



ACT UP, FIGHT BACK!

AIDS groups organized a loud, angry protest that drove Bush's representa-

tive from the stage at the international AIDS conference in Barcelona. Activists called for renewed struggle against Washington for its refusal to wage a serious fight against the epidemic.

11 By John Parker
Los Angeles

STOP THE WAR— BEFORE IT STARTS

The generals, the admirals and their commander-in-chief make no secret of their plans to invade Iraq. The time to put a halt to the Pentagon assault is now—before the fighting begins.

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ANTHRAX DANGER? TRY FT. DETRICK

A protest at the gates of Ft. Detrick, Md.—home to the U.S. germ warfare program—demands an independent investigation of the anthrax threat and wins support from postal workers.

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THE WAR AT HOME

Political prisoners languish in U.S. jails. Racist roundups of Arab, Muslim and South Asian people continue in virtual secrecy. And what do Bush, Ashcroft and Co. propose to ensure 'domestic security'? They want working people to spy on each other.

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PROFIT MOTIVE AT THE CONTROLS

A mining disaster in People's China and the airline crash over capitalist Switzerland tragically demonstrate the very real dangers of privatization.

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Another Rodney King case in southern California

Black community fights police brutality

Once again, southern California has received national and international attention because a witness videotaped a beating incident and exposed ongoing, criminal, racist brutality by one of its police departments.

Some say the Black community is united in its anger as "never before since the '60s." Already thousands have marched and rallied in protest, and another demonstration is set July 17 at 6 p.m. in front of the gas station where the young man was beaten.

This incident occurred in the predominantly Black and Latino town of Inglewood, near Los Angeles. The victim—a 16-year-old Black youth who was beaten repeatedly by police while handcuffed—was then picked up and pounded head first on a squad car on July 6.

The beating occurred during the daytime with witnesses present. Given the record of racist police crimes against Black youth, Donovan Jackson-Chavis may not have survived if this had occurred on a secluded road at night with no witnesses.

The other factor in Jackson-Chavis's favor, and which forced the corporate media to follow this story, was that this incident was videotaped.

On July 6 Coby Chavis Jr., his father, was parked at a gas station awaiting his son, who had gone into the station's market for potato chips. According to Inglewood police, while the youth was inside two county sheriff's

deputies approached the car because the tag on its license had expired.

The deputies said that when the young man came out of the store he tried to get into his father's car, supposedly ignoring their commands to wait while they questioned his father. By this time four other officers, for some reason, had joined the initial two and immediately began a confrontation with the teenager.

According to the police, he then lunged at the officers, forcing them to beat him before he was handcuffed.

At this point, bystander Mitchell Crooks, from a hotel across the street, began videotaping the beating.

The officers then lifted the 16-year-old off the ground while handcuffed and slammed him into the squad car headfirst. But the beating and humiliation hadn't stopped yet. Officer Jeremy Morse, who is white, then felt the need to punch the youth one more time.

The officers involved changed their original account to adjust to the facts caught on videotape after they found out the tape existed.

The Los Angeles Times reported that Joe Hopkins, then one of the attorneys for the Jackson family, had a different account. He said Jackson-Chavis was "grabbed by the throat to hold him back and the other four officers took turns hitting him. When the officers threw him to the ground they continued to beat him, pulling him by a necklace he wore and kneeling him. What we see on the tape is

Continued on page 3



Over 600 people filled Faith United Methodist Church in South Central Los Angeles July 13 to demand justice for police brutality victim Donovan Jackson-Chavis. Above: Dick Gregory. Right: Rep. Maxine Waters.



WW PHOTOS: J. LA RIVA



Workers World Party Classes

Cuba's revolution, combating national oppression

By Monica Moorehead
New York

For over four decades, the Cuban Revolution has remained a beacon of inspiration for workers and oppressed peoples everywhere, including inside the belly of the beast, U.S. imperialism. Located just 90 miles from Key West, Cuba with only 11 million people has been able to defend its popular gains despite the criminal U.S. blockade.

How has an island country with very few resources been able to stave off the U.S. government's terrorist plots against its sovereignty?

Why is supporting the right to self-determination pivotal to the struggle to overthrow capitalism and establish a truly humane society, namely, socialism?

Why is it so imperative for the vanguard elements within the communist movement to adhere to Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin's concept of building class solidarity with oppressed nationalities, in theory and in practice?

These were just a few of the important questions taken up here on July 13 on a second weekend of summer classes organized by Workers World Party. Party members and friends traveled from as far away as Baltimore and upstate New York. They took time out from their organizing responsibilities to hear WWP Secretariat members Teresa Gutierrez and Larry Holmes make enlightening presentations.

In the first class, entitled "Socialism in Cuba," Gutierrez covered various stages of the 43-year-old Cuban Revolution: its battle to survive U.S. aggression in the 1960s while inspiring revolutionary struggles in many other countries; the period of socialist economic construction aided by the USSR; the rectification period beginning in 1985 that sought to correct problems in the economy and the party; and the post-Soviet "special period" that has forced Cuba to integrate into the international market.

Gutierrez's review of the various characteristics of these stages imparted a sense of the uniqueness of this particular social revolution.

Following her presentation, the general discussion focused on the contributions that Marxist leaders Karl Marx and Frederick Engels made during the 19th century on the process



Teresa Gutierrez



PHOTOS: PEOPLE'S VIDEO NETWORK

Larry Holmes

of the withering away of the state that will ultimately lead to worldwide communism. Participants explained why it was crucial that the Cuban Revolution have a centralized state apparatus to defend itself against counter-revolutionary elements inside Cuba and against U.S. imperialist designs. This defense includes arming the Cuban masses.

Holmes opened the second class on "Racism, National Oppression, Self-Determination and the Struggle Today" by bringing attention to an important document written by the late chairperson of WWP, Sam Marcy, in 1959. It was called "At a Turning Point in History: A Letter to a Fighter in the Deep South."

The document gave a Leninist view of the then-emerging African American struggle, focused in the South. It showed why it was important for class-conscious revolutionaries, especially whites from the oppressor nation, to extend their solidarity to the struggle for Black liberation against the yoke of racist repression and super-exploitation. Acts of solidarity included supporting the Black community's right to self-defense against racist terror and the right to political secession.

Holmes gave historical examples of working-class leaders who unfortunately abandoned the struggle against racism during the Reconstruction era and during the Back to Africa movement led by Marcus Garvey. This abandonment was rooted in white chauvinism and petty-bourgeois reaction. The legacy of some of these mistakes still impacts today on

the class struggle inside the U.S.

Regarding the defeat of the Soviet Union, Holmes stated, "The existence of the Soviet Union leveled the playing field for most of the struggling oppressed. The Soviet Union served as a brake on imperialism. Today socialist ideas are on the defensive." He added, "We have to revive solidarity, unity, and of course socialism. It is time for the workers in the big imperialist countries to bear the brunt of responsibility for the struggle against capitalism and for socialism."

Renee Washington, an African American mother and community organizer with the Baltimore All Peoples Congress, told WW why attending the Workers World Party classes was important to her:

"If we want to change conditions for the better, we have to understand the mistakes that were made by the movements in the past. This means understanding history from a working class view.

"The U.S. is trying to start another war with Iraq and other countries. People don't understand why their children are being sent away to fight. We need to be able to explain to parents why their children should not be sent to a foreign country to fight against people who are going through similar hardships that a lot of us are going through right here in the U.S.

"By educating ourselves, we begin to understand why it is important to show solidarity with different countries."

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WW CALENDAR

AUBURN-ALBANY, NY

Thu., July 18-Fri., July 26
March from Auburn to Albany to demand release of New Afrikan prisoner Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom) of the New York 3. In Albany July 25. For info phone Albany Jericho Committee (518) 436-0929 or www.the-jerichomovement.com. For Mid-Hudson carpool July 26 (845) 255-5779.

BALTIMORE

Sat., July 27
"Labor for Reparations." Why all workers should demand reparations for the victims of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Hear Fred Mason, president, Maryland State & D.C. AFL-CIO, and others. 3 p.m. At Unity United Methodist Church, 1433 Edmondson Ave. For info (410) 235-7040 or apcbaltimore@pipeline.com.

LOS ANGELES

Sat., July 20
Forum: 50 years of U.S. war crimes and the Korean people's struggle for peace and reunification. Sponsored by the Int'l Action Center and One Korea-L.A. Forum. Featured speakers: Yoomi Jeong, Deputy Secretary General of Korea Truth Commission, and Deirdre Griswold, jurist in the Korea Int'l War Crimes Tribunal. 4 p.m. At Loyola Law School, Student Lounge. For info (213) 487-2368 or iacenterla@action-mail.org.

SAN FRANCISCO

Wed., July 24
Solidarity with Int'l Longshore and Warehouse Union rally, against the union-busting attempts of the Pacific Maritime Association and the Bush administration in contract negotiations. For info phone Portworkers Solidarity Committee (415) 821-6545.

Sun., Aug. 4
Workers World Party honors Jackie Kiernan, Hilda Roberts, and Ricardo Leon, long-time activists in the struggle. The celebration will be held in the spirit of the Cuban Revolution to commemorate July 26 and raise funds for the campaign to free the five Cubans imprisoned in the United States. 2 p.m. At the Women's Building, 3543 18th St. For info (415) 826-4828.

WINDSOR, CANADA

Fri.-Sun., July 26-28
Cuba Labor Conference. With leaders of the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC), featuring Pedro Ross Leal, CTC General Secretary. Includes update on the situation in Cuba, role of Cuba's unions in Cuba's recovery. Sponsored jointly by U.S.-Canada labor unions. To register contact: U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange at phone/fax: (313) 561-8330 or laborexchange@aol.com.

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INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Videotape opens new battle over police brutality

Continued from page 1

the second beating.”

By July 11, it was reported that only officer Morse admitted to hitting the 16-year-old. Police reports, however, indicate that another white cop, Bijan Darvish, punched him twice before the videotaping began.

Cops arrest the videotaper

On July 11, five days after the incident, videotaper Mitchell Crooks was grabbed by police and arrested just outside CNN's Los Angeles office as he was going in for an interview. The arrest, allegedly for convictions from five years ago and warrants from 1999, was apparently meant to silence Crooks and intimidate others with video cameras.

Witnesses heard Crooks screaming inside the tinted-window van as police drove away. There is now a broad campaign to raise \$10,000 for Crooks' legal defense, which U.S. Congressperson Maxine Waters from Los Angeles has joined.

What surprised officials and apparently the U.S. Justice Department—which was forced to say it was launching an immediate investigation—was the almost instant and organized response by the outraged Inglewood community. This was mainly due to the work of Donovan Jackson-Chavis's family, including his cousin, Talibah Shakir.

Shakir, a former Black Panther, immediately coordinated support activities. Almost 2,000 people marched on Inglewood City Hall on July 12. Martin Luther King III and Dick Gregory also took part in the march.

The crowd arrived at City Hall around noon on that weekday. Though it was not a holiday, they found a sign posted there that said the city offices were closed for the day.

A representative from County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke's office tried to assure the demonstrators that authorities would probe the incident. People shouted, "Bullshit," "Arrest them now" and "You saw the tape, what's to investigate, send them to jail."

The next day, over 600 people filled Pastor Andrew Gaither's Faith United Methodist Church in South Central Los Angeles for an event organized by the family and the Donovan Jackson-Chavis Justice Committee. Speakers included Rep. Maxine Waters, Dick Gregory, representatives from Organization U.S., Committee Against Police Abuse, All African Peoples Revolutionary Party, October 22nd Coalition, Nation of Islam and International ANSWER.

"We want to know precisely, exactly, what kind of threat a 16-year-old teenager, eating a bag of chips, poses to adult armed and trained police officers," said long-time social activist Thandi Chimurenga to the rally.



Protest at Inglewood, Calif., City Hall.

Tabilah Shakir told Workers World she is encouraged by the support.

"We're getting mass support from all groups and from Bloods and Crips, and we're all united as one. It hasn't felt this good since way back in the 1960s. We have former Panthers in New York working with us. There have been demonstrations in D.C., San Francisco and New York," said Shakir.

No trust in Justice Department's envoy

Worried about this overwhelming community support, Attorney General John Ashcroft sent Ralph Boyd, head of the U.S. Justice Department's civil rights division. Many have questioned Boyd's sincerity, since he played the same role as investigator into racist police shootings in Cincinnati in April 2001. Those shootings caused a revolt in the Black community. The police are still brutalizing the community.

Statements already made by Boyd disregarding community outrage and labeling all those not willing to wait for the "legal process" as "outsiders" lend credence to this view of Boyd.

Many believe the Justice Department and police are just trying to stall in hopes that community outrage dies down. They point to the fact that Officer Morse has a history of police abuse and is only now being investigated for those past crimes because of the video.

The Los Angeles Times reported Inglewood Mayor Roosevelt Dorn saying that "one or two other cases" involving Morse



WW PHOTO: J. LA RIVA

From left, Tim Hellsley of the American Indian Movement, and Carl Muhammad speaking at the Justice Committee for Donovan Jackson-Chavis meeting in Los Angeles July 13.

"have been ordered reopened." Dorn said those cases of alleged use of excessive force, including one in 2001, "had not reached the level of the city administrator" and that "one was not actually closed."

In one case police officers, including Morse, handcuffed and beat Nelson Williams with batons in June. Williams spent five days in the hospital and time in intensive care.

On July 11 Patricia Surjue, a Justice Department employee, filed a civil rights lawsuit charging that officer Morse and two Inglewood officers illegally entered her home in October and began to shove and threaten her in front of her two children. The suit says that Mayor Dorn and Police Chief Ron Banks did nothing.

Banks was deputy chief of the Los Angeles Police Department at the time of the Rodney King police beating.

For these past and current abuses, Officer Morse has been rewarded with a temporary suspension with pay—in other words, a paid vacation.

Donovan Jackson-Chavis, however, is not being paid for his trauma. Shakir told Workers World that the young man is still shaken up by the event.

Anti-police brutality activists have



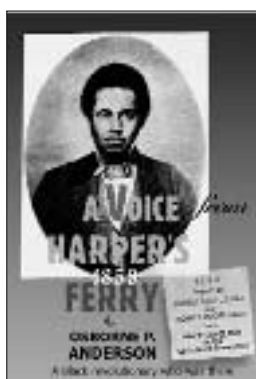
WW PHOTO: J. LA RIVA

James Williams from National Conference of Black Lawyers.

stated that continued community support and outrage can help build a movement against these racist cops and the system they represent. They feel this will prove to be an important ingredient in helping to heal the teenager and the rest of the community.

Besides the July 17 protest, in August, a caravan for justice is scheduled to travel to San Francisco.

Those seeking to lend support and get further information can email the Donovan Jackson-Chavis Justice Committee at justice4donovan@yahoo.com or racial-profiling2@aol.com.



By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. With an essay on 'The Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland & new prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead. 128 pp, photographs. \$12 available at www.leftbooks.com

A VOICE from
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FT. DETRICK, MD

Protest demands independent look at Anthrax threat

Special to Workers World
Frederick, Md.

On the morning of July 11, protesters gathered in front of the Fort Detrick military base in Frederick, Md., to demand an end to U.S. germ warfare programs and call for a people's investigation into the anthrax deaths of postal workers.

The All-Peoples Congress, International Action Center and the Frederick Peace Resource Center mobilized supporters for the demonstration.

Their action followed a series of articles in the Baltimore Sun papers and an op-ed by Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times that discussed a possible suspect in the anthrax deaths of postal workers and others. Kristof called him "Mr. Z," but the Baltimore Sun papers identified him as Steven Hatfield.

According to news sources, Hatfield had served with the "Selous Scouts" of the former Rhodesian Army (in the country now known as Zimbabwe) under Ian Smith's white supremacist regime. He also claims involvement in the former South African Defense Force under apartheid rule.

The worst outbreak of anthrax in history occurred in Rhodesia from 1978 to 1980 during the period when the liberation movement was winning the war against white minority rule. The disease raged in the African-owned Tribal Trust Lands. Some 10,000 Black farmers were sickened and 182 died, but the white elite of Rhodesia and their cattle were untouched.

Hatfield is also a former scientist employed by the U.S. Army's Fort Detrick germ warfare laboratories.

'Call for independent investigation'

Sharon Ceci, a spokesperson for the Maryland-based All-Peoples Congress, pointed out to local Frederick media and the Associated Press, "These revelations alone are enough to call for an independent people's investigation of U.S. germ warfare. Hatfield has an obvious history of involvement with far right-wing racist causes and yet he was employed to work with a germ warfare program.

"The FBI is also conducting a cover-up," she charged.

Barbara Hatch Rosenberg is a biological arms control expert at the State University of New York and the chair of the biological and chemical weapons program of the Federation of American Scientists. Rosenberg believes the FBI knows who sent out the anthrax letters, according to press releases issued by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs.

Rosenberg has said that the FBI's refusal to make any arrests has to do with U.S. involvement in secret germ warfare research that the Bush administration wants to keep under wraps.

Ceci asserted, "This secret research and its use is in violation of international treaties. This is just one reason why the Bush administration and the FBI are afraid to pursue this case openly.

"Who has benefited from the anthrax deaths and the fear surrounding them? The U.S. bio-terrorism program has had its funding doubled since Sept. 11," she continued.

"The Bush administration and the Pentagon have used these deaths to continue war threats against Iraq. Their first



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Demonstrators outside Ft. Detrick, Md., the home of U.S. germ warfare.

assertion was that the anthrax attacks came from Iraq. Now most sources, including the FBI itself, admit that the origins were domestic.

"These revelations show that the germ and chemical warfare program at Fort Detrick and at other laboratories is not only a threat to the people around the world, it is also a threat to people right here at home. Our group demands a halt to all germ and chemical warfare programs," stated Ceci.

Lillian Herz, former director of the Peace Resource Center of Frederick, said, "We question the placement of this germ warfare laboratory in our densely populated community. This facility has the capacity to create weapons of mass destruction that threaten both the world and the people of Frederick."

Postal workers under stress

The Peace Resource Center group is planning to attend Frederick City Council meetings to raise these issues with council members.

Renee Washington, another participant at the action who is a state worker and member of the public employee union AFSCME, said, "Workers everywhere are at possible risk. The postal workers and others who have been the victims of the anthrax attacks deserve justice. The FBI is no more interested in pursuing the truth than they were in bringing to justice those that murdered the four little girls in the Birmingham church bombing. We believe only an independent people's investigation can bring justice."

Organizers of the protest distributed hundreds of flyers to postal workers in Baltimore City and Frederick and reported that workers who eagerly took flyers agreed with the message.

Kenneth Lerch, president of National Letter Carriers Branch 3825, said, "Postal workers at my facility are under extreme stress. We have filed countless grievances about how management has failed to protect workers' safety. You can see the disparity in how we have been treated as workers compared to those on Capitol Hill. I agree that an independent investigation must be launched."

Conference set for Windsor, Ontario

Detroit City Council welcomes Cuban unionists

By Workers World Detroit bureau

Leaders of the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), including CTC General Secretary Pedro Ross Leal, will attend the Cuba Labor Conference in Windsor, Ontario, from July 26-28.

The conference will provide an update on the general situation in Cuba and discuss the role of Cuba's unions in the economic recovery since the most difficult days of the special period following the Soviet Union's collapse in the early 1990s.

The conference is sponsored jointly by labor unions in the United States and Canada.

Besides Ross, the delegation includes: Diana Maria Garcia, general secretary of the National Public Administrative Workers Union; Leonel Gonzalez Gonzalez, director of Foreign Relations, CTC; Manuel Montero Bistilliero, director of the Department of the Americas, CTC; and Edison Earl Brown, official translator of the CTC.

The U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange is trying to organize a national tour in the U.S. for the Cuban unionists in July and August. The Bush administration, consistent with its vicious anti-Cuba policies, has refused permission for the Cuban delegation to enter the United States, depriving even the working class of Detroit—right across the U.S./Canada border from Windsor—of the opportunity to learn more about the Cuban labor movement.

The people of Detroit and the Detroit City Council, which unanimously passed the following resolution, do not share this anti-Cuba attitude:

"Whereas a labor conference will be held across the border in Windsor, Ontario, and hosted by the Canadian Auto Workers Union, and;

"Whereas leaders of the Cuban trade union movement will be visiting the metropolitan Detroit area from July 26 to July 28, 2002, to meet with trade union leaders from across the United States and Canada, and;

"Whereas the Bush administration has refused the Cuban delegation permission to enter the United States, and;

"Whereas the Detroit City Council extends its greetings to Pedro Ross Leal, General Secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, Diana Maria Garcia, General Secretary of the Public Administrative Workers Union, Leonel Gonzalez Gonzalez, Director of Foreign Relations of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, Manuel Montero Bistilliero, Director of the Americas Department of Foreign Relations of the Confederation of Cuban Workers and Edison Earl Brown, Official Interpreter of the Confederation of Cuban Workers;

"Now therefore be it resolved that the Detroit City Council hereby welcomes this chance for unionists from several nations to exchange views and learn from one another. We also urge the Bush administration to pursue policies that will further peaceful contact between the people of Cuba and the United States."

Anyone wishing to register for the conference is asked to contact the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange at phone/fax: (313) 561-8330 or email: laborexchange@aol.com.



EXPANDING EMPIRE

The global war drive of big business and the forces that will stop it

Download at: www.workers.org/cm/empire.html

What Greenspan really said

Glut of capital stifles Wall Street

By Deirdre Griswold

The stock markets in New York have been moving downward relentlessly for weeks, despite the efforts of President George W. Bush and Federal Reserve Bank chief Alan Greenspan to inveigle people to put their money into stocks. Both have made statements in recent days “assuring” investors that the economy is basically sound. But it hasn’t worked, and as stocks continue to drop, so does the value of many retirement funds that have invested at least part of their “nest eggs” in securities.

Even the name “securities” is meant to calm any suspicions on the part of the public that their hard-earned money, often accumulated through thrift and self-denial over many decades, could go up in smoke, be sucked down the drain, or evaporate in a bursting “bubble” on Wall Street.

Bush used what must be a familiar metaphor to him to describe what is happening. The economy is experiencing a hangover, he told an audience at the University of Alabama on July 15.

The problem originated during Bill Clinton’s watch, of course, when everything was expanding at a tremendous rate, and now we drunks are paying the price.

But don’t worry. “Our economy is fundamentally strong,” he said. It didn’t cut the mustard because he was just repeating what he had said a week earlier, which led the Dow Jones average to drop more than 700 points.

Not having confidence that the president’s speech would turn things around, Wall Street arranged to have Alan Greenspan, the heavy from the Federal Reserve Bank, testify before the Senate Banking Committee the next day. At first his appearance, and the advance publicity about it that promised the economy was improving, seemed to have the desired result. The market began turning upward while he spoke.

But then the investors must have read the text of his speech. By the end of the trading day, the Dow Jones average of select industrial stocks had lost another 166 points—the seventh straight day of losses. As of this writing, the Dow is hovering around 8,500 points—down more than 15 percent over the last 13 weeks.

Broad index shows grimmer picture

Looking at a broader index of stocks, however, shows a much grimmer picture. And the further you look back, the grimmer it gets.

The Web site of Dow Jones says that, “So far this year, the DJ U.S. Total Market Index has declined 19.94 percent and over the past 12 months has retreated 24.06 percent.

“Since April 2000, the most recent major inflection point for the U.S. stock market, the DJ U.S. Total Market Index has lost 36.74 percent. The index covers a constant 95 percent of the investable U.S. common stock market, currently tracking approximately 1,650 stocks.”

And this is in addition to the high-tech Nasdaq market, which has declined by 73 percent since its high on March 10, 2000.

This means that the many millions of people who were induced to put their money into the stock market during the 1990s, when even commercial banks got into the brokerage business and were pushing stocks to their customers as a sure thing, have lost on average more than a third of what they put in.

Editorial writers for the big business press are starting to call this a market “meltdown.” (New York Times, July 16)

Greenspan to the ... rescue?

So in comes Greenspan. What did he say about the economy that just added to the alarm of investors? Here’s one excerpt from his testimony. After claiming that consumers are still confident and household spending has been pretty consistent, he added:

“By contrast, business spending has been depressed. The recent economic downturn was driven, in large measure, by the sharp falloff in the demand for capital goods that occurred when firms suddenly realized that stocks of such goods—both those already in place as well as those in inventory—were excessive. The resulting declines in the production of capital goods were particularly sizable in the high-tech sector.

“Monthly shipments of computers and peripherals, for example, fell by about 40 percent from their peak in 1999 through their trough in 2001. Sales by communications equipment producers slumped just as sharply. Outside the high-tech sector, production also declined. Assemblies of commercial aircraft slowed abruptly.

“In addition, the construction of office and industrial buildings fell off noticeably. The collapse of many Internet firms and the difficulties of the high-tech sector more generally led to a significant drop in the demand for office space that was exacerbated as the economic slowdown widened beyond the tech sector.

“Overall, the level of real business fixed investment plunged about 11 percent between its quarterly peak in the final months of 2000 and the first quarter of this year.”

Crisis of overproduction

What is interesting here is that Greenspan is describing what Marxists have always said is the essence of what leads to a capitalist crisis: overproduction.

The biggest problem facing the capitalists is the lack of demand for capital goods—that is, the machines and facilities used in production—not a falling off in the sale of items of individual consumption.

The systemic, incurable contradiction that leads this economic system into periodic crises is not to be found in the area of consumption, but in production itself.

This seems to fly in the face of the popular notion that it is the inability of workers and middle class consumers to buy all the products produced by the workers that leads to crisis. This theory is summed up as under-consumption, and its liberal advocates argue that an infusion of purchasing power into the economy will avoid a crisis.

However, every major crisis has been preceded by a period in which consumer spending was on the rise, because the economy was booming and jobs were plentiful. And when the last great depression occurred, the boost in consumer spending ushered in by the New Deal did not end it. Only a vastly destructive world war did that.

The more the present economic chaos turns into a genuine crisis, the more there will be intense debate and struggle over what to do. The masses of workers will be drawn into this debate as the capitalist bosses dump the crisis on their backs with widespread layoffs accompanied by intense pressure on those still working to produce more for less pay.

Right now the debate is still within the capitalist political structures, particularly the Congress. The politicians have confined themselves to selecting scapegoats among the CEOs while they continue to praise the capitalist system as the only one in which bosses and workers can get what they want: profits for the bosses, jobs for the workers.

Capitalist plunder built into the system

The question of culpability among the CEOs for illegal practices that ended up bilking their investors while putting money into their own pockets is not an insignificant one, but it doesn’t go to the root of the present chaos. U.S. corporate heads are guilty of such a world of crimes that one hardly knows where to start.

They presided for years over corporations that either wouldn’t hire or wouldn’t

promote women and people of color in the better jobs. None went to jail for that.

The prison-industrial complex exploits people confined under conditions resembling slavery. It includes some of the biggest corporations, which have invested in prison labor.

The corporations and banks have been behind an aggressive, imperialist foreign policy that has committed hundreds of invasions and started numerous wars to advance their profit goals. Just to mention a few examples:

It is openly admitted now that United Fruit Co. organized the overthrow of the liberal Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954.

ITT was intimately involved in the coup by Gen. Augusto Pinochet that overthrew the elected Chilean government of Salvador Allende.

The overthrow in 1953 of the Iranian government headed by Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh was engineered by CIA officer Kermit Roosevelt, who soon quit to become a vice president of Gulf Oil.

U.S. sugar, gambling and tobacco companies led the charge to try and topple the Cuban Revolution from its inception.

No corporate heads have rolled over these crimes. It is difficult to say where the corporations leave off and the CIA begins.

So the crooked accounting practices of Enron, WorldCom, Qwest and others may be outrageous and plenty of reason for jailing dozens of filthy-rich executives, but they are merely the extension of a system that has for centuries thrived on deceit, theft and mass murder in the pursuit of profit.

The struggle will grow to save jobs, keep families from being evicted, restore some measure of health to pension funds and organize the mostly unorganized work force in this country. Those in the thick of these struggles for reform must begin a dialogue with the workers of this country over the need to scuttle capitalism altogether and develop a society free of the scourges of war, unemployment, racism, sexism and class divisions.

It can be done by the workers reclaiming everything they have built and running it for the benefit of all, not for the profits of a few. This is not utopia. This is the only alternative to a rogue system running amok and spreading devastation in its path.

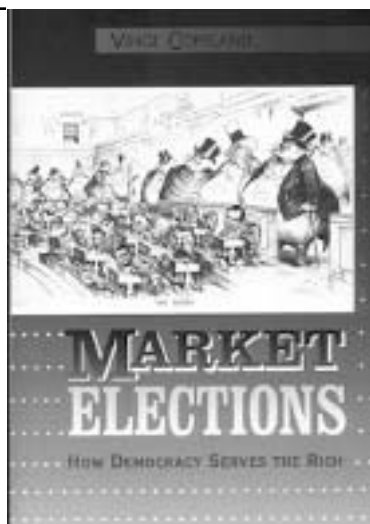
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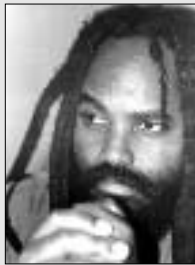
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Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

A plan for imperial peace

When an American president speaks, people listen. They listen because (to borrow a term from the French intelligentsia) the United States is a "hyper-power," a superstate in a world with no serious state rival for global military or economic hegemony.



They listen, but they don't necessarily agree.

This is especially so when that American president is George W. Bush (known to some as H.I.M. George III), who has not the gift to read the writings of others and make the words sound his own, whose marble-mouthed syntax and malapropisms make his handlers cringe when he's in range of an open microphone.

And it is even more so, when Bush speaks, and it appears as if his speech was written for him by wags for the Israeli lobby. For his early summer speech on the U.S. preconditions for support of an "interim" Palestinian state must have caused gleaming smiles in Tel Aviv and the settlements, while sparking grunts of stunted outrage in the besieged occupied territories, Gaza and the West Bank:

"Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born." (G.W. Bush, June 24)

With these words, the Americans plunged the daggers into Yasser Arafat, offering a people under siege "help," if they but betray their own.

It is not lost on the Palestinians that the offer comes just as Israel has launched its second, mass military occupation of their lands, as a kind of iron fist to accompany U.S. words of honeyed diplomacy.

This is a macabre kind of "Son of Oslo," a new diplomatic initiative that amounts to a betrayal on the heels of a betrayal. For millions of Arabs, Oslo was not the glorious achievement that the corporate, pro-Western media portrayed it as. As Arab political science scholar As'ad Abu-Khalil notes:

"[I]t is important to realize that the Oslo process, which was hailed as a victory by the U.S., was met with skepticism and hostility in much of the Middle East. ... Arab public opinion, and even some Arab governments, considered the Oslo deal unfair to the Palestinians and faulted Yasser Arafat for squandering decades of Palestinian struggle to save his own political career ... [Abu-Khalil, A., "Bin Laden, Islam and America's New 'War on Terrorism,'" Seven Stories/Open Media, 2002, p. 36]

Bush, using words of "peace" and promises of support, gives a bright, green light to Israeli intransigence and military belligerence in the region. When an army kills, or represses a people, this is not seen as violence. The Palestinians have no right to security, and apparently no right to statehood, unless they betray their leaders.

As for the American insistence on the establishment of a state that doesn't have roots in terrorism, Americans are insisting on a purity that it did not possess at its inception. The ruthless and monstrous genocide waged against indigenous "Indian" nations, from Wounded Knee to Sand Creek, is a history of terrorism that has few parallels in the world. The same could be said for the racist exploitation of millions of Africans for centuries.

Nor could Israel claim such a distinction at its inception slightly over 50 years ago, when Jewish armed militias drove the war-weary British from Palestine, as well as countless Arabs from their ancestral lands, by bombings of hotels, and massacres as in Deir Yassin. Terrorism apparently worked so well that at least two of the men whose faces graced British wanted posters, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin, later became prime ministers of Israel.

Is Israel, to quote George III, "compromised by terror"?

Neither the U.S., nor Israel, wants "peace." They want the silence and acquiescence of the oppressed and the occupied. They want a Palestine that is but a state in name, a client state of the Americans, and a satrap of Israel.

This is Bush's "vision" of imperial democracy. Will the people of Palestine accept it?

Abouazza in Canada

Boston struggle wins release of Palestinian activist

By Frank Neisser
Boston

After 41 days of illegal detention, Palestinian activist Jaoudat Abouazza is now free in Canada. Abouazza was arrested May 30 by Cambridge police as part of a national wave of arrests targeting Palestinian activists. He was held in the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service where he was subjected to extreme conditions to the point of forcibly extracting several of his teeth.

Abouazza stood up for his principles and retained his personal integrity in the face of enormous pressure. A strong public defense campaign involving hundreds of letters to INS officials, protests and visits and investigations has finally led to Abouazza's voluntary exit to Canada, where he is a citizen.

On the evening of May 30, Abouazza had been stopped by Cambridge, Mass., police on the pretext of a minor traffic violation. Without being charged with a crime or read his rights by the arresting officers, he was handcuffed and brought to the Cambridge police station. Within hours, Abouazza would find himself in jail being interrogated by the FBI for suspicion of "terrorism."

During his time in custody, Abouazza was subjected to intense interrogation without a lawyer present, to repeated beatings and arbitrary lockdowns and solitary confinement, as well as the forcible extraction of several teeth from his mouth on June 16.

Subsequently, the jail barred the executive director of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts and Abouazza's state court lawyer from the jail, as well as defense committee members.

Abouazza had a hearing before an

immigration judge on June 27, which he attended by video conferencing. Over 100 supporters demonstrated outside and then packed the court. The judge ruled that he be allowed to leave the country and return to Canada voluntarily rather than be deported. Abouazza is a Canadian citizen of Palestinian origin.

Since the judge gave the INS 30 days to appeal, and denied bond, the prisoner remained at the mercy of continuing mistreatment in INS custody at Bristol County Jail, where Sheriff Thomas Hodgson is well known for having tried to bring chain gangs back to Massachusetts.

A prison rebellion occurred at the jail in early July because Sheriff Hodgson had begun to charge inmates \$5 rent a day, to be deducted from their canteen funds. The debt accumulates as a negative canteen balance and is kept on the books even after prisoners are released in case they return within two years.

The mass pressure on the INS and the jail after the extraction of Abouazza's teeth resulted in antibiotics and pain killers finally being provided, and in an announcement by the INS on July 3 that it would not appeal the judge's voluntary exit order.

But Abouazza's ordeal was not over. He was removed from Bristol County Jail to another jail and kept incommunicado in isolation in a bare cell without furniture or clothes for 24 hours. He was then kept in lockdown for 23 hours a day until his departure. He was not allowed to make any calls.

Before that, members of his defense committee had received collect calls from Abouazza several times a day—the only communication allowed him. From July 3 to July 8 they received no information on his condition or where-

WW PHOTO



abouts and were seriously concerned. Finally the Canadian Consulate announced that he would be flown to Canada on July 9.

He is now in Canada and has spoken by phone to many members of the defense committee.

Catch 22 charges persist

But the struggle for justice for Jaoudat Abouazza is not over. While he was in INS custody, the agency defied a habeas corpus order from the district court requiring it to produce him for a trial on the original arrest, which involved vehicle registration issues. Because Abouazza wasn't present in court, the judge, over the defense's strenuous objections, found him in default and issued a warrant for his arrest.

This default and warrant would prevent Abouazza from entering the U.S. in the future. He would be considered a fugitive through no fault of his own, strictly because the INS barred him from participating in his own trial, even via video conferencing, which is available in the jail.

What happened to Abouazza may be happening to many more who are being held behind closed doors without public knowledge.

The Jaoudat Abouazza Defense Committee and the International ANSWER coalition have said they will continue to resist the new Cointelpro-like policies and detentions and USA Patriot act abuses, including secret evidence, searches without warrants, and suppression of civil rights and liberties, until all detainees are released and full rights are restored to everyone.

Legal team vows to fight on

No proof of guilt, but Peltier parole denied

"...The killing of FBI agents at Pine Ridge was reprehensible, but the government now admits that it cannot prove that Mr. Peltier killed the agents."

—Congressman Don Edwards,
former FBI agent

By Leslie Feinberg

FBI big-wigs, court rulings and government officials have all confessed that they don't have the foggiest notion of who shot two FBI agents during a government shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota 27 years ago.

Yet a hearing officer denied American Indian Movement warrior Leonard Peltier parole on June 9. Peltier is imprisoned at Leavenworth, Kan., serving two consecutive life sentences for the shootings.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee organized rallies on the anniversary of the FBI shootout, June 26, to focus attention on "the FBI, its history of suppressing dissent and violating citizens' constitutional rights, and recent revelations of investigatory misconduct that has caused the wrongful

conviction and incarceration of many."

Events were held on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota as well as San Diego; San Francisco; Houston; Denver; New York; Boston; Portland, Ore.; and Carbondale, Ill. Rallies were also scheduled in London, Paris, Brussels, and Offenbach am Main, Germany.

The next date for a full parole hearing is not until 2008. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark vowed to work for Peltier's release before that date. Clark and Washington-D.C.-based attorney Carl Nadler argued on Peltier's behalf at the recent hearing.

Clark blasted the denial of parole. "Leonard Peltier is the longest-serving prisoner from the Indian wars and they admit they didn't prove who shot the agents." (Leavenworth Times, July 11)

Clark expressed optimism about the recent release of 30,000 pages of documents—11 full boxes—that the LPDC wrested from the FBI using the fulcrum of the Freedom of Information Act.

The LPDC Web site says there is more information it wants to get released: "While these documents represent the extent of what the FBI claims

it had in their headquarters,

there are still many more documents in the 56 field offices. The Minneapolis field office reports 42,000 pages in Leonard's file, and an FBI agent assigned to FOIA issues in Washington says the volume may near 100,000 pages. The goal is to vigorously pursue full declassification of all the documents, which will likely involve legal challenges to delays in release and to the extent of redactions, or 'blacking out' of information."

Denis Moynihan, acting coordinator for the LPDC, said that several of Peltier's lawyers and supporters planned a "working weekend" starting July 20 to scrutinize these freshly released papers.

Why is Peltier still behind bars? To find out how to amplify the question, and to help win his release, contact the International Office of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, KS, 66044; call (785) 842-5774 or e-mail lpdc@freepeltier.org.



The war at home

Jeb Bush appoints lawyer for anti-Cuba terrorist to Fla. court

By Greg Butterfield

Remember the Florida Supreme Court? Back in 2000 it was just about the only official institution with enough backbone to stand up to the Bush brothers' theft of the presidential election.

Timid and legalistic as it was, the court's ruling that the votes in disputed and largely Black southern Florida districts be recounted was more of a fight than the Al Gore campaign could stomach.

The Bushes beat back the court's order for a fair recount by mobilizing some of the most rabid KKK-type elements for a violent campaign of intimidation against local election boards and the state Supreme Court justices.

With the timely aid of the U.S. Supreme Court, which handed the presidency to George W., the reactionary mobilization succeeded.

Within this neo-fascist movement, a key role was played by right-wing Cuban American organizations. These groups have strong, longstanding ties to individuals and bodies that carry out terrorist acts against revolutionary Cuba.

Now Florida Gov. Jeb Bush has moved to bolster his—and his brother's—influence on the Florida Supreme Court, while rewarding these advocates of anti-Cuba terror.

On July 10, Bush named Miami lawyer Raoul Cantero III as the newest member of the Florida high court. Cantero is the grandson of former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, who was overthrown by the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

The media have made much of Cantero being the first Latino member of the court. But he is no friend of oppressed peoples.

In Cantero's case, the apple didn't fall far from Batista's tree. He is a spokesperson for the counter-revolutionary Cuban

American groups. He was also a lawyer for Orlando Bosch, the anti-Cuba terrorist who has carried out mass murder, several dozen bombings and assassination attempts.

On Oct. 6, 1976, Bosch and Luis Posada—aided by Venezuelan reactionaries—planted a bomb on a Cubana Airlines flight from Barbados. All 73 passengers, including 57 Cubans, 11 Guyanese and five north Koreans, were killed.

In 1989, Bosch was finally ordered deported by the U.S. Justice Department for his role in numerous bombings against Cuba and other Latin American targets originating from U.S. soil.

But a year later—under President George Bush senior—the deportation order was cancelled and Bosch was freed. He remains free, even though he still espouses terrorist attacks.

Cantero was born in Spain and has never been to Cuba. But his anti-Cuba rhetoric echoes that of the Bushes and isn't far from Bosch's own. He insults the revolutionary government by calling it "totalitarian" despite its broad popular support.

Questioned about his ties to Bosch, Cantero replied, "Any lawyer who's ashamed of who he's represented should consider another line of work."

Jeb Bush added, "I have no problems that he was part of the team." (Associated Press, July 10)

There was not a hint of protest from big brother Bush in the White House.

Case of Lynne Stewart

Cantero's anointing to be a state Supreme Court judge must have come as a surprise to all those attorneys who've been under the gun for defending those whom the Bush administration has charged with "terrorism," especially since Sept. 11.

Lynne Stewart speaks at July 4 protest for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Not only have thousands of Arab and Muslim men been detained for long periods. Not only have hundreds been deported without due process. Not only are U.S. citizens labeled "enemy combatants" being denied their rights. But also the lawyers who dare to defend the accused are under attack—just for doing their jobs.

Take Lynne Stewart, the longtime progressive civil rights lawyer from New York. In her distinguished career she has defended Black Panthers, Palestinian activists and police brutality victims, among many others.

On April 8, Bush's Justice Department indicted Stewart, accusing her of "aiding and abetting terrorism" in connection with her legal defense of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, who was convicted of masterminding a plot to bomb New York City landmarks in the mid-1990s. Abdel-Rahman is now serving a life sentence in federal prison.

Stewart says she has been falsely accused of aiding Abdel-Rahman's cause. Her defense committee calls the indictment "an obvious attempt by the U.S. government to silence dissent and instill fear in those who would fight against the U.S. government's racism, seek to help Arabs and Muslims being prosecuted for free speech and

defend the rights of all oppressed people."

A call for solidarity from the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee states: "When Attorney General [John] Ashcroft loudly announced Lynne's indictment and arrest, it was clear a message was being sent, especially to the legal community across the country.

"If a lawyer was going to forthrightly fight for any controversial client, especially Muslim or Middle Eastern cases these days, or for political cases generally, then the government was going to use their new 'Patriot Act' club on the activity. This is a rollback of longstanding constitutional rights."

Readers can help expose the Bushes' hypocrisy by supporting Lynne Stewart at her upcoming court hearings on July 18 and Aug. 29 in New York City. For more information, visit the Web site www.lynnestewart.org.



State repression & the Black struggle

'I was a prisoner of war'

Interview with Safiya Bukhari —PART 4

By Imani Henry

Safiya Bukhari, a former Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army member, spent almost two years underground before being arrested on Jan. 17, 1975.

Imani Henry: What were you charged with?

Safiya Bukhari: I had five counts charged against me, including one count of felonious murder where I was facing the electric chair; two counts of attempted murder; two counts of robbery; one charge of possession of a machine gun. The federal charge was knowing and willing possession of an unregistered explosive device. The rest were state charges.

What they had done was stomp Kombosi Amistad to death. [He was only 23 years old.—IH] While they were stomping him, they found a weapon under his coat. It was a Paratrooper M1 with a folding stock that I had a federal firearms license to carry. I bought it over the counter.

They charged me for that weapon. I

gave them the license thinking that they would see that it's legal and wasn't a machine gun. [The rifle fires a .30 caliber bullet and is effective at 500 yards. Clearly not a weapon of mass destruction.—IH]

They charged Masai Ehehosi and me with attempting to rob this place. I wasn't charged in the state court with the pipe bomb. I was charged in federal court with that. Anyway they brought in demolition experts who said I could have killed everybody for a block with that. They asked for a 900-year prison sentence for the machine gun possession to show people that "they can't come to their town doing stuff like this."

IH: Where were you captured?

SB: In Norfolk, Va. Out of the five charges, only the felony murder charge was thrown out along with the million-dollar bail. Once they threw out the murder charge, I told the media that I would counter-charge them with murder because of what they had done to Kombosi. And I told them I would expose this on the stand, how they had stomped him to death and what had happened.

Then they cremated him before his

family got there so they couldn't do the autopsy and show what they had done. So by the time his mother got there all she got was clothing.

Anyway, they left me with the other four charges. I told them they didn't have the jurisdiction to try me because I was a prisoner of war and I gave them my name, rank and serial number and that was it.

They assigned this former FBI agent to defend me and wouldn't let the attorneys gotten by the PG-RNA defend me. [The Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PG-RNA) was formed in 1968 "to free the oppressed Black nation in North America and to win reparations from the United States government."—IH]

There was no way I would let him defend me. I wasn't stupid so I refused. But the only way me and Masai, my co-defendant, would get to see each other is if we went to a legal meeting. So we went to the meeting but when we got there, Masai and me talked in code the whole time. The lawyer was so upset that he walked out of the room. But we got across what we wanted to and then

I told the lawyer that I would not let him represent me in court.

During the jury selection, when this potential jurist asked why was I being tried, the dude (the defense lawyer) said, "I was being tried for what I had done."

I objected. And the judge said I couldn't object because he was my lawyer, and I said, "Oh no, he is not."

And I told the judge he was supposed to say, "I was being tried for what I allegedly had done." He's already convicted me in front of the jury and he's supposed to have been my attorney!

Anyway, by the time it was all over they had thrown me out of court. They picked a jury, had the trial, convicted us, sentenced us and sent us off to jail all in one day. They drove me out of there with a helicopter caravan that night to the women's prison.

IH: So the whole court process happened...

SB: ...in one day.

(Correction: In the first installment, Safiya was not 9 years old when she moved to the South but 9 months old.)

Next—part 5.



MEXICO

Indigenous farmers fight land seizures, win concessions

By Adrian Garcia

Recent revolutionary events in San Salvador Atenco, on the outskirts of Mexico City, have inflicted a mighty blow to the ruling class's neoliberal agenda. They show that the spirit of Emiliano Zapata's call for land and liberty nearly a century ago during the Mexican Revolution is very much alive among the working people in Mexico.

On July 11, mostly Indigenous farmers from San Salvador Atenco and neighboring communities embarked on another of almost weekly protests on the streets of Mexico City.

Farmers have been struggling against the Mexican government's plans to expropriate their land in order to build a six-runway airport in the capital region. The Mexican government claims that the present Benito Juarez Airport is incapable of accommodating the large number of flights that come into Mexico.

This project was proposed without consulting the people who will be affected most. While the government informed the



Left, Mexican farmers destroy police car to fight land seizures. Below, masked farmers block road with machetes and molotov cocktails.

fiant woman waving a machete.

Farmers armed themselves with machetes and homemade bombs. They engaged in street battles with police, barricaded themselves in the town with burned cars and stolen tractor trailers, and took 12 hostages, including city officials and police officers.

The protesters took three more hostages on July 13. The regime's response was to station 750 officers in riot gear around the town of San Salvador and nearby highways. All 15 hostages were freed early on July 15.

Militant struggle wins concessions

In a great victory for working people around the world, Mexican President Vicente Fox's government conceded to the farmer's demands and released a dozen men arrested during the street clashes with police on July 13.

Most of the events and subsequent developments were broadcast live via the two most prominent television stations in the country.

"We have to tell the government: 'Sit down so you can listen to me, not so that you can impose your will on me,'" said Ignacio del Valle, a popular local leader who was among those released from prison. Some reports from Mexico claim that the Fox administration may be inclined to cancel the proposed airport project. Despite claims by other ministers that the project would proceed regardless of the recent uprising, Interior Minister Santiago Creel refused to state that the project would go ahead.

This would certainly be a great victory for

all oppressed people in Mexico and worldwide. Mexico's Indigenous populations have endured forced expropriations in the past, many times without even an offer of monetary compensation—in the states of Guerrero and Chiapas, for example. The events in Mexico give hope to all those fighting against capitalism's abuses around the world.

"This is now the center of the fight against globalization and the multinationals," proclaimed Juan Blanchen Nieto, an activist from the southern state of Morelos who arrived in Atenco in a gesture of solidarity with the farmers.

San Salvador Atenco has also attracted Mexican anarchists, national farm groups, and even a delegation of university students from the U.S. The supporters have joined the armed farmers in chanting revolutionary slogans and in demanding land and dignity for the oppressed.

The fight for dignity and land, especially among the Indigenous people throughout the country of Mexico, has been a continuous struggle that received worldwide attention with the Jan. 1, 1994, Zapatista uprising in Mexico's southern state of Chiapas. Chiapas's Indigenous masses rose up against the reactionary and neoliberal policies incorporated in the North American Free Trade Agreement on the first day of its implementation. Zapatistas proclaimed that their struggle was not one between war and peace, but a struggle between a dignified life and an undignified life.

The Zapatista uprising inspired movements the world over. Its fighting spirit is evident in today's struggle in San Salvador Atenco. Oppressed people around the world are taking heed of these new, heroic actions of the Indigenous people in Mexico.

Despite facing overwhelming military and economic odds, the Indigenous masses have stood up and said no to their attempted marginalization and continue to demand land and liberty.



SOUTH AFRICA

Strike wins broad union, community support

By Gery Armsby

Public sector workers in South Africa received broad union and community support as they entered the third week of a nationwide strike for better wages.

Agricultural workers, food workers, teachers, transport workers, communication workers, metalworkers and others joined striking members of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) on the picket lines in dozens of cities and towns. Their unions endorsed SAMWU's strike demands with public statements of support.

Heartfelt solidarity came from communities such as Embalenhle Township, where 3,000 people have no modern toilet facilities. In a march on the town's municipal hall, the community joined its longstanding demand for upgraded plumbing with the demands for improved wages and working conditions raised by the municipal workers, who empty the town's sewage with buckets.

The union's negotiations with the South African Local Government Association

(SALGA) have been stalled for over a week. After a July 15 meeting SAMWU representatives were dismayed that SALGA's proposals tried to use issues of worker pensions, vacation and medical benefits as bargaining chips.

A July 16 SAMWU statement concluded, "This attempt to link other issues to the wage dispute is not assisting in finding resolution to the strike."

As the negotiators failed to arrive at a settlement, trash, sewage and other municipal services provided by the striking workers have been seriously curbed, effecting millions. Concerned by moves on the part of some local administrations to alter service delivery structures, SAMWU stated that "it will not tolerate SALGA using these talks to downgrade existing conditions of service."

SAMWU has maintained the demand for an across-the-board pay increase for all workers and an increase in the minimum wage from R1,900 to R2,200 per month (\$190 to \$220).

Marches, picket lines and rallies in some places are being met with repression. One

man was reportedly killed and another seriously wounded by police gunfire July 15 in Limpopo. Police in Queenstown, Eastern Cape, faced broad community ire when they opened fire with rubber bullets against picketers who were holding a street demonstration. In Stellenbosch, the chairperson of a SAMWU local was arrested and hundreds marched on the police station to demand his release.

A statement issued by the South African Communications Workers Union condemned the "unfortunate impression,

spearheaded by SALGA, that the current struggles led by SAMWU are marred by violence on account of SAMWU's leadership.

"Whilst we do not support violence, from whichever quarter," the CWU statement continued, "we assert that peace is not only the absence of physical violence. Continuous struggles to feed one's family on salaries as little as R1,900 per month, the struggles to meet education needs and other social needs on starvation wages is violence in itself."



The Bolsheviks and War Lessons for today's anti-war movement

By Sam Marcy \$4.95

What distinguished the Bolsheviks from the other parties in the Socialist International? Lenin and the Bolsheviks used the crisis of WWI to organize the revolutionary overthrow of the old order in Russia.

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A call to anti-war forces

Strong action needed to stop U.S. war on Iraq

By Brian Becker

The writer is a co-director of the International Action Center and a spokesperson for the ANSWER coalition.

It is imperative that all progressive working class and anti-war organizations try to stop the pending U.S. war against Iraq.

These progressive organizations should base their strategy and tactics on the assumption that the administration of President George W. Bush is determined to attack Iraq and replace the current government with a puppet regime, like the one that exists in Afghanistan.

Despite this Bush administration goal, however, there exist sufficient potential deterrents—in the U.S. and around the world—that could still prevent a new invasion.

A war on Iraq is a war of imperialism against an oppressed, formerly colonized people. It is a war for Big Oil against a country that dared to nationalize its oil fields and tried to use the revenues from that oil to help Iraq emerge as an independent, modernizing regional power in the Persian/Arabian Gulf. This area contains two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves.

Working people must not be taken in by the war propaganda of the White House. It's just propaganda aimed at justifying aggression against Iraq.

Ten years ago, an authoritative Pentagon policy study was leaked to the New York Times, which published it on March 8, 1992. It was reportedly drafted by Paul Wolfowitz, now deputy secretary of defense. The U.S. strategists made it clear they would accept no challenge to U.S. domination of any world region.

Bush and the Pentagon are planning a war, but not because they fear Saddam Hussein's potential to develop weapons of mass destruction, or because they are sickened by the undemocratic nature of the Iraqi government. Washington supports dictatorial monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. It sends \$15 million a day to Israel while that government has invaded Lebanon, occupied the Palestinian territories and created a large, illegal arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Psychological war as prelude to invasion

The Bush administration has recently stepped up a full-scale psychological war against the Iraqi regime and the people there. It is going out of its way to create an aura of inevitability about the coming conflict. This is a coordinated, high-profile campaign designed to split the Iraqi government as a prelude to U.S. military action.

From July 11 to 13, a CIA-supported gathering in London of hundreds of Iraqi military and political foes of Saddam Hussein announced a virtual government in exile. Notably present at the meeting was Jordan's number two leader, Crown Prince Hassan. Although Jordan has publicly opposed a new war against its larger neighbor, the Western media on July 12 widely reported that the pro-U.S. monarchy has "agreed secretly to allow U.S. special forces to operate from two of its air bases" when the invasion takes place. (The Herald of Scotland, July 12)



WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

February 1998 protests stalled Clinton's assault on Iraq. Will the movement now be up to stopping the Bush-Wolfowitz cabal?

Other lead articles have appeared in the major press of U.S. allies with screaming headlines like that in the July 16 National Post of Canada: "Iraq is bound to lose, quickly, completely." On the same day British Prime Minister Tony Blair went out of his way to tell the members of Parliament that his government will not be compelled to discuss with them any British participation in the coming war.

On July 14, Paul Wolfowitz, now the Pentagon's second-ranking official and a leading cheerleader for the war, held a press conference in Turkey—a likely site from which the U.S. attack would be launched—announcing that Turkey would reap "economic" benefits from the overthrow of the Iraqi government. Turkey is experiencing a severe economic crisis and its government was on the verge of collapse even as Wolfowitz was putting on his widely covered saber-rattling media performance.

Impact of "leaked" war plan

The administration's psychological war, or Psyops as it is known in military parlance, began with special intensity when a top secret, five-inch-thick dossier detailing plans for an invasion of Iraq with 250,000 troops was "leaked" to the New York Times. The Times on July 5 featured the story prominently on the front page. Its follow-up editorial two days later did not dispute the legality or rightness of the planned aggression—as it did so famously with the publication of the secret Pentagon Papers in June 1971 that increased public opposition to U.S. policy in Vietnam. The Times follow-up editorial to the July 5 Iraq invasion story only called for the tactics of the war plan to be debated in Congress and elsewhere.

Since the Times story on July 5, the print media and television have been dominated by a discussion of the tactics of the coming war. Should it be a large-scale invasion of hundreds of thousands of troops or a lightning-fast special forces operation accompanied by strategic bombing? The debate, limited exclusively to what would be the "best tactics," is designed to leave everyone—in Iraq and among the public at home—with the distinct impression that

the military conflict is unavoidable, inevitable and thus impossible to resist.

Which raises the question of who leaked the classified document to the New York Times in the first place?

"The Observer of London has been told that the leak ... came from within the Pentagon, from the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the top professional soldiers who drew it up in the first place," wrote The Observer newspaper on July 14.

Can the war be stopped?

Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz are creating an aura of inevitability around the war with two audiences in mind. They are hoping to split the Iraqi military—hoping that sections of the Iraqi High Command will defect rather than face certain annihilation. But Bush and company are also trying to demoralize any, at home or abroad, who desire to challenge the war before it starts.

Bush and the Pentagon know the history of the Vietnam War and they are actually frightened by the potential of massive anti-war resistance from Washington, D.C., to

the streets of Cairo and Amman.

While the centers of bourgeois liberalism are playing their usual frightened and collaborationist role in the face of the ultramilitarists, the genuine progressives and anti-imperialist fighters need to do everything in their power to mobilize grassroots opposition on every campus, high school, workplace and community.

While Bush slashes funds for education, housing, jobs and health care, he is calling on the sons and daughters of the working class to kill and be killed in the deserts of the Arabian peninsula for the sake of ExxonMobil, Texaco, Chase, Citibank and his corporate constituents. This war doesn't have to happen. Now is the time for the anti-war movement to intensify its mobilization among working and poor people, and especially young people—including those in uniform.

All anti-war forces should unite right now to launch an energetic and determined mobilization of the people—in the United States and around the world. It is time to remind the war-makers of the inevitability of resistance to their plans for slaughter and destruction.

Anti-war groups set protests to stop war on Iraq

The International ANSWER coalition has announced plans for demonstrations in October and January opposing any war on Iraq and commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The following is from a coalition news release.

On Oct. 26, the first anniversary of the signing of the so-called USA Patriot Act, anti-war and civil rights forces are joining together to launch a massive international mobilization in opposition to a new war against the people of Iraq.

The ANSWER coalition is calling on organizers from campuses and communities around the U.S. and the world to hold picket lines, rallies, vigils, teach-ins and more in their local areas on this day.

Martin Luther King Jr. spent the last year before his assassination linking the mass movements for civil rights and freedom at home with the growing opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam. This courageous stand constituted a major political threat to the war-makers. Dr. King came to the conclusion that the "greatest purveyor of violence on the planet is my own government."

There is no better way to truly remember the spirit and legacy of Dr. King than to organize a bold, visible protest against war and racism in Washington, D.C., on the anniversary of his birthday. We will not allow the war makers in the Bush administration and on Wall Street to turn Dr. King into a harmless icon, rather than an

Continued on page 10



TIPS breaks solidarity

Even the term “Big Brother” sounds too familial for this spy plot. Operation TIPS plans to pit worker against worker. TIPS stands for Terrorism Information and Prevention System. The program, being developed by the Justice Department, is slated to begin in August in 10 U.S. cities, according to the agency’s Web site. The operation is part of the “Citizen Corps,” which President George W. Bush announced in his State of the Union address.

The employees being recruited are those who have access to homes, neighborhoods and workplaces. The premise is that millions of truck drivers, postal carriers, train conductors, ships captains, cable, gas, telephone and other utility employees will be asked to spy and inform on anyone or anything “suspicious.”

Wow. Need we spell out the dangers of that? Fomenting racist profiling—now a boasted-about national policy of the U.S. government at home and abroad—is the gravest threat.

And aren’t these workers being encouraged to enter and search people’s homes without a warrant? Who and what exactly are they looking for? Considering all the violations of people’s rights, infringement of dignity and charges of racist profiling by airport security—in public places—Bush, Ashcroft and Co. are now trying to deputize whole professions of workers to trample on people’s civil liberties in their homes, communities and workplaces.

Would it make the United States a

safer place to live? Hardly. Racism and reaction create a dangerous political climate for all. And it will make being an immigrant in this country—particularly an Arab or South Asian or Muslim—even more precarious. Who will want to get cable or put in a new phone line or get a possible gas leak checked if they fear the worker who comes to their door?

Such a plan is designed to erode class solidarity just at a time when it’s most needed. This is a critical moment for workers and their unions to draw together in unity to put a halt to the Bush war drive that is creating justifiable rage around the world, stop the racist mass roundups of immigrant Arab, South Asian and Muslim workers and rally to defend hard-won civil liberties.

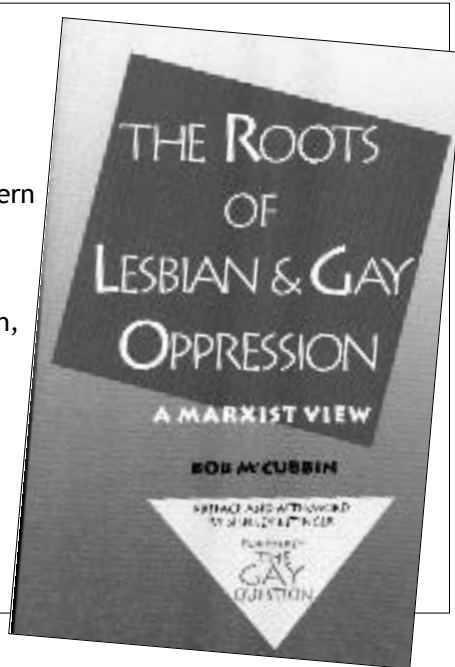
With real worker solidarity, a new kind of public information program could be established. Secretaries could call a toll-free phone number at a community/union office to report price-fixing by their bosses. Office workers could report insider trading by their CEOs. Workers could blow the whistle on the rampant crime wave called capitalism that is making their lives anything but secure.

That kind of unity—anti-racist and class conscious—would set the stage for a fight back movement that is needed more than ever now as the emerging capitalist economic crisis is taking an ever greater toll on the lives of working and oppressed peoples here and around the world.

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BARCELONA CONFERENCE

Grassroots groups say: 'Money for AIDS,

By Preston Wood

“Money for AIDS, not for war,” “USA: Shame! Shame!” These words rang out at the 14th International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, and reverberated around the world.

Militant demonstrations at the July 7-12 conference were organized by some of the largest grassroots organizations in the United States. Sponsors of the protests included Gay Men’s Health Crisis of New York, AIDS Project Los Angeles, ACT-UP, AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition and the Treatment Action Group, among many others.

Organizers all called for a return to the militant, confrontational, action-oriented movement that brought the message of AIDS to the world while right-wing politicians tried to bury the issue.

Activists pointed their fingers squarely at the U.S. government for standing by and fiddling while millions have suffered and died from AIDS.

Millions more have been infected in an epidemic that has spanned the globe. Protesters demanded that the billions being spent on Bush’s endless global war be instead used to mount a serious worldwide campaign to save millions of lives.

Protesters trashed and shut down display booths by some of the giant U.S. pharmaceuticals. These drug giants, hungry for obscene profits, refuse to provide life-saving AIDS drugs to countries in Africa and elsewhere ravaged by the disease.

President George W. Bush’s man on the scene—U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson—was kept from speaking by militant AIDS activists. They vowed that the U.S. speaker would not be allowed to get up and lie about this country’s lack of action in the face of the epidemic and its complicity in the global spread of AIDS.

Tea cups of water for forest fire

As the AIDS crisis spreads like a forest fire throughout Africa, Asia and all over the world, the U.S. has contributed only a tiny amount to international efforts to curtail the epidemic.

Today, the Bush administration is limiting its donations to the United Nations Global Fund to Fight AIDS to a paltry \$500 million, which it demands be earmarked only for treating mother-to-child transmission.

Proportional to its wealth, the U.S. is one of the smallest donors to the fund. Activists have demanded that the U.S., the richest country on earth, should cough up \$2.5 billion annually to the UN Global Fund to fight HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Not a small sum, but nothing compared to the billions being poured into the Pentagon death machine each year.

Much of the blame for the global catastrophe which is unfolding lies at the feet of U.S. administrations, which, because of homophobia and racism, refused to even acknowledge the existence of the disease until it had taken root.

In Barcelona, protesters denounced U.S. policy as “hollow” due to Bush’s attack on “science-based prevention programs that talk frankly about sex” and his “support of ridiculous ‘abstinence-only’ prevention programs.”

In addition, Bush has refused to support needle-exchange programs despite overwhelming evidence that such programs can reduce the spread of HIV, and do not increase drug use.

Like Ronald Reagan, Bush is catering to the homophobes and racist bigots who wish to see the rights of people with AIDS trampled, who despise the very notion of sexual freedom and who view drug abuse as a crime and not a treatable illness.

The AIDS holocaust

A UN study released just this month shocked even those who have been struggling against the spread of the disease.

According to the study, 70 million people will die over the next 20 years unless the rich nations of the world become seriously involved in curbing the epidemic.

“We haven’t reached the peak of the AIDS epidemic yet,” said Dr. Peter Piot, the UNAIDS executive director. “It’s an unprecedented epidemic in human history. If all of Africa is destabilized by AIDS,” he

Anti-war groups set protests to stop war on Iraq

Continued from page 9

inspiration for struggle.

That weekend is also the anniversary of the start of the 1991 U.S./UN war against the people of Iraq. Some 100,000-200,000 Iraqis were killed as U.S./UN

bombers dropped more than 88,500 tons of explosives on Iraq during this 42-day assault. In the years since, more than 1.5 million Iraqi civilians have perished as a consequence of malnutrition and disease caused by economic sanctions.

People in the United States and everywhere have an obligation to stop the Bush administration’s drive to launch a new, all-out military aggression against Iraq. The Bush administration has no right to wage war against a country that is posing no threat to the United States.

Disregarding all international law, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and company are planning to send tens of thousands of young GIs to kill and be killed in a war for Big Oil. The Jan. 18, 2003, march on Washington will call for civilians and soldiers alike to exercise their political right to speak out against an illegal war that will benefit only ExxonMobil, Texaco, Chase, Citibank, Raytheon, Lockheed, Boeing and George Bush’s corporate backers—who are his real constituents.



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not for war'

continued, "it's going to have implications for all continents."

The disease has killed more than 22 million people since its discovery in 1981. During the few days the Barcelona conference was taking place, 50,000 people worldwide died of AIDS.

Only last year, AIDS killed 3 million people—2.2 million of whom were from Africa. And last year HIV infected another 5 million people. In sub-Saharan Africa, 28.5 million people have HIV or AIDS—more than 70 percent of all those infected worldwide.

In Zimbabwe, one-third of adults are infected. In Botswana, 39 percent of adults are infected. Life expectancy there has dropped below 40 for the first time since 1950.

Act up! Fight back!

According to the study, the world must spend \$7 billion to \$10 billion annually to combat AIDS.

"It's an enormous scandal," said Piot. "Only 4 percent of infected people in developing countries have access to the latest anti-viral drugs, as opposed to about half in North America. The international community has not given what it should. They consider it a marginal problem."

So what's stopping the flow of drugs to Africa? In a word, capitalism. Owners of huge pharmaceutical companies, Bush's billionaire buddies, are intent on maximizing profits with their drugs instead of helping humanity. Profits and racism are behind Bush's shallow handling of this world catastrophe.

Rather than education about the spread of AIDS, Bush calls for sexual abstinence. Many community-based AIDS prevention programs are being "investigated" for how they handle their books merely because they promote sex education and prevention.

Here in this county, the unfolding crisis exposes the racist nature of U.S. policy regarding AIDS. In South Florida, 19 percent of Miami-Dade's population is Black, but

they make up 49 percent of the AIDS-infected population in the county.

Nationally, the disease is the second leading cause of death for Black women aged 25 to 44, outpaced only by cancer, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. In cities such as Newark, according to a 1994 report, AIDS was the number one killer of Black women. (Ebony, April)

In a recent study, The Centers for Disease Control verified that the AIDS crisis in the U.S. is still burgeoning just below the surface. Out of 575 gay and bisexual men aged 15 to 29 years old tested in cities around the country, 77 percent of those HIV-positive were unaware of their status.

Among young African American men, 90 percent of those infected did not know that they were HIV-positive. The CDC also reported that more than 30 percent of all young gay and bisexual African American men in this country are HIV-positive.

According to CDC estimates, 900,000 people in the United States are HIV-positive, of whom more than 40 percent are African American, one third white and about 20 percent Latino. The CDC estimates that gay and bisexual men make up 43 percent of new infections; 27 percent are attributed to heterosexual sex and 23 percent to IV drug use.

While Bush is obsessed with his war plans against innocent people in Iraq, Korea and other countries that won't bow down to U.S. domination, he doesn't seem to have the time, money or inclination to mount a war against this terrible disease.

In the past only militant mass action brought results. That is what is needed now. The militants are right. It's time again to organize against Bush's attack. The time has come to ACT UP, fight back!

Private owners spur mine disasters in China

By Deirdre Griswold

On June 20, a gas explosion tore through the Chengzihe mine in Jixi, in the Chinese province of Heilongjiang, killing 111 miners and four rescue workers. The official Communist Party newspaper People's Daily reported that the government had ordered the mine to close seven times before the accident, but the owner had ignored the orders.

At least 21 miners were killed by a flood at the Fuyuan coal mine in May in Yuncheng, Shanxi province. Authorities were investigating whether the owner of the mine, Zhang Shunhe, had destroyed all employee records and transferred the corpses and remaining miners to other areas to cover up the scope of the accident.

On June 22 at least 46 miners were killed when an electrical fire ignited explosives at a gold mine in Yixingzhai in the northern province of Shanxi.

Five miners were killed May 17 in a bauxite mine water leak in Cangshan County in Shandong Province. Li Jiamin, the owner of the mine, was wanted for questioning after fleeing the area.

All these mines were privately owned. According to a latelinenews.com report from Beijing on July 8, "China's notoriously unsafe coal mines kill thousands each year and have claimed the lives of more than 150 miners in the past month alone. The worst offenders are typically small, privately owned mines that can operate under the radar of provincial and national safety agencies."

The safety record in China's mines is but one symptom of the increasingly dangerous downside to the decision, made by the Communist Party in the 1970s under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, to allow

the capitalist market to function alongside China's socialist, state-owned economy.

The upside has been rapid economic growth, which has transformed major cities along the coast and special economic zones where foreign investment is encouraged. With this growth, however, has come growing inequality and the pressures of a newly rich class of entrepreneurs on the political structure inherited from the Chinese Revolution.

The Communist Party of China still operates as a barrier to a counter-revolution of the kind that broke up the Soviet Union and allowed the emerging bourgeois class, with enormous help from imperialism, to take over the government. But the bourgeois elements in China are aggressively putting pressure on the state structures.

A debate has been simmering in the leadership over whether to allow "entrepreneurs" to join the party.

In rural areas, a capitalist who buys an old mine from the government will try to make it profitable by cutting wages and taking risks. The resulting accidents are predictable. It is also predictable that the bosses will attempt to bribe local officials to look the other way, thus corrupting the socialist authority.

The Chinese government has responded by tightening the penalties for such behavior. It has even executed some mine owners for responsibility in these disasters—a step never seen in countries where the capitalist class is solidly in the saddle.

Such measures, however, do not resolve the unfolding class struggle in China. The mobilization of the workers themselves must be recognized by the party as the key element if the growing power of the bourgeois elements is to be reversed and the socialist infrastructure strengthened.

A disaster here and in Switzerland

Privatization & air-traffic control

By Deirdre Griswold

The safety of airline passengers depends on a myriad of decisions made during the design and construction of the aircraft themselves, their maintenance, the exercise of judgment by the crew and the handling of air traffic by controllers on the ground.

Per passenger-mile, flying is the safest form of transportation. But the horrible mid-air collision over Switzerland on July 1 that killed 71 people, including 52 Russian schoolchildren, shows that the profit motive can influence these decisions, with disastrous consequences.

The crash involved a Tupolev passenger jet operated by Bashkirian Airlines and a Boeing 757 cargo plane operated by the package delivery service DHL International. At first, the Swiss company handling air traffic control, Skyguide, tried to blame the Russian pilot for the disaster, saying he didn't respond quickly enough to instructions from the tower.

But once the black boxes were found, it was discovered that the pilot had followed faulty instructions from the Swiss air traffic controller. He quickly descended, only to collide with the cargo plane, which had also been given instructions to descend.

The plane was equipped with an on-board anti-collision system, which told the pilot to climb. These systems com-

municate with other aircraft in the immediate area and would know that the approaching plane was going into a dive. But the pilot, after a few seconds' hesitation, followed the Swiss air traffic controller's advice.

It later turned out that the controller was on duty alone. The only other person working with him had gone on a break. The European Union had just days earlier issued a report criticizing the radar system Skyguide was using as sub-standard. And an alarm system—which should have warned the controller that the two planes were on a collision course—was down for maintenance.

All these factors point to cost cutting by Skyguide, the company that took over Switzerland's entire air-traffic control system, including both commercial and military flights, when it was privatized.

President George W. Bush wants to privatize air traffic control in the U.S. The

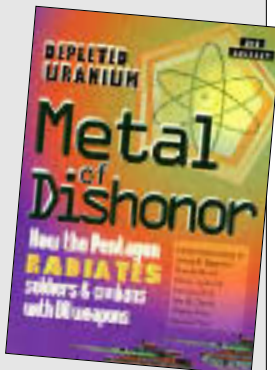
aviation news Web site landings.com reported in early July that "President Bush took the first step toward privatizing air traffic control services in the U.S. last month when he modified Executive Order 13180 to create a performance-based ATC organization. His statement that ATC was not 'an inherently governmental function' left little doubt how he felt about the issue of user fees for aviation safety services."

National Air Traffic Controllers Association President John Carr responded to Bush's action, saying that, "The administration thinks it can dupe the American people into believing we should follow the failed path of privatization and jeopardize aviation safety to boot."

The disaster in Switzerland should stiffen the resolve of controllers here to resist privatization and bring them greater support from other unions and the flying public.

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CUBA

Fidel se dirige a la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular

A continuación ofrecemos el discurso pronunciado por el Presidente de la República de Cuba Fidel Castro Ruz, en la sesión extraordinaria de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular en el Palacio de las Convenciones, 26 de junio del 2002

Primera parte.

Compañeras y compañeros: Todo está dicho y mucho mejor de lo que pueda yo decirlo. Un resumen y la consideración de algunos aspectos es lo más que puedo hacer. En los días en que tomó posesión, no deseábamos intercambios retóricos con el nuevo Presidente de Estados Unidos. Aunque no albergábamos la menor duda sobre su política hacia Cuba, no veíamos la utilidad de lanzar la primera piedra. Seríamos pacientes.

Un grupo de extrema derecha había tomado el poder en Estados Unidos, y sabíamos de sus acuerdos y compromisos contraídos desde antes de las elecciones con los grupos mafiosos de Miami para liquidar la Revolución Cubana, que no excluían mi propia eliminación física. El azar añadió la peculiar circunstancia de que aquellos decidieron, mediante fraude electoral, la elección presidencial de Bush.

En la primera etapa tuvieron lugar las habituales maniobras anticubanas de Ginebra. Nada nuevo, sólo que los métodos de presión contra las delegaciones ante la Comisión de Derechos Humanos fueron más brutales que de costumbre.

Casi un primer año había transcurrido sin especial novedad: los tradicionales ataques retóricos contra Cuba, la reunión del ALCA en Québec y la desacertada referencia por parte de Bush en ese evento al pensamiento de Martí, que originó una lluvia de cartas de los niños y adolescentes cubanos explicándole al Presidente de Estados Unidos, con la mayor cortesía posible, quién era y cómo pensaba nuestro Apóstol y Héroe Nacional, fueron los hechos de más relevancia en las relaciones bilaterales.

En la esfera internacional, la decisión de construir un escudo nuclear antimisiles, el desprecio a los compromisos contraídos en Kyoto y el anuncio de grandes gastos militares en el desarrollo de nuevas y sofisticadas armas cuando ya ni siquiera existía la guerra fría, dieron temprana señal al mundo del pensamiento, el estilo y los métodos de la nueva Administración de la superpotencia hegemónica.

La economía internacional comenzaba a mostrar síntomas preocupantes por doquier: todos los índices y pronósticos se tornaron pesimistas. El mundo entraba en una incierta y desconcertante recesión. Los productos básicos, de los que vive la inmensa mayoría de las naciones del Tercer Mundo, estaban por el suelo, mientras la globalización neoliberal, la privatización forzosa, la deuda externa y los precios del petróleo alcanzaban su cenit.

Tienen lugar en medio de tales circunstancias los hechos trágicos, absurdos e injustificables del 11 de septiembre.

El mundo prestó apoyo unánime y solidaridad al pueblo de Estados Unidos. Cualesquiera que fuesen los errores y las incongruencias de la política exterior de las Administraciones de ese país, nadie dejó de conmovirse ante la atroz matanza de miles de norteamericanos inocentes, nacidos allí o procedentes de los más variados países.

Era la hora del examen de conciencia y no de atizar, multiplicar y capitalizar los odios absurdos acumulados durante décadas enteras. La nación superpoderosa debía ser ecuánime; el resto del mundo estaba en el deber de ser valiente. Lo primero dependía de sus líderes; lo segundo, de un elemental sentido común y dignidad. Tales virtudes no abundan. No ocurrió ni lo uno ni lo otro. El más poderoso decretó un golpe de estado mundial el 20 de septiembre, 9 días después del repudiable acto terrorista, al declarar en son de guerra que todos los países debían escoger entre ser sus aliados o ser sus enemigos. Las Naciones Unidas perdieron la poca autoridad que les otorgaba una Carta viciada por el más antidemocrático de los procedimientos: el veto. Los demás estados, alrededor de 184, que suelen entretenerse votando acuerdos casi siempre nobles, pero que jamás se aplican, esta vez perdieron incluso su derecho a la voz.

Desde entonces se escucha sólo el ruido estridente de la irracionalidad, las amenazas y las armas.

Las crisis económicas, con su secuela de pobreza y hambre, se multiplican; el egoísmo crece, la solidaridad se debilita; las enfermedades, peores a veces que las propias guerras, amenazan con exterminar regiones enteras. Las ciencias económicas se encuentran ante problemas que ni siquiera habían imaginado nunca, atadas a conceptos y categorías que, como pesado lastre, las hunden en un mar de incertidumbre e impotencia. Es lo que han aprendido en las grandes y prestigiosas universidades de un sistema económico y social devenido hoy anacrónico imperio mundial. La política ha dejado de ser la ilusión de arte noble y útil con el que siempre soñó justificarse, para convertirse en entretenimiento banal y desprestigiado. Es una tragedia grande, pero no insoluble. La propia insostenibilidad del sistema conducirá a la especie humana a la búsqueda de soluciones.

Volviendo a poner los pies sobre la tierra, en el limitado espacio del planeta donde se encuentra nuestro país, los cubanos tenemos derecho a disfrutar el modesto privilegio del deber cumplido. Somos fruto de grandes acontecimientos y corrientes históricas que han tenido lugar a lo largo de muchos siglos. Sociedad colonial y esclavista, con fuertes sentimientos anexionistas y antindependen- tistas en las capas criollas más ricas hasta hace poco más de un siglo; lucha titánica del creciente sector patriótico durante 30 años, próxima ya al logro de sus objetivos; intervenida por tropas de Estados Unidos la nación forjada con la tenacidad y el heroísmo de sus mejores hijos, traicionada

y vendida, llevada y traída por fuerzas infinitamente superiores, nos vemos hoy, país pequeño, independiente y absolutamente libre, erguido ante la potencia imperial más poderosa que ha existido, nada proclive a la paz y al respeto del derecho de los pueblos.

Tan singular caso no estaba escrito en ningún libro. Del profundo abismo del pasado habían surgido las ideas, los sentimientos y las fuerzas que nos llevaron, nos mantienen y nos mantendrán aquí.

Después de la bochornosa maniobra de Ginebra, en que el gobierno de Estados Unidos tras brutales presiones logra por mínimo margen una pírrica victoria, surgen en mayo pasado peligrosos hechos: el día 6 el gobierno de Estados Unidos nos acusa de realizar investigaciones sobre armas biológicas; el 20, los discursos de Bush en Washington y Miami; el 21, se reitera la inclusión de Cuba en su lista de países que propician el terrorismo; el día 1ro. de junio, los insólitos pronunciamientos de Bush en West Point.

El 20 de mayo el Presidente de Estados Unidos dedicó todo un día a Cuba y la Revolución. ¡Qué gran honor! ¡Nos recuerda, luego existimos! Ignoro cuándo el Presidente de Estados Unidos escribe sus discursos, cuándo encomienda esa labor a uno de sus íntimos asesores, o son un híbrido de ambas cosas. En cualesquiera de las circunstancias, la arrogancia, la demagogia, y la mentira suelen ser compañeras inseparables de tales discursos. Ese día pronunció dos: uno en la Casa Blanca y otro en Miami. Se mostró despectivo, insultante y poco respetuoso hacia el adversario. Lo más importante no fueron ofensas e insultos. Quienes carecen de argumentos no tienen otras armas que la mentira y los adjetivos. Lo que debe considerarse como esencial son sus macabras intenciones, sus planes insensatos y sus ilusiones.

Un ejemplo de inconcebible falsedad y falta de respeto a la opinión pública internacional tiene lugar cuando, en el discurso de la Casa Blanca, el señor Bush afirmó tranquilamente que Estados Unidos, sus aliados y amigos lograron la libertad en países como Sudáfrica. El mundo entero conoce, y las nuevas generaciones deben conocer, que fue en Cuito Cuanavale y al sureste de Angola donde se decidió el fin del apartheid, con la participación de más de 40 mil combatientes cubanos en ese frente junto a soldados angolanos y namibios. Las administraciones de Estados Unidos armaron a Savimbi, que sembró millones de minas y mató a cientos de miles de civiles. Guardaron silencio cómplice sobre la posesión de siete armas nucleares por parte de Sudáfrica, con la idea de que fuesen usadas contra las tropas cubanas.

Bush confunde sus deseos con las más extrañas fantasías. "Hace 100 años," -dijo en Miami- "el pueblo orgulloso de Cuba declaró su independencia y situó a Cuba en el camino de la democracia. Estamos aquí hoy para celebrar este importante aniversario."

Para él no existió en absoluto la Enmienda Platt, el engaño, la traición, el derecho de intervenir, el ultraje a la soberanía de Cuba que esta constituyó. No existió siquiera la historia.

Habla de un "peter pan", hoy ministro suyo. Y no dijo que en aquella monstruosa operación que llevó tal nombre, organizada por las autoridades de Estados Unidos sobre la base de una cínica y repugnante mentira, fueron sustraídos clandestinamente del país 14 mil niños cubanos.

Acto seguido acude a la melodramática historieta de un niño cubano que llegó a Estados Unidos en 1995 cuando tenía diez años de edad, que dentro de unas semanas se graduaría en una Escuela Senior High School de Miami y sería el primer graduado de ese plantel que ingresaría en la Universidad de Harvard. No tuvo ni podía tener siquiera la mínima honestidad requerida para reconocer que sólo un niño procedente de Cuba -único país del hemisferio donde desde el preescolar están matriculados todos y el ciento por ciento se gradúa de sexto grado con el doble de conocimientos promedio en lenguaje y matemática, según testimonia la UNESCO- puede entrar en Harvard con unos pocos años de estudio posteriores; no se trataba de un inmigrante del resto de América Latina, educado en una escuela pública, ni de un niño indio o negro norteamericano.

De inmediato añade que nada se ha proporcionado en Cuba a nadie, "nada a los trabajadores, los campesinos y las familias cubanas; sólo miseria y aislamiento."

No intenta siquiera explicar por qué entonces cuatro décadas de agresiones, terrorismo, bloqueo y guerra económica por parte de Estados Unidos, que para enfrentarlos se requería de una gran dosis de conciencia política, cultura, heroísmo y apoyo popular, no han podido sin embargo destruir o debilitar absolutamente nada a una Revolución que nada haya hecho por el pueblo.

El señor Bush añade, entre otras superficialidades, que cuando todas las naciones del hemisferio han escogido el camino de la democracia, yo escogí "la cárcel, la tortura y el exilio para los cubanos que dicen lo que piensan". Esta calumniosa referencia al empleo de la tortura en nuestro país la hace precisamente el jefe del Estado que formó en escuelas especiales a decenas de miles de latinoamericanos que en casi todos los países de nuestro hemisferio fueron responsables de cientos de miles de torturados, desaparecidos y muertos. Nuestro personal de seguridad nunca recibió lecciones de tan experimentados maestros. Si el señor Bush fuera capaz de demostrar un solo caso de tortura en Cuba a lo largo de más de cuatro décadas de Revolución, estaríamos dispuestos a erigir una estatua de oro, aunque sea fundiendo la colección de nuestro museo numismático, para honrar su memoria, como el menos mentiroso de todos los mentirosos del mundo.