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Iraq unites against U.S. occupation

BRING THE TROOPS HOME!

By Fred Goldstein

April 7—To the consternation of the Bush administration, the Pentagon and the entire U.S. capitalist political establishment, the inevitable has finally begun in Iraq. A section of the Shiite population in Baghdad and key southern cities has opened up a second front in the struggle against the brutal and oppressive U.S. colonial occupation. The resistance has taken a giant leap forward.

Just as the U.S. was dispatching Marine regiments to try to crush the Sunni resistance in Fallujah, the followers of Shiite clerical leader Muqtada al-Sadr responded to outrageous provocations with a mass insurrectionary movement in Baghdad and elsewhere. L. Paul Bremmer III, U.S. viceroy in Iraq, had provoked a confrontation after a year of humiliation and repression by the occupation forces.

This Shiite insurrection, coinciding with the full-scale urban guerrilla struggle of the Sunni population in Fallujah, Ramadi and other key areas, is an earthquake shaking the ground under the feet of the U.S. imperialists and their allies in Iraq.

The U.S. military will try to drown this new wave of resistance in blood. There are already reports that U.S. helicopters have hit a mosque in Fallujah, killing 40 people. Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmit has vowed to crush al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. Just before the U.S. offensive, a warrant was issued for the arrest of the cleric.

How the insurrectionary forces will be

able to withstand the counter-attack by the U.S. military and adapt to a major assault remains to be seen. But whatever the military outcome of this current phase of the struggle, it has sent up in smoke any prospects the Pentagon and the White House may have had of ever establishing a stable, pro-U.S. colonial regime in Iraq.

It was only after the U.S. had committed atrocities in Baghdad and Najaf against peaceful demonstrators that Muqtada al-Sadr declared: "America has shown its evil intentions ... the proud Iraqi people cannot accept it. They must defend their rights by any means fit."

The newly emerged Mahdi Army, along with other fighters, are reported to be in control of the south-central cities of Kut and Kufa, and are battling for control of Najaf. After having organized mass demonstrations throughout the region, Sadr's forces seized government buildings, police stations, bridges and other installations in the Sadr City and Khadi-maya sections of Baghdad as well as in Najaf, Karbala, Nasariya, Amara and other cities. These militants have engaged heavily armed U.S. military forces, in addition to British, Italian, Ukrainian, Polish and Bulgarian forces, in pitched battles against helicopters, tanks, armored vehicles and artillery.

Sunni-Shiite unity emerging on the ground

Most importantly, unity on the ground in the struggle is evident. On the morning that U.S. Marines began their attack on

Fallujah, as the insurrection in the south was underway, a letter was read in Sadr City. "We send you this letter from your brothers in al Anbar governate and the city of Fallujah to say that we are with you under the banner of 'God is Greatest' and the mantle of Islam. We are all behind Sayyid Muqtada Sadr, may God give him victory ... on the subject of liberation." (Washington Post, April 6)

The New York Times of April 7 reported what it considered to be an "ominous synergy developing between the Sunni and Shiite insurgents." The report described how Sunni forces from a Baghdad neighborhood of Adamiya and Shiite fighters from nearby Khadamiya joined forces in a battle against U.S. troops.

"On a white sheet hung from the bullet-ridden [sic] walls of a Sunni mosque were the words: 'Our banner in Adamiya is the same banner as in Khadamiya. If they have a problem, we are their backup and their right hand.'

"The two neighborhoods are linked by a bridge over the Tigris River. Rival Sunni and Shiite gangs used to cross the bridge to rumble. Now, people say, militants cross the bridge to coordinate attacks."

Bremmer's "Bloody Sunday" and Sadr City's resistance

The insurrection was touched off by Bremmer, who at the beginning of April ordered the newspaper Al-Hawzah, published by al-Sadr, shut down for 60 days. Mass protest demonstrations were called.

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Iraqis and GIs are dying— EMERGENCY PROTESTS NATIONALLY COORDINATED DAYS OF ACTION

AGAINST OCCUPATION AND WAR

Friday, April 9,
to Monday,
April 12

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Anti-lead poison activist Zaki Shabazz with her son Zaki.

WW PHOTO: PHIL WILAYTO

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CHICAGO

Thu., April 22

Internationalism—The Legacy of Malcolm X. Featuring: Suzanne Adely, Palestine Solidarity Group; Larry Holmes, Steering Committee International ANSWER; Ayinde Jean-Baptiste, Ad-Hoc Committee to Protect Constitutional Democracy in Haiti; Sarah Smith, Chicago Youth Delegation to Cuba; Thick Routes Performance Collage; Music of the primeridan; Sanabel Palestinian Debka Group. Sponsored by: International Action Center-Chicago; Chicago Volunteers for International ANSWER; and the Malcolm X College Student Government. 7 p.m. At Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Jackson Blvd.-Auditorium. For info (773) 250-7006 or ChicagoANSWER@comcast.net.

LOS ANGELES

Every Friday

Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 7. At 422 S. Western. Phone (213) 500-0529 for info.

NEW YORK

Fri., April 9

Workers World Party meeting: John Catalinotto, co-managing editor of Workers World, on "Iraq: A new stage in resistance to occupation." 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

SAN FRANCISCO

Every Sunday

Workers World Party weekly meetings. These educational meetings cover current events as well as struggles of the peoples from all over the world. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St., No. 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

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Residents of historic city mobilize

Lead threatens children's health and lives

By Phil Wilayto
Richmond, Va.

Zaki Shabazz vividly remembers the day she decided to have her children tested for lead poisoning.

"When I saw the paint peeling around the air conditioning unit in my son Zaki's bedroom, it triggered some memories of a younger cousin having to be hospitalized for lead poisoning," she said. "So I decided to have all four of my children tested."

That was in 1996. Zaki, then 18 months old, tested positive.

"Zaki's lead level wasn't considered high enough for hospitalization or medication, so I started looking for natural remedies," Shabazz said. After bolstering her son's diet with fruits and vegetables rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C, his lead level came steadily down. By that time, Shabazz had become committed to helping other parents prevent lead poisoning in the first place.

The result was United Parents Against Lead, or UPAL, a national advocacy organization Shabazz directs from a modest office on Richmond's South Side.

"Our goal is to be proactive, rather than wait until after the fact," Shabazz said during an interview in early April, observed annually as National Lead Awareness Month.

Lead is a toxic substance that in low concentrations can cause nerve damage, learning disabilities and behavioral problems in children. At higher levels, it can lead to convulsions, coma and even death. Many experts think lead may be a major factor in poor school performance, as well as in youth violence.

"A lot of the problems of Richmond's children can be caused by lead poisoning," says Nancy Van Voorhis, director of the Lead-Safe Virginia program of the state health department.

A major source of lead poisoning is lead-based paint. The paint tastes sweet, so young children like to eat the deteriorating flakes. Infants can ingest lead dust through their constant hand-to-mouth motions. But even though medical researchers have known for more than 100 years that lead can cause brain damage in children, its residential use wasn't banned by the federal government until 1978. As a result, older cities like Richmond are particularly vulnerable to lead hazards.

Another potential source of lead poisoning is municipal drinking water. In Richmond, approximately 20,000

of the city's 65,000 water service lines are made of lead. The city's utility department takes measures to stop the "leaching" of lead into the system, but only tests the pipes every three years.

While lead can't be completely removed from a child's system, lead-poisoning symptoms can be reduced through medications and diet. But the problem has to be caught in time—and that means early testing.

In 2002, an estimated 50,000 Virginia children under the age of six were screened for lead poisoning, according to Van Voorhis. Of these, 2.3 percent were found to have elevated levels. The national average that year was 2.2 percent.

But in Richmond, a nearly 400-year-old, majority Black city, 8 percent of the children under age three who were tested were found to have elevated levels of lead. The 1,672 city children tested represented just 22 percent of those the state considered to be at risk.

Actually, the problem may be much greater than even these statistics would suggest. During the 1960s, 60 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood was considered the threshold for concern. That was lowered to 25 micrograms in the 1980s, then to 10 in the 1990s. However, in a well-publicized article in the April 17, 2003, issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers stated that even lead levels below 10 can be harmful, particularly in very young children.

"Our findings suggest that considerably more U.S. children are adversely affected by environmental lead than previously estimated," the researchers wrote.

After that article was published, Van Voorhis told a reporter from Richmond's daily newspaper that there had been a discussion at a recent Virginia conference of dropping the threshold to 5 micrograms, but that public health officials had decided they had "enough children 10 and above to worry about."

The problem isn't a lack of resources. In Richmond, as in other cities across the country, government officials find money for the projects favored by their wealthy backers. So, faced with what appears to be a widespread but greatly neglected health problem, UPAL has joined with the Richmond Branch NAACP and the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality, a predominantly African-American community group, to demand the city test all

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More cases emerge of

Soldiers turning against the war

By Dustin Langley

While ruling class politicians pretend to debate the war, focusing on tactical questions like whether the Bush administration has enough troops on the ground, working people in uniform are entering the debate in earnest and calling for an end to the war.

Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia, a Nicaraguan immigrant, refused to return to Iraq from leave, saying, "This is an oil-driven war, and I don't think any soldier signs up to fight for oil. I did not sign up for the military to go halfway around the world to be an instrument of oppression. We were all lied to when we were told we were looking for weapons of mass destruction or we were going to fight terrorism."

Lt. John Oliveira, former public affairs officer for the Navy, resigned his commission after 16 years and now marches in anti-war demonstrations.

These are among hundreds in the military who are now turning against the war.

In the past year, more than 600 have gone AWOL—absent without leave. (Chicago Tribune, March 15) Many more are exploring ways to get out. The Army granted five conscientious objector discharges in January alone, compared with 31 in all of 2003, 17 in 2002, and just 9 in 2001. (New York Times, March 16)

Some soldiers change their minds when they face the reality of war. Sgt. Mejia said, "When I saw with my own eyes what war can do to people, a real change began to



Globe, March 20

A recent report from the Pentagon found dirty and unsafe conditions in four mess halls operated by Halliburton in Iraq, including, "blood all over the floor ... dirty pans ... dirty salad bars ... rotting meats ... and vegetables."

A recent investigation found that at least four returning soldiers from a local National Guard Company tested positive for radiation "likely caused by dust from depleted uranium shells fired by U.S. troops." (New York Daily News, April 4-5)

While GIs are getting sick, eating rotten food, and facing a lack of equipment, the real beneficiaries of the war—the multina-

take place within me. I have witnessed the suffering of a people whose country is in ruins and who are further humiliated by the raids, patrols and curfews of an occupying army. My experience of this war has changed me forever. I went to Iraq and was an instrument of violence, and now I have decided to become an instrument of peace."

Others are learning of the Bush administration's callous disregard for the soldiers. Families of soldiers in Iraq have to pay as much as \$1,400 for body armor because the Pentagon is not supplying it. (Boston



Caption

tional corporations—are raking in enormous profits and paying their civilian contractors top dollar. Halliburton lists more than 450 openings in Iraq on its website. Chris Boyd of Kroll-Crucible Security told CNN, "There's a lot of contracts that pay anywhere from \$350 a day to \$1,500 a day."

As GIs become fed up with being cannon fodder for the multinational corporations, it is imperative that the anti-war movement stand with these brave resisters. Camilo Mejia is facing a court martial and could receive up to a year in prison. SNAFU, an organization that supports military resisters, is asking activists to call Gen. William Webster (912-767-7667) at Fort Stewart, and tell him to release Camilo Mejia.

"Members of the military who have doubts about their government's policies often feel isolated," said Alex Majumder, a SNAFU organizer. "They are in an environment that does not tolerate dissenting viewpoints. For this reason, it is important for military personnel to connect with a strong civilian anti-war movement. This movement has to educate soldiers with an anti-imperialist perspective and help them to stand up for their rights and against the war machine."

Lt. John Oliveira says of the antiwar movement, "I'm thankful for those people today. And I was thankful for them back then." □□

Lead & children

Continued from page 2

children for lead by the age of 12 months.

That's "a realizable goal, if it is considered a priority," states a flier now being circulated by the Defenders. "City Hall can declare the city to be in a state of emergency. ... It can demand funding from the federal government. ... Or demand that the thousands of corporations that profited from slavery and Jim Crow discrimination in Virginia fund a massive lead-prevention program as a form of reparations. Tell Washington that instead of fighting wars overseas it needs to declare a war on lead poisoning here at home."

Earlier this year, UPAL, the NAACP and the Defenders were successful in focusing public attention on the fact that the city's Lead-Safe Richmond program had fallen so far behind its lead-abatement schedule that it was in danger of losing its \$3-million federal grant. Three dozen civic, civil rights, religious, labor and anti-war organizations endorsed a statement that Ms. Shabazz read before City Council demanding it take all necessary steps to save the program. The city has since made changes in the program's management and administrative procedures.

While continuing to monitor the program's progress, the three organizations are now collecting endorsements for their call for early, universal testing. They are also mobilizing people to attend upcoming meetings of the City Council and the School Board where Shabazz will formally present the groups' demand.

"I'm hoping it doesn't take somebody dying before the city admits how serious this problem is," Shabazz said.

For more information, visit UPAL on the Web at www.home.earthlink.net/~shabazzaupal and the Defenders at DefendersFJE.tripod.com. □

Iraqis and GIs are dying— EMERGENCY PROTESTS NATIONALLY COORDINATED DAYS OF ACTION

Friday, April 9, to Monday, April 12

TO DEMAND:
**U.S. OUT
OF IRAQ**

Bring the troops
home now

Money for jobs,
education and
healthcare,
not for wars
of aggression



**AGAINST
OCCUPATION
AND WAR**



NEW YORK CITY
Friday, April 9
4:30 p.m.
Times Square
(212) 633-6646

WASHINGTON, DC
Saturday, April 10
12 noon
White House
(Lafayette Park)
(202) 544-3389

LOS ANGELES
Friday, April 9
5 p.m.
Westwood Federal
Building
(Wilshire & Veteran)
(213) 487-2368

SAN FRANCISCO
Saturday, April 10
12 noon
UN Plaza
(Market St. between
7th St. and Hyde.
Civic Center BART)
(415) 821-6545

Initiated by the ANSWER Coalition, www.internationalanswer.org

This is capitalism

1,001 ways to rob the workers

By Deirdre Griswold

The news items keep on coming, from every direction, like swarms of noxious pests in some horror movie. Workers are being fleeced, robbed, swindled, plundered, looted and just plain exploited by bosses in a thousand different ways.

Take something as simple as being paid for time worked. Seems simple, right? You clock in and at the end of the week you get paid for the hours you worked. The rate of pay may be small, but at least you have a job and can count on it.

Wrong. An investigative report by Steven Greenhouse, which appeared in the April 4 New York Times, found that cheating workers out of their hours has become a common practice in chains like Taco Bell, Wal-Mart, Pep Boys, Family Dollar and Toys "R" Us.

"Experts on compensation say that the illegal doctoring of hourly employees' time records is far more prevalent than most Americans believe," wrote Greenhouse. "The practice, commonly called shaving time, is easily done and hard to detect—a simple matter of computer keystrokes—and has spurred a growing number of lawsuits and settlements against a wide range of businesses...."

"Compensation experts say that many managers, whether at discount stores or

fast-food restaurants, fear losing their jobs if they fail to keep costs down."

Some workers have won suits against companies that altered their time records.

William Rutzick, a lawyer who reached a \$1.5-million settlement with Taco Bell last year after the chain's managers were found guilty of erasing time and requiring off-the-clock work, said, "A lot of this is that district managers might fire you as soon as look at you. The store managers have a toehold in the lower middle class. They're being paid \$20,000, \$30,000. They're in management. They get medical. They have no job security at all, and they want to keep their toehold in the lower middle class, and they'll often do whatever is necessary to do it."

But the pressure is coming from much higher up. Managers are having their base pay cut, too, and have to rely increasingly on bonuses for minimizing costs or maximizing profits. "The pressures are just unbelievable to control costs and improve productivity," said George Milkovich, a Cornell University professor of industrial relations.

The workers being cheated make as little as \$8 an hour, said Beth Terrell, a Seattle lawyer who has sued Wal-Mart, accusing its managers of doctoring time records. "These employees can scarcely afford to have time deleted. They're barely

paying their bills already."

Drew Pooters, a former employee of Toys "R" Us, said, "Unless you keep track of your time and keep records of when you punch in and punch out, there's no way to stop this." Managers are able to secretly erase hours from computer payroll records—something much more difficult in the days of punch cards.

At chains like Family Dollar, managers are given a payroll budget. But the work just can't be done in the time allotted. If hours worked go over the budget, the money is deducted from the managers' pay. It's a strong incentive for low-level managers to shave payroll hours.

Where the money's going

So where is all this stolen money going? A new study has just been released by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. Its title sums up its findings: "The Unprecedented Rising Tide of Corporate Profits and the Simultaneous Ebbing of Labor Compensation—Gainers and Losers from the National Economic Recovery in 2002 and 2003."

What the report shows is that, during this period of "recovery" from the recession, an unprecedented proportion of the new wealth created largely by the workers' increased productivity has gone to the bosses.

"This is the first time we've ever had a case where two years into a recovery, corporate profits got a larger share of the growth of national income than labor did," said Andrew Sum, the lead author of the study. "Normally labor gets about 65 percent and corporate profits about 15 to 18 percent. This time profits got 41 percent and labor [meaning all forms of employee compensation, including wages, benefits, salaries and the percentage of payroll taxes paid by employers] got 38 percent." (Bob Herbert's column, New York Times, April 5)

This skewing of wealth toward the already-rich comes as low-wage jobs in chains continue to replace union jobs in manufacturing. The unorganized are vulnerable to both illegal finagling, like the "shaving" of their hours, and to legal exploitation—that is, the pocketing by the bosses of a huge portion of the value created every day by the workers.

It is remarkable how much these con-

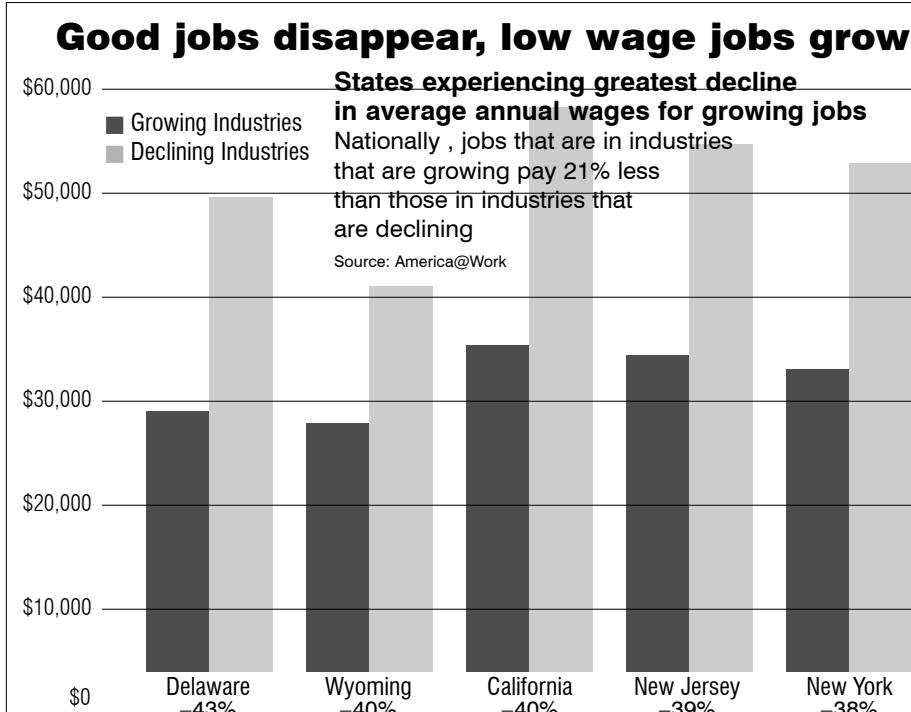
ditions resemble the miserable situation for workers at the time that Karl Marx was writing his analysis of capital, 150 years ago. Marx showed that the tendency to reduce wages to the bare minimum required to keep the workers alive was built into capitalism. The socialist movement that grew up at that time played the major role in organizing the workers into unions that fought to relieve these conditions.

Eventually, that movement succeeded not only in winning better conditions in many countries but in taking territory away from the exploiters. The Russian Revolution of 1917, followed by others a few decades later, socialized the factories, mines and so on that had been privately owned and began planning production to meet human need instead of to produce profits for a few.

The success of these revolutions and the workers' struggles everywhere forced concessions out of the developed capitalist countries. In the United States, even in the depths of the Depression, when the politicians could have been crying poverty, workers won many social programs through their militant struggle and the fear of the bosses that they would fight for socialism here, too. Now those programs are being taken away by a ruling class emboldened by the collapse of a huge bloc of countries that attempted to build socialism but were overwhelmed by the wealth and military power of capitalism, which had grown rich on hundreds of years of colonialism and imperialism.

Many think that the answer to the revival of sweatshops and starvation wages is to get politicians into government who will be more sympathetic to the workers. But that didn't work 150 years ago and it won't work now. What changed the landscape for workers in the industrialized countries was the class struggle. That's how unions got formed to fight in the workers' interests, and also what forced the capitalist politicians to accept the need for some progressive government regulations.

That struggle is now worldwide, as the same corporations run roughshod over workers abroad and at home. Just as surely as capital is never satisfied and will grind every cent it can out of the workers, so is the working class sure to respond by organizing and fighting in a great new wave of struggle everywhere. □



George Washington University

Students arrested supporting workers' rights

By Steven Ceci
Washington, D.C.

Eleven student activists were arrested on March 28 at George Washington University here in a solidarity action supporting workers' rights at the wealthy school, located just blocks from the White House.

Nine of those arrested were GW students; the two others were from Georgetown University.

The students had set up a tent city at the Marvin Center, the main student center on campus, to demand that GW affiliate with the Workers Rights Consortium. To affiliate, the university would have to verify that apparel bearing its logo was not made by sweatshop labor. It would also have to institute a labor code of conduct that guarantees a livable wage, affordable health care and the right to organize to university employees.

Senior Allie Robbins, who cheered "No justice, no peace!" while being put in handcuffs, said she was wrongfully detained and that she was participating in a peaceful protest. "It's obviously scary knowing that we were doing the right thing... but the fact that 10 other students were with me was absolutely empowering," she said. Alex Freedman, another student who participated in the tent city, said the arrest of the 11 would not deter activists from demonstrating for greater worker rights.

The tent city encampment followed a spirited rally of close to 200 students and workers outside GW's Rice Hall and the office of university president Joel Trachtenberg. It was organized by a coalition of student groups and unions representing many of the workers at GW—from housekeepers and food service workers to adjunct faculty. The action was part of the Student and Labor Action Project (SLAP),

a nationally coordinated week of activities at universities and colleges to bring attention to workers' rights. The week includes March 31, the birthday of farmworkers' organizer Caesar Chavez, and April 4, the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

GW is the largest private employer in the District of Columbia and second only to the federal government as an employer in the District. The university is a wealthy institution and a large property owner in the District. At the end of 2002 it had assets of \$1.7 billion and liabilities of \$826 million. It also has endowments of \$635 million.

GW is notorious in the D.C. area for failing to respect workers' rights or provide a livable wage. The university is trying to cut health insurance benefits to its janitors, housekeepers and maintenance staff, represented by SEIU local 82. It gets university apparel from sweatshop com-

panies. And it is trying to keep part-time faculty from organizing their own union with SEIU Local 500 by hiring one of the most notorious union-busting law firms in the country, Krupin O'Brien.

In yet another labor struggle at GW, parking lot and garage workers are trying to organize with HERE Local 27. The university contracted out its parking garages to Colonial Parking, which has refused to recognize the workers' right to form a union. Using this tactic, George Washington University claims its hands are clean while it refuses to put leverage on Colonial Parking to respect the workers' right to unionize.

With all these attacks and abuses, student groups and the AFL-CIO Metro Labor Council are planning to broaden the struggle and make George Washington University's labor record a citywide issue. □

Oakland, Calif.

Black forum discusses same-sex marriage

By LeiLani Dowell
Oakland, Calif.

A forum and panel discussion on same-sex marriage was held in the African American community here on April 3. The event showed the breadth of the debate around same-sex marriage in the Black and lesbian/gay/bi/trans communities, as well as the commitment to struggle.

The meeting was hosted by the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) and the Sexual Minority Alliance of Alameda County (SMAAC). NBJC was formed in December 2003 to respond to the lack of African American voices in the marriage equality movement. SMAAC is a full-service agency providing an array of services to LGBT and questioning youth, primarily youth of color, throughout the Bay Area.

Bobbie Wilson, a pro bono attorney representing the City and County of San Francisco and a board member of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, discussed the two lawsuits that have been filed against the state of California. One suit, filed in the state Supreme Court, is in opposition to the temporary restraining order placed on same-sex marriages in San Francisco. The other challenges the validity of California state statutes which discriminate against same-sex marriages.

Pamela Ayo Yetunde and Tracey Scott, a lesbian couple, described how they married in San Francisco for love, but also to take the opportunity to be counted in the movement. They described waiting in line for seven hours in the rain without any-

where to sit, in order to participate in what Scott described as "100 percent civil disobedience outside City Hall, and 100 percent love inside at the ceremony."

Calvin Gipson, managing director of Human Services at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco and the first Black man to produce the San Francisco Pride Parade—which he did for five years—described his commitment to same-sex struggles as trying to put a Black face on the gay community. In a frank discussion, he stated that because of other issues—such as AIDS, healthcare, police brutality, poverty and racism—same-sex marriage becomes less central to the Black community, as well as the Black LGBT community. However, he also stressed that the issue of same-sex marriage can be used to force the LGBT community to deal with the issue of racism.

D. Mark Wilson of McGee Baptist Church in Berkeley reinforced the idea that the broader LGBT community must raise the fact that Black and Brown families are under attack. Other speakers included Kara Korbel Chinula of the East Bay Chapter of Marriage Equality and Tony Colvin of Black and Queer at Stanford, who chaired the event along with a high school student.

A diverse open forum followed the panel discussion. The call for May 17 national solidarity actions for equal marriage rights and against all forms of discrimination, bigotry and racism was raised from the floor and received a welcome reception. □

JANE WOOD tenant organizer

By Sue Davis
New York

Jane Wood, who died in March at the age of 96, was a community organizer feared by landlords but loved by tenants. A tiny wisp of a woman with bright blue eyes and a huge heart, Wood could be heard chanting the loudest on picket lines. She was equally outspoken at Rent Guidelines Board and Community Board meetings. She is credited with helping to prevent the eviction of hundreds, if not thousands, of tenants as her Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan became gentrified during the 1980s and 1990s.

Born to a wealthy family in St. Louis and destined to be a debutante, Wood rejected all that. Instead, she moved to New York City in the 1930s at the height of the Great Depression, got a job in an auto parts plant, and was fired for union organizing. She devoted her life to helping working and oppressed people. A long-time socialist, she could be found at anti-war rallies, anti-racist meetings and other progressive events.

Wood founded the Chelsea Coalition on Housing in the 1950s, when she initiated the first of many campaigns. She led demonstrations opposing construction of the Penn South housing cooperatives until an agreement was reached ensuring that low-income workers who lost their homes when the development was built were given priority in the new housing.

One of many battles that Wood led during the 1980s was trying to stop Barney's,



an expensive men's clothing store then at 17th Street and 7th Avenue, from expanding into adjacent housing and evicting tenants. Though the company did buy several brownstones, the coalition saved at least five buildings and made sure Barney's paid generous stipends to those who were forced to relocate.

Wood's husband, Robert, opened a business importing cigars in the 1950s, so she was a frequent visitor to Cuba. But she didn't let the U.S. blockade stop her after the 1959 revolution. In fact, she often took medical supplies and other essentials with her to show support for Fidel Castro and the socialist revolution. Her knowledge of Spanish helped Wood reach out to many in the neighborhood.

A long-time subscriber to Workers World, she attended many public meetings, such as the 150th anniversary of The Communist Manifesto, sponsored by the party.

A memorial to commemorate her life on her birthday, June 5, is tentatively scheduled for the Hudson Guild. □



Protesters at Rhode Island hearing.

Rally in State House for marriage equality

By Mike Shaw
Providence, R.I.

Several hundred supporters of same-sex marriage massed in the Rhode Island State House rotunda on March 31. Organized by the Rhode Island Campaign for Marriage Equality, it was the largest rally in the State House since the state's credit union crisis in the early 1990s. The rally numerically trounced a bigoted rally the previous week in the same spot.

There are currently two competing bills before the State Senate: one to legalize civil marriage for same-sex couples and one to limit marriage to heterosexuals.

Chris Butler, executive director of AIDS Project RI, chaired the rally. He stated, "This community is energized, organized and committed."

Senate Majority leader Gordon Fox, who is part Cape Verdean, surprised and delighted those at the rally when he stated, "I'm in a committed six-year relationship with a very special man."

BUFFALO, N.Y.

'Solidarity key to battling capitalism'

Workers World Managing Editor Leslie Feinberg spoke to a full house at Unity Church here on April 3 about how solidarity against all forms of oppression is critical in order to wage a successful struggle against capitalism.

The multinational and multi-generational audience at the Workers World Party-sponsored forum included gay and straight folks from Buffalo neighborhoods, including Lackawanna where the working-class Yemeni community has been targeted by the Bush administration's "war on terror."

Feinberg urged all those gathered—many of whom are active in anti-war, anti-globalization and anti-police abuse and racism struggles, and the lesbian/

gay/ bi/trans and student movements—to open up discussions on the successes and problems of revolutions that have attempted to end capitalism. This will help to both defend the existing workers' states and to strengthen the overall revolutionary movement to build a communist future.

The audience responded to the evening's message with a prolonged standing ovation.

After a report on upcoming May 17 solidarity actions for same-sex marriage rights and against all forms of discrimination, bigotry and racism, more than a quarter of those in attendance signed up to work on a plan for a local action that day.

—Beverly Hiestand

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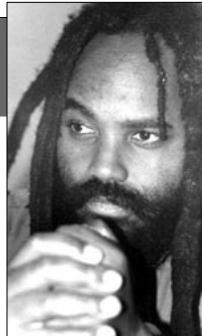
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CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

By Mumia Abu-Jamal
from death row

Behind the coup d'etat in Haiti



Make no mistake, we are witnessing a coup taking place on the island nation of Haiti. The forced departure of Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was something that the Bush administration has been trying to do for years. It saw the opportunity, and—wham!—it took it.

Now, it has installed a puppet as prime minister, and tries to install a president to its liking. This is what American "democracy" means: the power to impose U.S. imperial will on a sovereign government.

Several years ago, writers for the Haïti-Progrès newspaper wrote:

"The destabilization campaign against the Haitian government is being led by the Bush faction of the U.S. bourgeoisie, which is arch-reactionary and hostile to regimes which even pay lip-service to a progressive agenda, as Aristide once did. Two conservative retreads from the previous Bush administration, Undersecretary of State for the Americas Otto Reich and Ambassador to the Organization for American States (OAS) Roger Noriega, are spearheading the campaign to uproot Aristide, whom they charge is becoming an 'illegitimate president' of a 'parish state,' even as other OAS states stand by wringing their hands at the plight of the besieged president." (From "Haiti—A Slave Revolution: 200 Years After 1804," Ramsey Clark et al. Article by Kim Ives, "Class Analysis of a Crisis.")

Haïti-Progrès newspaper published this article in October 2002. They warned that elements of the Haitian bourgeoisie would ally themselves with their very rivals, the land-rich "grandons," and the latter would bring forth the same forces that held sway under the Duvalier dictatorship.

Lo and behold—within days of the coup against Aristide, who emerges but Gerard Latortue, a man who served as ambassador in the short-lived military-backed government of Leslie Manigat, back in 1988. Manigat was overthrown by Gen. Henri Namphy some six months after his term began. Now, a face from that government is installed as PM—and what are his first words?

"Bring back the army!" He has called Aristide's disbanding of the army "unconstitutional."

We are now watching the re-emergence of neo-Duvalierists, who want to reinstate the power of the Macoutes.

The Bush regime calls this "democracy," but the Haitian people have another idea. They have seen the U.S. come in before, using words like "democracy," and saw, instead, occupation and humiliation.

Haitian poet Paul Laramée in his poem, "Reign of a Human Race," gives a poignant definition that arises from Haitian history:

*You say democracy
and it's America to the Yankee
it's the rape of nations
It's Sandino's blood
And Peralte's crucifixion
You say democracy
and it's the plunder of our wealth
from Hiroshima to Indochina
you spread the slaughter everywhere
and everywhere ruin*

(See "Haiti—A Slave Revolution," pp. 163-64. Charlemagne Peralte was the leader of the Cacos Rebellion against the U.S. occupation in Haiti of 1915-1919. Peralte was captured and slain by U.S. Marines, his nearly nude body chained to wood, with his arms outstretched, like in crucifixion.)

Slowly, but surely, Americans are giving the people of the world a bad taste for the word "democracy." It means, simply, that the rest of the world must submit to American business will.

Haiti is facing dire times as the "grandons" and the bourgeoisie launch another war of exploitation against the Haitian poor.

That's what it's all about. Who will profit from the exploitation of the Haitian peasantry?

Who shall rule?

The U.S. seems determined to make sure that the Haitian people will have little say in the matter. That's why they sent Aristide into a forced exile—the man who won some 85 percent of the Haitian people's vote!

Down with U.S. meddling! Let the Haitian People govern themselves! □

LOS ANGELES

Great interest in new Haiti book

By Maggie Vascassenno
Los Angeles

"The Haitian Revolution is history's sole example of a successful slave uprising. It was a beacon of hope and inspiration to enslaved Africans in the U.S. and elsewhere. This made the Haitian Revolution and successive Haitian governments repeated targets of U.S. intervention, the latest being the overthrow—the second since 1991—of the Aristide administration," stated Pat Chin.

A co-editor of the book, "Haiti, a Slave Revolution: 200 Years After 1804," Chin brought the truth about the U.S. coup in Haiti to four meetings and book signings in Los Angeles this past weekend. "Haiti, a Slave Revolution" was published by the International Action Center and can be ordered through leftbooks.com.

The kick-off event was held in South Central Los Angeles on April 3 at the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research. Chin was joined by Pierre Labossiere of Oakland, Calif., founder of the Haiti Action Committee there, and Pierre-Antoine Lovinsky, a psychologist and victims' advocate from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. A surprise appearance and opening talk by Rep. Maxine Waters at Saturday's event received thunderous applause and a standing ovation from the overflow audience.

The speakers on the panel saluted the courage of Congressmember Waters for the crucial role she has played in defense of President Jean-



Pat Chin at book signing.

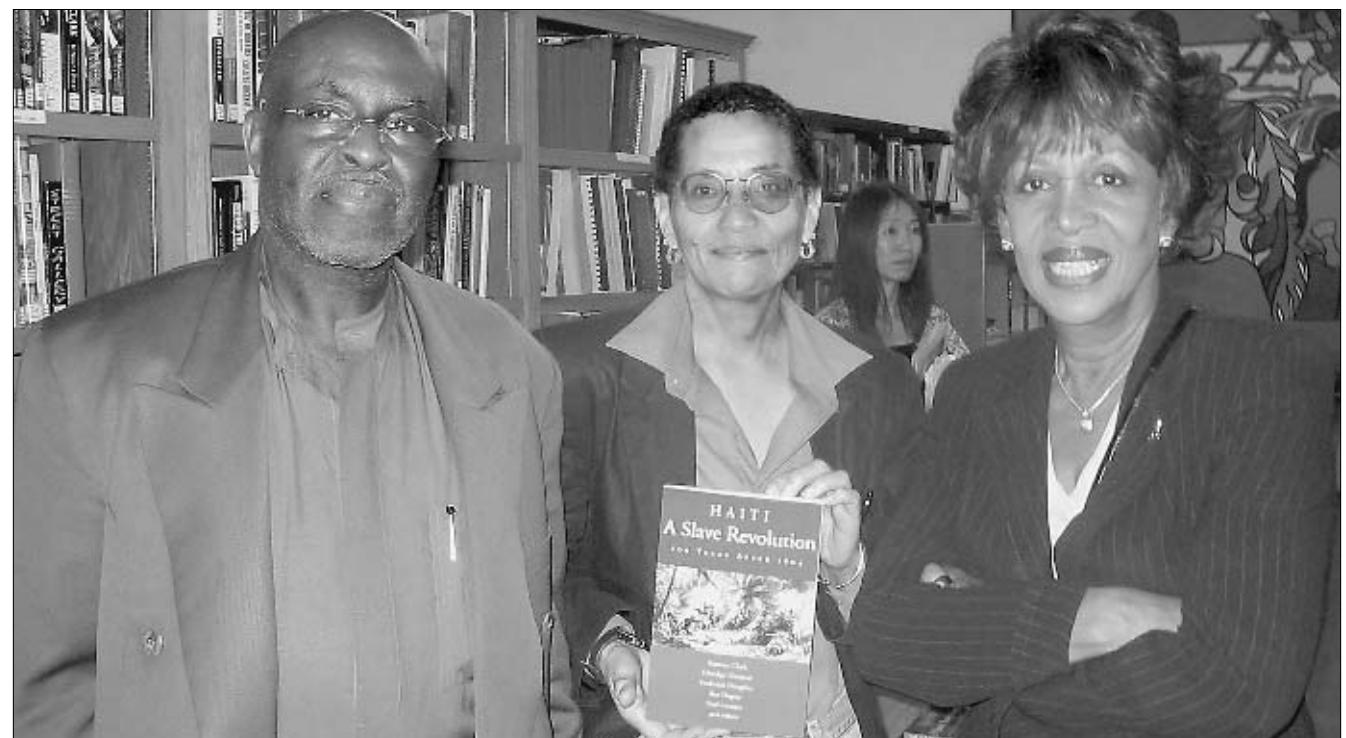
WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

Bertrand Aristide and in getting the truth about the U.S.-backed coup in Haiti to the people of Southern California and the U.S. Labossiere and Lovinsky, both Haitians, stressed the urgent need for solidarity. "Our solidarity can beat the bosses' solidarity—truth always wins out," stated Labossiere. Muna Coobtee of the International Action Center chaired the afternoon event.

From the library Chin went to EsoWon Books, located in the African American community. The predominantly Black audience was deeply cognizant of the racist nature of the coup and the bicentennial of the slave revolution that established an independent

and free Haiti. Chin concluded her presentation by reading an excerpt from her chapter in the book, "Haiti needs reparations, not sanctions."

On April 4 Chin spoke at a progressive Westside bookstore named Midnight Special. Jefferson Azevedo of the IAC chaired the event. Chin then spoke at Imix Books, located in Highland Park on the east side of Los Angeles. Imix is a relatively new bookstore that focuses on the struggles of the Latino/a peoples of the Americas. At all the meetings and book signings many people bought the book, and signed up with the International Action Center to help build and participate in future actions in solidarity with Haiti. □



Rev. Louis Chase, Pat Chin and Maxine Waters.

2004 marks Mumia's 22nd year on Pa.'s death row

Be in Philly on Saturday, April 24 for Mumia's 50th Birthday

March and Rally to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!

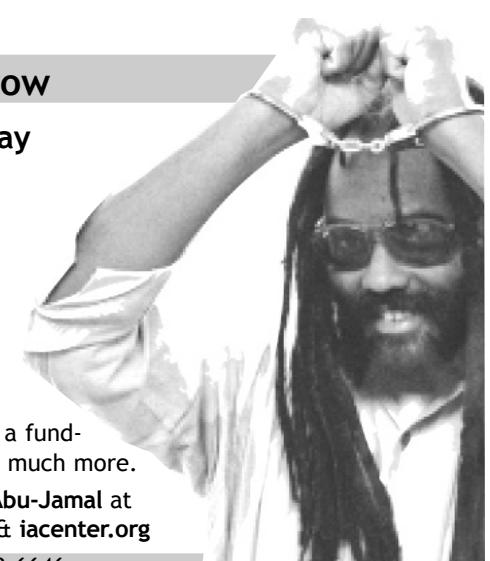
10:00 AM Rally at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia, 52nd & Pine St.

11:30 AM Begin march through West Phila. neighborhoods

1:00 PM Arrive at the Kingsessing Recreation Center located at 50th and Kingsessing Sts. for an indoor and outdoor program. The program will be a fundraiser with live music, dance performances, an art show, an auction, food, & much more.

For information call the International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal at 215-476-8812 or email icffmaj@aol.com. Visit mumia.org, millions4mumia.org & iacenter.org

For transportation from NYC call the International Action Center at 212-633-6646



HAITI

U.S. tries to stabilize coup regime

By G. Dunkel

April 5—The de facto "government" that took over Haiti after the U.S. ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is pretending that normality is being reestablished—that schools are open, food is being distributed, justice is being done.

No major demonstrations are taking place, but this is because there has been bloody repression of those demanding Aristide's return. And while the schools are open, many students are staying home and the situation is still extremely tense.

On the international level, CARICOM—15 Caribbean nations united in a free-trade zone—refuses to recognize the new government. This decision was strenuously opposed by the United States, which called the prime ministers of the CARICOM countries on their personal cell phones just before the vote was taken. Venezuela, however, heartily endorsed the CARICOM decision.

The African Union announced that it has "decided to undertake immediate consultation with both CARICOM and eventually the United Nations in order to discuss the conditions for a quick return to constitutional democracy" in Haiti. Aristide's ouster, they said, "sets a dangerous precedent for duly elected persons." The AU represents 53 African nations.

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, many parents in poor neighborhoods are keeping their children at home because of fears generated by the 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew that from time to time is filled with gunfire. (*Haïti-Progrès*, March 31)

This curfew makes life very difficult when illness or other emergencies hit at night. When Louis Balmir, with his friend Marcel Lucmane, went looking for some asthma medicine for his son during curfew on March 20, they ran into an ambush by U.S. Marines, who opened fire on their car without warning. Lucmane was shot once, but Balmir was shot at least seven times. He wants to sue but doesn't know where to begin.

Outside the capital, where the Marines and the French Foreign Legion enforce what they call "order," the country is ruled by rebels and gang leaders, armed and trained by U.S. Special Forces.

Gérard Latortue, who was made prime minister after the U.S. forced Aristide out of the country, has frozen Aristide's party, Fanmi Lavalas, out of any government posts and has even kept out those who have been touted by the U.S. media as the "democratic opposition." At the same time, he has praised the death-squad leaders who shot their way into the country as "liberation fighters." Latortue spent almost all his adult life outside Haiti and is a retired UN bureaucrat. He was plucked out of a comfortable retirement in Boca Raton, Florida.

Perhaps indicating the direction he wants to go, Latortue appointed retired Gen. Herard Abraham as interior minis-

ter in charge of the police. Abraham openly supports the re-establishment of the Haitian Army, which has a long history of repressing the people.

Bernard Gousse, another appointee who is now called Justice Minister, told Reuters on April 2, "The justice system is not very healthy. ... It will take some months to rebuild. You can see the derelict situation in which the police is, the justice system, even the buildings."

Gousse has appeared at public functions with Louis-Jodel Chamblain and Jean-Pierre Baptiste—both convicted in a Haitian court of participating in a mass murder in Raboteau—and with other leaders of the armed uprising against Aristide who are wanted on drug-related charges. The beefed-up police force he envisions won't be arresting them.

Secretary of State Colin Powell made a one-day visit to Haiti on April 5, suppos-

edly to discuss the need to bring "stability" and international aid. His visit is basically an admission that the situation in Haiti is not stable and that Latortue's public embrace of mass murderers and drug dealers is creating political problems for the Bush administration.

Dominic de Villepin, France's foreign minister, may also visit Haiti soon. It is obvious that France and the United States have come to some kind of deal on Haiti that protects France's considerable interests in the Caribbean and Latin America, while the United States gets help in its second occupation of Haiti in the past decade.

The occupation of Haiti by imperialist troops continues. More and more Haitians—like the contingents that marched in the March 20 demonstrations against war and occupation in the United States—are seeing that their struggle against neocolonial occupation is part of a worldwide struggle.

In spirit of Dr. King Baltimore youth demand better education

Determined to commemorate the April 4 anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with protest and struggle, members of Baltimore's Children First participated in civil disobedience and were arrested for sitting down in front of the city's baseball stadium. This heroic action was very reminiscent of the 1960s civil rights movement, when African American school children participated in massive school walkouts and civil disobedience throughout the racist deep South to demand equal rights.

The Baltimore protest was aimed at increasing funds for education and supporting youth. Dr. Andrey Bundley, an African American former mayoral candidate who challenged Mayor Martin O'Malley, joined the group. He and community activist Dr. Tyrone Powers have vigorously campaigned to remove dangerous levels of lead in Baltimore school drinking fountains and to make healthy lives for children a priority. Local members of the Nation of Islam and the All Peoples Congress also participated in the day's action.

—Story and photo by Sharon Black



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Bridget Alston Smith being arrested at student protest.

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION - 200 YEARS AFTER 1804

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HAITI:
A SLAVE REVOLUTION

200 YEARS AFTER 1804



Ramsey Clark
Edwidge Danticat
Frederick Douglass
Ben Dupuy
Paul Laraque
and others

German protest surprisingly large

European workers fight cutbacks

By John Catalinotto

In a coordinated action, over a million retirees and workers marched in Europe on April 3 to protest planned future cuts to pension plans, unemployment insurance and health care benefits.

These marches included the largest workers' protests seen in Germany in half a century—a dramatic new development.

The largest demonstrations were in Italy, where as many as a million people—mostly retirees—came to Rome. About half the total of 11.2 million Italian union members are retired.

In Germany, up to 250,000 people marched in Berlin, many of them workers from formerly socialist eastern Germany. More than 100,000 protested in Cologne and another 120,000 in Stuttgart in the west.

In both Italy and Germany, most demonstrators marched under the banners of the major trade unions, but anti-globalization organizations and left political parties also participated.

Another 75,000 marched in 60 cities in France. Trade unions also called demonstrations in Belgium, Slovenia and Slovakia.

The European ruling classes have stepped up their offensive against the workers since the fall of the Soviet Union. Using the excuse that they have to improve their competitive position, the bosses have attempted to cut not only wages but the significant benefits programs that workers won throughout much of Europe. These include medical care, unemployment benefits and retirement

benefits that are far better than those in the United States—where benefits have been under attack since the Carter administration.

In France and Italy, rightist governments have been leading the attack on the workers. In Germany, it is the Social Democratic Party under the leadership of Chancellor Helmut Schroeder that has introduced "Agenda 2010," a program of heavy social cutbacks. In addition, the German bosses are demanding a longer work week, even though unemployment has reached almost 11 percent.

The French and Italian workers have been battling cutbacks for years with demonstrations and one-day general strikes. Most recently, Italian public workers walked out for a day on March 26. But the outbreak of struggle among the relatively conservative German trade unions marks a new development. Most of the German trade union leaders are tied tightly to the Social Democratic Party. It is rare they mobilize a mass demonstration.

Nearly everyone in the German protests wore buttons reading "Aufstehen" or "Stand up." The protests demonstrated clearly that the rank-and-file workers are demanding a more confrontational approach to the Schroeder government.

So far Schroeder has refused to give in. The question now before the trade union leaders in Germany is whether they are up to the escalation in struggle necessary to win concessions, and whether they are willing to break with the Social Democratic leadership to represent their union members. □



Sign at Berlin rally says 'Schroeder must go.'

French economy pushes vote to left

By G. Dunkel

The electoral left in France won a big victory March 28, winning seats in 21 of 22 mainland regions. Only Alsace-Lorraine, a small, prosperous and traditionally conservative region on the German border, voted to keep President Jacques Chirac's conservative party in control.

The breadth of Chirac's defeat was unexpected, much like the election results in Spain two weeks earlier. The election was seen by politicians, analysts and voters as a referendum on his domestic policies.

Fighting against cuts in education and "pension reform," most French teachers spent five to six weeks on strike last year. Firefighters struck for safety and retirement reforms. Entertainers who work in France's extensive summer festivals and theaters struck over cuts in unemployment.

In last year's heat wave, cutbacks in hospital staffing resulted in the deaths of 15,000 people, according to the French statistical institute.

Most public employees will now have to work more years before they can retire with full pensions. The next phase in the cuts that Chirac's government has planned will force people to pay more for medical benefits and students to pay a greater portion of their expenses.

Even though the people said "No!" in the election, Chirac essentially kept the same team with the same prime minister.

The Socialist Party, the dominant force in the new left-leaning coalition, has proclaimed it is not going to go into the streets to fight.

This isn't going to satisfy French workers, who have a long tradition of taking their protests to the streets. □

Turkish activists arrested in Europe

By John Catalinotto

The police forces of Turkey, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece and Belgium struck out April 1 and 2 against political activists. Sixty-three people were arrested, 40 of them in Turkey, under the cover of "anti-terrorism." (Reuters, April 2)

The announced target of this new wave of state repression is accused members of, or sympathizers with, the Turkish revolutionary organization Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C). This working-class, revolutionary group is known for its resolute struggle against the Turkish military regime and especially in the past few years for its struggle within Turkish prisons. The DHKP-C has been forced to operate illegally in Turkey and for the last two years it has been banned by the European Union.

Turkey is a NATO member. Its rulers want to join the EU, so Turkey now has an elected parliamentary government. But the real power still lies with the Turkish army, which in turn is dependent on its close ties to U.S. and German imperialism. The Turkish state and fascist-like death squads linked to the state have kept up a steady attack on workers' organizations during this entire period. The army has also committed mass murder against the Kurdish population.

The DHKP-C's members have played a leading role in a prison hunger strike that has gone on since 2000. Its aim is to prevent the introduction of maximum-security lockups that isolate individual political prisoners in an attempt to break them, as is done in the United States.

DHKP-C members have shown great courage and self-sacrifice. Some 60 of them have died during the hunger strike. Many more have been injured and murdered by the Turkish guards and military. The organization has also struggled against NATO and the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

While the DHKP-C is not pacifist, in Europe it has carried out only political activity. The group has never been identified with such acts as the bombing of a synagogue in Istanbul or the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid. Not even the police can seriously make such accusations. It is apparent, though, that the EU police apparatus has misused the fear created by these attacks to try to break a revolutionary workers' organization.

Along with Turkish immigrants, three Italian members of the Anti-Imperialist Camp (CAI) were arrested in Perugia, Italy. The Italian capitalist media has constantly attacked the CAI in recent months because that group has taken an explicit public position supporting the armed Iraqi resistance to the U.S.-led occupation of that country. The big-business media has been trying to discredit the idea of solidarity with the resistance and even support for the immediate withdrawal of Italian and U.S. forces from Iraq, identifying these positions with "terrorism." The media campaign and the arrests are meant to intimidate the massive anti-war movement in Italy, whose ranks are moving toward an ever more anti-imperialist position.

Meanwhile, in Greece, the teachers, public workers and other unions have made statements opposing arbitrary arrests of DHKP-C sympathizers in that country. □

Symbolic but significant shift

New Serb law aids of Milosevic vs. NATO

By John Catalinotto

Under mass popular pressure, the Serbian government has defied the U.S. and West European imperialists. The parliament voted to provide concrete support to Serbian citizens on trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, Netherlands. This includes modest financial support for former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and for Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj, who both face war crimes charges. The Radical Party led the parliamentary vote last Dec. 28 with 36 percent.

By passing the "Law on Rights of ICTY Indictees Detained at The Hague and of Their Families" on March 30, the parliament gave expression to the growing mass anger at Western imperialist domination of their country. It was also a thumbing of the nose at Washington, which is threatening to withhold an already meager \$50 million in loan aid.

The new law provides the Hague's prisoners and their families with very modest financial assistance, including the equivalent of their salaries if they had worked in Serbia, travel costs for visits by family members, phone calls and other small expenses. It also gives detainees expense

money for the work of two lawyers—legal advisers or assistants—in accordance with the rates set by the Serbian Bar Association, if these expenses are not covered by ICTY.

According to President Milosevic's assistant, Vladimir Krstjanin, this law is "important politically" but the amount is "insufficient" for a defense as complicated as Milosevic's.

The NATO-created tribunal has spent two whole years and tens of millions of dollars developing a prosecution case against Milosevic. According to his supporters, the former president plans to wage a thorough political defense on every point and charge raised against him and to turn the case into an indictment of NATO.

The growing popular support for the defendants comes after more than three years of rule in Serbia by pro-Western parties and individuals.

In 1999, a 78-day NATO bombing campaign killed thousands and destroyed much industry in Yugoslavia. It allowed the U.S. and its allies to occupy Kosovo, a province of Serbia, as alleged peacekeepers. These countries continued their efforts to subvert the Milosevic government, focusing on manipulating the national

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Iraq unites against U.S. occupation

Continued from page 1

Bremmer then sent forces to surround al-Sadr's house near Najaf and arrested his communications officer, Mustafa Yacoubi.

Protest demonstrations were organized. Writing about the demonstration in Baghdad's Firdos Square, British journalist Naomi Klein reported: "On Sunday, Iraqi soldiers, trained and controlled by Coalition forces, opened fire on demonstrators here, forcing the emergency evacuation of the nearby Sheraton and Palestine hotels. As demonstrators returned to their homes in the poor neighborhood of Sadr City, the U.S. Army followed with tanks, helicopters and planes, firing at random on homes, stores, streets, even ambulances. According to local hospitals, 47 people were killed and many more injured. In Najaf, the day was also bloody: 20 demonstrators dead, more than 150 injured." (zmag.org, April 5)

Bremmer had opened up a campaign of terror against the Shiite followers of al-Sadr with this "bloody Sunday" massacre, and by the afternoon the insurrection was underway. A report in the April 6 Los Angeles Times gave details:

"A U.S. military patrol was navigating the pitted streets of the Baghdad slum that is the stronghold of [al-Sadr] late Sunday afternoon when it ran into about 30 members of the cleric's personal volunteer army."

"But militia members rebuffed orders to lay down their arms. They and supporters hidden in a maze of surrounding buildings showered the Americans with small arms fire, pipe bombs and rocket-propelled grenades."

"The echoes of gunfire raining down from the rooftops sent Iraqi police fleeing their precincts and forced the American patrols to duck into an abandoned building. Two other patrols wound their way into the heart of the slum, and they were

attacked almost simultaneously on all sides. Militiamen toppled market stalls into the narrow streets to create roadblocks, and combat continued ... as night fell."

For hours, continued the report, "quick-response forces with Bradley fighting vehicles rolled into the area, only to be pinned down by heavy fire from black clad militia members hiding on rooftops and in alleyways."

Maj. Gen. Martin Dempsey, commander of the First Armored Division, told the reporter: "There was constant pressure. There wasn't a time when the soldiers there could have simply stood up and said 'OK... Let's leave now.' Whenever they moved, there was somebody trying to suppress them."

Continued the article: "It took more than four hours and a dozen tanks to quell the fighting. When the bullets finally stopped, dozens of Iraqis and eight U.S. troops were dead, with more than 40 Americans wounded."

Fallujah: "Everyone who had a gun was out there"

The U.S. military faced the same kind of determined resistance in Fallujah, despite the use of helicopter gunships, C-130 killer planes with rapid-fire heavy machine guns, tanks, armored vehicles and 500-pound bombs. The people prepared to meet the Pentagon's well-publicized Operation Vigilant Resolve with urban guerrilla warfare.

"As soon as we pulled up, they started shooting at us," Lance Cpl. Jamil Alkattan told reporter Pamela Constable. "There were mortars, rockets and bullets flying everywhere. They were definitely waiting for us. It seemed like everyone in the city who had a gun was out there." (*Washington Post*, April 7)

One company commander said that as the U.S. troops crossed the line from an industrial zone they had occupied, there was "a real uneasy feeling. Little kids made roadblocks." One commander noted that, unlike previous guerrilla engagements, where the fighters attack and melt away, this time the guerrilla units were larger and were standing their ground and fighting.

The resistance carried out the same kind of aggressive guerrilla warfare in Ramadi, where 12 Marines were killed in a seven-hour battle after an attack on the U.S. base at the governor's palace. The battle raged in alleys around the area.

Now a U.S. helicopter has been reported downed in Baquba. Fighters in Mosul have attacked U.S. forces as an act of solidarity with fighters in Fallujah. And a U.S. soldier has been killed in Kirkuk.

Hundreds of Iraqis have been killed in the latest fighting. At least 30 U.S. soldiers were killed and many more wounded. Bush, Bremmer, "defense" secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. John Abizaid, are ready to fight to the last drop of blood of the Iraqi people and the U.S. troops. The U.S. military, which so feared the battle of Baghdad during the war, is now being drawn into the kind of urban guerrilla fighting it was able to avoid when the resistance in Baghdad collapsed in April a year ago.

Republicans, Democrats want more U.S. troops

With this operation the Pentagon is actually resuming the war, complete with air power and heavy armor. The U.S. high command is firing into residential areas and destroying houses, schools and hospitals while it sends in U.S. troops to fight

Whatever the military outcome of this current phase of the struggle, it has sent up in smoke any prospects the Pentagon and the White House may have had of ever establishing a stable, pro-U.S. colonial regime in Iraq.

block by block, commit atrocities against the Iraqi defenders and the population at large, and be killed themselves.

The Pentagon is trying to sound calm and confident as the fire of resistance spreads across Iraq. Nevertheless, Gen. Abizaid asked for options to increase troops in the area. Rumsfeld has said that the U.S. military will get whatever troops it asks for. Secretary of State Colin Powell made a futile mission to Brussels to try to get the NATO powers, especially France and Germany, to commit forces. Rumsfeld, who once decried the "Old Europe," has said he would be "delighted" if NATO got involved.

The call for more U.S. troops on the ground is emanating from both Republicans and Democrats.

There are now 135,000 troops in Iraq on "rotation" and many may be held over. There are also at least 15,000 mercenaries—former Green Berets, Navy Seals, South African mercenaries left over from the days of apartheid, Chilean ex-soldiers from the army of the fascist Augusto Pinochet, and every variety of soldier of fortune. They can make up to \$1,000 a day. These "private contractors," in the employ of private corporations, are not subject to any military codes. But this privatization of the military is just a way of hiding additional U.S. and British forces.

It was the death of four of these mercenaries that provided the pretext for the attack on Fallujah.

Kennedy on Bush's Vietnam

Along with calls for more troops, the demands to internationalize the occupation are growing louder and louder. More cries are going out to bring in NATO, the United Nations, and any other means by which the resistance can be stopped, defused, diverted or crushed.

Typical is Sen. Edward Kennedy, who has denounced the war as Bush's Vietnam. His goal is to boost the Kerry presidential campaign. Kennedy neglected to mention that it was his brother, John F. Kennedy, who got U.S. imperialism into the Vietnam War in the first place. And it was Lyndon Johnson, JFK's vice president, who sent half a million troops there. But Kennedy would prefer that people remember the role of Richard Nixon, who came at the tail end of the war.

Nor is Kennedy calling for the U.S. to get out of Iraq. He wants to succeed with the occupation, with the subjugation of the Iraqi people, but under international auspices. But he is right in several respects.

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon all lied to the people and the world about what was going on in Vietnam. They lied about their so-called "successes." They sent home reports of "body counts" to show that they were winning the war. They lied about the fact that it was a war of national liberation, which they were trying to suppress in the name of fighting communism—just as the Bush administration is trying to justify a war for oil and



colonial subjugation in the name of fighting terrorism.

The Vietnam analogy holds also in that this latest escalation of the resistance, whether or not it is militarily set back, has profound political implications. It shows the Iraqi people, the people of the Middle East and the entire world that Washington cannot turn Iraq into its compliant colony.

An Iraqi Intifada

The battle of Fallujah, despite the atrocities carried out by the U.S. military, will not extinguish the spirit of resistance. It will only drive it deeper and wider, in the same way that no amount of repression can extinguish the Palestinian struggle for national liberation. It is no accident that the U.S. high command, according to Robert Fisk of the London Independent (April 6), has asked the Sharon government of Israel for the rules of engagement it uses in Gaza and the West Bank.

It was inevitable that—after watching the Sunni fighters valiantly resist the occupation for a year, after experiencing the raids, the checkpoints, the killing and wounding of civilians, the utter disrespect of their culture and customs by the occupation—the Shiites would join the resistance. The pressure of the masses to fight back has become irresistible.

It is true that this latest phase was set off by the arrogance of Bremmer and the Pentagon. In fact, it was Bremmer who laid the basis for building up the forces of Muqtada al-Sadr in the first place. The less resolute current among the Shiites, led by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, had center stage when he made the elementary democratic demand for elections by June 30. But Bremmer and Co. stonewalled al-Sistani and forced him to back down.

And there's more. Bremmer demanded and got outrageous provisions attached to the constitution that preserve U.S. command over the Iraqi military for five years. He got provisions to establish 14 U.S. military bases around the country. He forbade any new government from overturning the privatization laws he had illegally laid down. With all this, it became clear that there never would be even formal sovereignty for Iraq, elections or not, as long as the U.S. was running the show.

This is what made the present insurrection inevitable. And this is what will make a stable U.S. imperialist rule in Iraq impossible. □

defense court

elections in the fall of 2000. They stage-managed a coup in October of that year to get rid of Milosevic and isolate Seselj.

At that time a portion of the intelligentsia and parts of the population in Serbia believed that the removal of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and the Radical Party from the government would open the door to integration with Western Europe, bringing peace and improving living conditions.

Instead, since the ouster of Milosevic and Seselj in 2000, Serbia's economy has been globalized and taken over, mainly by U.S. and German transnational firms and by local collaborators. Unemployment is now at 30 percent, with many factories closed. No significant aid arrived from the West.

Instead of bringing peace to Kosovo, since 1999 NATO has allowed the ganglike rightist grouping known as the KLA to use murder and arson to drive 240,000 Serbs, Jews, Roma and other nationalities and progressive Kosovo Albanians out of the province. Some 4,000 were driven out just this March after widespread attacks.

Meanwhile, Milosevic's self-defense and cross-examination at The Hague has helped destroy a weak ICTY case and regained much support from the population in Serbia. □



What drives the empire?

In the 90 years since the start of the worldwide conflagration among the imperialist powers that became known as World War I, U.S. finance capital has honed its justification for war to a fare-thee-well.

According to this ideological spin, the problem always lies beyond the shores of North America. The problem is always external. And the Pentagon is never the aggressor, it's the defender.

The "endless war on terror," approved and funded by Republicans and Democrats alike, has been painted as a response to the attacks on 9/11. But evidence has already proved that the war against Afghanistan was in the works months before September. And the war to control oil-rich Iraq began with Daddy Bush, and continued during the eight years of the Clinton administration.

Haiti. Palestine. Colombia. Wherever Washington is sending troops or weapons, the excuse is always that the U.S. needs to solve the problems "over there." But their problems are effects, not causes.

The heart of the world's problem is right here, in the belly of the beast.

Many here who oppose the U.S. military drive rightly characterize it as a "war for empire." But what is the motor force of the drive for empire?

V.I. Lenin, the early 20th-century Marxist and leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, developed the most thorough and scientific analysis of imperialism in his 1916 book, "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism."

In it he wrote, "If it were necessary to give the briefest definition of imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism."

Monopoly came out of the competition and concentration of capital that began during capitalism's early laissez-faire stage in Europe, the U.S., and later Japan. That laid the basis for the emergence of today's giant monopolized industries, fused with banking capital. These behemoths play a decisive role in economic and political life. Rather than merely exporting commodities, imperialism is exporting capital—dragging hundreds of millions more people into the social relationship between exploiter and exploited. The endless search for greater and greater profits is the driving force behind this capitalist globalization.

Once the whole globe had been carved up by the imperial powers into their spheres of economic domination, a war among them to redivide the world's spoils exploded in 1914. Since then, whether the imperialists have sent their armies to fight each other in open theaters of combat, or battled for hegemony with local proxies, or fought wars of conquest like in Afghanistan or Iraq, it is the built-in imperative of monopoly capitalism to expand its markets or die that fuels imperialist war.

But this "endless" war is creating a fire storm of resistance from those under the boot-heel of Pentagon occupation. And the concentration of monopolies has also created a worldwide working class. This is the class, including its most oppressed sectors, that can end imperialist wars once and for all by removing the contradiction behind them—the private ownership of the vast mechanism of production created by collective labor.

Lenin stressed that the monopolies, themselves products of labor by workers around the world, are ready for the laboring class and oppressed to take over and run themselves. Only this class can transform private ownership into social ownership.

Getting rid of the profit motive will remove the firing pin of imperialist war.

To really be anti-war, we must be anti-imperialist and fight here at home against the rule of the giant monopolies. □

MARKET ELECTIONS:

How Democracy Serves the Rich

By Vince Copeland

Every four years, big money chooses the presidential candidates. Their war chests filled to the brim, they are then packaged by the media as "the people's choice." It's U.S.-style democracy-of the rich, by the rich and for the rich.

In this fascinating tour through the history of U.S. presidential elections, Vince Copeland explains the devious art of capitalist politics. And he shows how mass movements can upset even the best-laid plans of the "king-makers."



List price is \$18, at leftbooks.com it's 15% off, only \$15.30

Post-Civil War & Reconstruction

Democrats, Republicans create breach

By Leslie Feinberg

In the late 1860s, the Democratic and Republican parties—acting on behalf of differing economic interests—tried to drive a deep wedge between the struggles for Black liberation and women's suffrage.

The "hard-cop, soft-cop" roles of today's Republicans and Democrats were reversed in that era. In "Market Elections—How Democracy Serves the Rich," Vince Copeland explains that the Republican Party of the Northern industrialists and bankers had been the organizer of the Civil War and the leading advocate of abolishing slavery. "Its smaller radical wing in Congress identified itself to a great extent with the Black masses, fighting hard but unsuccessfully for the division of the plantations into free farms for the oppressed," he writes.

"The Democratic Party, on the other hand, had been the party of reaction, the party of the slaveholders, and even in the North was generally their ally," Copeland concludes.

The Republicans, eager to gain ascendancy by winning Black voters, backed a 15th amendment to the U.S. Constitution to extend suffrage to Black men, but not to women. The Southern former slave-owners, fearing the numerical and political strength of the Black vote, offered white women the right to suffrage.

Black leaders like Sojourner Truth, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Frederick Douglass—who had worked hard for decades to expand the rights of all women—called on white women leaders to support the 15th Amendment as a first step toward putting African Americans on an equal political status with whites in a period of violent lynch-law repression.

In this decisive moment, two currents emerged among white women struggling for suffrage.

Several of the most prominent, well-to-do white suffragists, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—those most recalled and honored today on minted coins and postage stamps and March television programming—actively opposed the 15th Amendment. They resorted to white supremacist arguments, which can easily be found in the historic record.

Anthony actually campaigned against the 15th Amendment with Democratic Party backing.

Standing tall for Black-white unity

But many, many white women who had been steeled in the struggle against the patriarchs of property and power to win Black liberation and women's rights did stand tall for unity.

Abby Kelly Foster, an Irish-American leader of the early women's rights movement, took on Stanton on the question of Black men: "Have we any true sense of justice? Are we not dead to the sentiment of humanity if we shall wish to postpone his security against present woes and future enslavement till woman shall obtain political rights?"

Frances Dana Gage also took on Anthony and Stanton. The three were considered the triumvirate of white leaders for woman's rights. "Could I with breath defeat the 15th Amendment, I would not do it," she wrote. "It is my earnest wish that the 15th Amendment may be ratified."

Mary Ashton Livermore refused to publish in her newspaper articles that Stanton and Anthony wrote calling for opposition to the 15th Amendment.

After attending woman's rights conferences in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kansas and Wisconsin, Livermore wrote in language that is moving, but dated: "The Western women moving for woman's enfranchisement do not oppose the 15th Amendment. We have never heard it opposed at a Western women's meeting, in a single instance. Western women comprehend that humanity is one—that the colored man cannot be elevated without, at the same time, uplifting the colored woman—and they see clearly that through the gap in the fence made by the colored man, as he passes over into citizenship, all American women will pass to the same destination."

Lucy Stone, who had bitterly opposed Douglass on this question earlier, also came over to support the 15th Amendment. Stone introduced a resolution declaring women's support for the amendment at a Woman's Rights Convention held in Chicago in September 1869, asserting, "We rejoice in every extension of suffrage."

When the resolution passed with only two dissenting votes she observed that this consensus was "an accurate expression of the feeling of the woman's suffrage advocates in regard to the 15th Amendment. Not one in a thousand of them is opposed to it. On the contrary, they know that Negro men, and all women, suffer a grievous, common wrong; and are glad when either class, or individuals of either class, can escape from it. Let the friends of both causes cheerfully give each other credit for real facts. Each bitterly needs all the help of the other."

When the 15th Amendment was adopted into the Constitution on March 30, 1870, even amidst the cheers of victory Frederick Douglass rallied for a campaign to win a new amendment that would extend suffrage to all women.

Douglass praised Victoria Claflin Woodhull for the support she'd given the struggle to get the amendment passed.

In May 1872, Woodhull was nominated for president of the United States by the Equal Rights party, a split-off of the socialist International Workingmen's Association. At her suggestion, Frederick Douglass was nominated to run for vice-president on the same ticket.

Historian Philip S. Foner wrote that, "Victoria Woodhull felt that woman suffragists in the Stanton-Anthony camp had been wrong in splitting with Douglass, whom she admired and respected, and that the movement would be benefited by reuniting the woman's struggle with the Negro's cause."

Unholy alliance between masters

But those who struggled for Black freedom and women's rights—and all who fought for economic and social justice—came up against a formidable new enemy alliance.

The former Southern slave-owners, desperate to unleash all-out counter-revolution to overturn Black Reconstruction, found a class ally in the Northern capitalists.

Once capital was free to expand westward, the monarchs of money formed a partnership with the old kings of cotton, helping them swindle freed slaves out of the promise of "40 acres and a mule."

In 1877 the Northern capitalist class withdrew its federal troops from the South—the last time in this country's pre-imperialist history that the military could have played a progressive role.

The Emancipation Proclamation, inked on Jan. 1, 1863, had mandated that the U.S. government and the entire military—must maintain the freedom of former slaves, and "will do no acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom." And the proclamation also specifically spelled out the right of African Americans to self-defense against violence.

But the 1877 Compromise left the largely unarmed former slaves defenseless.

The political harbinger of this treachery was the Tilden-Hayes betrayal of 1876—a vote-switching election rigged particularly against Black voters. It was the political handshake of the Republicans with the Dixiecrat Southern landowners.

Copeland stresses, "Both Republican and Democratic parties were, from then on, the exclusive parties of U.S. big business with no other significance (besides the enrichment of professional bourgeois politicians) than to continue the rule of big business with one or another reformist or reactionary method."

Capitalism was rapidly reaching a new stage of development, one that would leave its impact on all movements for social and economic equality.

Next: Rise of Rambo.

Despotic king besieged as

General strike shuts down Nepal

By Deirdre Griswold

April 7—Should we be surprised that the Bush administration is supporting the tottering reign of King Gyanendra of Nepal with money and military equipment, even though virtually the entire population has risen up against the despotic monarch?

Nepal, a country of 24 million people high in the Himalayas, is in the middle of a full-blown political crisis. On April 6 and 7, the whole country reportedly "came to a standstill" as a general strike called by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) closed "almost all shops, schools, businesses and factories." (French Press Agency, April 7) The strike was called to protest the killings, arrests and disappearances of the group's leaders and activists.

The Maoists have been leading a growing insurgency in the countryside. In recent months, they have launched major attacks on police stations and other government targets, including bombing the house of Interior Minister Kamal Thapa. On April 5 they released to the International Red Cross 37 police, soldiers and government officials they had captured on March 21 after a 12-hour gun battle in Beni town, 180 miles west of Kathmandu.

The rebels had been demanding the release of two of their top leaders, politburo member Matrika Prasad Yadav and regional chief Suresh Ale Magar, who had been captured in India and turned over to the Nepal regime. (New Kerala, April 6)

That same day, hundreds of anti-gov-

ernment rebels attacked a police station in Yadukhuwa in central Nepal, according to Xinhua, the Chinese press agency.

At the same time, other political forces are continuing with daily protests against the monarchy in several cities. In Kathmandu, the capital, tens of thousands of activists began turning up every day, beginning on April 1, to demonstrate near the royal palace. The next day, police attacked demonstrators with batons and, for the first time, fired on the crowds, injuring at least 205. (IC Wales, April 3)

On April 3, a rally was held at which the main speakers were the president of the Nepal lawyers association, the president of Nepal's biggest human rights association, the president of the Nepal professors' association and the president of the Nepal doctor's association. This moderate rally was attacked by police with tear gas. Many senior leaders were injured. (Union Network International, April 6)

The next day, 10,000 people returned to battle police outside the royal palace.

Demonstrations are also continuing in Bhaktapur, a medieval town on the outskirts of Kathmandu, and in the western city of Pokhara.

The political thrust of these demonstrations, called by five parliamentary parties, including the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), seem to be shifting. While the UML calls only for a constitutional monarchy, chants for a republic are coming from the demonstrators.

The present king took power in 2001 after his brother, the constitutional mon-

arch King Birendra, and most of the royal family were massacred. The mysterious killings were attributed to the crown prince, but he also died, supposedly of "self-inflicted wounds," paving the way for Gyanendra. The new king abandoned constitutional reforms made a decade earlier and has been ruling virtually by decree since he dismissed the elected government in 2002.

Washington has been supplying Gyanendra's regime with modern guns and night-vision equipment to combat the growing guerrilla movement, which has the support of the peasantry.

The BBC reported on April 6 that the U.S. was investing \$17 million of military aid in the Royal Nepal Army, mainly to pay for about 20,000 M16 rifles and night-vision equipment.

"Now that King Gyanendra has lost overall control of 40 of the country's 75 districts, the Bush administration believes it has good reason to be concerned," said the report.

"It has decided that the only way to prevent Nepal from becoming a 'failed state' or, worse still, a 'rogue nation,' is to increase the flow of military aid."

A decade ago the United Communist Party of Nepal was for a brief time the largest party in parliament and formed a government under King Birendra. However, it was in a coalition with the monarchist party and was unable to achieve even a modest land reform in a country where the vast majority of the people are impoverished peasants and serfdom was still legal.

This failure to achieve anything through the elections led to a split between the parliamentary left and the Maoists, who began the armed struggle for a socialist republic two years later, in 1996.

Last August, the government entered negotiations with the Maoists, but they broke down when it refused to accept their demand for the election of a new constituent assembly.

Another factor was heightened repression against the rebels and their peasant supporters.

The BBC reported on April 6 that "Just 10 days before the collapse of peace talks last August, the army killed 21 people in the eastern district of Ramechhap. They were lined up and executed at the end of a three-hour march. The report by Nepal's National Human Rights Commission into the killings concluded that almost all of the dead bodies bore evidence of being shot in the head at close range. It blamed the RNA [Royal Nepal Army]."

Now, some of the parties that were with the government then are out in the streets now, supporting the strike called by the Maoists. The French Press Agency reported on April 6 that "The Maoists, who control much of the countryside, issued a statement of support for the strike by the parties, with whom the guerrillas regularly clashed when Nepal had an elected government.

"Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as Prachanda, or 'The Fierce,' called for 'unity among all political forces' against the king." □

Chung Soon-duk dies as she lived

A fighter for Korea's liberation

By Monica Moorehead

Countless unknown or little-known self-sacrificing revolutionaries have given their lives for the liberation of humanity from colonialism and imperialism, under some of the harshest conditions imaginable. One such revolutionary was Chung Soon-duk, who died on April 1 in Seoul, South Korea. She was 71 and had suffered a stroke two months earlier.

As the wife of a peasant farmer in South Korea, Chung became a communist guerrilla fighter during the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. She, her husband and other peasant fighters went into the Chiri Mountains to fight against the U.S.-backed, reactionary South Korean military. She learned how to read and write as a guerrilla.

The Pentagon had occupied the southern part of the Korean peninsula in 1945 at the end of World War II. It remained there illegally, dividing the country and setting up a right-wing dictatorship in the south to counter the socialist revolution, led by the Korean Workers Party, that was transforming the north. From 1950-53, 1.8 million U.S. troops were sent to Asia to participate in a war meant to defeat that revolution. Close to 4 million Koreans lost their lives in this bloody conflict within a three-year period. Three-fourths of those killed were in the north, but the U.S. failed to defeat the socialist government.

For over 50 years, since the end of the Korean War, the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north.

Chung remained a great supporter of the DPRK until her last breath. She dreamed of the day when all of Korea would be free of greedy landlords and exploiters. But she did more than dream. She took up arms as a vehicle for making this dream a reality.

Chung's husband died on the battlefield in 1952. By the end of the Korean War, many of Chung's compatriots had been killed or surrendered to the South Korean military, but she and others continued the fight against the "colony of U.S. imperialists," as she referred to South Korea.

Chung sacrificed material comforts and remained in the mountains as a guerrilla until 1963, 10 years after the armistice, when, in a shoot-out with the South Korean police, she was shot and captured. She lost her right leg.

Chung spent 23 years in prison and was released on parole in 1985 after she finally signed a statement "disavowing" her communist ideology. In an Associated Press interview last August, she reiterated that she still believed in communism and only signed the statement in order to receive better health care and a reduced prison sentence. Her dream was to go to the north.

In September 2000, South Korea sent 63 communist guerrillas, who had refused to denounce communism, to the DPRK. They had spent up to 45 years in solitary confinement. Chung was not among them.

Right before Chung died, the Red Cross Society in North Korea stated that not including her among those repatriated was "proof that South Korea is the worst

violator of human rights." (AP, April 2)

Mingahyop, an organization in the south that supports former communist guerrillas and political dissidents, stated that Chung will be cremated and her ashes sent to a Buddhist temple near the demilitarized zone, so that one day her remains can have a final resting place in the DPRK, as she wished.

Today, millions of Koreans in the north and south are fighting for the reunification of their country despite the ominous presence of occupying U.S. troops and the Pentagon's nuclear threat. These Koreans are carrying on in the great heroic tradition of freedom fighters like Chung Soon-duk.

"All my life, I have been a unification warrior who struggled to free the fatherland from the Americans," Chung stated last August. "I can still fight. I still feel like standing up and climbing the mountains."

Moorehead was a delegate at an international conference on the reunification of the Korean peninsula held in Pyongyang, DPRK, last July.



Chung Soon-duk

All my life, I have been a unification warrior who struggled to free Korea from the Americans.

Fallan esfuerzos de EE.UU. de atemorizar a países caribeños

CARICOM rechaza nuevo régimen haitiano

Por Pat Chin

Una reciente reunión de los líderes miembros del CARICOM—una organización de comercio entre 15 países caribeños—no dio el resultado que la Casa Blanca de Bush quería. A pesar de la intensa presión, ellos concluyeron su reunión el 27 de marzo rechazando el reconocimiento del régimen instalado en Haití. El Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide había sido forzado a dejar su puesto tras una campaña desestabilizadora respaldada por los Estados Unidos que incluyó el uso de pandillas terroristas armadas.

Los líderes del CARICOM también exigieron que la Asamblea General de la ONU investigue la expulsión y el exilio de Aristide. Los 53 miembros de la Unión Africana ya habían hecho la misma demanda, y el Consejo Congresional Afro-Americano de los Estados Unidos ha pedido una investigación congresional.

Mientras tanto, según un reporte del Grupo de Apoyo a Haití, muchos oficiales y partidarios del Partido de la Familia Lavalas, quienes habían sido forzados a ocultarse, parecen ahora estarse reagrupando. El Senador del Partido Lavalas, Yvon Feuille ha dicho abiertamente que “miembros del partido Lavalas están siendo perseguidos y asesinados por todo el país”. Denunció “el plan de los colonizadores blancos americanos y franceses de marginar al movimiento que llevó a Aristide al poder en 1990 en las primeras elecciones democráticas haitianas y advirtió que, “sin Lavalas, no hay solución.”

Según Prensa Asociada, “los líderes caribeños están enojados porque el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU rehusó escuchar sus peticiones de enviar tropas internacionales para defender a Aristide... pero rápidamente aprobó una invasión liderada por los EE.UU.” tan pronto él se fue.

El Primer Ministro jamaiquino, P.J. Patterson, líder de CARICOM, ha enfrentado intensas presiones por darle asilo temporero a Aristide. La Consejera de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos, Condoleezza Rice fue la última en tratar de intimidar al gobierno jamaiquino exigiendo a Patterson que expulse a Aristide inmediatamente o de lo contrario enfrentaría graves consecuencias.

Esta amenaza surgió pocos días después que se reportara que el Departamento de Estado había suspendido la venta de armas a Jamaica, aduciendo con su acostumbrada hipocresía, que la suspensión no tenía nada que ver con la presencia de Aristide en Jamaica y que ésta no se aplicaba al ejército ni a la fuerza policial jamaiquina, sólo a los compradores de armas privadas.

Patterson recibió grandes aplausos cuando él dijo en la reunión, “Nosotros podremos ser pequeños en tamaño y no nos jactamos de tener un gran poder militar, pero nuestra influencia en el hemisferio [no debería] subestimarse... Y yo creo que no puede haber una solución permanente y duradera a la crisis en Haití sin que CARICOM esté involucrado.”



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Haitianos se unían a las manifestaciones contra la guerra el 20 de marzo en Nueva York.

(Trinidad Express, 26 de marzo)

Aristide ha rechazado refugiarse en Nigeria. Y se han dudado los reportes de que él se irá a Sur África para un asilo permanente; el gobierno sudafricano ha negado haber recibido una petición.

Mientras masas de haitianos se unían a las manifestaciones contra la guerra el 20 de marzo en la ciudad de Nueva York y en todo el país, un espectáculo se desarrollaba en Gonaives, la ciudad norteña de Haití que ha expuesto la conspiración de la administración Bush tanto con el brazo político como el armado de la “oposición” que se movilizó en contra del presidente elegido popularmente de Haití.

El Primer Ministro Interino, impuesto por Estados Unidos, Gerard Latortue, fue llevado a Gonaives, la primera ciudad tomada por las pandillas armadas, donde saludó a los mercenarios a pago reunidos allí llamándoles “luchadores por la libertad” y les agradeció el deshacerse del “dictador Aristide.”

Latortue ha formado un gobierno interino que excluye al Partido Lavalas de Aristide, el grupo político más grande de Haití. Fue llevado a Gonaives en un helicóptero del ejército estadounidense “Black Hawk” y escoltado por otro “Black Hawk” y un “Chinook.” Allí fue recibido por una delegación de asesinos, incluyendo al ex oficial del ejército y del cuerpo policial, Guy Phillippe para darle legitimidad al nuevo régimen y a su brazo armado. El Representante Especial, David Lee, de la Organización de Estados Americanos observaba secundando.

En el último mes, desde la expulsión de Aristide, 3.200 tropas estadounidenses, francesas, canadienses y chilenas han sido desplegadas en Haití. Pero la mayoría de éstas están fuera de Cap-Haitien, Les Cayes y Gonaives, donde a los escuadrones terroristas se les ha dado luz verde para montar un reino de terror contra los partidarios de Aristide.

Las llamadas tropas “internacionales para la estabilización” continúan ignorando que un asesino convicto como

Louis-Jodel Chamblain preside una “corte” en Cap-Haitien, que juzga a acusados desde robos hasta ser partidarios de Aristide y da veredictos múltiples, incluyendo la ejecución pública de muerte.

Los cadáveres continúan encontrándose en la bahía de Cap-Haitien, la segunda ciudad más grande de Haití, de acuerdo con Prensa Asociada. Además, “docenas de cuerpos ametrallados han sido llevados al depósito de cadáveres este mes.”

El titere Primer Ministro, Latortue ha criticado la decisión de Jamaica de dar asilo a Aristide. También rompió relaciones con Jamaica y congeló la membresía de Haití en el CARICOM. Latortue no fue invitado a la reciente reunión cumbre, y todos los contactos informales con él fueron suprimidos después que él alabara y calificara a los terroristas apoyados por Francia y los EEUU como “luchadores de la libertad”.

Voces caribeñas llegan hasta los EE.UU.

Rickey Singh, reconocido periodista para el periódico la Nación con base en Barbados, respondió: “Habría sido ridículo, en realidad trágico, que ningún país del CARICOM, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad y Tobago, o cualquier otro, no le hubieran brindado estadía temporera a Aristide y a su familia, mientras que los Estados Unidos continúan rehusando dar asilo a los refugiados haitianos y a la vez dan ‘refugio’ a ex asesinos y políticos maleantes haitianos.”

El periódico, Trinidad Express también dijo: “La arrogancia de los Estados Unidos no tiene fronteras,” declaró el 24 de marzo en un artículo titulado “Jugando con Aristide.”

“Sobre Haití y su presidente expulsado, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, estamos siendo aleccionados por Dubya y sus colegas como si fuéramos estudiantes de primer grado. Los americanos no nos gobiernan. Por lo tanto si nosotros deseamos dar asilo a Aristide, ese es asunto nuestro, no de ellos. Y si ellos desean que nosotros

deportemos a nuestros doctores y enfermer@s cuban@s y que cortemos relaciones con Chávez en Caracas porque ellos creen que él es otro Castro, ése es su problema, no el nuestro.”

“En una pieza titulada “Compasión, política y tonterías de la historia” por Michael Burke para el periódico el Observador de Jamaica, re impreso en el diario Trinidad Express y publicado en un portal venezolano, él hizo recordar que por lo menos 9 presidentes haitianos pasados fueron permitidos quedarse en Jamaica por un tiempo, además de Simón Bolívar de Venezuela y un ex presidente de México, el General Antonio López de Santa Anna. El cubano José Martí también estuvo allí, y una estatua de Bolívar fue erigida en el Círculo de Héroes de Jamaica en el 1967.

Burke recordó que Patterson había “diferido públicamente con los EE.UU. sobre la invasión a Irak. El además demostró al mundo que él podía enfrentarse a los Estados Unidos pidiendo una investigación por la ONU sobre las circunstancias bajo las cuales Aristide había sido expulsado de su poder en Haití; y a pesar del disgusto de los Estados Unidos sobre el permiso para Aristide de estar allí, él no ha cambiado de opinión.”

Los haitianos y sus partidarios protestaron en Washington D.C., el 20 de marzo por los derechos humanos en ese país caribeño que lleva siglos de opresión. Varios grupos de derechos humanos también han protestado la devoción mostrada por Latortue a los escuadrones terroristas de la muerte y han pedido el arresto de ellos.

Aún algunos legisladores del Partido Demócrata, incluyendo al candidato a la presidencia John Kerry han criticado el golpe militar de Bush en Haití—pero no exigen el regreso de Aristide como principio basado en el derecho del pueblo haitiano a la autodeterminación. La crítica es sólo para lograr una ventaja política en contra de los Republicanos en las próximas elecciones capitalistas. □