clear. For every Lina Ron noticed by the big business press in the U.S., there are hundreds in the streets of

Caracas. Chávez has put out a call to the people, and the people are responding.

Battles still loom

The revolutionary process led by President Hugo Chávez survived a key test in April—thanks largely to the organized people in the Bolivarian circles. But new battles are looming on the horizon.

When Chávez made some conciliatory remarks after his release, the right wing made one central demand. Anti-Chávez lawmaker Andrés Velásquez told the AP on April 18, "There can be no reconciliation until the Bolivarian circles are disarmed."

New rumors of coup attempts are still rampant. The U.S.-backed Venezuelan ruling class still controls the main media in the country, and is organizing openly.

Hugo Chávez's election in 1998 was not a revolution. But it did open a revolutionary process that is now being tested in struggle. The Bolivarian circles have felt their power, reversing the April coup attempt that had the support of the U.S. government and the Venezuelan ruling class.

The creation of the Bolivarian circles has been the most important step taken to date in the Venezuelan revolution. It is the creation of working class power, growing up alongside and in defiance of the old ruling class's state. Widening the influence of the circles and strengthening their organization is the critical task both to defend the revolutionary process against counter-revolution and to extend the revolution to address the social needs of the working class.



Lina Ron

convenient for armored tanks to attack the centers of the population. More than 5,000 people were rendered homeless by this action.

Lessons from recent Israeli war crimes

Many lessons have already been absorbed from the recent Israeli offensive in the West Bank.

The Israeli army blockaded hospitals, shot at ambulances and denied the injured access to desperately needed medical treatment. This caused many people to bleed to death—just blocks from hospitals that were surrounded and off limits.

According to Palestinian sources, including the Palestine Red Crescent Society, during the Al Aqsa Intifada the Israeli forces killed four ambulance drivers, partially or wholly destroyed 165 Palestinian ambulances, and denied ambulances access to the injured and killed on 350 occasions, as of April 21.

So the Palestinian people in Gaza, anticipating an Israeli attack, have established emergency field units at points throughout the refugee camps.

Trained first-aid teams and medics are being organized in every neighborhood. They have been equipped with small resuscitation devices and reserve units of basic fluids. More than 250 medical kits for health-care professionals have been distributed along with 500 emergency first-aid kits.

More than 350 young people have taken emergency first-aid training. Doctors are sleeping in the hospitals rather than going home so they will not be blocked from getting back.

The hospital's maternity department is giving pregnant women in their third trimester birth delivery kits with a 10-step program on what to do if they go into labor and cannot get past checkpoints.

The high level of organization by these dedicated health providers is an important part of combating a feeling of helplessness in the face of overwhelming violence. It is intended to empower people and help create a higher level of organization and social cohesion.

More than 160 doctors, nurses and paramedics have been killed or wounded during this Intifada because they are usually in the front lines during emergencies.

Although the Union of Health Work Committees attempted to purchase bulletproof vests and helmets—such as all Israeli forces and settlers routinely wear—Israel denied them the right to buy this safety equipment for use in combat zones.

The delegation saw the disastrous human-rights effect of the Israeli checkpoint that cuts off the southern section of Gaza, blocking Khan Younis and Rafah. Thousands of people and a line of cars stretching over a mile waited in the sun for nine hours to cross into Khan Younis. Among those stopped at the checkpoint were sick people waiting to see doctors, as well as others attempting to reach their place of work. Also caught in the bottleneck were people attempting to deliver food and medicine.

A coordinator of food delivery explained that the Israelis have drastically cut the food coming into Gaza, making it difficult for people to stockpile emergency supplies.

The fact-finding delegation also traveled to Bethlehem and visited the Church of the Nativity, recently under siege for 40 days. The church is now open, but the area is still completely surrounded by Israeli military forces.

The ANSWER fact-finding delegation will give direct testimony on the findings of its trip at the June 1 Emergency National Anti-War Conference in New York. For more details about this conference, visit www.internationalanswer.org.

Report from Kwangju, south Korea

Tribunal: U.S. crimes against Korean people

By Sharon Ayling
Kwangju, south Korea

On May 18, after five hours of eyewitness and expert testimony and the presentation of documented evidence, the Kwangju People's Tribunal found the U.S. government guilty of crimes against the people of Korea.

The guilty verdict was related to U.S. involvement in the murderous suppression of a people's uprising here 22 years ago.

On May 18, 1980, the people of Kwangju rebelled against a violent assault on students who were protesting the former military regime's declaration of martial law.

Students and workers joined together. With massive street demonstrations and a quickly formed people's militia, they battled police and Korean Special Forces troops, managing to seize control of the city for several days.

At least 2,000 people were killed in these battles and when the military brutally retook control of the city on May 27.

The Tribunal found 10 U.S. government officials at the time guilty of complicity in this suppression. They include President Jimmy Carter, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea William Gleysteen, and U.S.-Korean Combined Forces Commander in South Korea John Wickham.

The most damaging evidence of U.S. criminal involvement was Wickham's decision to release four divisions of south Korean army special forces troops for deployment in Kwangju. This approval was required because the south Korean army is under direct U.S. command.

Recently declassified documents showed that U.S. officials said the decision to release the troops should be kept quiet because it would fuel anti-U.S. sentiment if it became known. The United States also ordered a naval carrier to south Korea from the Philippines.

U.S. soldier tells of alert

Ellen Barfield, a sergeant in the U.S. Army stationed at Camp Humphreys in Korea during the Kwangju events, submitted videotaped testimony. She said that all 40,000 U.S. troops occupying Korea at the time were put on high alert. This meant that all routine was suspended. For two to three days they received riot training instead. This mostly consisted of classroom discussion about what to do when face-to-face with people rebelling in the streets.

She also expressed the hope that the truth about the U.S. role in Kwangju would

come out. And she commended the citizens of Kwangju for their efforts.

The Carter cabinet set up a special task force on the Korea crisis, code-naming it "Cherokee." Messages from this task force to the U.S. Embassy expressed deep fear of a revolutionary situation in Korea like the one that had just shaken the U.S. grip on Iran. They called the Korean student struggle a challenge to law and order.

Publicly, the U.S. government only voiced concern about Korean stability and security, with no expression of concern about the deliberate killing of civilians. Washington also fabricated unspecified "threats" from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north.

The tribunal was held in Province Hall, a government office building that was the scene of many battles during the uprising and where many of the rebels perished in a final stand.

A huge banner in the hall read, "Today we are victims, tomorrow we will be winners," a quote from the head of the citizens' army who died in Province Hall with 200 of his compatriots.

More than 300 people attended the one-day tribunal, including many long-time political prisoners, participants in the uprising and survivors of the suppression.

The May tribunal here in Kwangju opened with introduction of the judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers and jury. The people's jury was composed of workers, farmers, religious leaders and students from all the regions outside Kwangju.

The lead prosecutor explained that this tribunal was historic for the people of Kwangju because it was the first time that the role of the U.S. government in suppressing the Kwangju uprising was being examined. While two former Korean presidents were found guilty in 1989 of crimes against the citizens of Kwangju, the crimes of the United States have been covered up until now.

Tribunal organizers had to put up a struggle just to hold it. On May 14, the tribunal committee delivered papers to the U.S. Embassy informing the United States that 10 of its former officials were being charged with crimes against peace in relation to the Kwangju suppression, and requesting their appearance before the tribunal.

A few days later, the organizers received a call from the Korean National Security Office informing them that Province Hall

could not be used as the venue for the tribunal and warning that the United States could sue for defamation if the defendants were found guilty. Local police also called.

While a struggle won the right to use the hall, organizers were denied the use of a sound system.

Heart-wrenching testimony

Many survivors of the repression came forward to testify about their suffering at the hand of the special-forces troops—including indiscriminate bayoneting of demonstrators, shooting civilians in the head and beating prisoners to death.

A woman testified that soldiers shot her in the back of the head at 7 a.m. in front of her home. There was no combat in the area at the time. She had only gone outside to look for her 7-year-old son.

At the hospital, she was repeatedly interrogated about whether she was a communist. Her family was interrogated as well. When her father asked a soldier why he shot at civilians, he replied that they were told to shoot all Kwangju residents who were out on the street.

A Buddhist monk testified that he witnessed the killing of 200 citizen soldiers holed up inside the Catholic Center. He had organized a medical team during the uprising. He was shot in the back and paralyzed while taking care of injured people in an ambulance.

After hearing closing remarks and deliberating on the evidence, the chief jurist—the Rev. Jung-hyun Moon, a Catholic priest—stepped forward. Moon is a well-known militant against U.S. occupation who was permanently disabled by riot police at an anti-U.S. protest.

He read the verdict: The jury found the 10 U.S. officials guilty on all counts.

The jury verdict also included a list of demands: that the officials and the United States issue official apologies, pay just compensation, and release all relevant documents; that command of Korean troops be transferred from the U.S. government to south Korea, all U.S. troops be withdrawn and the SOFA agreement between U.S. and Korea governing GIs be revised so that Pentagon troops can be held accountable in Korean courts for their criminal behavior.

The next day, a militant crowd of 10,000 youths outside Province Hall cheered this verdict and led a triumphant march throughout the city.

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La lucha determinará la libertad de nuestros cinco héroes

El discurso de Gloria La Riva, presidenta del Comité Nacional por la liberación de los cinco compatriotas en Estados Unidos a la movilización masiva del 1ro de Mayo en la Plaza de la Revolución en La Habana, Cuba:

Como el Comandante y el pueblo cubano saben, es la lucha la que determinará la libertad de nuestros cinco héroes presos en las cárceles del imperio.

Siempre ha sido así con la cuestión de los presos políticos. Fue la lucha del pueblo de Sudáfrica lo que destruyó el apartheid y liberó a Nelson Mandela.

Más de una vez Mumia Abu Jamal estuvo en peligro de ser ejecutado, pero la lucha incansable de los que apoyan a Mumia es lo que ha impedido su ejecución y lo que logrará su libertad.

Fue lo mismo en la lucha por Elián. Aunque el gobierno de Washington fingía ignorar las movilizaciones gigantescas de Cuba, ellas fueron decisivas.

Se logró otra cosa muy importante en la lucha por Elián, un aspecto favorable del cual podemos tomar ventaja en la batalla por la liberación de los cinco compañeros. Y es que el pueblo estadounidense aprendió sobre la naturaleza verdadera de los ultraderechistas de Miami.

En el caso de los cinco héroes, el problema es el desconocimiento de su caso en Estados Unidos. Una vez que lo explicamos, la gente lo entiende y nos apoyan. El imperialismo quiere mantener el caso en secreto.

Fueron arrestados por el FBI no solo para encarcelar revolucionarios cubanos, no solo para dar la luz verde a los terroristas de Miami, sino también para intimidar a la comunidad cubana en Miami, que más



Gloria La Riva

MUNDO OBRERO FOTO

y más está opuesta al bloqueo y que está desafiando el terror de la ultraderecha.

En los comités de apoyo en favor de los cinco, una de nuestras tareas principales, es ir al pueblo y pedirle respaldo a su causa, a través de sus firmas en peticiones. La petición es muy importante porque le demuestra al gobierno que existen miles de personas que apoyamos su libertad y seremos muchos más.

También las peticiones nos dan un vehículo para salir a la calle, a los foros políticos, a las protestas, y explicar su lucha.

Y siendo parte de otras luchas progresistas, uniendo la lucha de los cinco héroes con otras, nos ha dado una audiencia mucho más amplia.

Esa síntesis de solidaridad mutua, nos da más fuerza. Por ejemplo, el 20 de abril, en la coalición antiguerra de ANSWER, organizamos las manifestaciones más grandes en la historia de Estados Unidos, en solidaridad con el pueblo palestino. 100 000 personas en Washington y 35 000 en San Francisco y un mar de banderas palestinas. La resistencia inaudible del

pueblo palestino ha puesto millones de personas en todo el mundo a su lado.

En estas protestas, la bandera de Cuba y esta manta que exige la libertad de los cinco compañeros estaban presentes también.

Estamos produciendo un video educativo e inspirante sobre los cinco, porque el pueblo estadounidense es capaz de ser inspirado a apoyar las causas justas.

Junto con el trabajo admirable de los abogados de los compañeros con la propuesta de Ramsey Clark, el ex Fiscal General de Estados Unidos y muy amigo de Cuba, vamos a hacer una petición legal, llamada "Amigos de la Corte", y solicitar firmas, de esperamos miles de abogados.

Compañeros, desde esta tribuna entrañable, llena de historia y de lucha, hago un llamado a los amigos extranjeros presentes, a los amigos de Cuba, a que formen comités de apoyo a los cinco héroes en sus países.

Gerardo, Antonio, Ramón, René y Fernando son hombres nacidos y criados en esta Revolución. Las prisiones norteamericanas son realmente una pesadilla, una

gran violación de los derechos humanos. Sin embargo, en las cartas que recibimos de ellos, se ve su firmeza y determinación. ¡Jamás serán vencidos!

Estamos viviendo momentos realmente peligrosos para el mundo. Bombardeo tras bombardeo por los imperialistas, las masacres de los palestinos mientras que Bush declara que Ariel Sharon es un hombre de paz.

Vemos al imperio hablar abiertamente de asesinato de líderes, y expresar su derecho de emplear armas nucleares. Pero también estamos viviendo momentos gloriosos de resistencias y lucha, en Palestina, en Venezuela, aquí en Cuba, y en Estados Unidos.

Bush, Clinton, Bush padre, Reagan, Carter, Ford, Nixon, Kennedy, Eisenhower, todos han tratado de destruir a la Revolución Cubana, pero no han podido ni podrán lograrlo.

Mientras que otros líderes pretenden salvarse abrazando a Bush, mientras que traicionan a sus pueblos, Cuba y nuestro querido Comandante en Jefe siguen alzando la bandera de la Revolución, la bandera de la veracidad del socialismo.

Gracias Fidel, por defender al mundo de los trabajadores, de los oprimidos.

Gracias Cuba, por enseñar que solo el socialismo puede crear una sociedad justa.

Gracias, Fernando, René, Ramón, Antonio y Gerardo, por su sacrificio del que nunca se han arrepentido.

No les defraudaremos jamás. Serán libres y marcharán nuevamente con su querido pueblo en un Primero de Mayo como este.

¡Volverán a Cuba!
¡Volverán a Cuba!
¡Volverán a Cuba!

BREVES INTERNACIONALES POR DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

VENEZUELA

Gángsteres petroleros vs. Chávez

Los gángsteres petroleros dirigiendo al gobierno de los Estados Unidos querían que el presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez sea eliminado de su puesto por varias razones, una de las cuales fue su actitud desafiante frente al intento de Washington de aislar a Iraq diplomáticamente. Después de que le tocó a Venezuela funcionar como presidente rotativo de la Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo, Chávez en agosto de 2000 el primer jefe de estado visitar a Iraq desde que los EE.UU. impuso el embargo contra ese país. Ahora, el equipo de Bush esta discutiendo abiertamente otra guerra contra Iraq aún más devastador que la guerra lanzado por Bush, padre, en 1991. Pero Chávez ha sobrevivido el intento reciente de parte de los EE.UU.

de derrocar a él. Y el gobierno de Iraq, más de una década después de la guerra, todavía queda parado, a pesar de las sanciones letales y los frecuentes sobrevuelos y bombardeos de parte de aeronaves de guerra británicas y estadounidenses.

NEPAL

Helicópteros de EE.UU. en contra de reforma agraria

Los caballeros feudales en armadura protegiendo a los aristócratas en Europa tuvieron una ventaja militar sobre los campesinos hasta que los propietarios pequeños comenzaron a utilizar la ballesta, cuyas flechas fueron capaces de penetrar la cota de malla. Los aristócratas de hoy prefieren utilizar a los helicópteros en vez de caballos mientras que intentan mantener sus privilegios y sus coronas.

El gobierno de los Estados Unidos, siempre amigo leal a los ricos domesti-

ca e internacionalmente, está proporcionando equipo militar moderno al Reino de Nepal, lo que está en medio de una guerra civil involucrando campesinos luchando por tierra y reforma agraria encabezados por el Partido Comunista de Nepal (Maoísta). El primer ministro de Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba se reunió con George W. Bush durante la segunda semana de mayo y fue prometido \$20 millones en ayuda militar—lo que va directamente al complejo militar industrial de los Estados Unidos.

Nepal, un país de 25 millones de habitantes alto en las Montañas Himalayas, ha sido en estado de agitación política por años debido a su estructura social arcaica —utilizado primero por el colonialismo británico y actualmente por el imperialismo estadounidense— atrapa a la mitad de la población en miseria absoluta. El ingreso promedio anual es solamente 220 dólares. El rey anterior, Birendra, y la mayoría de su familia murieron en una serie de asesinatos misteriosos en junio de 2001 cuando, según fuentes

en el palacio, su hijo baleó a ellos antes de ser acribillado. Progresistas nepaleses, sin embargo, consideran que fue una fuerza extranjera que fue culpable. Birendra fue en ese momento celebrando negociaciones con los opositores sobre la cuestión de reforma agraria cuando fue asesinado. El rey actual, Gyanendra, es partidario de la línea dura, que conforme bien con la política expansionista de los Estados Unidos en la región.

A los trabajadores y campesinos de Nepal no les fascina el capitalismo. El Partido Comunista de Nepal (UML) alguna vez ocupó un 40 por ciento de los escaños parlamentarios y tuvo poder político en 1994–1995, pero su enfoque política no alcanzó la reforma agraria, lo que resultó en los avances de la insurgencia guerrillera en el campo. El gobierno lanzó un ataque contra un campamento insurgente para coincidir con la visita de Deuba a Washington y declaró que había infligido bajos numerosos a los guerrilleros. Sin embargo, las aseveraciones oficiales fueron negadas por oficiales militares.