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Colonial occupation in trouble

U.S. moves to disarm Iraqis

But it's easier said than done

By Leslie Feinberg

Pentagon officials announced May 20 that plans for the disarming of the Iraqi population would be issued in coming days. Iraqis will be ordered to hand over automatic and heavy weapons or face arrest by U.S. forces.

"We are in the final stages of formulating a weapons policy to put rules on who can and cannot possess a weapon," Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan, the chief allied land commander, stated flatly. (New York Times, May 21)

This came just one day after the largest demonstration yet in Baghdad against the occupation.

It is a sure sign that the U.S. and Britain fear the seething anger of the Iraqi people at the deepening occupation—especially as they get ready to rip off Iraq's oil.

So the Pentagon has ordered its troops to dismantle any vestiges of Iraq's sovereign state—police, military, courts, prisons. But disarming the whole country won't be easy.

The colonial rulers face a daunting task. First they must disarm a people who have shown again and again that they will resist foreign occupation. Then they must build a stable, long-term state machinery willing to facilitate the exploitation of Iraq's resources by U.S. and British corporations—as the Saudi and Kuwaiti ruling cliques have done.

The U.S. military command is the top cop now. But there aren't enough rank-and-file troops to cover the whole country, and the GIs want to go home. The Pentagon says they have to stay. Cancellation of the rotation home for the 1-41 infantry bat-

talion, for example, "caught soldiers by surprise and caused more than a little grumbling among the troops," the May 15 New York Times admits. The anxious headline of the article was: "Fear of Baghdad Unrest Prompts a Halt in Sending Troops Home."

Rank-and-file soldiers—pressed into service largely by an economic draft, aspirations for school tuition and dreams of job

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training that could lead to a better life—do not have the mindset of police. Promises of being welcomed as "liberators" by the Iraqi people have exploded in their faces. Now, after a brutal war of imperial conquest, they find themselves ordered to become an army of occupation.

Each new crime by their brass and each new move to assert a colonial mandate by the Bush administration brings greater popular rage directed at these foot soldiers of the Empire.

Even Ahmad Chalabi, the long-absent and corrupt Iraqi banker who was brought back by the Pentagon and led to believe he would be crowned as titular head of a puppet regime, fears the people's anger. He is complaining that U.S. and British troops are remaining instead of turning over the reins to a hand-picked "Iraqi interim authority." He says they are giving "far less than you gave the Iraqi government when you occupied Iraq in 1920."

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WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

She's disabled, raped and pregnant, but

Jeb Bush demands, 'Protect the fetus'

By Leslie Feinberg

It's hard to imagine a more vulnerable young person for Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to offer up as a sacrifice to the ultra-right strategy of abolishing women's reproductive rights.

She is 22 and publicly identified only as JDS. She is severely developmentally disabled and autistic. JDS lives with cerebral palsy and seizure disorder. She cannot speak. She can't stand or take a step without assistance. She weighs only 88 pounds.

She has been institutionalized in a small state-licensed group facility in southwest Orlando for 19 years, where she reportedly slept on a bed in an open hallway next to a bathroom. (Orlando Sentinel, May 16)

In April, say officials of the Department of Children and Families, they discovered she was approximately five months pregnant. She is unable to consent to sexual intercourse. Her pregnancy is a result of rape.

Doctors stress that her disabilities are multiple and severe, making this a high-risk pregnancy that endangers her life.

In early May, DCF officials asked an Orange County circuit judge to appoint two guardians—one for the woman, the other for her fetus. But on May 12, officials retracted the request for a fetal guardian, acknowledging that a landmark 1989 Florida Supreme Court decision had ruled such an appeal "clearly improper."

The very next day, Gov. Bush—who is consistent in opposing a woman's right to control her own body—publicly intervened. He ordered state lawyers to fight for one guardian only—for the fetus.

The National Organization for Women, Center for Reproductive Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union immediately filed a brief asking the court to reject Bush's move.

A June 2 hearing has been set to determine JDS's competency. Soon after June 2, a guardianship hearing will take place. There, Bush has vowed to push state officials to ask a judge to appoint a "guardian" for the fetus.

Pro-choice activists are angered at these attempts to keep the case moving slowly through the courts. After the sixth month, an abortion will no longer be a legal alternative in the state.

Roe vs. Wade in the cross hairs

A decision in this case would not result in the wholesale elimination of Roe vs. Wade—the hard-won 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

But it is the use of the courts to make an end-run around Roe, while avoiding a direct assault on the law that could ignite mass protests. This reactionary tactic is sharply focused in Gov. Bush's carefully crafted language.

"Given the facts of this case, it is entirely appropriate that an advocate be appointed to represent the unborn child's best interests in all decisions," he said in a May 13 statement. "This is a tragic case about a mom who cannot make decisions for herself," he said on May 15.

A pregnant woman is not a "mom" until she bears a child. A fetus becomes a child at birth.

This is the second attempt nationally in recent weeks to set a legal precedent to establish the "personhood" of a fetus.

In April, Jeb Bush's brother in the White House, plus

members of Congress, tried to manipulate the public horror and rage generated by the apparent murder of a pregnant woman in California—Laci Peterson. They used her death to press for congressional passage of the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act." This bill would make a fetus a separate "person" from the woman carrying it—making a fetus the woman's legal adversary.

This legislation would extend to the womb 14th Amendment protections to life, liberty or property that women themselves do not automatically have.

It was conservative men, of the same stripe as those now arguing for legislation to "protect" the fetus, who killed the Equal Rights Amendment that would have provided equal protection to women under the law.

One such legislator is Sen. Orrin Hatch, a very conservative Republican from Utah. Speaking approvingly of the "Unborn Victims" bill, he said of its critics, "They say it undermines abortion rights. It does." (BBC News, May 15)

Disability rights?

The shocking insensitivity to JDS's body and life also illuminates conditions for disabled people in this country.

Her potentially life-threatening pregnancy requires careful monitoring of her health, but even JDS's court-appointed lawyer doesn't know what kind of care she's getting—if any.

Rod Taylor, her sole official advocate at this point, said he "doesn't know what kind of medical attention she's receiving beyond her daily medication and vitamins." (Orlando Sentinel, May 19)

Carla Josephson, president of the Orlando-area chapter of the National Organization for Women, questioned how the state could provide complete medical care for JDS and other disabled people if they have no guardians.

"What kind of medical care was she getting all along?" Josephine asked.

A month after JDS's pregnancy was confirmed, the state has still not found her a guardian with the legal power to make life-or-death decisions—despite a court document stating that she is in "imminent danger."

Pressed by the Sentinel, officials revealed that JDS is one of 857 developmentally disabled adults in Florida's state-licensed group homes who have no legal guardian.

Tallahassee lawyer Lance Block says it doesn't look like the DCF has learned anything since he represented a developmentally disabled young woman who became pregnant after being raped in a state home 12 years ago. The DCF left the woman without a guardian in the home for three months, near her rapist—the home operator's son.

But even after the high-profile exposure of the abuse of JDS, the May 19 Sentinel article concludes, "For now, DCF says it has no immediate plans to change its rules or call for changing the law governing its practices."

'Pro-life'? They gotta be kidding!

The right-wing of the national political establishment views Florida as an ideal battleground to wage war against women's reproductive rights.

Its "pro-life" governor helped deliver his anti-choice brother to the Oval Office by disenfranchising Black voters.

Now the Bush brothers and members of both parties

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WW CALENDAR

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Sat., May 24

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Storm into 'wrong' apartment in Harlem

Police terrorism kills city worker

By Monica Moorehead
New York

There have been countless victims of police brutality over the decades in New York City—home to the largest police department in the country. Thousands of those victims have survived their traumatic experiences, notwithstanding psychological and physical damage that can last a lifetime. Many have not.

Some of the more well-publicized deaths of Black people at the hands of New York Police Department violence are Michael Griffin in 1983, Eleanor Bumpurs in 1987, Amadou Diallo in 2000, Patrick Dorismond in 2001—and now Alberta Spruill in 2003.

Spruill was a 57-year-old African American woman who lived in Harlem. She was a city worker for almost 30 years. In the early morning hours of May 16, Spruill was preparing to go to work.

Without any prior warning, six heavily armed police officers broke down Spruill's door with a battering ram. They threw a concussion grenade into her apartment. This particular grenade confuses and stuns people with earsplitting noise and a blinding flash of light. Police reportedly then handcuffed her.

Once the police realized that they had targeted the wrong apartment, the damage had already been done. Spruill, who had a long-time heart condition, went into cardiac arrest and eventually died in

Harlem Hospital. She would have celebrated her 58th birthday in late May.

This was a horrific assault that should never have happened.

The police claim they had been given Spruill's address as a "tip" from an unnamed informant, who allegedly told them there were guns and drugs in the apartment.

The six NYPD cops were empowered by a court-approved warrant that allowed them to physically break into someone's apartment without identifying themselves and without any prior surveillance. These warrants are approved routinely by judges.

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly "apologized" to Spruill's family. He said there would be an "investigation" of the incident and that the use of the grenades would be suspended. He revealed that the NYPD had already used these stun grenades 85 times this year.

Where are the reports of what happened to the victims of those 85 incidences of police terrorism?

Apparently, the six police officers involved in the Spruill raid have not even been indefinitely suspended, much less charged with her death—which should be the case.

Instead, there will be inquiries on whether the police informant will be implicated in the death of Spruill. Will an anonymous informant be made the scapegoat for police terror?

According to the May 19 New York Times, Spruill's neighbors questioned whether such brutal police tactics would have been carried out in a predominately white, affluent neighborhood rather than this predominately Black, poor neighborhood.

Culpability for the death of Alberta Spruill and other victims of police violence should be placed squarely on the entire NYPD—starting with the police commissioner.

Spruill's sisters are calling for an independent autopsy. There needs to be an independent investigation of Spruill's death that would include the Harlem community. And that community-led investigation needs subpoena power. The workers in her union should be actively involved in demanding justice.

If there's only a police investigation, it will eventually turn into a whitewash and a cover-up like so many others.

This is the same repressive NYPD that is sending officers to Iraq to train a new



Alberta Spruill

Iraqi police force under U.S. occupation. It is the same NYPD that denied hundreds of thousands of demonstrators on Feb. 15 the right to march against imperialist war.

While the U.S. military is carrying out racist repression worldwide, police continue their daily brutal occupations of Black and Latino communities here in New York City and across the country. □

Disabled, raped and pregnant

Continued from page 2

of big business are pushing to roll back the right to abortion under the slogan "right to life."

Not JDS's life.

And certainly not the rights of women and children as a whole.

A zealous crusade against lesbians and gays was waged by orange-juice industry figurehead Anita Bryant in 1977 under the cynical banner "Save Our Children." The result was a ban in Florida on lesbian and gay adoption and foster parenting.

The "Scarlet Letter Law," now in the process of being repealed, was enacted by the state in October 2001, penned by state Sen. Walter Campbell—a Democrat, it's worth noting. It required that a pregnant woman of any age who planned to give up her baby for adoption must pay for ads to publish her name and descriptions of all her sexual partners over a 12-month period in the newspaper—even in cases of rape and incest. The rationale given was that the father would then be able to claim the child.

The right wing's "we care about children" campaign is a deliberate distraction. It portrays poor women as villains when in fact they face especially difficult deci-

sions about having children in this period of dwindling jobs and deteriorating living conditions.

Politicians from both parties, with the backing of their right-wing patrons, have succeeded in abolishing welfare, which offered minimal sustenance to women and children impoverished under capitalism. After having minimized taxes on the rich, they claim there's not enough money for programs like Medicaid. That is already translating into less pre-natal care and medical access for poor children. Education is on the chopping block. Day care is less available and priced out of reach.

Many of the social programs important to women were won during the last period of progressive mass action in the 1960s and 1970s, when the militancy of the anti-war and civil rights struggles, along with national liberation movements around the world, helped spark mass movements for women's and gay liberation as well. The huge anti-war mobilizations of the past year, which have been even more diverse than back then, give promise that a new social movement has begun that can turn back the right-wing offensive and win new and stronger rights for women. □



NEWARK, N.J.

PHOTO: MICHAEL YOUNG/GLAAD.ORG

Family, friends condemn killing of young lesbian

By Leslie Feinberg

When Sakia Gunn's family marched to the steps of Newark City Hall on May 16 to express their outrage and grief over the stabbing of the 15-year-old lesbian, hundreds of Black youths closed ranks with them.

Gunn and four friends, aged 15 to 17, were returning home from a party in Greenwich Village on May 11. They walked from Penn Station in Newark to catch a bus home. At the city's major downtown intersection, two men got out of a car and reportedly made sexual advances towards the teenagers.

According to the young women, they told the men they were lesbians. One of the men then stabbed Sakia Gunn in the chest. Gunn's friends flagged down a motorist who took her to the hospital, where she died a short time later.

Richard McCullough turned himself in to the prosecutor's office five days later. Witnesses provided police with a partial license plate number and the driver, police say, implicated McCullough.

"I want to ask him, why he did that to my daughter," said LaTona Gunn, who became Sakia's legal guardian after the youth had become homeless.



Above and below, solidarity at Newark protest. Left, Sakia Gunn.



PHOTO: MICHAEL YOUNG/GLAAD.ORG

"He had no right to kill my child, whether she was gay or straight." About her daughter's sexuality, Gunn said, "I didn't have any problem with it."

The Star Ledger estimated that 300 people from the community converged on May 16 in support of the slain youth. They wore t-shirts with Sakia Gunn's photo and proudly displayed rainbow colors—one of the visual symbols of the modern lesbian, gay, bi and trans pride movement.

Some expressed anger that Sakia Gunn was killed in front of an abandoned police substation at Broad and Market.

Youths said harassment at night at that intersection is common. But, Ontaya Kirby told reporters, "It doesn't stop us from being who we are." □

The Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression

This book was originally published in 1976, during the first flush of the modern lesbian and gay liberation movement. This updated edition gives a clear, dispassionate, yet utterly partisan review of a history of pain, persecution, courage and pride.

Order from Leftbooks.org for \$6.99

Who is guilty in immigrant deaths?

By Heather Cottin

When 19 women, men and children died of asphyxiation, hyperthermia and dehydration in a truck in southern Texas last week, authorities were quick to blame the driver. They needed a scapegoat, someone on whom to focus media attention while the real perpetrators of this crime went free.

There is talk of the death penalty for driver Tyrone Williams, who comes from Jamaica and lives in a working class neighborhood in Schenectady, N.Y. Williams was driving his own rig. He is one of the thousands of independent truckers in the U.S. who leave their families for long periods, traveling great distances trying to make a buck. Williams's semi usually transported milk from New York to Texas and watermelons from Texas to New York. When he was approached by people who offered him money to transport Latin American economic refugees through Texas, he agreed.

Williams was offered \$2,500 to transport what he was told was a group of 16 people who were returning to the U.S. from visiting their families in Mexico, or who were trying to get work in the United States for the first time. (Newsday, May 19)

Only it wasn't 16 people, it was closer to 100. And they came from several countries: Honduras, where 67 percent of the population lives in poverty; the Dominican Republic, where 60 percent of the people are poor and 20 percent survive on less than \$1 per day, according to a 1999 report by the Organization of American States; and Mexico, where over 17 million people subsist on less than \$350 per person per year. Two-thirds of Mexico's population of 34.1 million live below the poverty level.

Refugees of this system of misery risk death trying to get into the United States.

Williams's tractor trailer was just one of thousands of big rigs that take on human cargoes in return for a few thousand dollars. His truck was locked tight and the people inside were trapped in the hot Texas sun for hours. One by one they died. One was five-year-old Marco Antonio Villasenor Acuna of Mexico, who was traveling with his father. By the time Williams realized something was wrong, 17 people were already dead. Others died later in Texas hospitals.

Williams and the Latino workers were all caught in the growing economic crisis.

Mexico's economy has been in decline for some time. In the 1990s the govern-



Wall on U.S.-Mexican border with names of more than 600 people who perished trying to make the crossing.

Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Border Patrol, and now the Department of Homeland Security. Anti-immigration activity is not new. Two decades ago, border guards and racists hunted down Central Americans who were fleeing U.S.-sponsored wars against the peasants and workers in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

U.S. wars against peasants

In the 1980s the U.S. backed fascist oligarchies in Central America while organizing and paying for wars against revolu-

tionaries seeking land reform. In El Salvador, for example, 14 families owned 80 percent of the land. In Guatemala, the U.S. corporation United Brands, formerly United Fruit, owned the majority of the arable land. In Nicaragua the Sandinista revolutionaries tried to hold onto land reforms, but the Pentagon and CIA waged a bloody war against them.

In the end, the "neoliberal" economic schemes backed by the U.S. prevailed. NAFTA and the Free Trade Area of the Americas have codified this iniquitous system.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government and racist vigilantes demonize and hunt down these refugees. Mexicans and Central Americans are denied visas and called "illegal aliens." Hundreds of right-wing racists prowl the southern region of the United States in death squads, their mission to stop the migration of Latin American people into the United States. In October, a dozen Mexicans were shot and two were killed by vigilantes in Arizona. (Washington Post, Oct. 19, 2002)

These racists work in concert with the

United States are grown. The transnationals pay the workers starvation wages. Land reforms have been reversed. Landless peasants have flooded into the cities to compete for low-paying jobs in areas where unemployment can be as high as 35 percent. The U.S. enforces these conditions with money, militarism and manipulation. Billions in profit go to United Brands, Domino Sugar, Liz Claiborne, General Motors, Chrysler, Fisher Price, U.S. banks and other transnationals. They suck the resources and lifeblood from these countries, destroying their economic sovereignty. Their junior partners, the oligarchies of Central America and Mexico, allow U.S. corporations to enslave and impoverish their populations.

The policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have rendered Caribbean, Central American and Mexican peasants and workers poorer than they were in 1980.

So, in the Southwest, there is a land-office trade transporting people desperate to work into the United States. Independent truckers are vulnerable to the bribes of the "coyotes," the people who smuggle Central Americans and Mexicans into the U.S. These small businesses are on the ropes and losing ground to the huge trucking conglomerates. They have faced large price hikes in tolls, fuel oil and insurance.

Independent truckers and the people who run these smuggling operations make a few thousand dollars at most. When the U.S. government arrested four individuals, including Williams, for the murder of the migrant workers in Texas, it targeted the wrong criminals.

Those really responsible include the Bush administration, which reneged on its promise to Mexican President Vicente Fox to open the border to migration. Instead the Department of Homeland Security is encouraging militia groups and border guards to kill and imprison refugees of this cruel system.

Also culpable are the transnationals that employ 1 million workers in the maquiladora towns along the U.S.-Mexican border. And the U.S. agribusiness owners making billions from the cheap labor and land stolen from poor peasants in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America.

The real criminals are the capitalists who make billions from these arrangements, and the corrupt governments that benefit from the economic plunder of the increasingly impoverished people of these regions. □

Why programmers need a union

By G. Dunkel

Most of the dot-com companies are dot-gone, but not all the jobs they created vanished with them when the bubble burst. Some moved.

Amazon still has its headquarters in Seattle and is still selling books and sundries over the Internet. But it has yet to show a profitable year, although it is gradually edging into the black. To save money, it moved its customer service department—about 500 jobs, including some highly skilled programming jobs—to India about 18 months ago.

In India, programming jobs pay about one-third to one-fifth of what they do in the United States.

Amazon is not the only company that has used Indian skilled labor to lower its costs. About 200,000 informational technology (IT) jobs have been exported from

the United States in the past three years, according to ComputerWorld. More are sure to follow. Any job that can be digitized—engineering, accounting, marketing, reading x-rays as well as programming—can be exported. A consulting firm estimates that 3.3 million technical jobs will be moved abroad over the next 15 years.

Dave Schecter, an applications programmer working in the New York City suburbs, told Workers World, "Of course I'm worried about my job. Any programmer should be." He pointed out that some freelance programmers who used to make \$120 to \$140 an hour are now getting \$40 to \$50—still a good wage, but quite a comedown.

In many ways, IT jobs are easier to export than assembly jobs. A program written in Bombay can be running in New York less than an hour after it's finished.

India has a large pool of qualified English-speaking technical workers, but it is not the only destination. Microsoft has its second-largest applications development center in Beijing, China. Russia has a large pool of highly qualified programmers, many of whom read English. The Philippines and Malaysia are other low-wage programming centers. Canada, Israel and Ireland are higher-cost countries where programming is conducted for the U.S. and Western Europe.

The United States is not the only country affected. The Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), an India-based transnational, has just won a number of contracts to do data processing for Australian companies. Tata also outsources some of its work to the Philippines, where skilled labor is even cheaper than India.

The Bank of Ireland, the second-largest bank in a country where an abundance of

low-paid, highly skilled, English-speaking technical workers helped fuel a boom of "green" industries, has signed an outsourcing contract with Hewlett-Packard for \$600 million. Some 600 IT specialists in Ireland will lose their jobs, since HP will use a subsidiary in India to do the work. The Irish union representing the IT workers has voted to strike unless satisfactory terms and conditions are reached.

In 1985, Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy wrote about the impact of automation and computerization on the capitalist economy in the book "High Tech, Low Pay." He pointed out that while the scientific-technological revolution "enormously raises the productivity of labor, it for the first time simultaneously lowers the general wage patterns and demolishes the more high-skilled, high-paid workers. It enhances the general pau-

Continued on page 11

Cuba maintains vigilance as U.S. expels diplomats

By Gloria La Riva

In its latest provocation against Cuba, the Bush administration has suddenly expelled 14 Cuban diplomats from the United States, falsely inferring that they were engaged in espionage on the U.S. The Cubans were assigned to the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York and the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.

Since the U.S. broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in early 1961, just months before the CIA sponsored an invasion at the Bay of Pigs in an attempt to turn back the Cuban Revolution, the Interests Section has been Cuba's only official link in the United States.

With the bogus charges and mass expulsions, the U.S. government seems to be trying to further escalate tensions—and perhaps provoke a reciprocal expulsion of U.S. diplomats by Cuba—to justify more aggressive action by Washington.

Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in response, "The expulsion of the Cuban diplomats is done with the objective of provoking an escalation that could culminate in the closing of the Interests Sections of both countries, as the anti-Cuba terrorist mafia has demanded historically."

The timing of the expulsions was only two days before President George W. Bush

was to give an anti-Cuba address on May 20, a speech that the New York Times of April 16 said could contain "a series of steps to punish the Cuban government."

The newspaper said administration officials were "preparing a variety of options for the president," including the ending of direct flights to Cuba and eliminating cash remittances from Cuban-Americans to their families in Cuba.

Bush 'speech' says nothing

However, when the time came, Bush, surrounded by Cuban right-wingers at the White House, delivered a 66-word, 40-second, one-paragraph "speech" dripping phrases like "freedoms and rights" but announcing no official policy changes toward Cuba.

Bush played it very low-key, but that may be only temporary.

It is possible that the development of other crises in the world in recent days, including bombings in the Middle East, growing resistance in Iraq, and the deployment of U.S. troops to the Philippines, might have forced this belligerent president to pull back momentarily regarding Cuba.

Even the most powerful imperialist country has resource limitations.

But it is most likely that the administration was unable to draw Cuba into a

confrontation that would work to its advantage.

Washington has been hoping to unleash an emigration crisis. Even though the U.S. made an agreement, codified in the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, to allow in 20,000 Cubans a year through normal immigration procedures, the State Department has granted only a few hundred visas to Cubans so far this year. At the same time, it has gone easy on those who hijack planes and boats from Cuba to the U.S.

There were seven armed hijackings over a seven-month period. Finally, when a Cuban ferry boat and its passengers were seized by armed hijackers on April 11, the Cubans saw this as the product of a serious escalation of Washington's campaign of threats and subversion. The prosecution asked for the death penalty for the three hijackers, a sentence that was carried out after their appeal was rejected by a higher court. Since this stern action, there have been no more hijacking attempts.

After denunciations by some intellectuals abroad who had been considered friends of Cuba, the Cuban government defended the measure as necessary to insure its stability and security at a time of extreme threat from outside. All this took place while the U.S. was showing the

world in the most brutal way in Iraq what it means by "regime change."

Bush's latest actions toward Cuba are also generating debate and contention within the U.S. political establishment. A sign of that rift was the May 15 revelation by the FBI that the decision to detain the Cuban diplomats came from the White House and the State Department.

The 14 expelled diplomats received a warm welcome when they returned to Cuba and spoke to the people via television, radio and newspapers. They denounced the expulsions as politically motivated.

The expulsions may also have been directed in part at certain diplomats for the work they have conducted on behalf of the five Cuban political prisoners who are unjustly incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Two of the Cubans who had been based in the D.C. consular office, Florentino Batista González and José Anselmo, attended to the needs of the Cuban Five, visiting them frequently in the prisons where they are held across the U.S. and sharing news from their loved ones back home.

On his arrival in Havana on May 19, Florentino Batista talked to Cuba's Granma newspaper about the country's five heroes: "The best memory and gift that I take with me from my stay in the United States is to have known all of them. Any sacrifice for them was worth it." □

'U.S. hands off CUBA'

Demonstrations demanding "U.S. hands off Cuba" took place in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and New York City on May 17 to 20.

The May 20 protests, called by the ANSWER coalition, were planned in anticipation of a speech President George W. Bush was to make that day. The press had speculated that he would announce the adoption of more hostile measures against Cuba.

Instead, Bush held a small meeting with Cuban emigres. His "speech," a radio address that lasted only about a minute, talked in broad generalities about "freedom." This was seen as a betrayal by right-wing Cuban-Americans, who have been pressing for "regime change" in Cuba. Three Republican congresspeople from Florida did not attend the White House meeting. Rep. Robert Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey, immediately attacked Bush for "not living up to your promises" and "playing on the emotions of the Cuban-American community."

All this indicates disarray within this reactionary administration, which has its hands full trying to subdue Iraq and the rest of the Middle East.

The demonstrators in solidarity with Cuba denounced the Bush administration for ordering the expulsion of 14 Cuban diplomats on May 13—seven from Washington and seven from the United Nations—without a shred of evidence to back up the charge that they engaged in "inappropriate and unacceptable activities."

Protesters viewed the expulsions as simply one more act of U.S. aggression in its more than 40-year history of terror, economic strangulation and assault on the self-determination of the Cuban people.

The New York actions were also called to counter efforts by right-wing Cubans who, emboldened by Bush's "endless war," were trying to disrupt the functions of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York and the Cuban



San Francisco

PHOTO: BERNIE FOX

Interests Section in Washington.

Demonstrators who converged outside the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles on May 20 expressed solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and demanded that the Bush administration halt its menacing rhetoric and its escalation of threats against Cuban sovereignty.

John Parker, organizer for the International Action Center, said that the fact that Bush's speech made no mention of any new sanctions against Cuba shows what disarray these war makers are in. "It also demonstrates that it is imperative that we remain vigilant and organize a people's defense of the Cuban Revolution against the imperialist aims of the United States."

Adrian Garcia and Bill Hackwell contributed to this report.



Los Angeles

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA



WW PHOTOS: PAT CHIN AND BILL HACKWELL



Clockwise from top left: Joe Navidad, John Parker, Elias Rashmawi, literature tables, plenary session, Caneisha Mills and Carl Messineo at opening plenary.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Brenda Stokely, Guillermo Guevara, Ismail Kamal, ovation at plenary, workshop on Patriot Act



ANSWER conference

Activists move from anti-war

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

Over the last year hundreds of thousands of people in this country have protested the horrors of war in Iraq and Palestine. Now, at a conference held the weekend of May 17-18 in New York, many of them showed they have moved ahead in their thinking. They are not satisfied with just protesting the violence. They want to act in solidarity with the struggles of peoples around the world who are resisting U.S. imperialism and the corporations and banks it serves.

The National Conference Against War, Colonial Occupation and Imperialism was organized by the ANSWER coalition, which formed right after 9/11 to push back the wave of racism and war frenzy generated and manipulated by the Bush administration. Close to 800 people came from all over the U.S. and as far away as Japan to attend the conference at the landmark Washington Irving High School in Manhattan.

They applauded a wide array of speakers representing popular movements around the world as well as union and community activists from the U.S. They also participated in two dozen well-attended workshops and discussion groups.

At the end, they ratified a plan of action that will bring many thousands into the streets again over the next few months. ANSWER also intends to provide speakers and literature to organizing centers around the country in a concerted educational campaign to lay bare the relationship that the cutbacks, layoffs

and racist, sexist and homophobic repression at home have to the vast plan for military expansion being pushed by the Pentagon and the Bush administration.

Focus on targets of U.S. military

The talks and workshops on imperialist military expansion put special emphasis on those countries under the greatest threat today: Iraq, North Korea, Cuba, Palestine, the Philippines, Venezuela, Colombia and the Balkans. While they are very different societies, they have this in common: U.S. troops are already there or are poised on their borders.

Larry Holmes of the International Action Center and Carl Messineo of the Partnership for Civil Justice kicked off the conference with presentations that stressed the global character of this movement—which succeeded in coordinating simultaneous demonstrations around the world that mobilized millions—and the big, big task ahead. “We’re not going to win with one demo,” said Holmes. “We are in a long struggle to bring down the

empire and prevent the U.S. from establishing a military dictatorship over the world.”

Their words were reinforced by the many solidarity statements that had come in from organizations on every continent, including one from the United American Indians of New England that spoke of “knowing first hand what it is like to be on the receiving end of a relentless campaign of war and terror.” It expressed hope that “this movement will lead to a new understanding amongst all of us of each other’s struggles and of what it will take to build a new and just society right here in the belly of the beast.”

The first plenary session centered on a slide presentation on Geopolitics and the Strategy of Imperialism in the Middle East by ANSWER Steering Committee member Elias Rashmawi of the Free Palestine Alliance. His detailed charts showed why U.S. imperialist strategists view the area as essential for world domination because of its strategic position, encompassing major waterways and access to three con-

tinents, as well as its rich repository of oil, the essential commodity for modern industry.

Iraq Sanctions Challenge coordinator Sara Flounders boiled down ANSWER’s position on Iraq to the simple demands, “No occupation, no colonialism.” She showed how the Rumsfeld doctrine for a quick takeover of Iraq wasn’t going according to plan but was being resisted every step of the way by the people.

Gloria La Riva of the International Action Center brought up the threats against Cuba that grow more serious every day. Conference participants that evening joined a picket supporting Cuba at its Mission to the United Nations and planned more solidarity actions for when they returned home.

Joe Navidad, a Filipino representing Bayan USA, told of his country’s fight to end direct U.S. colonial rule from 1899 to 1946, and the continued need for solidarity with the people’s struggle as U.S. troops once again are carrying out operations in the Philippines.

Guest speakers included Guillermo Guevara, a member of the Venezuelan National Assembly and founder of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon. Charles Barron, an elected member of the New York City Council who has shook up that body with his militant politics, reminded the conference of the struggle that continues in Zimbabwe, where white settlers whose loyalties are still with Britain are trying to keep their monopoly on the best farm land.

These are merely some of the many well-informed speakers



Workshop on the corporate media: ‘Breaking the Giant Squid.’



to anti-imperialist

who brought the struggles of the oppressed peoples of the world into a once-elegant girls' high school near Manhattan's Union Square. Each in their own way, they drew the lessons that these are not isolated struggles but are a response to the rampages of a profit-hungry global system that can expand only through war and repression.

The struggles at home

And this was just one side of the equation. Equally important were the talks and discussion on how imperialism has impacted workers here, and why it's crucial that the anti-war movement not be "single issue" but address capitalist exploitation and the inequity here in the U.S. that places added burdens on millions of people because of their color, national origin, gender and/or sexual expression.

IAC leaders Ramsey Clark, Brian Becker and Teresa Gutierrez were joined by Ismail Kamal of the Muslim Students Association, Macrina Cardenas of the

Mexico Solidarity Network and others in mapping out "Where is the movement going?," the provocative topic of the second plenary.

A workshop on Queers for Peace and Justice talked about how to do anti-war organizing at the Pride marches. Another explored the mechanisms of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Labor activists discussed how to defend unions and workers' rights in this period of repression, especially against immigrants. Brenda Stokely of New York Labor Against the War talked of the struggle to move the unions to the left and overcome the tradition of "business unionism."

Another workshop explored what can be done to reach the youth who are prey to military recruiting because of the lack of jobs and education.

People packed into the workshop on the Patriot Act to hear attorneys and others talk about the assault on civil liberties and immigrant rights. Lynne Stewart, herself fighting prosecution for having legally defended Muslim leaders, Mara

Verheyden-Hilliard of PCJ, and Jim Lafferty of the L.A. Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild gave advice on how to challenge the unconstitutional tactics of the Ashcroft Justice Department and support those who are targeted for repression.

Building anti-racist solidarity and the struggle for reparations attracted unionists and community activists. Monica Moorehead, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper and coordinator of Millions for Mumia, showed how taking on these questions is central to building a strong, united anti-war movement.

Health care workers are facing a crisis in this country and also are sickened by the immense suffering inflicted by the U.S. on the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan. One workshop was devoted to doctors and nurses who have been in the forefront of the anti-war struggle.

Members of Youth & Student ANSWER played a big role in pulling the conference together and defining its agenda, from the opening talk by Caneisha Mills, chair of the first plenary, to presentations on

The conference demonstrated that activists are not satisfied with just protesting the violence. They want to act in solidarity with the struggles of people around the world who are resisting U.S. imperialism.

"Where is the movement going?" by Peta Lindsay and Sarah Sloan, "Who profits from war?" by Natividad Carrera, and "The Strategy and Tactics of Empire" by Leilani Dowell.

The Action Plan adopted by the conference pinpointed two important dates: July 4, when Bush will be in Philadelphia to, ironically, open the National Constitution Center, and Sept. 27, an Internationally Coordinated Day of Action against Occupation and Empire and in Solidarity with Those Who Resist. In Philadelphia, ANSWER will be joining with local organizations that have issued a call for thousands to come and protest U.S. wars at home and abroad.

The details on these actions as they unfold will be available at www.internationalanswer.org. □



Workshop of doctors and nurses.



Workshop on 'The War at Home.'

U.S. 'Authority' in Iraq continues to unravel

By Sara Flounders

The U.S. conquest of Iraq is not going according to plan.

Developments confirm that the situation is unraveling due to growing popular anger and resistance.

On May 15, the Pentagon announced that no more U.S. troops will be headed for home. All troop departures have been canceled. And tens of thousands of additional troops are on the way to Iraq. More soldiers will be moved into policing city streets to confront an increasingly desperate population.

Gen. Jay Garner and his entire U.S. advance team were unceremoniously fired. Garner's assignment—setting up a civil administration—never got off the ground. His replacement, L. Paul Bremer III, is described as a counter-terrorism expert who belongs to the Council on Foreign Relations and once headed Kissinger Associates—both connected to Rockefeller oil money.

The U.S.-appointed Iraqi Interim Government that Garner promised to install before the end of May was put on hold. The "by U.S. invitation only" National Assembly never made it off the drawing board.

Thousands of Iraqis marched in Baghdad on May 19 in the largest protest yet against U.S. occupation. To demonstrate unity between Sunni and Shiite Moslems, marchers gathered outside a Sunni Mosque and moved en masse across the city to a Shiite shrine.

Their banners and chants repeated the theme of unity and demanded: "No to occupation," "No to injustice," "No to the foreign administration"—and, again and again, "No, no, no USA!"

Organizers armed with AK-47 assault rifles served as security for the march, according to May 19 Associated Press reports.

The corporate media covered the demonstration, but attempted to downplay the numbers and marginalize the significance of the protest—the same way they have done with anti-war demonstrations in the United States.

The AP and New York Times reported that 10,000 people participated. Media in the Arab world, such as Al Jazeera and others, reported that more than 50,000 participated.

The situation in Iraq today

A quick review of news in the corporate media reveals that the entire situation in Iraq is wildly out of control.

There's still no potable drinking water in Baghdad and Basra, the largest cities of Iraq. In Basra, contaminated water has caused an outbreak of cholera, a deadly disease. Summer is just beginning. Daily temperatures rising above 100 degrees will rapidly spread disease.

There is still no electricity in most major cities. U.S. military installations have their own generators. But most Iraqis have no lights, refrigeration, fans or water pumps.

The phone system is destroyed. This means no communications, except for a handful of U.S. collaborators who receive the most popular "perk" or status symbol: a satellite phone.

There is almost no fuel. The lines to buy gas for cars, or fuel to cook or boil drinking water, are miles long. Public transportation is not running.

There is no functioning health care system. Hospitals are still totally overwhelmed with thousands of people of all



ages who were injured during the war. Exacerbating the health catastrophe is the fact that supplies have been looted, there is no program to re-supply them, and doctors and emergency personnel are exhausted and not getting paid.

Many schools are bombed and gutted. U.S. military units are encamped in others. The streets are so dangerous that many parents won't allow their children to walk to school.

There has been no organized food distribution since the war began. For years, due to U.S.-led sanctions, 75 percent to 80 percent of Iraqis have been almost totally dependent on the food distribution system organized by the Iraqi government.

Today, after the war, malnutrition is already double what it was a year ago under sanctions.

With the economy shut down, there are few jobs.

The U.S. government has totally failed to meet the most basic needs of the Iraqi people, after declaring it was in full control of the situation.

So what is the U.S. solution? Blame the people themselves.

L. Paul Bremer III floated the idea of a new policy to shoot looters—desperate people trying to find something to sell in order to feed their families.

Of course Bremer isn't interested in shooting the real looters in Iraq today. Phillip T. Carroll, the former CEO of Shell Oil Corporation who is now heading the Advisory Committee to the Iraq Oil Industry, is not on the hit list. Nor is top U.S. Treasury official Peter McPherson, who is now heading the Iraqi National Bank. The role of these two corporate criminals is to loot the oil industry and the national bank.

Smashing the old state

There is no functioning Iraqi state apparatus of any kind.

The U.S. military command allowed and encouraged the conscious destruction of every functioning government ministry except the oil ministry. For weeks, small-scale looting was encouraged as a cover to divert attention from the grand theft of Iraq's resources.

In this chaotic atmosphere basic democratic rights or laws don't exist. The U.S. military is the absolute law. Check points, searches and arrests are totally arbitrary.

Those arrested are not informed of the charges or the evidence and their families are not notified. An unknown number of Iraqis, believed to be in the thousands, are still being held.

In an orchestrated effort to divert the angry mood away from the Pentagon occupation, the U.S. is encouraging vengeance against former Baathist Party officials and outright assassinations. The U.S. is offering big rewards to encourage a hunt for thousands of officials from the past Baathist government.

Depleted uranium coverup

The Pentagon used 1,000 tons of radioactive depleted uranium rounds—three times the amount used during the first Gulf War. This time most of those rounds were fired in urban centers, not on desert battlefields.

International environmental and health organizations have raised concern that the destruction of the Iraq Ministry of Health may be part of an effort to cover up what had become an international issue: the devastating impact of DU weapons from the first Gulf War on the health of Iraqi civilians.

Iraqi health officials had compiled extensive records and very precise statistics on every form of health problem. Studies included information on neighborhoods that were hardest hit. Other studies followed the births of disabled children whose parents served in the military.

Now being able to measure the increase in cancers, health problems and birth defects is far more difficult.

And in addition to the crisis created by DU rounds, thousands of bright yellow unexploded cluster bombs and other munitions litter the entire country.

Free trade at gunpoint

There is enormous anger throughout the Arab world that the U.S. and British occupation troops made no effort to protect Iraqi culture. The looting of the Baghdad Museum was not an isolated incident. Hundreds of small museums, archeological sites and works of art are being systematically looted.

Returning U.S. journalists and soldiers are in on the heist. They come back to this country with priceless art objects, directly stolen or purchased on the cheap at thriv-



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Sara Flounders, above.

Left, even Iraqi school children are protesting the imperialist occupation of their country.

ing underground markets.

The burning of the National Archives may be even a greater loss than the Baghdad Museum. Countless ancient texts dating back many hundreds of years are lost to all humanity.

Yet despite the gutting of the culture and inability of the U.S. to provide any of the most basic services needed for a functioning society, President George W. Bush has announced plans for a "Middle East Free Trade Agreement."

This announcement confirms once again that what makes the world safe for McDonald's hamburgers is the jet bombers made by McDonnell Douglas. U.S. corporate globalization is enforced through its military domination.

The Middle East Free Trade Agreement is an effort to economically integrate the U.S.-financed state of Israel into the Arab world. It won't give Iraq or any Arab countries access to U.S. markets. It will only further impose structural adjustment policies on the entire region.

U.S. demands mandate for occupation

The Bush administration introduced a resolution in the United Nations Security Council on May 8. It's entitled, "To Assist the People of Iraq." This U.S.-led resolution supposedly would provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Iraq—after 13 years of U.S.-led sanctions starved the population.

In fact, the resolution is a demand that the UN legitimize the criminal war against Iraq and authorize the present occupation. It's an effort to get international recognition for absolute U.S./British control—called The Authority—over Iraq.

The resolution was formally introduced by the United States, Britain and Spain. But the United States, as the kingpin military and imperial power in the formation of this Authority, would get the bulk of wealth and control.

The Authority would have total control over all Iraqi funds, including those frozen for 13 years; the billions of dollars in the Oil For Food fund that was withheld for years; and all future profits from the sale of Iraqi oil.

This Authority would control all contracts, reconstruction and administration until a government that it approves of is established.

In return the Authority would allow UN agencies to hand out food and humanitarian aid.

In other words, it is a replay of the British Mandate over Iraq and Palestine of 80 years ago. Now it is a U.S./British Mandate.

This is colonialism in its rawest form.

Continued on page 11

BELGIUM

Anti-war forces bring U.S. general to court

By John Catalinotto

Belgian anti-war activists, working with 18 Iraqi and two Jordanian victims of U.S. aggression, have charged the Pentagon—specifically Gen. Tommy Franks—with war crimes. The charges, introduced in Belgian courts on May 13, include the deliberate targeting of civilians during the occupation of Baghdad.

The initial reaction of the Belgian government was to formally accept the charges, but to direct their deliberation to courts inside the U.S.

Belgian anti-war activists are attempting to mobilize world opinion to demand the cases be tried in Belgium.

Washington has threatened it will move NATO headquarters out of Brussels and other consequences if the Belgian government allows this case to be accepted in its courts.

Belgian law allows people to bring charges of war crimes or genocide against citizens of other countries—but only in cases where the individuals are not expected to face trial in their own country or in an international court of law.

This measure has not always been applied in a progressive way. But it has occasionally been used to bring charges against imperialist war criminals.

For example, Ariel Sharon, now the Israeli prime minister but then minister of defense, has been charged for co-responsibility in the slaughter of thousands of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Lebanon in 1982, during the Israeli Army invasion and occupation of that country.

Tommy Franks: war criminal

Belgian lawyer Jan Fermon, working with the Stop USA Coalition—Stop United States of Aggression—brought charges against the Pentagon on May 13, using

Belgium's 1993 legislation dealing with war crimes and genocide.

A Stop USA Coalition document explains, "The complaint is directed against soldiers—who are not identified at this stage—who have committed war crimes. It mentions Gen. Tommy Franks in particular for ordering war crimes and for not preventing others from committing them or for providing protection to the perpetrators.

"The plaintiffs have been seriously injured or have lost relatives as the result of:

- the use of cluster bombs
- attacks on the civilian population, including journalists
- acts of aggression against health services and other Iraqi infrastructure
- looting protected by or under orders from the U.S. Army.

"The plaintiffs and their relatives likewise have reason to fear the devastating effects of depleted uranium munitions used by the U.S. Army. Their effects have already been highlighted in the previous wars against Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan."

The statement continues, "The plaintiffs demand an independent inquiry to identify those responsible for the war crimes of which they were victims. They are also asking for those guilty to be brought to justice."

Doctors bear witness

Physicians Colette Moulaert and Geert Van Moorter of Medicine for the Third World spent most of the war period inside Baghdad assisting at the understaffed hospitals and witnessing the crimes the U.S. military committed against civilians. They have documented the charges levied by the Iraqi and Jordanian plaintiffs.

Moulaert and Van Moorter saw many

civilian victims of the bombing raids, including many children, during their time in Baghdad.

The U.S. corporate media kept most images of wounded and dead children away from its domestic population. Washington fears that a trial in Belgium—or even publicity that repeats the truth about U.S. crimes in Iraq—could have an impact on public sentiment in the United States.

The doctors also saw evidence that U.S. troops fired on Iraqi ambulances bringing wounded people to the hospitals.

Even the initial news that these charges would be accepted by the Belgian court received world-wide publicity and produced an angry reaction from the U.S. State Department.

U.S. spokespeople directed this anger at the Belgian government and also at attorney Fermon, physicians Moulaert and Van Moorten, and Dyab Abou Jahjah—a political activist among Belgium's North African immigrants who initiated the charges.

The Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel sided with the U.S. and its characterization that the charges were "frivolous."

Moulaert reacted with anger, saying that Michel "would do well to look into the eyes of the Iraqi children, the victims of the bombardments. What I saw was monstrous and I was only able to see a small part of the truth. But the children mutilated, destroyed—I saw dozens and dozens of them myself in a few days. It would be good to put the people responsible for these horrors in prison. To call that 'frivolous'? What world do these people live in?"

Van Moorter explained why they helped the Iraqi victims prepare the court charges. "We couldn't stay there and do nothing. The Iraqi victims said they wanted those responsible punished.

"If we had known earlier, we could without doubt have collected many more witnesses to accompany the charges. I was greatly shocked after the bombardment of the Shoala market in which 15 children were killed. Nowhere nearby were there military targets. For me, this was a war crime for which those responsible should be punished."

The courts and people's struggles

The Belgian law on "universal jurisdiction" had been amended on May 7 to give the Belgian government the option of filing a case before the International Criminal Court (ICC) or forwarding it to the country of origin of the accused.

But the United States refused to ratify the statutes of the ICC. This makes transferring the case to the ICC court impossible. And Washington made it clear it refuses to recognize any foreign or international court's jurisdiction over U.S. military or political figures, however horrible the crimes they commit.

Of course the U.S. rulers reserve the right to try people from other countries in their courts, and even to punish them without trial, like the hundreds of prisoners the U.S. has jailed at Guantánamo since the war against Afghanistan.

Belgian law demands that a court in the country of origin give guarantees of impartiality—unlikely in a U.S. court.

Asked about the possible impact of this case—since the Belgian government wants to transfer it to the U.S.—Jahjah responded: "I support this initiative entirely. But even if it is mainly a symbolic act, the trial could reveal the people in Bush's team as real criminals who don't hesitate before committing a war crime. In the Arab world, the anger regarding the events can only grow stronger."

For more information on this case see www.stopusa.be. □

Thousands in Baghdad alone

Counting dead and wounded civilians

By Leslie Feinberg

How many Iraqi civilians were killed in the war? The pro-Pentagon media in the United States are generally silent on the subject. But in Baghdad, death notices, hand-printed in yellow and white, flap in the wind from lampposts, trees and buildings.

One exception among the commercial newspapers here is the Los Angeles Times, which on May 19 reported on the findings of a survey it took of hospitals. It found that in Baghdad alone at least 1,700 civilians were confirmed dead and more than 8,000 injured.

In addition, undocumented civilian deaths in the capital and its outlying districts number at least in the hundreds and could mount to 1,000, based on reports by Islamic burial societies and groups trying to trace the missing.

U.S. military brass, governing the military occupation of Iraq, have "no plans to try to tally the civilian dead," the article stated.

Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Col. Dave Lapan brushed off the suggestion: "We have no way of verifying independently whether people who were killed were

civilians or not civilians."

But, the article pointed out, "even soldiers who shed their uniforms and threw away their weapons often continued to carry some form of identification."

And, Dr. Mahmoud Kubisi explains, "Some of them would murmur to us they were soldiers, because they wanted us to be able to help find their families if they died."

Iraqi hospital personnel kept meticulous records of patient information and military affiliation. Even after the U.S. command allowed massive looting of the hospitals, staff managed to reassemble data based on notations, patient charts and morgue attendant tallies.

At Monsour Hospital in central Baghdad, a four-hospital complex dubbed Medical City, doctors report that U.S. troops seized and removed their casualty records.

The city's registry of births and deaths wants to compile an official reckoning of war dead, but it may take months.

During the war, hospitals could not handle all the bodies of those who died. Many were buried on the grounds of the facility. Mosques helped bury bodies found in cars and buildings.



Most people in U.S. never saw images of the Iraqi people's suffering

Youths, some of them 15 and 16, volunteered to help bury the decomposing bodies, "despite the extreme danger of moving about in the initial days of the American military presence," the article noted.

"They were very brave," said Hashim Qureishi, an engineer who organized a group of volunteers. "It was terrible work, though, very terrible."

Haidar Tari, in charge of tracing missing people for the Iraqi Red Crescent, estimated there may have been up to 3,000

such undocumented burials—perhaps as many as one-third of them civilian deaths.

More bodies may be found in areas under U.S. military control where the brass has barred access to the Red Crescent.

William M. Arkin, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic Education at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, said that when the final toll is registered, the number of Iraqi civilians who died in the war will probably be "many thousands." □



Inventing the 'news'

Bob Herbert, the only Black columnist at the New York Times, wrote on May 19: "I've seen drunks, incompetents and out-and-out lunatics in the newsrooms I've passed through over the years. I've seen plagiarizers, fiction writers and reporters who felt it was beneath them to show up for work at all. ... Most of these rogues, scoundrels and miscreants were white because most of the staffers in America's mainstream newsrooms are white. What I haven't seen in all these years was the suggestion that any of these individuals fouled up—or were put into positions where they could foul up—because they were white."

He was commenting on the firing of Jayson Blair, a reporter who had invented much of the material he wrote. Herbert and other African Americans working for the newspaper are near the boiling point because of the suggestion that Blair's misdeeds were condoned or overlooked by editors because he is Black.

"So let's be real," wrote Herbert. "Discrimination in the newsroom—in hiring, in the quality of assignments and in promotions—is a much more pervasive problem than Jayson Blair's aberrant behavior. A Black reporter told me angrily last week, 'After hundreds of years in America, we are still on probation.'"

The Times management provoked this response from its own employees when it broke the Blair story in an unprecedented 14,000-word article that took up an entire page. The implication was that Blair's actions were extraordinary and had sullied the sterling reputation of the newspaper.

Extraordinary? Reporters and editors don't make up the news? We beg to differ. Here are two examples from the New York Times itself.

The first was a memorable front-page article about the arrival of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld at Ndola airport in the Congo's break-away province of Katanga on Sept. 17, 1961. The reporter vividly described the scene: African dancers welcoming the diplomat as representatives of Moïse Tshombe, the president, formally greeted him.

The article was pulled in the second edition. Why? Because

Hammarskjöld never arrived. His plane had crashed en route and he was dead. The article had been written and sent in to the newspaper hours before the event it pretended to chronicle. After that embarrassing incident, the Times said that its procedures on when stories could be filed would be changed.

Now for the second, more recent, example. Last Oct. 26, the ANSWER coalition held an anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C. It took out permits for 20,000 marchers. A huge crowd turned out, estimated between 100,000 and 200,000. The next day the New York Times ran a short report on page eight saying that just "thousands" had marched, "fewer people ... than organizers had said they hoped for."

Other newspapers, like the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, reported 100,000 marchers. People who had been in Washington flooded the New York Times with calls of complaint. Finally, without admitting that its first story was wrong, the newspaper printed a second article on Oct. 30 that said the protest "drew 100,000 by police estimates and 200,000 by organizers', forming a two-mile wall of marchers around the White House."

Was the original reporter to blame? Or the higher-ups? Lynette Clemetson, who wrote the first article, called Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman to explain. "She told us she had pitched a broader story on the protests, and had predicted it would be a big march, a turning point in the anti-war coverage," recalled Goodman. "She said she arrived at the protest in the early morning, when the number of people there was still low. The editors pulled her off the story to work on a story on the Washington-area sniper. In the afternoon, as the numbers of protesters swelled, she called in a corrected estimate to her editor. That correction never made it into the article. She said she received numerous calls from people angry about the coverage, which she referred to the editors. She said she is glad people called to complain." (Quoted in the December 2002 issue of Extra!Update, the bimonthly newsletter of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)

Keep those complaints coming. □

French workers strike to save pensions

By G. Dunkel

Two million French workers, mainly from the public sector unions, but with significant contingents from large private companies like Danone, Renault, Thales, Air France, Alstom and Bouygues, went on strike on May 13. They held demonstrations in 115 French cities, some larger than those held in the same cities in 1995 and even in the stormy year of 1968.

The French government wants to make government employees—about 25 percent of all French workers—work 2-1/2 years more before they get a full pension.

Bernard Thibault, the secretary-general of the most militant union confederation, the CGT, charged in a televised debate with the government minister in charge of social affairs that the government's plan to "reform" pensions will also reduce state pensions by 20 percent and private pensions by 30 percent. (Le Monde, April 26)

While the government denies Thibault's assertion, the unions agree with him. It was raised on many of the signs and banners the CGT and other union federations carried.

May 13 saw basically no public transportation in big cities like Paris, Marseilles and Toulouse; toll collectors did not collect on that day; air traffic controllers, one of the feistiest unions in France, also struck, affecting Europe as well as France. According to a number of polls, 65 percent of the people in the Paris metropolitan area supported the strike and 64 percent are worried about their own pensions.

Teachers and school staffs also walked out and marched with students and parents. They have their own issues with the government's attempt to restructure education as well as retirement. The education minister wants to move 100,000 paraprofessionals and staff onto local payrolls, where they can be laid off more easily, and to open education up to private competition. There have already been protests and strikes over educational issues.

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin took the unions on directly in a long interview on French television on May 7. Claiming economic necessity, he stated that parliament, where his right-wing party holds a commanding majority, would make the final decision.

"Let's be clear," he said. "Parliament must

decide. The street should express itself, but it's not the street that governs." By the "street" he meant the working class.

The unions have not backed down. The CGT and Workers' Force (FO), another major union confederation, warned the government that the struggle would not stop on May 13. Left-wing parties have a lot of influence in these unions. Both the French Communist Party and Workers' Struggle (LO), which historically have had deep ideological differences, denounced Raffarin's plan and called for a massive turnout on May 13. That's exactly what happened.

Workers in the Paris Metro, regional rail lines, and public transportation in other major cities, as well as in some post offices and schools, held mass meetings on May 13 and 14 and decided they were strong enough to continue the strike.

They were also encouraged when Austrian unions held a major demonstration of 200,000 in Vienna on May 13 over the issue of retirement and 50,000 Swedish public employees also went on strike. Governments throughout Europe want to cut expenses by cutting workers' benefits, and have decided that retirement is the easiest target.

Finally, faced with growing militancy and a public that supported the aims of the strikers, Minister of Social Affairs François Fillon offered the unions a deal on May 15. The CGT refused to attend the meeting. The FO attended but walked out. However, the government was able to get the leaders of another large union confederation, the French Confederation of Democratic Workers (CFDT), and a smaller confederation to sign off on some minor concessions.

The CFDT's decision was greeted with a storm of worker protest within the confederation. Affiliates proclaimed that they supported the CGT/FO call for another week of strikes beginning May 19 and opposed breaking union solidarity in the struggle against the government.

The militant unions have called for another massive demonstration on May 25.

Raffarin might very well be able to win the votes in parliament, but the unions have and can make it very hard for the government to run France. □

Hague protest to demand freedom for Yugoslav leader

By John Catalinotto

European groups that have been defending former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, along with organizations of the Yugoslav diaspora, are issuing a call for a demonstration in The Hague, Netherlands, on June 28, demanding his freedom.

It was on that date two years ago that Milosevic was kidnapped from Belgrade by NATO forces and brought to The Hague. It is also St. Vitus Day, a date commemorated in Serbia for its significance in the struggle against foreign oppressors in 1389.

The call states clearly the reasons NATO went after President Milosevic.

"Slandered from the outset," it reads, "Slobodan Milosevic, the Socialist Party of Serbia and all patriotic forces resisted the shattering of Yugoslavia into weak, racially segregated territories, resisted domination by the IMF and World Bank, resisted penetration by the McDonald's culture and resisted NATO-dominated racist-terrorist forces cynically disguised as freedom fighters. It is because of these acts of principle that NATO has put him on 'trial' in The Hague.

"In that trial President Milosevic refuses to

make a deal to save himself but continues to expose the crimes of violence and racism committed by NATO and its proxy forces against Yugoslavia.

"Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown by a 'regime change' made in the USA. Yugoslavia is now being wrecked economically, socially and culturally, under USA/German domination. President Milosevic has become the first political prisoner of the so-called 'globalization' of capitalist exploitation. By kidnapping and putting on 'trial' a popularly elected president of a sovereign state, NATO and their 'tribunal' have established the gravest precedent for the destruction of the sovereignty of states.

"After the military invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. government and its allies continue to blackmail many more nations into subjugation by economic sanctions, the threat of mass destruction and destabilization through 'dissident' and 'opposition' forces organized from outside."

The International Action Center, which was active in leading the anti-war struggle in the United States during the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, has added its support to the call and will send a representative to The Hague on June 28. □

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Baghdad, May 19. The largest protest against U.S. occupation to date.

U.S. 'Authority' in Iraq continues to unravel

Continued from page 8

It is a colonial mandate that is a complete violation of national sovereignty.

Demand reparations and no occupation!

This is only the latest phase in a long U.S./British war against Iraq. For more than 100 years—through wars, invasions and outright colonialism—the aim has been the same. It is an imperialist scheme to control the oil and the resources of the entire region.

At every stage the imperialist forces had far superior weapons. Yet time and again they have been pushed back by people's movements that made past colonial policies impossible to carry out.

U.S. occupation will become more

hated every day by a people who have long experience of resisting colonial schemes. It will be resisted precisely because the U.S. and British imperialists have no solutions for the people.

Instead of the jubilation and the welcoming throngs that U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld promised, U.S. troops now face angry, hungry people.

Every day soldiers face snipers and furious demonstrators, who march right up against their gun barrels.

The world movement that opposed the U.S./British war on Iraq must forcefully declare that U.S. corporations don't have the right to one cent of Iraq's funds.

This is a time to demand that the U.S. and British pay Iraq billions in reparations and to absolutely oppose any UN legitimization of piracy and conquest. □

Why programmers need a union

Continued from page 4

perization of the population."

His message was that workers of all skill levels must organize, organize, organize. And that they must fight for solidarity and against racism and national chauvinism. Globalization of capital cries out for the globalization of the workers' struggle.

At that time, there were slightly more than a million workers in data processing. Companies hired programmers to write applications specific to their needs and build their own networks. These programs displaced and down-skilled many factory workers, but they were idiosyncratic, hand-crafted and highly complicated.

In the early 1990s came the first stirring of the World Wide Web. Companies began to outsource their IT work. They bought ready-made packages of programs and hired temporary consultants to install and configure them. As the Internet developed, companies and large institutions like universities discovered it was cheaper to plug into the Internet. People discovered that they could work from home, or wherever their travels took them—cheaply and conveniently.

With the development of the Internet and the mad rush to get applications up and running on the Web, large corporations, governments and other institutions turned to outsourcing, using outside specialists trained in the new technology to build what was needed and run it. IBM and Oracle, along with Compaq and Sun,

soon began to make big profits providing professional services.

These big service companies, to make the highest profits, needed to use the vast changes in speed, ease and cost of telecommunications that have come with the explosive growth of the Internet. It has had almost as much impact on IT as computerization had on manufacturing in the 1980s.

IT companies can't go just anywhere for their programming needs. They still need to find workers with education, training and experience. They need a certain amount of infrastructure and communication lines. But whether that's down the hall or on another continent makes little difference to the computer.

Most programmers in the United States still think of themselves as small proprietors whose bit of knowledge gives them a leg up in the job market. Few are unionized. In this respect their consciousness is like that of teachers, nurses and pilots some 50 years ago.

But the drive for profits and the ease of communications are making them realize that they, too, are wage workers at the mercy of big capital. In Great Britain and Ireland, more and more IT specialists under the lash of outsourcing are seeking union protection.

Schechter has a suggestion. "Programmers in this country should get off our high horses and join a union. At least we'll get a fair shake, though it obviously won't solve all our problems." □

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row:

The uncounted dead



"Our boys were sent off to die with 'beautiful ideals' painted in front of them. No one told them that 'dollars and cents' were the real reason they were marching off to 'kill and die.'"

— Gen. Smedley Butler, 1934

It is easy for millions of Americans to believe that the Iraq war, or for that matter, any other war this century, was fought for high-sounding ideals, like freedom and democracy.

It is easy. Yet it is wrong.

In the earlier half of the 20th century, when the U.S. invaded the Philippines, it proclaimed its duty as bringing "civilization" to the benighted peoples of the islands. There, Filipino rebels were waging an independence war against the Spaniards and were on the verge of winning their freedom. Lo and behold, the U.S. stepped in and proclaimed that they too were on the side of "freedom." Spain, reading the handwriting on the wall, rather quickly capitulated. Under the fog of "freedom," however, lay other motives, ones expressed openly by Indiana Sen. Albert Beveridge, who announced:

"The Philippines are 'ours forever ... and just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets...' The Pacific is 'our ocean.'" [Howard Zinn, "A People's History of the United States" (1995), p. 306]

The Filipinos clearly had other ideas, for they had just ended a war for independence, after all, with one waning empire. They were in no mood to join another. But the Americans, using their media and their politicians to promote "civilization" as their "mission," brought in troops, who were ordered to "Burn all and kill all." The U.S. military killed over 600,000 Filipinos to "civilize" them. The great American novelist, Mark Twain, so outraged by the American actions there, joined the Anti-Imperialist League, became its vice president, and would later exclaim:

"I have seen that we do not intend to free but to subjugate the Philippines and so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land. ... I have a strong aversion to sending our bright boys out there to fight with a disgraced musket under a polluted flag."

[Philip Foner, "Mark Twain: Social Critic" (1958), p. 260]

For decades the U.S. supported the corrupt and brutal Marcos regime in Manila, where freedom was a joke and democracy an illusion. It took a broad rebellion by Filipinos to remove him from power.

The native dead from the Vietnam War rarely enter American debate, even though some 2 million men, women and children lost their lives. When U.S.-backed dictatorships unleashed their CIA-trained death squads on their own people, killing hundreds of thousands since the 1970s in Central America, who among us bothered to even count these peasants? When the U.S. bombed its way into Panama in 1989 to remove Noriega—and install its own kleptocracy—thousands of Panamanians were slain during the invasion. How many? The U.S. hadn't bothered to count.

During the first Gulf War, in 1991, the U.S. killed an estimated 150,000 Iraqis. But like the Panamanians, the Central Americans, the Filipinos before them, they were faceless, nameless and largely forgotten. In U.S. military parlance, they are "collateral damage."

So too, the bombing campaign of the most recent Iraqi War was brought to you by Raytheon, Lockheed and the imperial press corps, complete with uniforms. They can tell you how many bombs were dropped, where they were dropped, indeed how much each bomb weighed and cost. Yet who they hit, and how many they killed is not news. As non-Westerners, as nonwhites, they are expendable; forgettable.

Do you really think that there will be a "democratic" Iraq?

What if a majority of Iraqis want to found an Islamic state? U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had already announced that such a polity would be "unacceptable." "Democracy" thus may really mean, "Do what the Americans want you to do."

For the better part of a century, the words "democracy," "civilization" and "freedom" have been code words for something else indeed. They have been code words for Empire. And what is Empire? It is the looting and exploitation of the world for profit. Let us return briefly to Sen. Beveridge for the flavor of the Philippines invasion and slaughter, to reflect the real reasons for that war, as well as an inkling of the latest invasion of Iraq:

"The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East. ... No land in America surpasses in fertility the plains and valleys of Luzon. Rice and coffee, sugar and coconuts, hemp and tobacco ... The wood of the Philippines can supply the furniture of the world for a century to come. At Cebu the best informed man on the island told me that 40 miles of Cebu's mountain chain are practically mountains of coal. ...

"My own belief is that there are not 100 men among them who comprehend what Anglo-Saxon self-government even means, and there are over 5 million people to be governed.

"It has been charged that our conduct of the war has been cruel. Senators, it has been the reverse. ... Senators must remember that we are not dealing with Americans or Europeans. We are dealing with Orientals." (Zinn, p. 306)

This greed, this pervasive racism fueled American colonialism at the beginning of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, if you look far enough, it is with us still. □

MUMIA SPEAKS An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row Columns by the Black journalist on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica Moorehead, Larry Holmes and Teresa Gutierrez.

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¡PROLETARIOS Y OPRIMIDOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!

MUNDO OBRERO

Detrás de las demandas de EE.UU. de suspender las sanciones

El historial de las sanciones de la ONU

Última parte

Por Sara Flounders

Vale la pena revisar el historial de las sanciones impuestas por los Estados Unidos y la ONU sobre Irak, sus impactos y lo que está en juego en este nuevo y pero a la vez viejo debate.

En agosto de 1990, usando su sofocante poderío, Washington produjo y a fuerza hizo que el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU impusiera las sanciones económicas contra Irak que terminaron con estrangular a este país por los últimos 13 años. Las sanciones fueron definidas como una medida para forzar a Irak a salir de Kuwait.

Se debe recordar que el 25 de julio, antes de la invasión a Kuwait, la embajadora estadounidense, April Glaspie se había reunido con el líder de Irak, Saddam Hussein. Este le informó a la embajadora que Irak tomaría pasos contra Kuwait si las negociaciones fallasen. La oligarquía rica de Kuwait mantenía bajos los precios del petróleo mientras le robaban este a Irak por medio de oleoductos subterráneos instalados en ángulos. La economía de Irak estaba en muy mal estado debido a la guerra contra Irán.

Glaspie afirmó que Washington no “tenía ninguna opinión” sobre el conflicto de Irak con Kuwait. Pero cuando Irak dio pasos hacia Kuwait, los Estados Unidos exigieron y recibieron de la ONU el permiso para el castigo colectivo más extremo jamás impuesto sobre un pueblo entero. Irak no podría vender su petróleo o ningún otro producto. Tampoco podría importar productos. Todos los fondos en bancos internacionales—miles de millones de dólares de las ventas de petróleo—fueron congelados. Con sus fondos congelados, sin comercio, sin créditos o préstamos, toda su economía se vino abajo. La inflación se elevó enormemente.

Cuando el Pentágono comenzó a bombardear en enero de 1991, sus blancos fueron escogidos para aumentar el impacto mortal de las sanciones. Los Estados Unidos destruyeron plantas de agua, de purificación, centros médicos y farmacéuticos, junto a plantas de procesamiento de alimentos intencionalmente. Surgieron epidemias de cólera, tifoidea y sarampión. En pocos meses, cientos de miles de niños iraquíes habían muerto por ingerir aguas no tratadas.

Luego de la masiva campaña por cuarenta días de bombardeos, Irak se retiró de Kuwait. Esto debió terminar las razones de las sanciones. Pero como condición al cese de fuego, los Estados Unidos exigieron que las sanciones se mantuvieran hasta que el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU confirmara que Irak había destruido cualquier arma no convencional que tuviera.

Esto se convirtió en la excusa para una lucha continua en exigir el derecho de enviar a miles de inspectores a Irak para confirmar que Irak no tenía tales armas.



Miles de personas manifiestan a Bagdad, 19 de mayo.

Industrias necesarias para que un país moderno industrializado funcione fueron destruidas, incluyendo las plantas químicas y plantas donde se producía fertilizantes y pesticidas. A pesar de las 9 mil inspecciones, la continua amenaza de un veto por los Estados Unidos ha mantenido a estas sanciones genocidas vivas por 13 años.

La campaña contra las sanciones.

Desde su nacimiento en 1991, el Centro de Acción Internacional (CAI) ha llevado una campaña para dar fin a las sanciones contra Irak. Ramsey Clark, ex procurador general de los Estados Unidos y fundador del CAI, en su esfuerzo de enfocar la atención del mundo sobre el impacto de las sanciones, hizo difíciles viajes a Irak cada año con delegaciones en busca de testimonios oculares. Él escribió una Apelación Internacional para Dar Fin a las Sanciones contra Irak que fue firmada por muchos líderes mundiales, junto con organizaciones internacionales de derechos humanos y de paz.

El llamado caracterizó a las sanciones como un arma de genocidio y “un crimen

contra la humanidad”, tal y como se define en los Principios de Nuremberg. El llamado fue traducido en varios idiomas y se convirtió en la base de una serie de conferencias internacionales por la paz en Londres, Roma, Atenas, Madrid, Tokio, Nueva York y San Francisco.

En 1995 un reporte de la Organización de Alimentos y Agricultura de la ONU confirmó que 567.000 niños menos de 5 años de edad murieron como resultado directo de las sanciones que aún siguen en vigor. Una movilización global demandando que las sanciones sean revocadas creó un cambio radical en la opinión mundial.

Mientras que el nivel de indignación mundial subió, los EE.UU. cambiaron su postura en las relaciones públicas. En un esfuerzo para ocultar la política brutal con una fachada humanitaria, impulsó su Programa de Alimentos por Petróleo. Este programa permitió a Irak vender una cantidad limitada de su petróleo y comprar alimentos y medicinas con los fondos derivados. El Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU, bajo un comité especial llamado el Comité 661, controlaría todos los fondos derivados y revisaría todos los contratos de los productos que recibiría Irak.

De estas ventas de petróleo severamente restringidas, Irak también tendría que pagar indemnizaciones a Kuwait y una cantidad de otros reclamos resultado de la destrucción hecha por los bombardeos y otros actos de destrucción por parte de los EE.UU. durante la guerra de 1991. Desde enero de 1997, cuando este programa comenzó, hasta los fines de 2001, Irak pudo vender un valor de aproximadamente \$50 mil millones de petróleo. Todo este dinero fue depositado en una cuenta bancaria controlada por la ONU. Irak recibió menos de un 25 por ciento de esta cantidad para comprar medicinas y alimentos, sumando a menos de 22 centavos a diario por persona.

Un 34 por ciento de los fondos producidos por el Programa de Alimentos por Petróleo fue a la monarquía kuwaití y a otras “víctimas” de la guerra de 1991. Exxon-Mobil recibió \$200 millones en “indemnizaciones de guerra” de los fondos “del Programa de Alimentos por Petróleo” que supuestamente eran destinados a alimentar a los niños iraquíes hambrientos. Mil millones de dólares también fueron a la ONU para administrar este programa. Una burocracia multimillonaria fue creada la cual garantizó contratos lucrativos a muchos países.

Durante los últimos seis años representantes de los EE.UU. y el Reino Unido del Comité 661 han negado, postergado u obstruido la mayoría de los contratos presentados por Irak. Bajo presión de los EE.UU., el comité negó más de un 90 por ciento de los contratos presentados por Irak para proyectos de reparación de las plantas de tratamiento de aguas residuales y depuradoras, y de riego y alcantarillados.

Por razón de esta continua obstrucción, mil millones de dólares de las ventas petroleras nunca fueron otorgados para satisfacer las necesidades desesperadas de Irak pero siguen controlados en las cuentas bancarias de la ONU. Estos fondos, junto a los futuros ingresos petroleros son lo que el poder corporativo de los EE.UU. quiere controlar incondicionalmente.

El movimiento mundial para acabar con las sanciones contra Irak es en efecto un movimiento luchando por el derecho del pueblo de Irak de controlar sus propios recursos naturales. Las sanciones han sido un crimen contra la humanidad y un asalto contra la soberanía nacional de todos los países en vías de desarrollo. Tienen que ser revocadas.

Pero los EE.UU. quienes actualmente ocupan a Irak militarmente no se les deben permitir el pillaje imperialista de otra forma. El movimiento contra la guerra y las sanciones tiene que demandar que las tropas de los EE.UU. salgan de inmediato, junto con sus cómplices invitados. Tiene que defender el derecho del pueblo de Irak de controlar sus recursos nacionales. Ni un solo centavo del petróleo iraquí debe ir a los bolsillos del régimen criminal de ocupación militar de los Estados Unidos. □

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