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POLICE, PENTAGON & PROTEST

Movie stars, demonstrators, even software developers have to fight for right to oppose the war

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Iraqis continue to show spirit of resistance

By Fred Goldstein

The barbaric empire builders in the White House and the Pentagon have visited untold destruction upon Iraqi society. They waged a war of unprovoked aggression to destroy a sovereign, independent government. In the process they killed or wounded unknown thousands of men, women and children—soldiers and civilians.

They have left millions with no jobs and no services. They destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, power plants and power lines, the telephone system, railroads, pipelines and government buildings with millions of personal and public records.

The U.S. military aided or stood by while Baghdad's famed archeology museum, that had assembled artifacts dating back 7,000 years to the origins of Middle Eastern civilization, was vandalized, and while hundreds of years of cultural accomplishments in the national library went up in smoke.

Yet, with all that, the priests of high-tech "shock and awe" in Washington have not subdued the anti-colonial spirit of the Iraqi people.

In the fantasy world of the Pentagon planners, all they had to do was get rid of the Baathist government with well-placed missiles, bombs and a show of force on the ground. Then Iraq would be theirs to remake into a docile client state that would willingly hand them the oil and the military bases they seek to advance their empire.

But, at the moment, U.S. military forces are facing a growing tide of suspicion, resentment and hatred of the occupation.

A sea of anger

The new Pentagon-appointed overseer of Iraq is the retired general and military contractor Jay Garner. His position is innocuously titled head of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.

Garner made his entrance into Baghdad with a five-hour tour on April 21.

He had to travel in a heavily armed contingent, guarded by Humvees with machine guns. Although his tour was carefully scripted, he had to witness several thousand demonstrators outside the Palestine Hotel, the informal headquarters of the occupation, demanding the release of Shiite cleric Sheik Al-Fartusi. Al-Fartusi had been seized by the U.S. military on suspicion of involvement in the killing of a pro-imperialist cleric, Abdul Majid Khoei, who was assassinated in Najaf right after being flown in from London.

The London Independent of April 22 pointed out that this demonstration had "far more [people] than ever turned out to applaud U.S. troops" and that it was protesting "occupation."

Garner then proceeded to the looted Yarmouk Hospital, which had been without power for two weeks, where he was to meet with the hospital staff. He made a canned speech and then had to listen to Aml Khadir, a mother of two who had worked in the management office of the hospital for 25 years. She told him that bombs destroyed her house and left her family homeless, according to the Washington Post of April 22. The Post did not record his reply.

He was also told by Jawait Abaidy, an orthopedic surgeon, that most hospital workers had read about the Israeli statement that he signed in the year 2000 praising the Israeli military for its "remarkable restraint" in dealing with the Palestinian uprising. No record of his reply.

Garner then went to the largest sewage plant in Baghdad, the South Water Sewer Treatment Plant, which was abandoned and is sending untreated sewage into the Tigris River because of lack of power. The Iraqis who were supposed to show him around boycotted the meeting. Garner and his team lost the photo-op as they stood alone viewing the scene.

According to the New York Times of April 22, this was the kick-off of a four-day "campaign-style trip for the general, which seems as much tailored for American television as for the Iraqis." The Times pointed out that "it was a far different

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Baghdad and Karbala: Cries of 'U.S. out!' at huge rallies



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Pentagon punishes software developer for anti-war comments

By Gary Wilson

The Pentagon has cancelled funding for a software project because the lead developer said he was sickened by the war in Iraq.

On April 6, the Toronto Globe and Mail published an interview with Theo de Raadt of the OpenBSD project (openbsd.org), based in Calgary, Canada. The article focused on a controversy that was developing over the funding OpenBSD received from the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

DARPA is the Pentagon agency that funded the development of the system that eventually evolved into the Internet.

OpenBSD is a computer operating system that is widely used on computer systems requiring strong security. Users range from universities to Fortune 500 companies like Adobe to many governments as well as non-governmental agencies like Amnesty International—all worried about security.

OpenBSD has been developed almost entirely by volunteers over its seven years of existence. The primary focus of the developers has been security.

During its first seven years, OpenBSD reported only one security hole. Microsoft, on the other hand, reported 68 security holes in its products over the last year, or more than one a week.

The Pentagon believes OpenBSD “may be its best bet to protect its computer networks from so-called cyber-terrorist attacks,” reported the Globe and Mail.

A controversy developed because many questioned OpenBSD’s acceptance of funds from the Pentagon. Not many outside the United States are ready to trust the Pentagon and its motives. It is already widely believed that the Pentagon has a secret deal with Microsoft that gives it a back door into Windows servers—the powerful computers that run networks, databases and internet shopping services—that can be used to gain access to data without anyone else knowing. For that reason many governments have banned Microsoft products from their most sensitive systems.

OpenBSD has emerged as a favorite for many looking

for an alternative system. But then came the revelation that the Pentagon had been funding the project since the year 2000.

The developers of OpenBSD at first welcomed the funding. DARPA’s funds meant that after years of people working on a volunteer basis, a full-time staff could be hired. Five developers, including de Raadt, were given full-time jobs on OpenBSD.

But then the questions started coming. De Raadt told the Globe and Mail that they had accepted Pentagon funding only on the condition that absolutely no strings would be attached.

The war on Iraq was making it more difficult to justify acceptance of Pentagon funds. The war, de Raadt noted, is about oil, not human rights. “It just sickens me,” he said. As for the Pentagon’s funding, he said, “I’m actually fairly uncomfortable about it.”

He then added, “I try to convince myself that our grant means a half of a cruise missile doesn’t get built.”

Soon after that interview, de Raadt was called by Jonathan Smith, the computer science professor in charge of the DARPA project funding OpenBSD at the University of Pennsylvania, who said that people at the university and DARPA were uncomfortable with his anti-war comments. Two days after the phone call he was told officially that all funds were terminated. This fits a pattern. Many public figures who have spoken out against the war on Iraq are being publicly punished by the Bush administration and the Pentagon.

OpenBSD had planned a seminar in May. Without notice, DARPA representatives called and canceled reservations at a Canadian hotel for 60 developers who were to attend. And all other funds just stopped.

In an online conversation available on slashdot.com, de Raadt said, “I am not sorry for having said my anti-war stuff, in fact if anything, this comes to something I said to Ty a few nights ago at the bar: ‘If they take the money away, then it was blood money, and I don’t want it.’”

The OpenBSD project has put out an appeal for help that has gotten wide support. Funds were quickly raised to replace the \$30,000 withdrawn from the conference; it will happen as scheduled. □

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Protesters tell police spies, 'Back off'

By Greg Butterfield
New York

Hundreds of protesters who were arrested on anti-war demonstrations here from Feb. 15 to April 15 were subjected to illegal and unconstitutional questioning about their political beliefs and associations, the New York Civil Liberties Union has charged.

Many protesters contacted the NYCLU, which lodged a formal complaint with the New York Police Department on their behalf. On April 17 civil rights lawyers took the matter to a federal court judge who had earlier agreed to ease restrictions on police spying and intelligence gathering.

On April 8 Judge Charles S. Haight had sided with the NYPD's claim that police "needed greater latitude to conduct terrorism investigations" after 9/11.

But for nearly two months before this loosening of police restrictions, arrested protesters say, they were being questioned by detectives from the department's Intelligence Division—also known as the "Red Squad" for its historic persecution of communists and other progressives.

The detectives asked questions from an official "Demonstration Debriefing Form." Protesters were asked what political party or organization they belonged

to; if they had been to previous demonstrations; what school they attended; their views on Palestine and Israel; and even whether they believed the U.S. should have participated in World War II.

The NYPD compiled a computer database on these individuals.

When this was brought into public view, the NYPD claimed it had stopped asking the questions and had destroyed the database and paper forms. Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said he knew nothing about it.

There was no independent confirmation of these claims.

Arrested demonstrators will still be asked about their political affiliations, NYPD spokesperson Michael O'Looney said. Answers will be listed in a "tally of organizations" rather than individuals.

Civil rights lawyers say that's unconstitutional as well, and that the questioning demonstrates "an intelligence division that is out of control."

Denver victory bucks national trend

The New York case isn't an isolated incident. It's part of the Bush administration's war at home against poor and working-class people, communities of color, students and progressives.

"Under the proposed Domestic Security

Enhancement Act of 2003, the Justice Department would support communities in terminating state law enforcement consent decrees from before Sept. 11, 2001, that limit police from gathering information about individuals and organizations," the Associated Press reported April 6.

Chicago, Los Angeles and Seattle are among the major cities planning to undo restrictions on police spying and infiltration of political groups. A state Republican lawmaker in Oregon has even introduced a bill that would classify protesters as "terrorists" with a mandatory 25-years-to-life prison sentence. (Reuters, April 2)

And naked police repression is on the increase.

In Oakland, Calif., anti-war demonstrators and bystanders, including longshore workers, were attacked with wooden and rubber bullets, concussion grenades and tear gas April 7.

Two hundred protesters at a legal, permitted march in Chicago were arrested en masse on March 20.

At the Washington, D.C., anti-war protest April 12, Marc Frucht from Milwaukee was held down and beaten repeatedly with a nightstick by police after he tried to photograph a woman being arrested.

Modest restrictions on police spying and abuse were won in the 1970s and

1980s, after decades of state-sponsored terror directed at progressive movements. But it's a myth that police ever stopped targeting the left.

Take Denver, for example. On April 17, the city and the American Civil Liberties Union reached an out-of-court settlement restricting cops from photographing, recording license plate numbers, or intercepting email of protest organizers.

Fifty years of police spying came to light just last year. The American Friends Service Committee, a pacifist group affiliated with the Quaker religious sect, was listed as a "criminal extremist group" by the Denver police, along with a Chiapas solidarity group. (AP, April 17)

Under the settlement, police would be limited to "gathering information about serious criminal activity." There will be independent oversight for the first two years. (Reuters, April 17)

But no one in the department will be punished. And so far the Denver cops are refusing to turn over their files, claiming they will destroy the papers "in a year."

"I'm disappointed that no one to this day has been disciplined, transferred or fired for assembling the current files," said Native activist Glenn Morris, the subject of one of the 3,200 police files. "This intelligence was gathered in direct violation of the Constitution." (Denver Post, April 18) □

A visit with one of the Cuban Five

Out of the 'hole' and stronger than ever

By Alicia Jrapko and Bill Hackwell

Two members of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five were the first outsiders to visit Gerardo Hernández in prison after his release from solitary confinement—the "hole"—on March 28. This is their account of that visit.

As we drove the 300 miles from San Francisco to Lompoc prison, we were not sure if the authorities would allow us in to see Gerardo Hernández, one of the five Cuban political prisoners being held unjustly in the United States. The last time we had tried to see Gerardo was shortly after he and the four others were thrown into the hole on orders from Attorney General John Ashcroft, who cited "national security." On March 7, at the entrance to Lompoc, a legal representative of the prison had told us that we would probably never see Gerardo again.

Since his release from the hole, Gerardo had had no visitors other than a single legal visit, so our doubts remained on whether we were going to be allowed in. Early in the morning we completed all the necessary paper work. As we walked inside the walls we were still anxious,

anticipating that someone would deny us entry.

We were only sure when the door to the visiting area opened and Gerardo, now a hero to the Cuban people, walked in smiling, with his head held high.

During the next six hours, as we talked of our families and world events, he explained how he endured 30 days in solitary confinement behind double doors, in a cell 5 feet wide by 6 feet long with a single light bulb constantly burning. He was stripped of every personal thing, except his dignity. Sewer water from a toilet above leaked into his cell and communications with other human beings were suspended.

The Cuban Five had been thrown into the hole as the day for their appeals approached. This came as a surprise to people who follow their case around the world, and even to some of the guards and other prisoners. Gerardo is known as a model prisoner, who makes an effort to be helpful to others.

Cubans have a joke that concerns always finding a way to resolve the problems they encounter. This humor comes from the scarcity created by over 40 years of the unilateral U.S. blockade against

Gerardo
Hernández

WW PHOTO: ALICIA JRAPKO

Cuba. When Gerardo was allowed paper and stamps, but no envelopes, to send a letter to his attorney, Paul McKenna, he constructed an envelope made of legal paper glued together with toothpaste. It made it.

The question on our minds was how he coped with such deprivation and petty cruelty. He told us: "This was not just about me and the other four compañeros, because we represent the struggle of the Cuban people. I never forgot that. I knew that our people were behind us and would do everything to make our conditions known and to call out to the world for our release from the hole. I also knew that all the people working

in solidarity to free the Five and many others who are for justice, and who are learning about our case, would be mobilized in our behalf.

"I was also proud knowing that many of you in the U.S. who support the struggle for our freedom were also in the streets protesting the U.S. war of aggression against the people of Iraq."

Gerardo has just started to respond to the hundreds of letters that backlogged during his time in the hole. He asked us on behalf of the Five to thank everyone for their solidarity and efforts to get them released from solitary.



Perhaps the government of the U.S. underestimated how many friends the Cuban Five have. As we left the prison, we remarked that we had never seen Gerardo stronger or more determined. The solidarity movement must continue to make more people aware of the injustice of this case, which is about their efforts to prevent terrorist acts against their country.

The release of the Cuban Five from the hole was a step forward—but the real victory will be when Gerardo, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino and René González walk free and return to their homeland in Cuba. □

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As Pentagon budget takes all Unions mobilize against cuts

By G. Dunkel
New York

Hard times are here. Every state in the union is facing budget shortfalls, major job losses and sharp cutbacks in services like education, health care and sanitation.

In New York, unions of public employees are looking for strategies to hold onto their members' jobs. Major demonstrations are scheduled in New York and Albany, the state capital.

This crisis has hit even before the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy and the vast increases in military spending take huge bites out of the income and living standards of working and poor people in this country.

The increases in military spending are indeed major.

Congress passed an \$80-billion supplemental appropriation to pay for what the war cost to the end of March. Estimates of the cost of occupying Iraq with U.S. forces range from \$3 to \$5 billion a month. That bill won't come due for a while, and no one can know how long the occupation will last, or how hot and expensive it will wind up being. But there are still 20,000 troops in Kosovo after six years, and 37,000 U.S. troops in Korea after 50 years.

The Bush administration is obviously expecting to use Iraq's oil wealth to pay for the war, the occupation and whatever rebuilding it does of Iraq's infrastructure. The government has published no firm figure on what it will cost to repair enough of the damage to get Iraq shipping oil again.

Economist William Nordhaus, in a report published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in December 2002, estimated \$30 billion as "the minimal rebuilding needs in postwar Iraq (including the oil sector)." Other estimates range much higher.

A good chunk of this \$30 billion will have to come from the U.S. Treasury before Iraq's oil starts to flow. Even after it does, Iraq's debts—from the reparations it "owes" to Kuwait to loans from foreign companies amounting to \$100 billion—and its domestic needs will keep the U.S. government from recouping all its outlays. U.S. oil companies and military contractors, however, will be making billions.

Yet even with all these additional expenses on top of its \$400-billion military budget, which equals the combined total military budgets of the rest of the world, the Bush administration is determined to give the richest millionaires and billionaires of this country a \$550-billion tax break.

This profligate military spending plus tax breaks for the richest of the rich means more misery and harder times for the working and poor people of this country.

Response of New York union movement

President George W. Bush told the National Governors Association in February not to expect any significant help from the federal government, even though it was imposing major new burdens on the states in education and in domestic security. "It's because we went through a recession and we're at war," he said, neglecting to add that the war was of his own making.

The city of New York suffered major human and financial losses on 9/11. It has lost 250,000 jobs since then, but not all of them due to that assault. Since its economy depends on Wall Street and the financial industry, it was already in decline. The city is now facing a \$4-billion budget shortfall that by law it cannot carry into next year.

It's not getting much help from the state. The state of New York is facing its

own budget deficit of \$11.5 billion and has shifted the cost of some federally mandated programs onto the city.

Millionaire New York Gov. George Pataki plans on covering the state's shortfall by reducing funds that go to local school boards, higher education and medical care. He's cutting about \$4 billion, raising fees by \$1.4 billion and borrowing \$4.2 billion. Part of the fee raise would come from increasing tuition in state-funded colleges by \$1,200 a year, which would deprive many students of their chances for higher education and a better life.

Pataki is opposed to raising taxes and is opposed to letting the billionaire mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, impose a commuter tax on the 3 million or so people who live outside the city but work in it. Bloomberg has already raised real estate taxes, the only tax over which the city has control, by 18.5 percent.

Bloomberg's solution is to hit the municipal unions for big givebacks, at least \$600 million worth this year. He has already sent out layoff notices to 5,000 city workers and put 10,000 more on notice. If the unions cave in, he will go to the state legislature with a tough-guy victory in hand and push the commuter tax.

But the unions have their own solution: tax the rich by adding a surcharge on income over \$100,000 and an additional one on income over \$200,000.

AFSCME DC 37, which represents about 125,000 city workers making from \$15,000 to \$80,000 a year, is willing to bargain, but feels it doesn't have to take Bloomberg's deal. During the boom time

of the 1990s, it accepted 3-1/2 years of zeroes—that is, no wage increases.

To make its point, DC 37 has called for a major rally at City Hall Park on Tuesday, April 29, at 5:30 p.m. It is demanding "Stop layoffs! Stop contracting out our jobs!" and is urging the people of New York to "Stand up with DC 37 for your community and to stop the layoffs that hurt us all."

It is expecting 25,000 to 35,000 of its members and members of other municipal unions to attend this rally.

On the state level, New York State United Teachers, a joint council representing all the AFT and NEA locals in the state, has called for a major rally in Albany on May 3 to support full state funding for education, from pre-kindergarten to post-graduate. Hundreds of buses have already been reserved and three trains—two from New York City and one from Buffalo.

If there are not enough buses in the state for the teachers, staff and their supporters, NYSUT says it will rent some in Canada.

While the more conservative leadership of NYSUT turned down an anti-war resolution at its April convention, the Professional Staff Congress, a major affiliate representing faculty and staff at the City University of New York, intends on bringing placards saying "Money for education, not war." It is also planning to send at least one bus from each of the 19 CUNY campuses.

The May 3 NYSUT march is intended to be the largest in Albany's history and will make the point that education is a right, not a privilege, as strongly as possible. □

After shooting on Oakland docks

Unions call rally against police brutality

By Richard Becker
San Francisco

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the Alameda County (Oakland) Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and other labor organizations have called for a march to protest a police attack on anti-war demonstrators and unions at the Port of Oakland.

The protest on Saturday, April 26, will begin at 1 p.m. at Jack London Square in Oakland, to be followed by a march to Frank Ogawa Plaza at 14th and Broadway, outside the Oakland City Hall.

On April 7, about 500 people had held a community picket at the entrances to the docks of American Presidential Lines and Stevedore Services of America. They were protesting both shipping companies' war contracts. APL is a major shipper of military cargo. SSA has been awarded the contract to run the Iraqi port of Umm Al-Qasr under the U.S./British occupation regime in Iraq.

Oakland cops responded to the picket by opening fire with plastic bullets, wooden dowels and bean bags fired from shotguns, as well as concussion grenades. They injured dozens of people.

As the union flyer for the April 26 protest states: "Oakland police injured

San Francisco, April 7. One of the anti-war protesters wounded by plastic bullets.



peaceful protesters at the Oakland Port. Then they fired on ILWU Local 10 workers who were waiting to get into work on Monday morning. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that police acted at the direction of the shipping companies, and as though they were private security guards. ... Instead of protecting workers and respecting the rights of the protesters, police injured nine members of the Longshore union—sending five to local hospitals for treatment.

"Working people want to know: Who's next? Come show the Oakland police that working people and the community will stick together to demand accountability."

On April 29, at 7 p.m., the Oakland City Council will hold a hearing on the police attack. □

Lesbian, gay, bi and trans

Big win for same-sex couples

By Leslie Feinberg
New York

The demand to root out institutionalized discrimination against same-sex couples is scoring successes, small and large. A big victory—because it is precedent-setting—was won in April in the case of a gay man here who fought for his right to sue for wrongful death as legal spouse of his partner, Neal Spicehandler.

Many people here read about 25 people being deliberately run over by the car of an out-of-control individual in a three-day period last February.

But for lesbian and gay, bi and trans people, institutionalized oppression can turn accidents into even greater nightmares for lack of rights after the headlines have faded.

Spicehandler was one of the people mowed down in February. His broken leg required two surgeries at St. Vincent's Medical Center. Three days later, he died of an embolism.

His partner of almost two decades, John Langan, had no rights to sue on the basis of medical negligence because he was not considered a spouse in the eyes of the law.

In November 2000, soon after same-sex civil unions were won in Vermont, Langan and Spicehandler exchanged

rings and vows in a ceremony there. The two lovers had already lived together for 15 years.

So Langan sued for the right to sue, and has won a court battle in a ground-breaking decision. In a 25-page ruling made public on April 15, Nassau County Supreme Court Justice John Dunne conceded, "It is impossible to justify, under equal protection principles, withholding the same recognition from a union which meets all the requirements of a marriage in New York but for the sexual orientation of the partners."

"This decision is a tremendous victory," stressed Adam Aronson, a lawyer with Lamda—the group that represented Langan. "This is the first time, to our knowledge, that a court outside of the state of Vermont has recognized the parties to a civil union as spouses."

The Republican judge emphasized that his ruling could only be applied to the wrongful death lawsuit. Dunne may want to set that limitation in his own carefully worded decision. But the pressure to rule on this case is a result of a struggle outside the courtroom that he doesn't preside over.

And this demand for recognition of same-sex families is continuing to exert pressure so that equal rights can be enjoyed in life, not just in death. □

TRANSGENDER LIBERATION A movement whose time has come

A Marxist view of when and why transgender oppression arose—why is there bigotry and violence against trans people?

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Cancels Robbins/Sarandon film showing

Hall of Fame pitches a foul ball

By Monica Moorehead

"Everything is political," goes the popular saying. The brutal U.S. war followed by the occupation of Iraq has proven it again—this time in the area of baseball.

The president of the Baseball Hall of Fame, Dale Petrosky, canceled an April 26-27 showing of the 1988 movie "Bull Durham" at the organization's museum in Cooperstown, N.Y. The showing was to have marked the 15th anniversary of the critically acclaimed film.

Why was the film showing cancelled? Petrosky, a former assistant press secretary for President Ronald Reagan, could not tolerate the anti-war views of Tim Robbins. Robbins was scheduled to attend the showing with his companion and fellow actor, Susan Sarandon. Both had starring roles in the film and both are long-time progressive activists.

Petrosky was quoted as saying that Robbins's views "could put our troops in even more danger." Robbins stated that he was "dismayed" by the cancellation and added, "I had been unaware that baseball was a Republican sport." (New York Times, April 11)

This exposes, once again, that freedom of speech in the U.S. is truly

reserved for those who side with the reactionary, right-wing status quo. This so-called controversy is a distraction from the real issue: Why is a right-wing, pro-war extremist like Petrosky the president of the Baseball Hall of Fame? You can bet that millions of dollars are a big part of the answer.

Robbins interview interrupted

Robbins is not an anti-imperialist and relies mainly on moral and legalistic arguments to question this war. But he, together with other well-known artists like Martin Sheen and Michael Moore, have refused to be silent on the war on Iraq. The Bush administration and its allies, including conservative media moguls, are digging up McCarthyite tactics from the beginning of the Cold War, questioning the "patriotism" of these artists—an implied threat that dissent is treason. They have also attempted to put them on the defensive by arguing that anti-war statements—not the war itself—put U.S. troops in "harm's way."

On April 14, Robbins was interviewed about the "Bull Durham" controversy by Matt Lauer on NBC's Today show. "The message is, if you



Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins at the Academy Awards.

speak out against this administration, you can and will be punished," said Robbins. "We're sending out messages on an almost daily basis that they have no right to protest against this president." (Rock and Rap Confidential, April 18)

Robbins spoke about attacks on the popular women's group, the Dixie Chicks, who made anti-war, anti-Bush remarks during one of their recent concerts. Clear Channel carried out a vicious campaign to have their music banned all over the country. This did not stop the group's album record sales from zooming; in fact, it was an asset.

Clear Channel is close to the administration and has a far-right agenda. After deregulation of the airwaves in the 1990s, the company emerged as the biggest owner of U.S. radio stations—nearly 1,200, including major stations in all the big cities.

In the middle of the Today show interview, someone pulled the plug. Robbins's microphone went dead, with no explanation. □

Wayne State University

Student Council votes to divest from Israel

By Cheryl Labash
Detroit

The Wayne State University Student Council has demanded that the university divest all funds from and prohibit any transactions with companies that do business in Israel. The 9 to 7 vote resulted from a campaign by the Students Movement for Justice (SMJ), which was kicked off last fall at the beginning of the academic year. The WSU Student Council action appears to be the first time that a resolution proposed by this new movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people has been enacted.

UAW Local 2322 at the University of Massachusetts has passed a resolution supporting divestment and active campaigns to end the illegal Israeli military occupation of Pales-

tinian land are growing on many campuses, including the state universities of North Carolina, Massachusetts, Florida, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Virginia, as well as Columbia/Barnard, Rutgers, Princeton, Tufts and Yale.

The WSU resolution points out that "Israel was a long-time, close ally" of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa overthrown by the African National Congress. It states, "African Archbishop Desmond Tutu

has urged us all to divest from Israel due to its violent and humiliating apartheid policies."

In addition to the divest from Israel campaign, the SMJ has led many on-campus demonstrations against the U.S. war on Iraq. Wayne State University has investments in military profiteers like General Electric, Boeing, United Technologies, General Motors and Dow Chemical, as well as the hated symbols of globalization, McDonald's and Coca-Cola. □



Palestinian boy in Jenin on the West Bank hurls stones at Israeli army tank on April 16.

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

War for soldiers, or for empire?



"I believe that War is Murder. I believe that armies and navies are at bottom the tinsel and braggadocio of oppression and wrong, and I believe that the wicked conquest of weaker and darker nations by nations whiter and stronger but foreshadows the death of that strength..."

—W.E.B. DuBois, "Darkwater" (1920)

The war is on in earnest, and "Bombs over Baghdad" is no longer just a toe-tapping jam by that creative hip-hop duo from Atlanta, Outkast.

The American people have been dragged, kicking and screaming, into a war with a nation that has never attacked the United States, by a government that has been itching for a global demonstration of its military prowess from day one; and now, it has begun.

And because it has begun, people are being asked by the corporate media to support the war effort, if only for the soldiers.

Rarely has such madness been foisted on a people such as this tripe. "Support the troops!" is the latest mindless mantra, as if troops ever decided to fight a war, or indeed, in a democracy, should ever be able to decide.

Soldiers, by the very nature of military organization, decide nothing, for isn't that the very essence of democracy; that civilian, elected authorities decide? So "support the troops" really means support the politicians who are in power, even if unelected, for they have decided to send the troops—even if their ideas were boneheaded, stupid, or just plain wrong. If you deeply believe it is wrong, are you really supposed to fold up your picket sign, run a weather-beaten flag up the pole, and paste a false smile on your face?

The military is not a democracy. (This government isn't one either, but that's another story.) There has never been an army where the troops made military decisions. Those decisions are made by officers; and supposedly by the politicians who appoint them. Therefore, "support the troops" is a subterfuge for supporting the warmongers in Washington who are hell-bent on sparking World War III.

As bombs burst over Baghdad, it is comforting to believe that this will be an end to a pressing American problem; but, in truth, this is but the beginning. No matter what the outcome in Baghdad, a world full of people will now view the U.S., not as a "liberator," but as an invading alien, who cares nothing for the will of the United Nations, nor that of any other entity outside of itself.

Before the Iraq adventure was launched, pro-war commentators were assuring an anxious public that the Iraqis would greet the Americans with flowers and kisses. Some kisses. And since when do flowers have the blossoming aroma of cordite and gunpowder?

We are witnessing a New Age of Colonialism; the opening salvo of a New World Order. This kinder, gentler "humanitarian imperialism" features the promise of "liberation," but what if the natives don't meekly accept such "liberation"? They will be branded as terrorists by the corporate media, and the U.S. will "liberate" them from their bodies.

The ghost of Vietnam, where 4 million people were slaughtered by the Americans, gives us some idea of what "liberating" a people means. During the war, the saying went, "In order to save the village, we had to destroy it."

Will the Americans "save" Iraq, as they "saved" Vietnam?

No conquerer announces his true intentions when he invades a nation. They always give rosy reasons for invasion and conquest. They bring "enlightenment." They bring "freedom." They promise the "Rights of Man." For five centuries such sweet lies justified the ravaging of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Behind those lies lay exploitation, stolen labor, man-theft, and brain-numbing brutality. Whole nations have become stepping stools for other nations, ostensibly, for their own benefit.

If you really want to "support the troops," fight for an end to Empire. For that way, you support yourself, your future and your posterity. □

Is U.S. planning aggression against Cuba?

By Gloria La Riva

Recent threats and actions from the White House indicate the U.S. may be laying the basis for a new confrontation with socialist Cuba.

In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Bush administration's promise of "endless war," there is plenty of reason for concern.

As Washington increases its backing for subversion and terrorism against the island, it is also menacing Cuba for defending itself from those same terrorist acts.

On March 18 and 19 the Cuban government thwarted a CIA operation by arresting 75 individuals whose activities had been financed and directed over the years through the U.S. Interests Section diplomatic mission in Havana, which had been promoting them as political "dissidents."

Their trial exposed them as mercenaries who had received pay and directions to carry out actions against the Cuban state. About \$20 million has been funneled into Cuban counter-revolutionary groups through the U.S. Agency for International Development, which is well known as a conduit for the CIA. The defendants were sentenced to from six to 28 years in prison on April 7.

This was a decisive blow to the small counter-revolutionary groups that have been operating in Cuba and to the top U.S. diplomat in Havana, James Cason, who declared his intention to "bring freedom and democracy" to Cuba when he took office last fall.

The offensive by the U.S. has an even more ominous side. A number of recent terrorist acts, including seven armed hijackings, are directly linked to the accelerated U.S. policy of aggression toward Cuba.

On March 19, at the same time as the 75 arrests, a plane hijacking took place in Cuba. The hijackers forced a DC-3 plane to Key West, Fla., after overpowering the pilots with knives at their throats. More than 30 passengers were on board.

Within days, U.S. authorities in Miami hinted they would grant bail to the perpetrators, thus violating international and U.S.-Cuba agreements that require the immediate return of hijackers and planes.

With this green light of approval, a man armed with a grenade hijacked another plane on March 31, an AN-24 with 46 passengers. To avoid any harm to the hostages, Cuba permitted the plane to take

off to Miami after refueling.

Since those two terrorist acts, the U.S. authorities have refused to return the two planes, instead putting them up for auction on behalf of individuals who have U.S. court judgments against Cuba.

The court judgments derive from the Bush-era Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, signed into law last November. It is part of a strategy dreamed up in Washington to target countries like Iran, Syria, Iraq, North Korea and Cuba, and allow U.S. citizens to sue for these countries' frozen assets.

In Cuba's case, it is a way for the U.S. government and the Miami right-wing to harass the socialist island.

U.S. strategy invites hijacking

The U.S. government's refusal to prosecute the hijackers is a blatant invitation to more terrorist attacks.

The message is clear: If you can hijack a plane—loaded with passengers—and make it to Miami, your deeds shall go unpunished and even rewarded.

The existence of the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, granting special residence privileges to Cubans who come to the U.S. by whatever means they can, is also seen as a major incentive to illegal immigration. Cubans have demanded its repeal to help stem illegal and dangerous human smuggling.

On April 2 a Cuban ferry boat, the "Baraguá," built only for inner-bay travel, was hijacked by seven individuals who kidnapped over 50 passengers and demanded travel to Miami. They were armed with one Makarov pistol and two .38-caliber guns.

After a two-day standoff, the fuel ran out. The hijackers then threatened to shoot two of the hostages. The two jumped into the rough waters, which prompted a mass rescue by Cuban authorities. The other hostages also escaped by jumping in the water.

Many passengers could have been killed in any of the seven recent hijackings.

None of the hijackers who landed in the U.S. in recent months has been prosecuted.

Etched into the memory of the Cuban people is the terrorist bombing of Cubana flight 455 on October 6, 1976, by two CIA anti-Cuba mercenaries: Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles. All 73 passengers died.

In the midst of this wave of terrorism, Cuban President Fidel Castro warned that

Cuba could no longer tolerate terrorist threats against the people.

The trial of the boat hijackers began on April 5 at the provincial court level. The three principal hijackers were convicted of violating Law 93 against acts of terrorism and were sentenced to death. Their sentences were automatically appealed to Cuba's Supreme Court and the Council of State. All three sentences were upheld, and they were executed on April 11. Four others received life sentences and four were given lesser sentences.

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque explained in a press conference on April 19 that Cuba has applied the death penalty only in extreme circumstances, saying, "It is not compatible with our philosophy of life.

"It is true that we have had to do it now, to avert a crisis in Cuba, a migratory incident aspired to by sectors in the U.S. that want a war.

"The death penalty has been applied to avert that war, to save lives. We have had to make a painful decision, which we did not enjoy, quite the opposite, because we have on our shoulders the lives of millions of Cubans and tens of thousands of U.S. citizens who would lose their lives in a confrontation between the two countries."

With the pretext of protesting the trials, the Bush administration is floating the possibility of banning all direct plane flights between the U.S. and Cuba and stopping all remittances from Cuban-Americans to their families on the island. Remittances are the monies that immigrants send back home to help support their families, whether in Mexico, El Salvador or Cuba.

Many who follow U.S.-Cuba relations believe the U.S.'s financial cutoff is meant to create pressure inside Cuba through economic hardship, while at the same time forcing Cubans to enter the U.S. through illegal means.

U.S. cuts entry visas for Cubans

Not coincidentally, the U.S. has cut back drastically on the number of entry visas for Cubans into the United States. According to a 1995 U.S.-Cuba migration accord, the U.S. is supposed to issue 20,000 entry visas per year to Cubans who have permission to leave.

In an April 9 press conference, Pérez Roque denounced the U.S. refusal to comply in recent years: "In these first five months of the agreement this year during which the United States should grant no

less than 20,000 visas, they have issued 505 visas.

"Last year there were 7,237, in 2001 there were more than 8,300. What does this abrupt reduction in issued visas mean in overt violation of the Immigration Agreement?" asked Pérez.

He expressed Cuba's suspicions. "Why has the Interests Section, with the extensive consular apparatus they have working in Havana, with all their facilities, given out barely 505 visas?"

"We are witnessing the implementation of a premeditated plan to encourage illegal emigration, to give those who want to emigrate from Cuba no other option than to hijack boats, planes. What we want is for migration to take place in a legal and orderly fashion.

"There are people who want to tear up the immigration agreements. There is a list of people we know quite well who don't want any immigration agreements, who want to create an incident between Cuba and the United States, who are asking the United States to use aggression against Cuba."

In southern Florida, Cuban counter-revolutionary terrorists are emboldened by the Bush administration's war on Iraq and statements against Cuba. The Sun-Sentinel newspaper of Orlando reported that the paramilitary group Comandos F-4 is openly training in camps for what it says will be armed attacks on Cuba. The group recently purchased seven AK-47s at a Miami police supply store.

These groups plotting constant violence against the island operate with complete impunity. Federal, state and city officials take absolutely no action to stop them.

On March 29, a rally in Miami of several thousand people, organized by fascist terrorists like the notorious Orlando Bosch and the Cuban American National Foundation, met under the theme: "Iraq Now, Cuba Next."

Yet above this pro-war, ultra-right crowd, bold words of truth streaked across the sky on a banner flying from a plane that said, "Free the Cuban Five, the terrorists are now on 8th Street." The banner action was sponsored by the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the Martí Alliance, and the Miami Coalition Against the Cuba Embargo.

Clearly, Cuba is facing serious new aggressions by U.S. imperialism. This is a critical time for all progressives to stand side by side with Cuba's people and leadership in defense of its sovereignty. □

PHILIPPINES

U.S. imperial troops are back

By John Catalinotto

Following its invasion of Iraq, the U.S. military has opened a new offensive to retake its former military bases in the Philippines.

That's the real meaning of the April 17 announcement that 450 additional U.S. troops have arrived in the Philippines for "war games." The two-week military exercise, misnamed "Balikatan" or "shoulder-to-shoulder," is no demonstration of equality. It is part of an effort to put the U.S. boot back on the necks of the Filipino people.

The United States invaded and seized the Philippines to be a U.S. colony in 1898,

as part of the Spanish-American War. The U.S. military spent 10 years suppressing an indigenous resistance movement after that seizure, killing hundreds of thousands of Filipinos.

Except for a period during World War II when Japanese troops seized the Philippines, the country was a direct U.S. colony until 1948, and has been controlled by U.S. capital ever since. There have been frequent attempts to liberate the country, including by armed guerrilla struggle.

The 450 U.S. troops landed at the Subic Bay naval base. This was a major U.S. military base in the Pacific, used throughout most of the second half of the 20th century to project U.S. military

power throughout Asia.

Some 1,200 U.S. forces and 2,500 Philippine troops are supposed to take part in training, to be conducted at three points on the island of Luzon, including what used to be the Pentagon's Clark Air Force Base.

A Philippine uprising against the hated U.S. puppet Ferdinand Marcos, which threw him out in 1986, also eventually drove out the U.S. military. Now, using the cover of the U.S. endless "war on terror," the Pentagon is attempting to insert U.S. military force back in this former colony.

As another part of this offensive, U.S. troops are to be involved in a so-called anti-terror training exercise for the Sulu

islands. This is allegedly aimed at the Abu Sayyaf group. Filipino liberation organizations, including the New Peoples Army, consider this Abu Sayyaf group to be "bandits" and say the U.S. uses this group's existence as a cover to fight honest liberation fighters.

Earlier plans to have U.S. troops intervene in Sulu as "trainers" and "advisers" to the Philippine military were postponed when they stirred up mass opposition to U.S. military intervention in the Philippines.

The Philippine capitalist government has been quick to jump aboard the U.S. "anti-terror" campaign and even supported the illegal U.S. aggression against Iraq. □

Report from Caracas solidarity forum

Social change is sweeping Venezuela

By Teresa Gutierrez
Caracas, Venezuela

One year after a U.S.-supported coup captured President Hugo Chávez Frias and put a big-business junta in his place, only to be reversed in 48 hours, revolutionary change is sweeping this country.

Foreign delegates had a chance to feel the pulse of this social upheaval on April 10 to 13 at the World Encounter of Solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution, here in the capital city.

Over 5,000 people attended this exciting forum. They included several hundred foreign delegates from all over Latin America, as well as from England, Germany, Canada, Spain and the U.S.

Cuba sent over 150 people to the conference, including relatives of the five Cuban political prisoners held in U.S. jails. On more than one occasion, the conference broke into thunderous chants of "Cuba yes, Yankee no!"

The organizers of the event held several workshops to discuss not only developments in Venezuela but world events as well.

Venezuelans and international guests denounced the brutal U.S. aggression in Iraq and expressed their deep solidarity with the Iraqi people. Organizers included in their packed three-day agenda an outdoor demonstration as part of the April 12 worldwide events against the war.

A stirring chant at that protest was "Irak, aguanta, el mundo se levanta"—"Iraq, hold on, the world is rising."

A highlight of the conference was the participation of the Venezuelan people. They packed the theater to the rafters and broke out in chants countless times. There were many incidents of friendly banter and even flirtation between President Chávez and the people, something never seen in the controlled public appearances of U.S. presidents.

Caracas has long been a city of both great wealth and great poverty. An often-repeated sentiment expressed by many Venezuelans at the forum was that for the first time, poor Venezuelans, working class Venezuelans, dark-skinned Venezuelans could enter the Teresa Carreño Theater, where most of the events were taking place. It used to be only for the oligarchy.

The theater represented, even if just in a small way, what is happening in Venezuela today.

Chávez swept into office by the poor

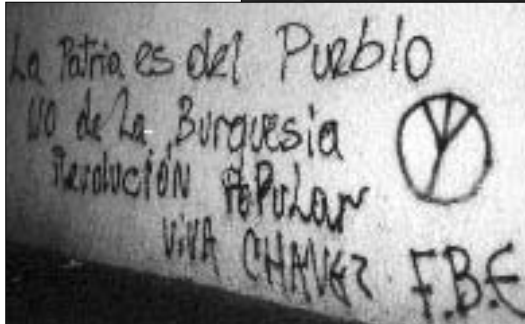
In 1997, before Chávez was elected in a landslide, 67 percent of Venezuelans earned under \$2 a day. Thirty-six percent earned less than \$1 a day.

Despite residing in a nation rich with oil, the overwhelming majority of the people—80 percent—lived in poverty. Over 60 percent of the arable land was owned by 1 percent of the population.

It was no surprise therefore that when Hugo Chávez ran a presidential campaign in 1998 and again in 2000, promising major progressive economic and political changes, his candidacy was enthusiastically welcomed by the people of Venezuela and in record numbers.

Venezuela, a nation of 24 million people, is currently undergoing a profound transformation of major historical significance. It is a transformation that is inti-

Graffiti: 'The homeland belongs to the people, not the bourgeoisie. Popular revolution with Chávez.' And 'Bush, your empire is not eternal! No to the war.'



WW PHOTOS: TERESA GUTIERREZ

mately connected to a remarkable mass movement.

This is a development that has earned the ire of Washington but the support of millions of people throughout Latin America and elsewhere.

This year, on April 11, as the people and the government commemorated the failed coup of 2002, Teatro Teresa belonged to the people. It was a symbol of the revolutionary Bolivarian Movement sweeping every city and village in Venezuela.

For the first time in Venezuela's history, a government and a movement are in place that defend Venezuela's sovereignty from the clutches of foreign banks and U.S. domination. A movement and a government are in place that are prioritizing the people's needs above those of the tiny class of rich elite.

Many speakers at the conference gave blow-by-blow accounts of the events of April 2002. An exciting video showed how the pro-U.S. right wing thought it had set back the clock when it carried out a coup to oust President Chávez.

Caracas Mayor Freddy Bernal described the roller-coaster ride of the masses, the government and the greedy "golpistas"—coup makers. The video showed President Chávez telling the Venezuelan armed forces that he had not resigned his presidency and never would. It was truly a look at history in the making. The film also showed how most of the Venezuelan armed forces were completely influenced by Chávez's progressive thinking and agreed to organize a rescue plan to restore him to the presidency.

The film also showed the masses of Venezuela converging on Miraflores, the Presidential Palace, demanding the return of their popularly elected president. In two days, the coup was defeated.

After the film, President Chávez jokingly told the participants in the conference, "I thought I would at least have a weekend to read a book or watch a video."

Mayor Bernal described how on that fateful day, as he and his comrades were figuring out what to do, they decided at one point to go to prison instead of turn themselves over to the golpista government.

Bernal had said, "I know the people will get us out of prison one day. It may take a year or two, but they will come for us."

Little did the mayor or President Chávez know that the masses of Venezuela would instead take destiny in their own hands.

In less than 48 hours, the people wrested their popularly elected government from the clutches of the counter-revolutionaries and forever took their rightful place in history.

The masses converged on Miraflores from every corner of Caracas and every region of the country. They came by taxi, bus, car—but mainly on foot. They did not wait for any organization, party or person to tell them what to do. Instinctively, they overpowered the right wing and forever changed the course of history.

By April 13, the coup makers and their



backers in Washington had egg on their face.

The imperialists were yet again reminded of a valuable lesson: that when the masses are inspired, when their class consciousness has been aroused, when they have had the taste of liberation, there is no turning back.

This is what is happening in Venezuela today. After the sweet victory of wresting back their president, and later of overcoming a bosses' "strike," the Venezuelan people know what it means to flex their working class muscles.

And those muscles are getting stronger.

Throughout the country, the poorest—including those who cannot read or write, students, women, Afro-Venezuelans, workers—are all taking part in changing Venezuela.

The grassroots organizations of the people called Bolivarian Circles are taking over schools, cleaning and repairing them, and finding volunteer teachers to raise the educational level of all.

Students as well as their parents are taking video classes to raise their technological level. These video lessons are put to good use, as the students record the many problems of their community, such as flooding. The videos are later turned over to the appropriate government agency so that corrections can be made.

Television and radio stations are being developed for the communities. This is important, as much of the means of communication are still in the hands of the anti-Chávez, pro-rich forces.

There is a constant barrage from these radio and television stations. They are attempting to instill panic and fear among the masses. Hour after hour, anti-Cuba propaganda is shown. The right-wing is trying to scare the Venezuelans from building a Cuban-type of society. The idea of free education and free healthcare for the people is a major threat to these U.S.-backed profiteers.

Throughout the land, the Venezuelans are participating in a massive debate and

dialogue about their society, as well as world events.

Walk the streets of Caracas and everyone you talk to condemns the U.S. aggression in Iraq.

It seems as if everyone in the country has memorized the Venezuelan Constitution, legislation that was discussed and voted on in a huge mass mobilization of the people. It is very progressive and far superior to that of the U.S. It guarantees the civil and human rights of the indigenous, women, lesbians and gays, and all formerly disenfranchised sectors of society.

Throughout the conference, when speakers addressed the issue of the Constitution, Venezuelans would whip out their little blue book to show that most people carry it around all the time.

The conference ended with a massive outdoor event at one of the main avenues of the city. Thousands of people came out to hear President Chávez, who spoke for several hours.

No one can predict how events will unfold in Venezuela. The Bush administration has not stopped its hostile rhetoric against Chávez. Venezuela is an oil-rich nation and its government and people are well aware that that means imperialism will always eye its valuable resources.

The international delegates made it clear, however, that the anti-war and solidarity movements would cheer on the Bolivarian Revolution sweeping the country.

Everyone is well aware that if the Venezuelan people and their leadership succeed in building a new society for the people, it will be a major boost to the world.

It will be a victory for people everywhere struggling against the yoke of U.S. imperialism. It will be a tremendous aid to the Cuban Revolution.

From Iraq to the Philippines, from Seoul to New York City, the triumph of the Bolivarian Revolution will be a triumph for workers and oppressed worldwide. □

IRAQ

Spirit of resistance surfaces everywhere

Continued from page 1

entry for the general from the one envisioned in Washington, where there had been hopes before the war that the new civilian administrator, whom many see as a modern-day viceroy, would be greeted with obvious warmth."

Probably Garner himself had no idea of what he would be faced with in terms of the destruction and hostility. As the *Independent* of April 22 pointed out, "It was not meant to be like this. One favored scenario for the war was that the Baathist regime would fall almost of its own accord, leaving a near-complete administration intact. The British advance into the south was envisaged as primarily humanitarian, with convoys and pipelines bringing food, medicine and clean water to the needy of Basra. The fighting changed all that."

Garner was scheduled for more photos in the north with Kurdish leaders. He is not even scheduled to go to the south.

Shiite and Sunni protests

The biggest shock to the occupation forces has been the anti-U.S. currents in demonstrations organized by Sunni and Shiite clerics. With the units of the Baathist Party either in disarray, underground or destroyed, the mosques have emerged as the centers of organization in Iraqi society.

The occupation is only two weeks old, but there have already been a series of openly anti-U.S. demonstrations. The first was in Nasiriyah, where the major Shiite organizations brought out thousands to protest a meeting in the nearby city of Ur. The U.S.-sponsored banker-in-exile Ahmed Chalabi, head of a fictional organization called the Iraqi National Congress, had convened a meeting there to begin planning for a puppet administration.

Opposition continued to build. According to the *New York Times* of April 18, the huge Abu Hanafi mosque, a Sunni religious center, opened its door to Shiites for overflow Friday prayer services "in a rare demonstration of solidarity, hostility toward the Americans and the desire for an Islamic Iraq."

The *Times* quoted the prayer leader Ahmed al-Kubeisy as saying to U.S. forces, "You are the masters today. But I warn you against thinking of staying. Get out before we kick you out."

"At the prayer meeting," continued the *Times*, "Sheik Kubeisy had little good to say about anyone, from the Mongol conquerors in 1258 to Mr. Hussein and the



An Iraqi student in Karbala, April 23.

looters who sacked the buildings in recent days, but he reserved much of his wrath for America. 'The United States is the enemy of mankind, we all know why they are here,' he said, alluding to the widespread belief that the Americans only covet the country's oil."

After the prayer service, 10,000 people poured into the streets. Fergal Keane, writing in the April 19 *Independent* of Britain, reported that the same virulently anti-U.S. mood reverberated on the streets of Baghdad. (See accompanying *WW* article, "At huge Muslim rallies, cries of 'U.S. out.'")

The next week the stage was occupied by the Shiites as they gathered for a massive convergence on Karbala for the commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammed in the 7th century. While this demonstration, estimated at 2 million, was predominantly a religious demonstration, the anti-U.S. sentiments were manifest. According to the *Asia Times Online* of April 22, "Shiite clerics ... seem to be united on at least one rallying cry that was heard at the Abu Hanifah demonstration and also on the road to Karbala: No Sunni, no Shiite, only one Islam. But another battle cry—also vocally imprinted by Sunni and Shiite alike—is infinitely more problematic: There is no God but Allah, and America is his enemy."

Anti-U.S. sentiment is everywhere. The *New York Times* reported the reaction after U.S. Marines fired on unarmed Iraqis at a demonstration in the northern city of Mosul on April 15, killing at

least a dozen. The Pentagon is rushing 2,000 members of the 101st Airborne Division to suppress the resistance there. "We must be united and support each other against the Anglo-American invasion," said Sheik Ibrahim al-Mamaa. "We must try to put an end to this aggression. This is not only my opinion. This is the opinion of all the people of Mosul."

While the religious forces have the political initiative, secular forces also form a large portion of Iraqi society. The question of the role of secular forces in the struggle against the occupation remains to be seen. But Jonathan Steele, writing in the *Guardian* of April 22, commented on the common agenda of Sunnis and Shiites so far. He also pointed out that "many are fundamentalists, but Iraq's progressive secular forces say this is not the primary issue at this stage. 'What we are faced with today is not a choice between secularism and religion. We're facing an invasion and foreign rule. We have to work together to end it,' says Dr. Wamid Omar Nadmi, a leading political scientist at Baghdad University."

Religious and secular forces against the occupation

Whether the religious forces will hold together behind a consistently anti-imperialist position cannot be known. They will have to withstand the machinations of imperialism meant to split them up and pit them against the secular forces. But what is clear at the moment is that any popular leader, clerical or secular, must speak against the occupation in order to have credibility with the masses.

This political opposition is arising quickly in a crisis situation created by the massive destruction wreaked by the Pentagon. It will not be that easy for the imperialists to reverse it in a rapid fashion, despite all the material resources at their disposal. According to Steele, "Ten million Iraqis, who depend on the state sector for jobs, have not been paid for a month. Washington may parrot the mantra about turning Iraq into a free-enterprise market economy, but this is for the birds."

Referring to the aftermath of the capitalist counter-revolution that broke up

the USSR, he continued, "The poverty that hundreds of millions of Russians and other Eastern Europeans faced in the over-hasty dismantling of the state-run economy is nothing to what is hitting the Iraqis." Steele pointed out that Iraqis had been serviced with food "by 45,000 well-run distribution points." But the free-market neo-conservatives who launched this war had as a high objective the privatization of all the state-run social services for the benefit of capital. This will be an explosive issue for Iraqis.

The imperialist arrogance of the White House and the Pentagon is on such a colossal scale that they have utterly discounted the feelings of pride, the aspirations and the historical experience of the Iraqi people, who have a high level of culture and a strong desire for self-determination and independence.

Jay Garner, Washington's appointee as the new ruler of Iraq, is a retired general who, along with numerous other retired U.S. generals and admirals, has been wined and dined by the right-wing leaders of Israel and signed a statement endorsing the suppression of the Palestinians. He is also a war contractor who is a director of the SY company, which makes systems that the Pentagon used to bomb the people of Iraq in the war. Garner is a close friend of Donald Rumsfeld.

The Bush forces have promoted Chalabi as the new political leader of Iraq. His banking family was closely connected to the monarchy overthrown by the anti-colonial revolution in 1958. Educated in the U.S., he was sentenced in absentia to 22 years at hard labor for defrauding the Petra Bank in Jordan. His defense against these charges is that he was framed up by the Jordanian government because he was working for the CIA, passing them information that could harm the Iraqi government.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has let out a contract to the D.C.-based firm Creative Associates to revamp the Iraqi primary and secondary education system—to cleanse it of the "influence of Saddam Hussein." (*Independent*, April 22)

It may be hard to top all this, in terms of colonial arrogance, but the Bush administration has done it by inviting Franklin Graham to proselytize for Christian fundamentalism in Iraq. Graham is the son of evangelist Billy Graham. He was invited to the Pentagon prayer service on Good Friday this year even though, or perhaps because, he said after Sept. 11 that Islam was "a very evil and wicked religion" and wrote a book saying that Christianity and Islam are "as different as lightness and darkness." (*Independent*, April 22)

Add to this that the U.S. has set up its own television station which broadcasts two hours a day, and you have the complete colonialist picture.

The Iraqi people have suffered a great trauma and military defeat. But from the ashes of that defeat there is already rising the spirit of resistance. And where the spirit of resistance exists, the resistance itself cannot be far behind. No matter at what pace it develops, the worldwide anti-war movement must make itself into a mighty force to oppose this occupation for empire and do whatever is possible to force a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and the Middle East. □



Outside the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, April 22. Protesters were demanding that power and water be restored.

In Baghdad and Karbala

At huge Muslim rallies, cries of 'U.S. out'

By Greg Butterfield

Days after U.S. troops gunned down 19 protesters in the northern city of Mosul, thousands of Iraqis took to the streets of Baghdad April 18 to demand the withdrawal of U.S. and British occupation forces.

In a powerful rebuff to President George W. Bush's claim to be the "liberator" of Iraq, Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims and secular forces all answered the call for a united protest by the Abu Hanafi Mosque, a large Sunni religious center in the capital, after traditional Friday prayers.

Over loudspeakers that could be heard blocks away by U.S. troops, Abu Hanafi prayer leader Ahmed al-Kubeisy said: "You are the masters today. But I warn you against thinking of staying. Get out before we kick you out." (New York Times, April 19)

The crowd, estimated at up to 10,000 people, marched from the 1,300-year-old mosque through the wreckage of downtown Baghdad. "Leave our country. We want peace," one of their banners said. Another read, "No to sectarianism, one Islamic state, no to America."

Fergal Keane, writing in the April 19 Independent of Britain, gave this description of the charged atmosphere in Baghdad: "They are shouting slogans forbidden under the secular rule of Saddam, slogans which, if George Bush could hear them, would surely cause him to revolve with anxiety: 'With our blood and our souls we will defend Islam.' The

same slogans rattled the walls of the Shah's palace in Iran a quarter of a century ago. ...

"An imam came over to me and asked to be interviewed. 'The Americans are here in our country for one thing. They want the oil. They want to defend Israel. If they don't leave soon there will be queues of mujahedin lining up to drive them out.' Again it was rhetoric familiar from the streets of Cairo and Beirut. But this was Baghdad, and there were American troops just up the road. ...

"Then came one of those moments you live through with every nerve of your body vibrating. I saw young men breaking away from the main crowd and running toward a street corner. There was some shouting. Then I spotted American helmets bobbing above the crowd. 'Look, buddy, I've got the gun—now back off,' a voice shouted. An Iraqi man was confronting an American soldier. 'Go ahead and shoot me. Go ahead,' the man said. A woman shouted into my face: 'It's about our pride. It's just about our pride.'"

Meanwhile, in stark contrast to the demonstration in the midst of devastation caused by weeks of U.S. bombings, a press conference was held at the exclusive Hunter's Club in a wealthy and relatively unscathed part of Baghdad. There, under heavy U.S. Special Forces guard, Ahmad Chalabi was wooing the international media.

Chalabi has been identified as the favorite of War Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon to be the future

president of Iraq. Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress received millions of dollars from the Clinton and Bush administrations, but has no support in the country. In fact, the Pentagon recently created a mercenary militia for the INC.

Until he was flown into northern Iraq by U.S. forces, Chalabi had not set foot in the country since he was 12. His wealthy family fled the 1958 nationalist revolution against British colonialism. Chalabi is wanted in Jordan, where he was convicted in absentia of fraud and embezzlement after the collapse of his Petra Bank cost the Jordanian government \$300 million in the early 1990s.

During his news conference, shots were fired at Chalabi's bodyguards outside. (The Independent, April 19)

U.S. arrests, then releases, Shiite leader

The French Press Agency reported April 22 that after two days of protests, U.S. forces released Sheik Mohammed al-Fartusi, a prominent Shiite cleric in Baghdad who had spoken out against the occupation and in favor of Shiite-Sunni unity.

Before Fartusi's release, supporters staged a sit-down protest in front of the Palestine Hotel, which U.S. forces have transformed into a command post. A protester who identified himself as Sheik Ahmed said they were trying "to find out if America is here to export freedom or terrorism." Another charged, "The United States wants to create problems between Sunnis and Shiites."

Fartusi and five others were seized at a

U.S. checkpoint 10 miles south of Baghdad on April 20. The group was returning from Karbala, where up to a million Shiites were gathering to mark a holy day honoring Imam Hussein, grandson of the Muslim prophet Mohammad.

The gathering of Shiite pilgrims in Karbala climaxed on April 21, 22 and 23, with hundreds of thousands joining in chants and protests against U.S./British occupation.

"These public demonstrations are ... to express Shiite power to the Americans," said Sheik Abdul Mahdi al-Karabala.

"Midmorning, even as pockets in the crowd chanted anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans, two U.S. Humvees drove through the masses to the edge of the Abbas Mosque, with soldiers in sunglasses waving self-consciously like beauty queens on parade," reported the April 23 Christian Science Monitor.

"We don't want the Americans driving here," said Haidar Ghazi, a student. "We want them to go."

Al Jazeera reported, "The crowd repeated slogans calling for unity between Shia and Sunnis, and between Shia political groups ... 'No Sunnis, no Shias, Islamic unity,' they chanted.

"Some also shouted slogans demanding a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. 'If America stays, it will suffer,' shouted a group of some 3,000 people as they passed in front of a hotel housing foreign reporters. 'No to colonialism, no to occupation,' 'No to America, no to Saddam, no to tyranny, no to Israel,' they continued." □

More details emerge about 'theft of the century'

Looting of Iraqi museum was long planned

By Heather Cottin

More information has come to light indicating that the looting of Iraq's archaeological museum was long planned by those aware of its great historical treasures and was carried out with the complicity of the Pentagon.

Some 7,000 years ago, the earliest Western civilization began in the fertile area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It was here that people invented the wheel, writing, law and agriculture. Today most of that area is in Iraq, which had carefully preserved, for humanity and particularly for scholars of antiquity, thousands of irreplaceable artifacts of the ancient world in its museums.

In the very first days of the U.S. military occupation of Baghdad, all the fabulous artifacts in the museum there were stolen. It was a crime engineered on behalf of "foreign art collectors," and was "planned well in advance of the American-led invasion." ("Raiders of the Lost Art," Sunday Telegraph, April 20)

The impression given by the U.S. mass media was one of utter and spontaneous chaos. But other accounts contradict that. "Witnesses have spoken of seeing well-dressed men with walkie-talkies at the scene, and of artifacts being transported away in orderly convoys of vans rather than over the heads of the crowd. 'We already have reports of exhibits being

offered for sale in Switzerland and Japan,' says Karl-Heinz Kind, Interpol's specialist officer for art and antiquity trafficking." (Sunday Telegraph, April 20)

U.S. troops were completely in control of the area. "We begged authorities to watch out for this ... All it would have taken was a tank parked at the gate," said Jane Waldbaum, president of the Archaeological Institute of America. (USA Today, April 14)

The tanks were there, but not to protect the building. "U.S. forces told people to commence looting," said Khaled Bayomi, a Swede who had gone to Iraq to be a human shield. ("U.S. Forces Encourage Looting," Dagens Nyheter, April 11)

Granite statue on an Abrams tank

In fact, U.S. soldiers have been flaunting stolen artwork. "On one U.S. Abrams tank in a Baghdad street soldiers carry a granite statue from a government residence that now seems to serve as a souvenir," wrote the Financial Times of April 14.

The destruction and looting of the culture of Iraq on April 11 and 12 was premeditated by international criminals and sanctioned by the United States. Angry that Iraq's "retentionist" laws protected its antiquities, a newly formed group of art dealers, the American Council for Cultural Policy, had met with U.S. defense and state department officials in January, before the start of the war. Their pressure

to make it easier for Iraqi art to enter the U.S. helped pave the way for the "crime of the century."

Since the 1991 Gulf War, when 5,000 artifacts were stolen from Iraqi museums, the provincial museums had moved their most valuable pieces into the National Museum in Baghdad for safekeeping. (Sunday Telegraph, April 20) This made the thieves' job easier.

"The vaults had been opened with keys," reported the Toronto Globe and Mail on April 18. Valuable objects were selected and replicas rejected. Academics who gathered in Paris at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization concluded that the pillaging was the work of an international conspiracy.

The staff of the Baghdad museum has told reporters that they begged U.S. troops to help against the looters, but could not get a detachment of soldiers assigned to protect the site. Nor was there even "just one soldier for [any non-oil-related] government building. . . I told the American major, 'you've caused this.'" an Iraqi neighborhood official said. (Financial Times, April 14)

This was so obviously a crime perpetrated by the U.S. military and capitalist art collectors around the world that several officials in the Bush administration resigned, including Martin Sullivan, chair of the president's advisory committee on

cultural property, and Gary Vikan, a committee member.

Aghast at the theft of 80,000 cuneiform tablets, Vikan, director of Baltimore's Walters Art Gallery, said, "If we understood the value of Sumerian cuneiform tablets to our past, as we do with oil getting us somewhere in our cars, I don't think this would have happened." (Guardian, April 11)

Once everything was stolen, the U.S. government swung into action. It called for Interpol and the FBI to try to help recover and "block any sale of the looted goods." But a week after the massive theft, nothing had been done to identify what was missing. "Iraqi Museum officials today indicated they have had no contact from the U.S. investigators." (Melbourne Herald Sun, April 19)

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld wasn't upset. He criticized the media for exaggerating the looting. "Stuff happens," he said, alluding to a crude slang expression. (CNN, April 12)

"If a country's civilization is looted, then that country is ended," said Raid Abdul Ridha, Iraqi archeologist. That was the idea. This was not about democracy. As Iraqi Airlines pilot Mohammed Nasser said, "Democracy cannot come through guns and looting." (Daily Telegraph, April 14)

The plunder of Iraq was an act of war designed to rob the Iraqis of their history and satisfy the greed of the bourgeoisie. □



May Day: The struggle to get a life

May Day originated with the struggle in the United States for an eight-hour day. The Knights of Labor called national strikes in both the U.S. and Canada on May 1, 1886. In Chicago, police fired on the striking workers, killing six. This and the fierce struggle that followed led the International Working Men's Association, meeting three years later in Paris, to declare May 1 an international workers' holiday. Today, it is celebrated more in the rest of the world than here. The U.S. bosses never want workers to act together with their sisters and brothers in other countries.

Think about it: an eight-hour day. Workers at that time often put in 12 or more hours a day, six days a week, at back-breaking and dangerous jobs. They could only dream about having the energy to do more with their lives than work, sleep and prepare to go back to the job.

While the first millionaires were amassing fortunes and outfitting their mansions with gold spittoons, these workers got paid just enough to keep body and soul together, so that the working class would be there for the bosses to exploit. The demand for an eight-hour day inflamed their imaginations, for it meant being paid the same amount for eight hours that they were getting for 12 or more.

The bosses cried that an eight-hour day would destroy their profits and drive them into bankruptcy. It would lead to anarchy, they said. It couldn't be done.

Many workers died in that struggle. The most famous were the four who became known as the Haymarket Martyrs: Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engle and Adolph Fischer, anarchist workers who were framed up and executed for a fatal bombing in Haymarket Square in Chicago during a demonstration protesting the police killing of six other workers.

Eventually, however, the eight-hour day was won in union contract after union contract, until it became the law of the land.

Or did it? How many workers do you know who have to put in overtime or get a second job to make it? Maybe you're in that category yourself. Wages in this country have been steadily eroding in relation to prices for over 35 years. Immigrant workers, especially, who are threatened with deportation if they organize and struggle, put in atrocious hours because their hourly rate is often illegally below the barest minimum wage needed to survive.

Even workers in more skilled categories are starting to find that self-employment and other "nonconventional" forms of work can be a fast track to the salt mines as the distinction between leisure time and work time is blurred by constantly ringing cell phones, emails and instant messaging.

And "downtime," which used to give workers in fast-paced jobs a little breather once in a while, has now been almost eliminated in jobs like trucking, deliveries, retail sales, food service and banking. When was the last time that you as a customer didn't have to wait on a long line at a bank or store, or count the minutes waiting for a real human to pick up the phone? Then think of the worker on the other end, who never gets more than a short—and very monitored—break.

Eight hours to work, eight hours to sleep, eight hours to live. It isn't happening. The majority of workers in this country are officially sleep-deprived. They're spending the time they should have for their lives either working or commuting or taking care of the house or all three.

After over a century of phenomenal technological progress, when millionaires have morphed into billionaires, the bosses have no excuse for paying crap and squeezing out every drop of labor. Every reason they give for it is a lie. May Day needs to be revived here, and with it the mighty international solidarity of the workers on a new and higher level that can sweep away this vicious system of capitalist exploitation. Let's get a life!

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A road map to nowhere

Palestinians not fooled by Bush

By Leslie Feinberg

When Bush and his generals talk about peace in the Middle East, they mean conquest. They've already demonstrated double-speak by calling the military occupation of Iraq "liberation."

Now, the Bush administration says, it stands ready to unveil a road map to peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. But Wall Street, the White House and Pentagon intend to continue bankrolling and arming the garrison state of Israel, whose occupation weighs so heavily on historic Palestine.

For all their tactical differences and rivalries, Washington, Tel Aviv and London see eye to eye on the strategic goal of trying to quell Palestinian resistance—a burning struggle against imperialist colonization that sparks solidarity amidst the dry tinder of Arab anger.

Before invading Iraq, Bush promised the European and Arab nations a road map to create a Palestinian state by 2005, which he said was authored by the U.S., the European Union, the United Nations and Russia. But before he would release the draft version, Bush demanded a new Palestinian leadership and refused to negotiate with Yassir Arafat.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon paid public lip service to the overall plan, but picked at the bones of the specifics. He stated that the Palestinians must accept the existence of the state of Israel and he refused to recognize the right of Palestinians to return to any areas within the borders set for Israel in 1948. Sharon also balked at any concessions being carried out simultaneously, putting the onus on the Palestinians to make compromises.

Sharon is "trying in a subtle way to demand that the spirit of the road map be altered from a parallel one to a sequential one," observed Yossi Alpher. Alpher is in a good position to know. He's a former senior official with Mossad—the Israeli secret police—and a special adviser to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

"In a sequential one, an impossible standard is set for the Palestinians—absolute peace and quiet—before Israel would be required to act at all." That demand dooms the process, he argued. (St. Petersburg Times, April 20)

As one Palestinian in Ramallah said, "Every day, Mr. Bush and the others say: We will make the peace, tomorrow, after 10 days, after one month, after one year, but we don't see anything." (CNN, April 18)

Sharon unleashes bloody provocation

For the public record, Sharon hinted that once Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas took office, Israel might consider easing travel restrictions, slowly withdrawing its military from occupied Palestinian towns, releasing some prisoners and turning over more tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority.



Israeli soldiers arrest Naseem Karkari, a Palestinian leader, near the West Bank city of Nablus, April 7.

But on the weekend of April 19-20, when Abbas was expected to call for a vote to form the new government demanded by Washington and Tel Aviv, Sharon let loose a bloody wave of state terror.

The Israeli regime carried out one of the largest military raids in 30 months—this time against the cinder-block refugee camp in Rafah, in the Gaza Strip, home to some 60,000 Palestinians. Before dawn on April 19, witnesses say, 60 tanks, armored personnel carriers and bulldozers invaded. Five attack helicopters circled overhead, beaming floodlights into the camp.

When the military left around 4 a.m. on April 20, five Palestinians lay dead and 70 were wounded, according to resident medics and other witnesses—who emphasized that many were civilians, including children.

In response, more than 15,000 Palestinians waving their flag and rifles packed the streets of Rafah in a march to bury the dead.

In a separate assault on the West Bank town of Qalqilya that weekend, the Israeli military killed five Palestinians, including a 15-year-old.

On April 19 the military also attacked the West Bank city of Nablus. Troops wounded 17 and killed Nazeem Darwazeh, a Palestinian cameraperson with Associated Press Television News, with a shot to the head. Television footage shows him wearing a bright yellow vest clearly marked "Press." The Israelis claim he was caught in cross-fire. Witnesses say there was no other gunfire in the area.

Four thousand Palestinians—by Associated Press figures—carried Darwazeh's body, wrapped in the flag of their nation, through the streets of Nablus later that day.

The same day, thousands of Palestinians crowded into the streets of Bethlehem and Ramallah in the West Bank to protest Darwazeh's killing. Many carried his photo, wore black scarves over their

ZIMBABWE

Leaders tell imperialists, 'Go to hell'

By Monica Moorehead

mouths to symbolize censorship, and shouted: "Justice and truth!"

While Sharon and Bush talk "peace," the apartheid state has unleashed similar provocative raids, gunned down other witnesses to its crimes of occupation, systematically sabotaged the infrastructure of civilian life, made a fast, illegal land grab, and is turning the West Bank and Gaza into walled prison colonies to drive the population into a forced exodus.

Why now?

"In the Israeli government now, there is an absolute antipathy toward a Palestinian state," explains Josh Ruebner, co-founder of Jews for Peace in Palestine and Israel, and a former analyst of Middle East Affairs for Congressional Research Service. "I'm afraid the road map is just an attempt to mollify critics in the Arab world."

Could Sharon do this if Bush were really committed to peace? Ibrahim Hooper, spokesperson for CAIR, the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, stresses, "Anything that depends on the whim of Ariel Sharon is not going anywhere in this country. Likud [Sharon's party] policy is U.S. policy."

"Nobody really took [the road map] seriously anyway. Well, maybe Tony Blair did."

Who wags who?

Israel has its own dreams of empire in the Middle East. But the settler state is ultimately beholden to Wall Street and the Pentagon—it could not exist without massive infusions of economic and military aid and political support.

After establishing a colonial regime in Iraq, the U.S. openly boasts it will brook no obstacle to its interests in the Middle East. Naseer Aruri, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, stresses that "The real agenda of hawks in the Bush administration is to reshape the strategic landscape of the Mideast." (Al-Jazeera, April 10)

Since WWII, strategic dominance and securing the immense profits in the oil-rich region has been at the heart of U.S. foreign policy.

Israel remains a loyal ally. Discussions about building a pipeline to deliver plundered Iraqi oil to the Israeli port of Haifa are underway. The plan would reconstruct an old pipeline from Iraq to Palestine that was cut off with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, when the flow was redirected to Syria. (The Observer, April 20)

Reconstructing the pipeline would ice out Syria, make the U.S. less reliant on Saudi Arabia, ensure profits for Big Oil and solve Israel's energy crisis. No friend to its Arab neighbors, Tel Aviv has to import its oil from Russia.

James Akins, a former U.S. ambassador to the region, was blunt: "After all, this is a new world order now. This is what things look like, particularly if we wipe out Syria. It just goes to show that it is all about oil, for the United States and its ally." (The Observer, April 20)

Akins was ambassador to Saudi Arabia before then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger fired him. Kissinger reportedly wanted to reconstruct the pipeline in 1975. In the mid-1980s Kissinger and now-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld promoted the plan.

The pipeline was to be built by the Bechtel company. Now the Bush-Rumsfeld administration has awarded the mega-corporation a multi-billion-dollar contract for the reconstruction of Iraq. □

Speaking before thousands of people at an April 18 outdoor rally in the capital city of Harare commemorating Zimbabwe's 23rd anniversary of independence, President Robert Mugabe made a defiant speech against the U.S. and British governments.

Mugabe declared, "Africa is for Africans and Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans. ... Our land, our dear Zimbabwe will never again fall into foreign hands. Never, never, never again will Zimbabwe be a colony." (New York Times, April 19)

Zimbabwe, formerly called Rhodesia, fought a heroic national liberation struggle against its British racist oppressor.

This modern-day liberation struggle was led by a Patriotic Front forged by two main groups—the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Today, the Zimbabwean government is dominated by ZANU-PF.

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have launched a barrage of bellicose political and economic attacks against the Mugabe government over the past year. For instance, the U.S.

and Britain, along with the European Union, instituted economic sanctions against members of the Zimbabwean government. All assets held by any of these officials in either U.S. or European financial institutions have been frozen indefinitely.

ZANU-PF issued an official statement on April 16 telling both Bush and Blair "to go to hell" after the imperialists illegally agitated for the overthrow of the Mugabe government, calling for "free and fair" elections in Zimbabwe. It is no secret that these two imperialist allies are backing the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change, in hopes of replacing Mugabe sooner than later.

ZANU-PF information secretary Nathan Shamuyarira remarked, "Instead of shouting instructions for Mugabe to step down, it's the Americans themselves who need a transitional government to hold fresh elections and replace the unelected Bush. If the Americans don't want to accept our legitimacy, it is their own problem." (Japan Today, April 18)

The U.S., Britain and other members of the European Union claim that the 2002 elections in Zimbabwe were a "sham" because Mugabe won a large majority of

the votes. However, the elections were characterized as free and fair by African and Southern African Development Community observers.

Bush and Blair have also accused Mugabe of "sabotaging" the Zimbabwean economy and causing the starvation of millions of Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe, like other parts of southern Africa, has been suffering from a devastating drought. Also, 96 percent of the Zimbabwean economy is still under the control of white settlers and British capitalist interests, including agribusiness. The authority that Mugabe and his cabinet hold is primarily administrative.

The underlying reason why Bush and Blair want to remove Mugabe is because he is supporting a second phase of the liberation struggle. That phase is the massive transfer of the large tracts of arable land, stolen by white farmers under colonialism, back to their rightful owners, the Zimbabwean people.

These dangerous attacks against the sovereignty of Zimbabwe are part and parcel of the overall designs of the U.S. ruling class, with Britain's collusion, to deepen its imperialist domination of the world, including the African continent. □

Anti-war movement in Greece

Tens of thousands protest at EU summit

By John Catalinotto

On April 16 Greece's anti-war movement showed that the U.S. military takeover of Baghdad had only increased its combativeness. At a meeting of European Union ministers guarded by 10,000 Greek cops, tens of thousands of people demonstrated their anger.

The special targets were those European government leaders who had given the most support to U.S. aggression against Iraq: Britain's Tony Blair, Spain's Juan Aznar and Italy's Silvio Berlusconi. The slogan of choice was "Blair, Aznar, Berlusconi, you are all murderers!"

Marchers waved red banners and rainbow flags as the European Union prepared to sign a deal absorbing countries from formerly socialist Eastern Europe into the imperialist trading bloc.

A large banner reading "Killers, imperialists" was hung over the offices of British Airways.

Participants wrote that "The fiesta of warmongers who want to share the looting of Iraq got a good answer by our movement! Despite police attacks with chemical mace and tear gas, thousands marched in front of the British and Italian embassies, walked past the EU offices and stopped outside the U.S. Embassy."

The demonstration expressed the anger of anti-war fighters, who said that the "occupation of Iraq is not the liberation of the Iraqi people."

More than 10,000 police officers patrolled Athens, cordoning off the ancient city center, and helicopters buzzed overhead

Police buses and patrol cars blocked central city streets to keep the demon-



Athens, Greece, April 16.

strators 300 yards away from where leaders and top officials from 40 European countries and Turkey gathered.

Several ancient sites and museums were closed to the public, including the Acropolis. The heavy security disrupted road access to Athens international airport.

To try to minimize the demonstration, the government declared a public holiday in Athens. They especially wanted to stop high school students from attending the protests, which were called by the trade unions.



The next day, more demonstrations took place in Athens and one in Salonika.

While the Greek government did not actively participate in the U.S. war on Iraq, it did nothing to stop the Pentagon from using its airspace or flying missions from a U.S. Navy base on the island of Crete. □

A pesar de amenazas de EE.UU.

Cuba defiende bienestar del pueblo

A continuación presentamos en forma integral un mensaje redactado por la Misión de la República de Cuba ante la ONU en Nueva York. El mensaje responde a las recientes provocaciones graves de parte del gobierno de Estados Unidos contra la soberanía cubana.

NOTA OFICIAL

Un artículo del New York Times informaba ayer [del 17 de abril -MO] que el presidente Bush estaba considerando una serie de pasos para castigar al gobierno de Cuba. “Entre los más drásticos”—se afirma textualmente—“está la posibilidad de suspender los pagos en efectivo a familiares en Cuba, una ayuda esencial para millones de cubanos, o la suspensión de los vuelos directos a la isla, dijeron los funcionarios.”

“El presidente Bush probablemente hará una declaración pública pronto acerca de las medidas represivas”, afirma el artículo.

“Funcionarios de la administración declararon que están preparando un surtido de opciones para el Presidente, y que aún no se ha tomado una decisión final. Las sanciones más severas entrañan la restricción o eliminación de las transferencias de dinero en efectivo, llamadas remesas, a amigos o familiares en la isla. Estas remesas, enviadas fundamentalmente por exiliados del sur de la Florida, son vitales para millones de cubanos y, calculadas en cifras hasta de mil millones de dólares, son un puntal para la economía cubana.

“También está siendo considerada la limitación del número de norteamericanos que viajan a Cuba”—continúa el artículo—“mediante la cancelación de los vuelos charter directos entre los dos países. Miles de viajeros, principalmente cubano-norteamericanos que viajan a visitar a sus familiares, utilizan todos los meses los vuelos charter que salen de Miami, Nueva York y otras ciudades.”

Tal vez las personas beneficiadas por las remesas no sean millones, como se afirma en el artículo, pero sí muchos cientos de miles de núcleos familiares o personas cuyo número individual es difícil de precisar con exactitud. En un principio esta ayuda familiar beneficiaba únicamente a los que tenían vínculos familiares con residentes en Estados Unidos y otros países, que podían adquirir productos en las tiendas de divisas o cambiar dólares por pesos cubanos para comprar en tiendas, agro-mercados y otras instalaciones de productos o servicios. Hoy la posibilidad de comprar o vender dólares y pesos cubanos equivalentes a dólares la tienen todos los ciudadanos en las casas de cambio del Banco Central, lo cual ha significado un progreso importante.

El Presidente de Estados Unidos y sus asesores de la mafia de Miami, amigos íntimos a los que agradece su elección mediante el fraude escandaloso que estos llevaron a cabo, parten de la idea de que las remesas y los viajes a Cuba para ayudar o visitar a familiares deben ser pro-

hibidos. Esgrimen la teoría de que esto significa cientos de millones de dólares para la economía cubana. Algunos incluso hablan de mil millones. La gran realidad es que con un dólar en Cuba las personas que reciben remesas pueden adquirir alimentos y otros productos esenciales en cantidades superiores a las que recibirían en cualquier otra parte del mundo. Pueden citarse varios ejemplos: un núcleo familiar con un niño de hasta siete años, que reciba un dólar, con el cambio de 26 pesos por un dólar, puede adquirir 104 litros de leche, que en nuestro país cuesta para esos niños 25 centavos de peso, es decir, menos de un centavo de dólar, mientras la materia prima en el mercado mundial varía entre 15 y 20 centavos de dólar por litro, es decir, de quince a veinte veces más. Del mismo modo puede adquirir por cuotas en el mercado normado más de cien libras de arroz por un dólar, cuyo precio en moneda nacional es de 25 centavos la libra. Lo mismo ocurre con los frijoles, el pan y otros muchos alimentos. Los medicamentos que se adquieren en las farmacias se pagan en la misma moneda a la mitad del precio que tenían hace más de 40 años; los que se usan en hospitales se reciben de forma absolutamente gratuita. La recreación es casi gratuita. Un buen partido de pelota, que se paga en pesos, cuesta alrededor de 500 veces menos que en Estados Unidos. Con un dólar que reciba un ciudadano, puede presenciar 26 partidos de pelota, que en Estados Unidos cuesta 20 dólares por partido, un número de funciones de teatro o de cine, que varían entre 5 y 26 veces por un dólar; en Estados Unidos cuestan entre 10 y 12 dólares cada función. Estas cifras son aproximadas y pueden variar de una instalación o de una ciudad a otra. En Cuba el 85 por ciento de las viviendas son propiedad del núcleo familiar en virtud de las leyes revolucionarias, y no pagan ni un solo centavo de alquiler ni impuesto alguno; el 15 por ciento restante de la población paga sólo un alquiler simbólico que no rebasa el equivalente a cuatro dólares al mes; por la electricidad, un promedio de medio centavo el kilowatt; servicios de educación y de salud, absolutamente gratuitos para toda la población, y con el gasto de sólo 20 centavos de dólar en material impreso y gasto eléctrico, pueden recibir un excelente curso de 160 horas de idioma inglés por televisión.

Esto es posible porque el Estado en Cuba subsidia cada año con más de 500 millones de dólares los alimentos esenciales que se importan, y con muchos miles de millones de pesos servicios vitales que se prestan gratuitamente a toda la población, incluyendo a los que reciben remesas en dólares.

Estos datos relacionados con los alimentos y servicios que pueden adquirirse a los precios mencionados, sirven para demostrar de cuántas cosas privan a un núcleo familiar o a un ciudadano cubano si se prohíbe a familiares suyos residentes en Estados Unidos enviarles un solo dólar.

Durante más de 30 años no se admitió la remisión de fondos desde el exterior a familiares en Cuba por constituir un privilegio que no podía disfrutar la gran mayoría de la población. Tampoco se autorizaban las visitas a Cuba de familiares residentes en Estados Unidos dados los riesgos que implicaban para la seguridad de un país que había sido víctima de miles de actos de sabotaje, terrorismo, espionaje, subversión, planes de atentados, y otras actividades similares, que iban desde la invasión de Girón hace 42 años hasta los recientes ataques terroristas contra hoteles e instalaciones turísticas, con empleo de ciudadanos cubanos residentes en Estados Unidos.

En determinado momento, la fortaleza, madurez y experiencia de la Revolución permitieron flexibilizar la política seguida durante decenas de años. Es curioso que sea ahora el gobierno de ese país quien acaricie la idea de prohibirlo para castigar a Cuba. Más de cuatro décadas de Revolución han demostrado que nuestro país es capaz de enfrentar cualquier amenaza y derrotar siniestros planes en cualquier sentido. Nada puede ser más duro que 44 años de criminal bloqueo y guerra económica, derrumbe del campo socialista y desintegración de la URSS, período especial, Ley Torricelli, Ley Helms-Burton, Ley asesina de Ajuste Cubano vigente desde 1966, ataques biológicos a plantas y rebaños. Todo lo hemos enfrentado sin que nada pueda impedir nuestro desarrollo social, que sitúa a Cuba en lugares cimeros, por encima de muchos países desarrollados. Sean cuales fueren los planes de castigo en el terreno económico, le quedan al gobierno de Estados Unidos muy pocas armas en el arsenal de acciones que pueda realizar contra Cuba. Todas las posibles están previstas y serán enfrentadas. Los castigados serán muchos núcleos familiares que han adaptado sus vidas al standard económico y los considerables beneficios que en las condiciones de Cuba les propician pequeñas remesas, como ya se demostró con datos irrefutables, o lo que es peor, muchas personas, en su mayoría de la tercera edad, que dependen de esas remesas. La economía cubana y sus servicios sociales pueden resistir la suspensión de los supuestamente grandiosos beneficios de tales remesas, o de los vuelos charters o cualquier otra medida, incluida la suspensión de las ventas de alimentos que, sin recibir el más mínimo crédito bancario hemos adquirido alimentos que se elevan ya a más de 300 millones de dólares, sin dejar de pagar hasta el último centavo y sin un segundo de atraso. Tal medida sólo serviría para demostrar que Estados Unidos, por causas estrictamente políticas, no es un abastecedor seguro y confiable de alimentos. Ello limitó nuestras compras, que sin embargo crecieron a elevado ritmo dada la eficiencia y seriedad de los agricultores norteamericanos. Si hubiésemos contado con financiamiento, entonces el daño sería de más consideración.

Las dificultades de prohibir las remesas y los viajes a Cuba, afectando a un incalculable número de personas tanto en Cuba como en Estados Unidos, serán para el gobierno de ese país. Los afectados harán por sus familiares lo que esté a su alcance, a fin de impedir que sus más elementales vínculos y relaciones sean tan injusta y arbitrariamente sacrificados.

Cuba, donde no existe un solo ciudadano abandonado, será capaz incluso de amparar a los que por tan inhumana política necesiten ayuda de la Revolución.

Las advertencias, en lenguaje amenazante, de que no tolerarán éxodos de baltos se contradicen totalmente con el estímulo colosal que las autoridades de ese país han ofrecido a secuestradores de naves aéreas y marítimas cubanas, que usaron armas de fuego o métodos similares a los que, con armas blancas en el cuello de pilotos y tripulantes, lanzaron aviones repletos de personas inocentes contra las Torres Gemelas de Nueva York y el Pentágono.

Más del 90 por ciento de los emigrantes ilegales llegan a través de lanchas rápidas de traficantes de migrantes residentes en territorio norteamericano, que van y vienen a su antojo impunemente entre Estados Unidos y Cuba, lo que unido a la absurda y criminal Ley de Ajuste Cubano, y la ambición de los traficantes que cargan dos o tres veces más personas de lo que permite la capacidad de las embarcaciones, ha provocado la muerte de gran número de personas.

Es evidente que los premios y privilegios que concede el gobierno de Estados Unidos a delincuentes que con métodos terroristas secuestran aviones y barcos, en nada contribuyen a la emigración legal y ordenada con la que Estados Unidos se comprometió. Tampoco contribuyen las infames calumnias contra Cuba por las medidas enérgicas que de forma absolutamente legal Cuba se vio obligada a tomar para evitar una ola de secuestros de aviones y embarcaciones de pasajeros.

Las presuntas medidas que se anuncian de prohibir vuelos y remesas estimularían igualmente la emigración ilegal, de la que en nada se podría culpar a Cuba, que cumple estrictamente las obligaciones que le corresponden en los acuerdos migratorios, sin una sola excepción.

Es verdaderamente absurdo y contradictorio que Estados Unidos lance amenazas relacionadas con éxodos masivos contra un país que, como Cuba, reiteradamente ha propuesto un acuerdo de cooperación para la lucha contra el tráfico de migrantes, que el gobierno de Estados Unidos ni siquiera se ha dignado considerar.

Esperaremos los pronunciamientos y las medidas punitivas que se anuncian. Mientras tanto, tratamos de adivinar y usar la imaginación para enfrentar exitosamente, con dignidad, firmeza y eficacia cualquier forma de hostilidad y agresión, como la Revolución Cubana ha hecho durante más de cuatro décadas.

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