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Assassination of Palestinian Sheik Yassin Israeli murder draws world condemnation

By Richard Becker

The assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement also known as Hamas, outside a mosque in Gaza City, Palestine, on March 22 has drawn worldwide condemnation. Sheik Yassin and seven other people were killed by missiles fired from an Israeli helicopter gunship.

The murder of Yassin signals that Israel, in the words of a statement from the International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition, "is preparing an all-out assault on the Palestinian people, much in the same context as the attack on Lebanon in June 1982. The aim then was to destroy the Palestinian national liberation movement and turn Lebanon into a virtual colony."

Following the assassination, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Gaza City in what may have been the largest demonstration in the area's history. Hundreds of thousands more staged militant protests in cities all over the West Bank and in Palestinian areas inside the 1948 Israeli border.

Massive street protests took place in many Middle Eastern countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Virtually all governments in Arab and predominantly Muslim states—even those most under U.S. domination—issued statements condemning the attack, as did political leaders around the globe.

The Hezbollah guerrilla movement, which was largely responsible for driving Israeli forces out of most of southern Lebanon in 2000,

fired heavy artillery and rockets into the still-occupied Chebaa Farms area in retaliation.

Hamas in its statement held both Israel and the U.S. responsible for the assassination.

The U.S.-Israeli role

After several hours of taking a neutral position while stating that it had no advance notice of the assassination, the Bush administration was finally compelled by the depth of world reaction to issue a statement mildly criticizing Israel. State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said that the U.S. was "deeply troubled" by the attack, but stopped short of condemnation.

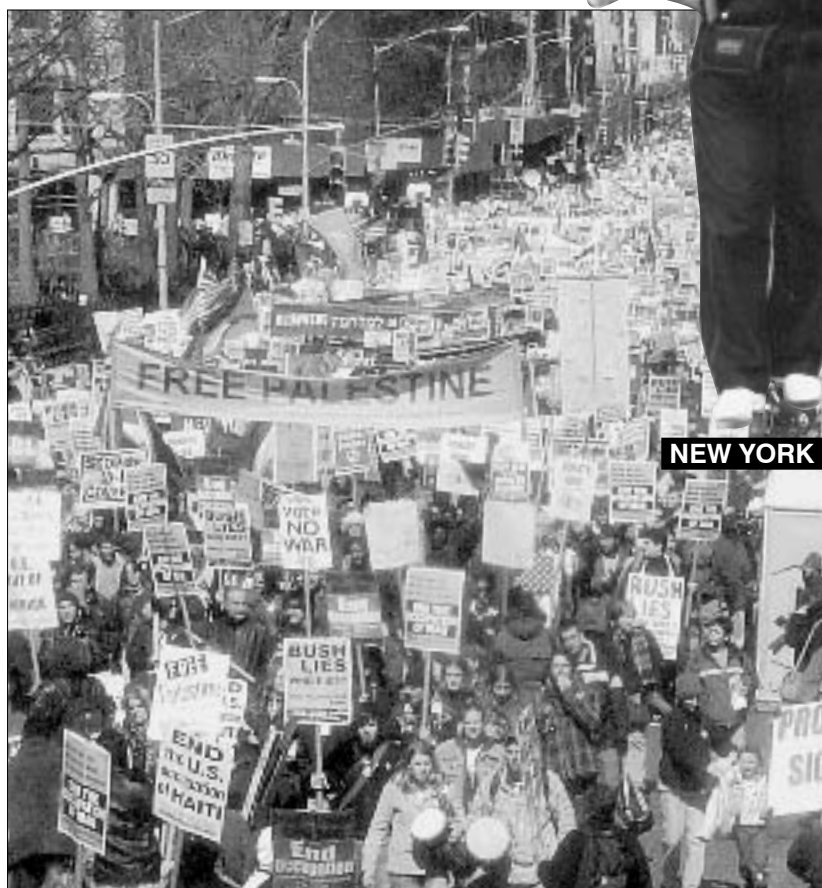
Just before the attack, Israeli Air Force F-16 fighter jets flew over the site. The roar of the jets was meant to mask the sound of the helicopter, which rose up over a neighboring building and fired three rockets into a group of people, including the wheelchair-bound Yassin, as they were leaving the mosque following morning prayers.

Both the F-16s and the helicopters that Israel commonly uses to attack Palestinian civilian targets

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LOS ANGELES



NEW YORK



BACK IN THE STREETS

Anti-war protests circle the globe 5-7



SAN FRANCISCO

Bigots set back in Tennessee

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Community advocates for same-sex marriage have resoundingly defeated anti-gay bigots in Tennessee.

On March 16, commissioners in Rhea County unanimously passed a resolution intended to bar gay people from living in the county. Located about 30 miles south of Chattanooga, Rhea County is famous for the 1925 "Scopes Monkey Trial."

Two days later, a wildfire of public outcry forced the commissioners to beat a hasty retreat and rescind the measure. It is patently unconstitutional under a 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down all "sodomy" laws and established a basis for overturning all discriminatory laws against lesbian and gay people in the United States.

The Chattanooga chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and the Tennessee chapter of the

American Civil Liberties Union mobilized against the reactionary proposal. During an emergency meeting called to reconsider the vote, social worker Esther Jackson held up a sign reading, "Breed love, not hate." The commissioners had to be escorted by deputies in and out of the tumultuous courtroom.

This is the same room where John Scopes was convicted almost 80 years ago for teaching evolution in his public-school science class.

Now some Tennessee legislators are balking at a proposed bill against same-sex unions, with the legislation locked up in committee. And a state court in Chattanooga is about to hear a case, brought by a local same-sex couple joined in a civil union in Vermont, that seeks to gain legal benefits similar to those offered married heterosexual couples. Advocates for same-sex marriage expect the case to go to the state Supreme Court. □

Los Angeles

Black groups defend same-sex marriage



PHOTO: KELLY WINE

Publicly announcing they were stepping into the battle for same-sex marriage, a crowd of over 50 African American activists and religious leaders gathered in historic Leimert Park in South Central Los Angeles on March 18. They challenged Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn to formally oppose the federal constitutional marriage amendment. And they demanded that California State Attorney General Bill Lockyer stop his attempts to outlaw same-sex marriage.

The event was organized by Jasmyne Cannick from the National Black Justice Coalition, who said: "The Black community is too smart and too strong to be divided over this issue. The fight for marriage equality is a civil right."

"We cannot allow the U.S. Constitution to be used to deny people their rights," said Vallerie Wagner, a long-time lesbian activist.

"This fight is about the 1,049 civil rights denied same-

sex couples," said Executive Director Lisa Powell of United Lesbians of African Heritage.

Phil Wilson, executive director of the Black AIDS Institute, said: "As an African American, this issue is simple. I believe in one America with one set of rights, privileges and responsibilities for all citizens. I think African Americans should resist at all cost any effort to codify the notion of different classes of citizenship."

Jewel and Rue Williams, an African American couple for 16 years, spoke on how legal recognition of their relationship would enable them to provide for each other as they grew older.

Ebony Lane and her transgender partner thanked both the LGBT and African American communities for uniting on this issue, and urged that all stay united in the fight against discrimination and for equality.

—Joe Delaplaine

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Fri., March 26
Workers World Party meeting: Hear Larry Holmes and Brian Becker speak on "What's Next for the Antiwar Movement?" 7 p.m.

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E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 46, No. 13 • April 1, 2004
Closing date: March 24, 2004

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Workers World-WW (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

Selected articles are available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to wwnews-on@wwpublish.com.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World-WW, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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AFL-CIO goes after wrong target

Globalization = Wal-Martization

By Milt Neidenberg

What has happened to jobs in this debt-fueled, debt-ridden economy? This has become a hot-button issue, economically and politically, for President George W. Bush and his rival, Sen. John Kerry.

Even as the capitalist parties jockey for leadership of the global imperialist system, there is no job growth at home, only shrinkage. U.S. trade practices have emerged as a significant factor.

In February, Gregory Mankiw, chairperson of the White House Council of Economic Advisors, stirred a boiling pot when he stated that the outsourcing of jobs is a long-term plus for the economy. Under pressure from the Bush administration, he quickly backed off from this statement. The timing of his remarks—in an election year—was an embarrassment to Bush, who had pledged time and again that jobs were his primary concern.

Mankiw made his remark while on a trip through industrial states that had lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

Outsourcing is seen as a plus not just for a capitalist economy showing signs of crisis but, more important, for the giant transnational corporations and their interlocking relations with Wall Street banks and investment brokers.

It's all about Fortune 500 profits. Outsourcing means eliminating and downsizing jobs, wages and benefits.

Secretary of State Colin Powell publicly supported outsourcing on his recent trip to India, where he met with Indian leaders and spoke to college students. Answering a student who asked what his position is on outsourcing, Powell said: "Outsourcing is a natural effect of the global economic system and the rise of the Internet and broadband communications. You're not going to eliminate outsourcing; but at the same time when you outsource jobs it becomes a political issue in anybody's country."

The March 17 New York Times commented that the United States "has intensified its drive to open Indian markets and wants to sell advanced civilian space and nuclear technology, but only if India imposes controls so that the technology is

not passed on to other countries."

There is nothing natural about the predatory role of the giant transnational corporations. Flush with cheap paper dollars, they roam the earth, seizing and privatizing the property and resources of developing nations. This is "natural" only under monopoly capitalism.

Globalization U.S.-style means opening markets for the military-industrial complex, exporting jobs, cutting labor costs for service-oriented transnational corporations, and making India fit into U.S. imperialist aims in South Asia.

Powell's India trip was an attempt to exploit the historical underlying tensions between India and China. China is challenging the United States in the global markets. The flood of Chinese exports to the United States reached \$124 billion last year. It was \$1.6 billion higher this January than the previous January. Most aggravating to the United States is China's refusal to adjust its currency to favor the transnational corporations.

Rigged rules, double standards

After Powell's trip to India, the Bush administration, on behalf of the \$70 billion semiconductor industry, filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization charging China with protectionist policies. What hypocrisy!

U.S. and European agribusiness barons receive \$1 billion a day in agricultural subsidies, allowing them to dump cheap surpluses in Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Small farmers and peasants are being forced off their lands by U.S. tariff barriers that cost them about \$100 billion a year, according to the organization Make Trade Fair.

To date the WTO has ignored claims of illegal protectionist practices. Transnational corporations have established their own rules on intellectual property to ensure that poor countries are unable to benefit from the scientific-technological revolution—a revolution that has intensified productivity and cost millions of jobs here.

Trading in the global markets is a stacked deck. According to economists at Alliance Capital Management LP, "Contrary to conventional U.S. beliefs, the

research found that American manufacturing workers weren't the biggest losers." Jobs here had suffered "an 11 percent drop. But Brazil had a 20 percent decline. Japan's factory work force shed 16 percent of its jobs, while China's was down 15 percent."

After looking at employment trends in 20 large economies from 1995 to 2002, the economists concluded that "more than 22 million jobs in the manufacturing sector were eliminated."

Wal-Martizing the world

Slogans like "free trade vs. fair trade" cover up U.S. imperialism's predatory objectives in the globalization of trade.

"Free trade" is nothing more than Wal-Martizing: a race to the bottom for workers here and for the hundreds of millions who are jobless, landless, poor, and hungry in the developing and undeveloped world. Backed by the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the greedy billionaires repatriate their obscene profits back here, leaving the oppressed countries with huge debts and at the mercy of the transnationals and banks.

"Fair trade" is non-existent as long as it is dominated by transnational corporations like Lehman Brothers, General Motors, Home Depot and Boeing, to name a few that have recently outsourced their information technology to Indian companies.

Recently, the AFL-CIO filed a complaint under a section of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974. The complaint alleged practices of failing to recognize trade unions or enforce minimum wage, and engaging in forced labor. Unfortunately, the complaint wasn't against Wal-Mart, which just topped the Fortune 500 list for the third time in a row. It wasn't against other transnational corporations, the Wall Street banks behind them, or the hundreds of non-union, sweatshop companies that have violated this law with impunity.

The complaint is aimed at People's China. It is a classic example of how the AFL-CIO, under President John Sweeney, is closing ranks with the Democratic Party and its front runner, John Kerry, who is gathering allies under the banner of "fair trade." This could end up in the patriotic, protectionist, anti-communist

frenzy of a "Buy America" campaign.

The unions promoted the "Made in America" label in the 1970s when the transnational corporations were exporting jobs, factories and capital. The shoe towns in the Northeast, the apparel and clothing manufacturing cities in the South, and the industrial states in the Midwest are still hurting from that policy. It didn't save jobs then and it won't save jobs now.

This strategy is failing the 13 million organized workers in this country, who come from many national backgrounds. It is divisive. It will isolate the labor movement at a crucial time, when international solidarity generally is on the rise.

For example, the March 20 Global Day of Action against war and occupation was a monumental success. Marches took place in over 250 U.S. cities and in 65 countries around the world.

At the 2003 World Social Forum in Brazil, the participants viewed their opposition to the policies of the transnational corporations as a process that would generate worldwide struggle. "Globalization in solidarity" became part of their statement of principles.

A crisis is looming as one quarter of U.S. industrial capacity remains idle. Debts and deficits continue to rise. And the jobless rate stays high even in a "recovery."

With the United States now a debtor nation, the ruling class here will become more vulnerable to crises and divisions. The labor movement needs a broad-based strategy to exploit these weaknesses. It will take a classwide, independent mobilization.

The powerful Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union has proposed a Million Worker March on Washington. The many thousands of protesters on March 20 in San Francisco cheered when an ILWU leader raised it there.

It's an idea whose time has come. Here is a perspective that would send a powerful message to Washington and Wall Street, Republicans and Democrats—the executive board of U.S. imperialism—that the labor movement will not be a passive player in the stormy days that lie ahead. □

Women's rights and Black liberation, Part 3

Former slaves backed early movement

By Leslie Feinberg

The most decisive, consistent support for the 19th-century women's rights movement came from Black men actively engaged in the struggle to abolish slavery.

Charles Lenox Remond and Frederick Douglass, for example, heard and understood the rights that Black and white women were demanding.

As historian Philip S. Foner noted, "Remond was one of the very early 'woman's rights men,' and as a delegate to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, he refused to take his seat because women delegates were excluded."

Douglass fought long and hard for women's rights. Angela Davis wrote that Douglass was responsible "for officially introducing the issue of women's rights to the Black Liberation movement, where it was enthusiastically welcomed."

Frederick Douglass strove to build a movement of Black people, South and North, to liberate their nation. At the same

time, he appealed to white workers to see how slavery kept all labor—chattel slaves and wage-slaves—in the position of captive classes. And throughout his tireless coalition building as a leading Abolitionist, he championed the rights of women—Black and white.

Douglass was one of 31 men present at the historic 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in upstate New York that marked the birth of the women's rights movement in the United States. Douglass had escaped from slavery only 10 years earlier.

When Elizabeth Cady Stanton proposed a resolution in support of women's right to vote, even her co-convenor Lucretia Mott shrank from the proposal and refused to raise it, characterizing it as too radical. But Frederick Douglass seconded Stanton's motion. The resolution passed narrowly—but only because of Douglass' intervention.

Douglass was the only man allowed to address the convention. He argued passionately in defense of women's right to

vote. Douglass said to those in attendance, "Our doctrine is that 'right is of no sex.'"

Soon after the Seneca Falls Convention, Douglass published an editorial in his newspaper, the North Star. The article, headlined "The Rights of Women," carried Douglass' advocacy of women's rights to an even wider audience.

In 1853, Douglass wrote the call for a women's rights conference in Rochester, N.Y. The call not only demanded that women's pay be equal to men's but that women, including married women, be entitled to the same property rights as men. The resolution passed with a bigger percentage of votes than at the previous conference.

Douglass spoke out on this issue at the "National Convention of Colored Freedmen," held in Cleveland about the same time as the Seneca Falls Convention.

An account by S. Jay Walker recalled, "He succeeded in amending a resolution defining delegates so that it would be 'understood' to include women ... an

amendment that was carried 'with three cheers for women's rights.'"

Shortly before his death in 1895, Douglass spoke at a women's suffrage conference. The sensitivity and solidarity of this pre-eminent leader and political bridge builder was evident: "No man, however eloquent, can speak for woman as woman can for herself. Nevertheless, I hold that this cause is not altogether and exclusively woman's cause. It is the cause of human brotherhood as well as the cause of human sisterhood, and both must rise and fall together. Woman cannot be elevated without elevating man, and man cannot be depressed without depressing woman also."

Sources: Philip S. Foner, introduction to "Frederick Douglass on Women's Rights." Angela Y. Davis, "Women, Race & Class." "Selections from the Writings of Frederick Douglass." Jay S. Walker, "Frederick Douglass and Woman Suffrage," Black Scholar, Vol. IV, Nos. 6-7 (March-April, 1973).

Nest: Democrats, Republicans and white supremacy tear united front asunder.

ON THE PICKET LINE

BY SUE DAVIS

S.F. Labor Council supports Aristide

On March 8 the San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution to restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide as the democratically elected president of Haiti and to investigate the U.S. role in the coup. The resolution read: "We applaud and support the actions of Representatives Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters, and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus in calling for a congressional investigation into the U.S. role in the coup that forced Jean-Bertrand Aristide out of office.

"We call for an investigation into last year's shipping of 20,000 M-16 rifles to the Dominican Republic by the U.S. military, and into how these weapons got into the hands of the thugs who overthrew Aristide.

"We call on the state AFL-CIO, labor councils, local and international unions to: a) demand an investigation into the Bush administration's role in the coup against Aristide; b) demand the immedi-

ate release of Aristide and his recognition and restoration as the democratically elected President of Haiti."

Part-time faculty file for union

The part-time faculty at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., filed a petition on March 8 with the National Labor Relations Board to authorize union representation on their behalf by Service Employees International Union Local 500.

A press release announcing the petition read in part: "We are over 50 percent of the teaching faculty at GWU. Our work, professionalism and dedication to our students contribute to making GW the intellectually challenging place it is. Our scholarship and teaching is central to the goal of academic excellence at GW. Yet we receive outrageously low wages compared to our full-time colleagues. Most of us get no benefits whatsoever, no matter how long we have been teaching at GW, and we have no job security.

Workers vs. MTV

In the real world, there are unions

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

MTV's "Real World" was dealt a reality check when it tried to set up shop in Philadelphia using non-union labor.

Union members from the city's construction trades picketed for two weeks outside the Seaman's Church Institute in Old City and prevented the production staff from entering a building being renovated for the so-called reality show.

The message from Teamsters, painters, carpenters and electricians to the show that claims to define "hip" was clear: Union busting isn't cool!

Bunim/Murray Productions, producers of "Real World," had sidestepped organized labor in 13 previous cities, including New York, Chicago and Boston. In Philadelphia, they hired a non-union suburban construction company that had been picketed by the carpenters' union at other job sites. Although city officials pressured the unions to compromise, Bunim/Murray refused to set a precedent of using union labor, packed up and left town.

In the aftermath of Bunim/Murray's departure, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News—the city's two daily newspapers, both owned by union-busting Knight Ridder—led a barrage of attacks on the construction union leaders, labeling them "goons," "oafs," "bullies" and "Neanderthals" for standing in the way of letting "Real World" portray Philadelphia as a "cool" place for young tech-savvy professionals to spend their money.

But even Daily News staff writer Ellen Gray had to ask just how "cool" is it that "Real World" producers Bunim/Murray and MTV, a division of Viacom—the same media conglomerate that owns CBS—"don't want to pay union wages to produce a show that celebrates conspicuous con-

sumption?" (Philadelphia Daily News, March 18) Gray explained that she was attracted to Philadelphia precisely because its newspapers were unionized, and paid enough so she could afford life in the city.

The attack on the unions is an offense against all union workers, whose off-camera labor built the cities showcased by reality television. It's also an insult to "Real World"'s target audience to imply they are only about being obnoxious to each other, partying, hanging out at Starbucks, wearing Tommy Hilfiger and sporting Nike sneakers.

The anti-globalization movement, which comes mainly from the same age bracket as this show's target audience, is challenging the same multinational corporations whose products are promoted by MTV and shows like "Real World." Many youths are also struggling to make ends meet on not just one non-union job, but often two or three.

If MTV wanted to portray the real, real world, it could send its production crews to Colombia to document the heroic life-and-death struggles of members of the SINALTRAINAL union. They have been victims of assassinations, attempted murder, kidnappings, forced displacement and burning of their homes and union offices by paramilitary forces acting as union busters on behalf of Coca-Cola Corp.

Reality television could have looked at the lives of 70,000 members of the Food and Commercial Workers union in California, who fought to save their health-care benefits while trying to survive a four-month lockout by the Greedy Three supermarket chains—Vons/Safeway, Albertsons and Ralphs. "Real World" cast members could have supported the boycotts against Coke and the supermarket giants, but in the world of capitalist entertainment, this would never fly. □

"We believe that in coming together to form a union we can not only improve our own working conditions, but in doing so raise educational standards at GW. We can also fight back against the growing trend in higher education to rely on contingent labor in an increasingly corporatized academy."

Boycott Taco Bell

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers, based in Immokalee, Fla., initiated a Taco Bell Truth Tour in Louisville, Ky., on Feb. 27 to demand better pay and working conditions for immigrant tomato pickers. The Department of Justice has prosecuted five multistate slavery cases involving over 1,000 farmworkers in the past five years.

A rally was held outside Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine, Calif., on March 5 to demand that Taco Bell pressure its tomato producers to pay their workers a living wage. The CIW initiated a national boycott of Taco Bell in 2000. After years of marches, hunger strikes and media exposés of deplorable conditions for farmworkers, the multibillion-dollar corporation is still unwilling to help farmworkers win their demand for just one penny more for a bucket of tomatoes.

Defend the right to organize

It's illegal to fire someone for union organizing, but that didn't stop Internet giant Comcast in Silver Spring, Md., from firing Stephen White. After four years of working there as a maintenance technician, White was fed up with lousy working conditions, no guarantee of job security, and unfair company policies. After he began talking to co-workers about forming a union, the company grilled him in one-on-one interrogation meetings, humiliated him in front of co-workers and increased his workload so that it was impossible for him to complete his assignments. He was fired on March 1 shortly after talking with a co-worker about organizing. He immediately filed a charge with the NLRB.

There's a campaign to send messages to Comcast Vice President Craig Snedeker telling him to reinstate White and to respect the rights of his employees to form a union. For more information on the struggle and to send a message to Snedeker, go to www.unionvoice.org/campaign/S_white.

Support union jobs at Star Toyota

Eight licensed mechanics represented by United Auto Workers Local 259 were illegally fired by Star Toyota in Queens, N.Y., in July 2002. The NLRB found Star

Toyota guilty of violating federal labor law in 2003 and ordered all the workers reinstated with full back pay and benefits. When Star refused, the workers initiated an unfair labor practice strike in October.

A spirited rally of about 100 union activists, including members of the New York City Central Labor Council, was held on March 13 in solidarity with the striking workers, all immigrants. Many passing motorists honked their horns while speakers addressed the workers' right to fair wages, decent working conditions and union protection. A huge gray inflatable rat, symbolizing the bosses, towered over the crowd.

To support the struggle, call (718) 279-1800 and tell Michael Koufakis, Star Toyota president, to sign a fair contract with Local 259. Also, call (800) 331-4331, press 3, and tell Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. that Star Toyota is guilty of unfair labor practices and is not a good representative of the company.

DC drivers win union

The 30 parking workers and shuttle bus drivers at the Washington, D.C., Kennedy Center voted to join Hotel and Restaurant Workers Local 27 on Feb. 27. Local 27 organizer Alex Zwerdling credits the victory to the extremely strong and committed worker organizing committee. "Local 27 thanks the other unions at the Kennedy Center for their support and looks forward to continuing to work with the Kennedy Center Union Council," says Local 27 Secretary-Treasurer Emil Abate. "On to contract negotiations!"

Fundraiser for Sterling strikers

More than 300 Washington, D.C., activists raised \$6,000 to support the striking Sterling laundry workers on March 3. "This event will make an incredible difference in our fight," said worker Evelyn Thomas. Sterling workers, mostly Central American immigrants, have been on an unfair labor practice strike since last September. They organized under the banner of UNITE to fight poverty wages, unaffordable health insurance and serious health and safety violations at work.

The festivities included free salsa dance lessons, powerful poetry written especially for the event and performed by the Rhythm Workers Union and DC Guerrilla Poetry Insurgency, and inspiring appeals and chants led by striking Sterling workers. A dollar from each Solidarity Drink benefited the Sterling campaign. □

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

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

March & Rally to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now!

10:00 AM Gather at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia, 52nd & Pine St. for a rally

11:30 AM Begin march through West Philadelphia neighborhoods

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

For information contact the **International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal** call 215-476-8812 or email icffmaj@aol.com. For more information visit www.mumia.org, www.Millions4mumia.org and www.iacenter.org

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

GLOBAL DAY OF PROTEST

250 cities across U.S. tell gov't:

Stop the wars & occupations

NEW YORK

More than 250 U.S. cities took part in the March 20 Global Day of Action protesting Pentagon wars and occupations. The biggest demonstration was in New York, where 100,000 people marched and rallied.

They came from as far away as Alaska and the Azores, marching with the power of a unified anti-war movement. Crowds filled 40 blocks in midtown Manhattan, chanting, "Occupation is a crime, from Iraq to Palestine!" and "Bring the troops home now!"

The event was initiated by the International ANSWER—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—Coalition, and United for Peace and Justice.

During the ANSWER segment of the rallies, Brian Becker, a co-director of the International Action Center and member of the ANSWER Steering Committee, applauded the courage of the Muslim community in turning out for the march, given the current repression, surveillance and raids.

Palestinian flags flew, and speakers in this segment included Ihab Darwish, Free Palestine Alliance; Lamis Deek, Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition; Imam Asharaf Uz Zaman, Islamic Circle of North America; Ismail Kamal, Muslim Students Association; Mahdi Bray, Muslim American Society and Freedom Foundation; and Waleed Bader, Arab Muslim American Federation/National Council of Arab Americans.

Speakers also called for determined opposition to U.S. imperialism's role in Haiti, Venezuela, the Philippines and Korea. Attorney Leonard Weinglass called for support for the Cuban Five, convicted and imprisoned in the United States for protecting Cuba against imperialist-financed aggression. Teresa Gutierrez of the International Action Center appealed to the crowd to boycott Coca-Cola, implicated in the assassination of workers unionizing its Colombian plants.

Brenda Stokely, chair of New York City Labor Against the War and president of AFSCME District Council 1707, vowed, "We're going to bring down the imperialist powers who think they have the right to slaughter our children!" Larry Holmes of the International Action Center spoke and a taped message from political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal urged resistance to racist oppression, police occupation and imperialist oppression.

In the UFPJ segment of the rallies, speakers included Suheir Hamma of Def Poetry Jam; Sinan Antoon, an Iraqi filmmaker; David Cline, national president of Veterans for Peace; and Todd Ensign of Citizen Soldier. Fernando Suarez del Solar of Military Families Speak Out said: "Bush lied. Who died? My son."

Also featured were Tony Benn, former member of the British Parliament, representing Stop the War UK; New York City Councilmember Bill Perkins; and U.S. Rep. Major Owens. Rep. Dennis Kucinich, currently running for president, asked the crowd to "heal the heart of the world" through peace. The John Kerry campaign, unlike Kucinich's, did not bring signs or banners to the march.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

New York City

Dorothy Zellner, a Jewish activist, advocated an end to Israeli occupation, and Ziad Abu Rish of SUSTAIN—Stop U.S. Tax Aid to Israel Now—supported Palestinian self-determination.

On the march, many carried rainbow peace flags as well as homemade signs with slogans like: "Capitalism is terrorism," "Halliburton is not my government," "My taxes are not venture capital," and "Bush cares about troops like Perdue cares about chickens."

International solidarity was visible: There were contingents of Haitians and Venezuelans, Zapatistas from Mexico, and Irish-Americans Against the War. Members of the 1930s Abraham Lincoln Brigade that fought against fascism in Spain marched. Labor unionists included Labor Against the War, United University Professions of SUNY, and a huge force from the Professional Staff Congress of CUNY, representatives of Service Employees/1199, and Communications Workers Local 1180, New York administrative employees.

The Stonewall Warriors from Boston chanted, "Come out against war and racism," and the women of the International Action Center of New York carried "Fight back!" signs emblazoned with the upraised fist of women's liberation.

—Minnie Bruce Pratt

SAN FRANCISCO

More than 50,000 people took to the streets in San Francisco. The front of the march was filled with banners and signs in English, Spanish and Arabic. Many young Palestinians were on the lead banner.

Unions also turned out in force, including a big contingent from International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 and the local's famed drill team. The ILWU shut down the port of Oakland/San

Francisco for the day to oppose the occupation of Iraq.

Students, facing drastic cuts in education and tuition increases, mobilized from all over northern California. Contingents included many veterans and veterans' groups, activists for same-sex marriage equality, a large and vocal group of Asians and Pacific Islanders Against the War, and a group of Koreans carrying a banner reading "No war on Korea."

The march and rally were initiated by ANSWER, San Francisco's main anti-war group. Other sponsoring organizations included the Free Palestine Alliance, Vanguard Foundation, ILWU Local 10, Bay Area United Against War and Muslim Student Association.

Speakers covered a range of struggles. Pierre Labossiere of the Haiti Action Committee described the dangerous situation caused by the U.S. abduction of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Alicia Jrapko of the International Action Center spoke in Spanish about the U.S. government's efforts to topple the

elected leaders of Haiti and Venezuela.

Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five pointed to Cuba as an example of how the world can be when the people take power and run society for themselves. "It's an example to embattled Haiti, to Venezuela, to Mexico, to countries all over the world," she said.

ANSWER steering committee member Richard Becker described the expansion of the U.S. empire even as "they are gutting every social program, attacking affirmative action and women's rights, attacking civil rights and civil liberties, proposing a constitutional amendment to tell people what kind of relationships they must and must not live in."

Other speakers included ILWU Local 10 President Henry Graham, actor Woody Harrelson, United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta, San Francisco Bay View Editor Willie Ratcliff, and war resister Stephen Funk.

LeiLani Dowell, a member of Workers World Party who is running

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Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: MATTHEW L. SCHWARTZ

GLOBAL DAY OF PROTEST



Rome



Above, Madrid. Right, Lisbon. Far right, Calcutta.



3 million in 65 countries

Worldwide movement back in streets

By John Catalinotto

A coordinated worldwide protest against U.S. militarism and aggression followed the sun on March 20, starting in Sydney, Australia, Manila, the Philippines, and Tokyo, and moving west across six continents to Honolulu.

Over 3 million people in 600 cities in 65 countries came out into the streets to demand an end to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq.

This movement first sprang to life six months before the war's onset. It reached its numerical height on Feb. 15, 2003, when over 10 million marched in a desperate attempt to prevent the looming U.S. aggression.

Last April many asked whether the movement would survive Washington's unilateral aggression and rapid military victory over the Iraqi Army.

Now, after almost a year of occupation, the Iraqi people have proven they have the will to resist. In turn, their courage has stimulated the worldwide movement to continue its opposition to the occupation.

This movement has not only survived. It has edged in a more anti-imperialist

direction, impelled as well by the increasing brutality of the U.S.-backed Israeli regime against the Palestinian national movement.

The call for a March 20 worldwide day of protest won support at the European and World Social Forums, at the Mumbai Resistance, and from most national anti-war coalitions, including the ANSWER and UFPJ coalitions in the United States.

Anti-imperialism and especially anti-U.S.-militarism was strongest in protests outside of Europe and North America. In Calcutta, India, in Cairo, Egypt, in Damascus, Syria, and Amman, Jordan, demonstrators burned either U.S. flags or effigies of George W. Bush.

In Manila they fought against water cannons in an attempt to reach the U.S. Embassy.

In Peshawar, Pakistan, people demonstrated not only to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq but also to stop Pakistani troops from killing civilians in Waziristan, a region along the border with Afghanistan.

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile; in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Montevideo,

Uruguay, demonstrators targeted not only the occupation of Iraq but also the U.S. attempt to impose the Free Trade Area of the Americas on Latin America and the Caribbean. They protested the recent coup and occupation in Haiti and marched in defense of Cuba and Venezuela, whose people also joined the worldwide protest.

'Your war, our deaths!'

Some of the biggest demonstrations took place in the main countries making up Bush's "coalition of the willing." That means where the local imperialist ruling class was willing to flout the will of the majority of the people to join Bush's gang of thieves. For a share of the oil plunder, they were willing to turn their country's young workers into cannon fodder for U.S. imperialism.

Tony Blair in Britain, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, John Howard in Australia and Jose Maria Aznar in Spain were key allies in Washington's war. The biggest March 20 protest was in Rome, where over 1 million people marched. In London, 100,000 were in the streets and two mounted the Big Ben tower to hang an anti-war banner near the clock's face.

Some 150,000 people marched in Barcelona, Spain, another 100,000 in Madrid and up to 50,000 in dozens of other cities in the Spanish state.

Considering that the peoples of Spain have been constantly mobilized since the March 11 bombings of trains in Madrid, the turnout was impressive. Spanish voters threw Aznar out of office in the March 14 national elections. Their slogan was, "Your war, our deaths." Demonstrators all over the world cheered the decision of the people in the Spanish state to eject Aznar from office.

In other countries where Bush has arm twisted the local regimes to send troops to Iraq, this aroused great opposition and angry protest. In Japan, which sent combat troops outside its borders for the first time since the end of World War II, 120,000 people demonstrated. There were some 60,000 in Tokyo alone.

In Chile, which has sent troops to Haiti, 3,000 people in Santiago chanted, "We are not neutral, we aren't pacifists, we are in the anti-imperialist trenches."

Hundreds of Hondurans went to the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, demanding the return of 370 Honduran troops

Stop the wars and occupations

Continued from page 5

for Congress on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket, told the crowd that a year ago people had marched in San Francisco, calling this a war for empire. "A year later, the U.S. is not only occupying Iraq and continuing to fund the occupation in Palestine, it is now occupying Haiti, the first Black republic, and looking towards Cuba and Venezuela." —Brenda Sandburg and Bill Hackwell

LOS ANGELES

More than 20,000 anti-war activists flooded the streets of Los Angeles on March 20, filling 14 blocks as the march wound its way through busy Hollywood.

U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, just returned from Jamaica where she helped return kidnapped Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the Caribbean, spoke at the opening and closing rallies.

Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic and Kimberly Huff, whose husband is a GI recently returned from Iraq, led the march. The Free Palestine Alliance and the Coalition in Solidarity with Haiti were also in the front.

Protesters embraced calls for solidarity with liberation struggles in Iraq, Palestine, Haiti, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Korea, Colombia, the Philippines, West Papua and everywhere. Demands for marriage rights for all and an end to attacks on immigrants were greeted with thunderous applause. The crowd fully supported the fight for vitally needed social services and demanded an end to racism.

There was broad support for labor, including praise for the strength of the grocery workers in their recent struggle here against greedy transnational corporations.

A lively Free the Cuban Five contingent participated in the march. Socialist Cuba's continued resistance to U.S. aggression received enthusiastic support.

Muna Coobtee of the Free Palestine Alliance and the International ANSWER Coalition, a principal organizer of the March 20 demonstration here, summed up the Global Day of Protest: "It's of such incredible significance that the demands of these massive demonstrations are strongly anti-imperialist and powerfully anti-discrimination."

John Parker of Los Angeles ANSWER enlivened the rally crowd: "I want to thank the Haitian people for their slave revolution making oppressed people everywhere, especially Black people here in the U.S., aware of the tremendous power we can wield in fighting injustice. Native, Black, Latino and all nationally oppressed people here have tremendous potential power."

Joe Delaplaine received enthusiastic cheers when he said, "Not every lesbian, gay, bi and trans person has to get married or wants to, but we all deserve equal access and we deserve the right to decide for ourselves."

—John Beacham

CHICAGO

Some 10,000 people marched in Chicago despite a vicious campaign of intimidation by the city, its police and the corporate media. Organized by the March 20 Anti-War Coalition, a broad group of organizations and individuals, the protest also demanded an end to racist profiling and defended civil liberties and immigrant rights.

The organizers wanted to bring their message to the public by marching down

busy Michigan Avenue. The police refused to grant a permit. Mayor Richard Daley put 2,000 police in full riot gear on the street. This same Democratic administration arrested nearly 800 demonstrators last March 20 when 15,000 turned out to protest the invasion of Iraq.

The police closed the avenue for over three hours in a massive show of force. Jesse Jackson of PUSH stood with demonstrators, demanding their right to march unimpeded.

In the end the march proceeded down Clark Street. Even there the large forces of police tried to provoke and intimidate the marchers. This demonstration had big contingents from the immigrant communities in Chicago and surrounding areas. March organizers made their safety, and that of the demonstrators as a whole, a priority.

The Palestinian movement played a very prominent role in the march and rally.

Speakers included Pearlie Stuckey of International ANSWER and the Chicago Coalition Against War and Racism, whose soldier son was in Iraq; Luis Cardona, a Colombian trade union



Dublin rally hits U.S. military

Thousands of people from all over Ireland marched and rallied in the streets of Dublin March 20, expressing their solidarity with the people of Iraq and Palestine. Speaker after speaker blasted Prime Minister Bertie Ahern for allowing U.S. military planes to stop in Shannon airport in violation of the neutrality clause in Ireland's constitution. The planes have transported military equipment to Iraq and brought home body bags with the remains of U.S. servicepeople.

Promising Ahern a fate similar to that of Aznar in Spain, speakers included parliamentarians from the Labor, Socialist and Sinn Fein parties, as well as groups representing students, labor and Ireland's growing Arab and Muslim communities.

George W. Bush plans to visit Ireland June 24 and 25 for a U.S./European Union summit. Washington has demanded a huge U.S. military presence for the visit and immunity from prosecution if any demonstrators are shot. The Irish Antiwar Movement, which sponsored the protest, called on people to reserve seats on a "mystery bus" to the yet-undisclosed location of Bush's visit.

Demonstrations were also held in Cork, Belfast and other Irish cities.

—Martha Grevatt



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Iraq

from Iraq.

Some 15,000 came out in Lisbon, Portugal. People marched and rallied in the thousands in Copenhagen, Denmark; Amsterdam, Holland; and Oslo, Norway, to demand that troops from those West European countries be returned from Iraq. Smaller but still significant protests occurred in Warsaw, Poland; Budapest, Hungary; Sofia, Bulgaria, and other East European capitals with the same demand.

In some imperialist countries that have not joined the military occupation—like France, Germany and Canada—the pro-

tests were smaller than last year, but still took place in over 100 cities.

Different political currents

Last year's protests had one simple demand: no war on Iraq. Now the demand depends on different attitudes toward the occupation and toward imperialism. Different political currents exist in the anti-war movement worldwide, just as they do inside the United States.

In Italy, for example, the more anti-imperialist groups and parties demand an immediate end to occupation "without ifs

or buts" and whether or not the United Nations supports it. They fought for slogans "against the occupation of Iraq and Palestine and for the withdrawal of all occupation troops," reports journalist Fulvio Grimaldi.

The more social-democratic forces pushed for slogans "against all wars and terrorisms," a pacifist slogan that does not distinguish between the imperialist oppressor and the oppressed. Grimaldi was pleased to report that "90 percent of banners and slogans in Rome centered on Bush's wars, on the occupation of Iraq

and mentioned support for the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance."

In Spain the struggle unfolds around how soon and under what conditions the new government withdraws its forces from Iraq.

This political struggle is really over whether or not the movement in the imperialist countries will stand in class solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world who resist the imperialist takeover. The message of March 20 is that this movement has grown and developed even as the political struggle continues. □



WW PHOTO: BETH SEMMER

Chicago

organizer; Susan Nussbaum, a disabled activist from Access Living; Congressional Black Caucus member Danny Davis; Kathy Kelly, Voices in the Wilderness; Bill Davis, president of Machinists Local 701 and of Vietnam Veterans Against the War; and Andy Thayer of the Chicago Anti-Bashing Network and Equal Marriage Now.

—Bill Massey

SAN DIEGO

Anti-war marchers, 4,000 strong, converged on Balboa Park. The San Diego M20 Coalition sponsored the day's activities. This coalition, formed by the San Diego Peace & Justice Coalition and San Diego ANSWER and endorsed by over 40 local organizations, represents an important step forward for the progressive movement in this military town.

The coalition united around the slo-

gans "Stop the war! End occupation of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan." After the U.S.-sponsored coup, Haiti was added.

Joseph Red Bear of the American Indian Movement opened the rally, followed by the mothers of two soldiers killed in Iraq and Zahi Damuni of Al-Awda Palestinian Right of Return. Carl Muhammad of San Diego ANSWER related the sorry history of United Nations cooperation with U.S. aggression. Modest Brown of the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and Bob McCubbin of Workers World Party spoke on the issue of same-sex marriage. A message from Mumia Abu-Jamal was played.

The next anti-war, anti-occupation action in San Diego will be on April 3. San Diego ANSWER and the California Coalition Against Poverty have called for a march on the 32nd Street Naval Base to demand: Bring the troops home now!

—Gloria Verdieu

PHILADELPHIA

More than 3,000 people demonstrated in Philadelphia. Along the route of march an Arab and Palestinian contingent joined in. Many onlookers also joined the march.

At the National Constitution Center the demonstration was welcomed by a contingent from South Jersey that had marched over the Ben Franklin Bridge.

Rally speakers addressed the importance of building a mass movement to oppose the war and not relying on candidate John Kerry, with his pro-war history. Others raised the danger of U.S. expansion in Latin America. Dr. Franz Latour of the Haitian Community Center was the keynote speaker. The program included labor, health-care and community activists.

—Betsey Piette

ATLANTA

Some 500 people, accompanied by a contingent of drummers, took their anti-war message to the streets of Atlanta. The Israeli Consulate was the starting point and the route wound through midtown. The demonstration was led by an 18-foot flatbed truck decorated with banners and Iraqi, Haitian, Venezuelan and peace flags.

High school and college students were high-energy chant leaders: "No justice? No peace! U.S. out of the Middle East!" "From Iraq to Palestine, occupation is a crime." And "One two three four, we won't fight your racist war!"

In the march was Patricia Roberts, the mother of Jamaal Addison, a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq days after the invasion started. Surrounded by a dozen family members, including her son's child, Roberts told the attentive crowd: "I don't



WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

San Diego

want any other families to go through what I've gone through this past year. I don't want any more bloodshed. I want the troops to come home."

Beth Corrie spoke eloquently about her cousin Rachel Corrie's support of the Palestinian people's struggle against U.S.-backed occupation. Rachel Corrie was killed by an Israeli bulldozer on March 16, 2003, in the Gaza Strip.

Elaine Brown, former chair of the Black Panther Party, energized the crowd with her call to identify, organize and mobilize against the system that produces war, exploits people, destroys the environment and imprisons millions.

Other speakers included members of the Palestinian, Haitian and Latino communities, and representatives of union, high school, peace and community groups.

—Dianne Mathiowetz

Hundreds also marched and rallied in many other cities—from Buffalo, N.Y., to Reno, Nev., Laramie, Wyo., and Milwaukee. In North Carolina, 150 people attended the Charlotte ANSWER chapter's rally. □

War on Iraq vs. 'war on terror'

The trap of a false debate

By Fred Goldstein

The Bush administration is losing credibility day by day and its foreign adventures are bringing about greater and greater instability in the empire. Under these conditions, the ruling-class critics of George W. Bush have converged with the Democratic Party electoral forces to generate a misleading debate. The venue for it is the congressional hearing on U.S. government conduct surrounding the Sept. 11, 2001, disaster.

The hottest focus in the debate for both the Bush and Kerry forces has been supplied by Richard A. Clarke, a former national security official spanning the Reagan, Clinton and both Bush administrations. In his new book "Against All Enemies," Clarke claims that the day after 9/11, Bush urged him to find an Iraqi connection, despite the fact that the CIA had already claimed definitely that Iraq had nothing to do with it.

The charge is that having been obsessed with Iraq from its earliest days, the Bush administration used the 9/11 attack as a springboard to move rapidly from a war against Afghanistan and the pursuit of al Qaeda to focus on what had really been its primary objective from the beginning—the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the

conquest of Iraq. Clarke thinks that was the wrong war.

Clarke claims that before 9/11 he had been urged by the administration to focus on al Qaeda, an alleged network of Islamic fundamentalist forces that was thought to have carried out previous attacks on U.S. government and military targets, but that his warnings were brushed off. Instead, says Clarke, the administration was totally fixated on Iraq and Saddam. The clear implication is that the Bush administration could have prevented 9/11 if it had listened to Clarke and the CIA about al Qaeda.

The Bush forces are trying to discredit Clarke and claim the mantle of being the champions in the war on terrorism, while the Kerry forces are trying to show that Bush was not tough enough on terrorism because Saddam Hussein was not really a terrorist threat.

The last thing the anti-war movement should do is get caught up in what amounts to a fraudulent debate between two currents of imperialist strategy, a debate that has converged with the struggle over who gets the spoils by controlling the White House.

The real "terrorists" are the ones doing the debating—the representatives of the two imperialist parties. They have just

brought in death squads to overthrow the sovereign government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti. They have given \$3 billion to the death-squad government in Colombia to assassinate and torture liberation fighters, trade unionists and progressive anti-imperialists. They are trying to overthrow the sovereign government of Venezuela under the popularly elected mass leader Hugo Chávez.

The Democratic and Republican leadership applauded as the Pentagon brought down thousands of tons of "smart bombs," cruise missiles and "daisy cutters" on Afghanistan and fired millions of rounds of ammunition, destroying homes, killing countless civilians, creating millions of refugees and occupying that impoverished country.

They all cheered the latest war in Iraq, which killed thousands of Iraqis and brought widespread destruction. Over 10,000 Iraqi "suspects" languish in occupation detention camps on suspicion of fighting for the sovereignty of their country and against the imperialist occupiers. Both parties carried out genocidal sanctions that killed over a million Iraqis.

For 55 years the Democratic and Republican leadership have armed and financially, economically and technologically supported the mass expulsion and

occupation of Palestine by colonialist Zionist forces and their attempts to exterminate the Palestine national movement.

Both parties united to lead NATO in waging the criminal war against Yugoslavia—bombing factories, hospitals, schools, television stations and churches, and killing thousands of civilians.

For generations they have used force and violence to suppress the peoples of the Gulf region, imposing the torturer Shah upon the Iranian people and propping up the feudal Saudi monarchy and all the other reactionary feudal states of the area.

They backed the fascist torturer Augusto Pinochet in Chile, the military regime in Guatemala that murdered hundreds of thousands of indigenous people, the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines and the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia that took power through a CIA-supported slaughter of a million people. The list goes on.

They waged a three-year war against socialist North Korea, killing millions of Koreans and Chinese, and leaving every house over two stories tall in rubble. In their 13-year war against the Vietnamese people, who were fighting for socialism and independence, millions were killed, cities were bombed, the countryside destroyed and poisoned. And, of course,

Israel strikes again

Assassination of cleric ignites Middle East

Continued from page 1

were supplied by the U.S. Israeli pilots can operate with impunity, knowing that the Palestinian side has little with which to counter Israel's high tech and heavily armored weaponry.

The murder of Yassin, like so many other "targeted killings" of Palestinian leaders, was specifically authorized by the Israeli cabinet headed by Ariel Sharon. Sharon is infamous for the countless massacres and assassinations carried out at his direction during his bloody half-century career as a military officer and politician.

The assassination and Sharon's strategy

The Israeli tactic of assassinating Sheik Yassin is part of a larger strategy that sees all-out conflict as being both necessary and desirable. Sharon and his advisors aim to destroy not only Hamas but all the Palestinian resistance organizations.

The Israeli regime has engaged for decades in a relentless daily campaign of violence and economic strangulation against the Palestinian population. Palestinian casualties have far exceeded those on the Israeli side. Since the current Intifada (uprising) began three and a half years ago, three times as many Palestinians as Israelis have been killed and 10 times as many wounded. At least 6,500 Palestinians are illegally held in Israeli prisons under deplorable conditions. Israeli income is 15 times that of Palestinians.

The media here glorify Israel and the Israeli military while demonizing the Palestinian resistance, which is driven to use desperation tactics. Palestinian suicide bombers, who suffer certain death in an operation, are called "cowards" and "homicide bombers" by President George W. Bush and U.S. networks, derisive terms never attached to the actions of Israeli snipers and pilots, who kill from afar at no

risk to their own safety.

Despite all the killing and deprivation, however, the Palestinian resistance—both secular and religious-based—has not been defeated.

Sharon's aim is to permanently add a large section of the West Bank to Israel. But to accomplish this conquest, it is not enough to simply exert military control over the area. That the Israelis achieved long ago.

The situation is similar to that in early 1948, during the war that established the state of Israel. It was not enough for the Israeli army to take territory. In order to establish an exclusivist Jewish state—the Zionist ideal—the indigenous Palestinian people not only had to be defeated, but also removed. That is what led to the mass expulsions of 780,000 Palestinians in what came to be known as Al-Nakba, "The Catastrophe."

It was not very different at all from what took place in North America to make way for the creation of the United States.

The Sharon government is squeezing the Palestinian population in every imaginable way, using the apartheid wall, hundreds of checkpoints and economic deprivation, as well as tanks, missiles and systematic torture.

But to disempower and demoralize the Palestinians into giving up and leaving in large numbers, Sharon and his fellow gangsters believe, it is necessary to destroy the deeply rooted organizations

of resistance.

For this strategy to succeed, the Sharon grouping assuredly knows, will take a prolonged period of upheaval and the deaths of unknown numbers of both Palestinians and Israelis. They are well aware that there will likely be many casualties on each side, and are willing to shed unlimited quantities of blood to fulfill their expansionist dreams.

Complications for U.S.

As much as the U.S. government and both capitalist parties support Israel—because of its role policing the region on behalf of imperialist interests—they must

recognize that the Yassin assassination has potentially far-reaching negative implications for the U.S. project in the region and beyond.

Anger was already widespread and growing against the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the seemingly unlimited support for Israel against the Palestinians, the multiplying Pentagon bases across the Middle East and Central Asia and more.

Photos of demonstrations from Cairo in Egypt to Mosul and Baghdad in occupied Iraq to Islamabad in Pakistan showed protesters burning U.S. as well as Israeli flags in the aftermath of the assassination.

Repressive pro-U.S. governments—called "democracies" in the obedient corporate media here—in Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere were forced for the first time in years to allow mass street demonstrations.

Even Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, whose fealty to Washington is legendary, was compelled to declare in response to a question about the U.S.-sponsored "peace" initiative: "Peace process? How can you speak of a peace process when the region is burning?"

Already faced with growing mass resistance to occupation in Iraq, intensified fighting in Afghanistan, and a resurgent global anti-war movement, this "burning" may greatly complicate the U.S. achieving its imperialist aims in the coming weeks and months. □



U.S. soldiers find foreign troops in Iraq—themselves

The Bush neo-conservative imperialists have proven to be a narrow grouping that lacks elementary foresight and strategic cunning, unlike their opponents within the 'multilateralist' camp of imperialist strategists.

the U.S. is the only government to have ever used nuclear weapons. The Pentagon has enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over.

Yet representatives of these two parties get up and claim credit for being against terrorism.

This debate and the evidence that will come out are extremely limited. The real debate should be about the criminal conspiracy of the Bush administration to go to war in the first place. An independent investigation by the people, not just in the U.S. but in the countries that have been victimized by the Bush administration's wars, should bring an indictment against Washington for plotting to open up an "era of endless war," as Bush put it after 9/11.

To begin with, they could use the book "The Price of Loyalty" in which author Ron Suskind documents former secretary of the treasury Paul O'Neill's experiences in the Bush administration.

Suskind, using O'Neill's notes and documents, writes that on Jan. 30, 2001, just 10 days after the Bush inauguration, the National Security Council met and quickly decided to back Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Then, Bush asked Condoleezza Rice, "So Condi, what are we going to talk about today? What's on the agenda?"

"How Iraq is destabilizing the region," she replied. Rice, according to Suskind, noted that reshaping Iraq might be the key to reshaping the region.

At the next meeting, on Feb. 1, Secretary of State Colin Powell was giving a presentation on strengthening sanctions.

"But after a moment, Rumsfeld interrupted. 'Sanctions are fine,' he said. 'But what we really want to think about is going after Saddam. Imagine what the region would look like without Saddam and with a regime that's aligned with U.S. interests,' Rumsfeld said. 'It would demonstrate what U.S. policy is all about.'"

At another point in the book, Suskind recounts that "One document, headed 'Foreign Suitor for Iraqi Oilfield Contracts,' lists companies from 30 countries—including France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom—and details their specialties and, in some cases, their particular interest. An attached document maps Iraq with markings for 'supergiant oilfield,' 'other oilfield,' and 'earmarked for production sharing,' while demarcating the largely undeveloped southwest of the country into nine 'blocks' to designate areas for future development."

Suskind also recounts that at the start of 2001, "Actual plans, to O'Neill's astonishment, were already being discussed to take over Iraq and occupy it—complete with disposition of oil fields, peacekeeping forces, and war crimes tribunals—carrying forward the unspoken doctrine of pre-emptive war."

This incendiary material has been kept out of the testimony about pre-9/11 pre-occupation with Iraq because its intimate detail is too illustrative of imperialist conspiracy.

This preoccupation with conquering Iraq by the forces around Bush is no secret. In fact, it was laid out as far back as January 2002 in a series of articles by Bob Woodward and Dan Balz of the Washington Post. On Jan. 28 two years

ago, they wrote about the "war cabinet" meetings the day after 9/11. The discussion was how to open up the war and what type of coalition to build.

"Rumsfeld then raised the question of Iraq, which he had mentioned in the morning meeting. Why shouldn't we go against Iraq, not just al Qaeda? he asked. Rumsfeld was not just speaking for himself when he raised the question. His deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, was even more committed to a policy that would make Iraq a principal target of the first round in the war on terrorism and would continue to press the case."

The debate continued for several days and finally Bush came out for first attacking Afghanistan and then "moving forward" to Iraq.

At these early meetings, both CIA Director George Tenet and Gen. Hugh Shelton, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, pulled out elaborate war plans to attack Afghanistan. The complex operations of the CIA and the Pentagon were quickly meshed. Surveillance and ground spying operations had long been in preparation. Predator drones had been taking real-time pictures of Afghanistan for months. The drones had been armed with Hellfire missiles; contacts had been made with tribal leaders. The Northern Alliance counter-revolutionaries were already under CIA tutelage. The battle of Masr-i-Sharif had already been planned.

Richard Clarke, the former Bush national security official, has made the Bush administration's refusal to move aggressively to prevent an attack a sign of negligence and preoccupation with Iraq.

There is another, more cogent explanation for how the Bush forces proceeded after 9/11. They had been expecting an attack, based on all the intelligence warnings, and were sitting waiting like a coiled spring to react with a major world offensive, with Iraq as an early target.

Why a debate now?

Why is this debate taking place now? Why did a faction of the ruling class get a dissident Bush official to testify at such a crucial and widely publicized hearing to the effect that the Bush administration was fixated on Iraq?

It is because in the eyes of important sections of the capitalist political and strategy-making establishment, the Bush policy is heading downhill.

The Pentagon is unable to suppress the resistance in Iraq. A narrow section of the U.S. capitalist class—Bechtel, Halliburton and those with close ties to the Pentagon and the Bush administration, whose business is connected to oil or the occupation—are making money. But the capitalist class as a whole is unable to set up shop in Iraq. They cannot travel without military escort and the prospect for setting up a stable regime of imperialist economic and financial exploitation is still highly uncertain.

The Bush administration is committed to handing over the title of authority to



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

some puppet regime on June 30. But that prospect is fraught with peril. U.S. consul in Iraq, Paul Bremer, and the Pentagon have had to jettison their plan for caucuses and suppress the demand for elections. They must find some expanded version of the puppet "Governing Council," which has no credibility in Iraq.

The political disaster for Bush in the Spanish elections, where his loyal flunky, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, was defeated and the incoming Socialist Workers Party leader José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero threatened to pull Spain's troops out of Iraq, has further isolated Washington. Even the Polish puppet regime weakened and began to backtrack, declaring it had been "lied to" about the war.

The decision to unleash Sharon's terror on the Palestinians has backfired in the face of unrelenting Palestinian resistance. Sharon, like Bush, can only use force to try to overcome failure, but that is fomenting a widening rebellion throughout the Middle East—as illustrated by the assassination of the leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

The Bush administration, desperate for the capture of Osama bin Laden or some high al Qaeda leader to bolster his election campaign, has sent Colin Powell and the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, Gen. John P. Abizaid, to Pakistan to bribe and cajole the regime into joint operations on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to capture bin Laden or his lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri. They have reclassi-

fied Pakistan as a strategic "non-NATO ally," which entitles the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf to weapons and intelligence. In addition, they have thrown a "ton of money" into the fray.

The result so far has been the killing of Pakistani civilians. Protests in Peshawar. Major casualties for the Pakistani Army and allied tribal fighters. And the further political deterioration of Musharraf's position as a paid collaborator of U.S. imperialism. In addition, the Indian bourgeoisie was not consulted about the newly conferred "non-NATO ally" status of Pakistan and is up in arms about it.

And the Bush-orchestrated coup d'état in Haiti is turning into an occupation of unknown duration. All the Caribbean nations are now on the spot about their relations with Aristide and the U.S. hand-picked coup regime.

The Bush administration—the Rumsfeld, Cheney, Wolfowitz grouping and all the supporting neoconservative right-wing imperialists—have tested their theories of absolute, unilateral domination of the globe through war and threat of war. In the wake of the collapse of the USSR they have probed the possibilities of domination without having to share any of the spoils with their imperialist rivals and operating by diktat.

In pursuit of their ambitions they have refused to consult, not only with their imperialist rivals, but with important sections of the ruling-class establishment. They have proved to be a narrow grouping that lacks elementary foresight and strategic cunning, unlike their opponents within the "multilateralist" camp of imperialist strategists. So far the Bush policies have not yielded either great profits or vast new regions of exploitation for the bosses. While they have been placated by tax cuts, all these foreign adventures have been politically and financially costly and doubts have begun to set in.

The Kerry forces are trying to use these weaknesses to their advantage. They are promising to bolster the fortunes of the ruling class by combining brutal military force with more tact and diplomacy. They want to reverse the isolation of Washington. They want to crush the resistance in Iraq, put out the fires of Palestinian resistance, subdue Haiti with more finesse, and so on. And they want to find ways of shoring up U.S. capitalism at home.

The weaknesses of Bush should be a signal to the movement not to run to the Democrats but to intensify the struggle against the system of imperialist expansion and capitalist exploitation. The movement should pay no attention to electoral demagoguery and instead build upon the great March 20 global anti-war mobilizations to escalate the struggle. □



Is the glass half empty or half full?

A recent U.S. government report declares there has been a decrease in the number of families on welfare over the past three years. That leaves 2 million families barely surviving on public assistance compared to more than 4 million families when President Bill Clinton in 1996 signed the despicable welfare "reform" bill that dismantled the Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

This important social safety net for all workers, especially the unemployed and lowest paid, was won through struggle during the 1930s when the U.S. labor movement was organizing in the streets and in the factories.

The report is full of contradictions. It claims that the decline in some states can be attributed to state governments providing more subsidized child care and tuition-free community college education for poor single mothers. Then why isn't this kind of assistance being given to all workers, period, end of story? Shouldn't every worker have the right to decent child care and education, regardless of their ability to pay? This is especially true now when low wages, poverty and hunger are on the rise during this protracted "jobless recovery."

But this is only one side of the story. In response to this report, Shawn Fremstad from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities stated, "Falling caseloads amid rising poverty should be a cause for concern."

Wendell Primus, a Clinton appointee who resigned from his post in protest over the signing of the welfare bill, said, "It's an indictment of the welfare law, the welfare system, that it has not been more responsive to economic conditions." (New York Times, March 22)

Those living at or below the poverty line have found it increasingly difficult to receive any kind of public assistance since Clinton's bill was enacted.

In the "land of plenty" that boasts a \$7-trillion economy, there was a 15-percent increase between 1999 and 2002 in the number of U.S. households facing "food insecurity"—1.5 million families. Overall, this translates into more than 12 million families not knowing where their next meal will come from due to layoffs and low-wage jobs with no benefits. And this disturbing increase in hunger does not just apply to the inner city poor but also to the working poor who once considered themselves the "middle class." There are more food pantries, many inadequately supplied, from one end of the country to the other. The number of families receiving food stamps has increased 35 percent in the past three years to 10 million.

All this shows that government figures on the decline in welfare don't come close to telling the real story. Deep suffering is taking its toll on millions of people in the U.S. The loss of welfare means that the greedy bosses can not only lay off workers but force them to accept slave wages in order to increase profits. Those who once thought that they could never lose their jobs and be on welfare are now finding themselves in an increasingly desperate situation, much like those in the inner cities.

From the point of view of the interests of big business, the report on the decline in welfare reinforces that the capitalist system works—for them. For the vast majority of workers, whether born here or abroad, it is an unmitigated disaster. Capitalism does not work when it comes to meeting the needs of human beings. □

Behind the turmoil in Kosovo

By John Catalinotto and Heather Cottin

On March 18 the corporate media worldwide reported an outbreak of what they love to call "ethnic violence" in the Balkans. Within a day, some 1,500 British, French, Italian, Danish and U.S. troops were on their way to Serbia's occupied Kosovo province, with an additional 600 German troops promised.

Like almost all events in the Balkans in the past 15 years, its meaning is distorted by these media reports, which attribute every violent act to "ancient ethnic animosities" that somehow can't be brought under control without Western military intervention.

The truth is that for 45 years following World War II, the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia was able to achieve a working relationship among its many nations, peoples, ethnic groups and religions. It also coexisted peacefully with neighboring Albania, then also a socialist country, despite sharp political differences with Albania's leaders.

It was NATO intervention, especially German- and U.S.-organized subversion, that sharpened all national and religious differences and led to the turmoil of 1991-1998. Finally came the U.S.-NATO 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia, begun just five years ago on March 24, 1999. It killed thousands of Yugoslavs, including ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo.

Expansion into Eastern Europe

U.S. imperialism used its European military organization, NATO, to create a multinational cover for the 1999 war. NATO was crucial to U.S. efforts to expand into Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

To provoke the war and the breakup of Yugoslavia, in the late 1990s both Washington and Berlin backed the KLA, a right-wing extremist grouping of ethnic Albanians. Before 1998 even U.S. officials described the KLA as "terrorist." The KLA's political program included setting up a "greater Albania" that included Kosovo and parts of Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.

The 1999 bombing ended when the Yugoslav government agreed to allow NATO forces to occupy Kosovo. Kosovo legally remained part of Serbia, however. Since then, the United Nations has given cover to the NATO occupation, and 18,500 troops still remain. Some 40,000 were originally deployed.

After the 1999 occupation, NATO troops in Kosovo allowed the KLA reactionaries to drive some hundreds of thousands of people of Serb, Jewish, Roma (Gypsy) and other nationalities out of Kosovo using arson, killing and intimidation. Most of these refugees moved to Serbia. The KLA reactionaries have also persecuted progressive Albanians.

"There are not many ethnic minorities left in Kosovo. 220,000 have fled since 1999," UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond recently told a news conference in Geneva. Since the start of the violence this month, over 4,000 Serbs have fled their homes. (Reuters, March 19)

The March 16 incident

On March 16, four young Albanian boys were swept into Kosovo's rushing Ibar River. Only one of them survived.

The first story to emerge from this incident asserted that the children had been chased into the river by Serbian youths and their dogs. But Derek Chappell, a

spokesperson in the United Nations occupation authority (UNMIK), told media in Pristina on March 18 that this was definitely not true, that the survivor of the drowning told his parents that he and three friends entered the river alone and were immediately caught up in the heavy current. Chappell said that organized forces used the lie to spark virulent attacks upon ethnic Serbs in the region.

A reported 24 people were killed and 500 injured in the fighting, mostly ethnic Serbs. Twenty-five Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries were burned, and some 400 houses torched. (ITAR-TASS, March 22)

Some UN and Western officials have been quoted as saying that the incident was intended to provoke a battle to gain the separation of Kosovo from Serbia. Such a separation would violate the 1999 agreement.

It wouldn't be the first time an incident was fabricated to justify fighting. In January 1999, the KLA and U.S. official William Walker claimed that the death of a group of KLA fighters in the Kosovo village of Racak was instead a massacre of civilians. The "Racak Massacre" was used to justify the NATO war on Yugoslavia, which the U.S. and Germany alleged was a "humanitarian" intervention.

This year, the Finnish pathologist Helena Ranta, who led forensic investigations into the Racak case, told the Berliner Zeitung of Jan. 17 that Serb security troops were also killed and that there was no proof that the dead bodies she examined were civilians or had been executed.

Protest in Belgrade targets U.S.

On March 18, some 10,000 people marched in downtown Belgrade in solidarity with the beleaguered ethnic Serb community of Kosovo. Vladimir Krsljanin, an aide to former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, told Workers World from Belgrade that 2,000 of the demonstrators surrounded the U.S. Embassy until 2 a.m. The embassy has been closed since then.

Krsljanin said that 200 rowdy or provocative elements carried out an arson attack on a mosque in Belgrade. The police didn't try to stop them, he added, but they protected the U.S. Embassy. Most demonstrators rightly saw the U.S. as responsible for the deterioration of life in the Balkans and the threat to Serbia.

In Kosovo since 1999, thousands of Albanians, Serbs, Bulgarians and others have been laid off from factories and mines that the government of Yugoslavia formerly operated. In addition, state-supported free medical care and most government support for education was terminated in Kosovo.

NATO had allowed the paramilitary KLA forces to seize control of Kosovo in 1999. In the past two years these same CIA-trained operatives have helped set up paramilitaries to attack neighboring Macedonia.

The first result of this latest provocation will be to draw more forces into the region to beef up the imperialist NATO alliance in Eastern Europe.

In most of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, from Poland to Turkmenistan, from Uzbekistan to Hungary, NATO is now protecting Western imperialist corporations and advancing the fortunes of Western military industries, especially those of the United States.

In the Balkans, imperialist intervention has brought not "humanitarian relief" but increased turmoil to the region. □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

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U.S. goal for Haiti comes into focus:

Duvalierism without Duvalier

By G. Dunkel

The U.S. government has set its goal for Haiti: restore the paramilitary Macoutes and the Haitian Army to power. But the popular movement has its own agenda, and is building resistance to the U.S./French occupation.

With the assistance and aid of Washington, the army and paramilitaries controlled Haiti through terror and intimidation from 1957 until 1990. They kept Haiti stable for the bourgeoisie there and for U.S. imperialism while reducing the Haitian people to the deepest poverty in the Western Hemisphere.

The Macoutes were the personal police force of François Duvalier, who came to power in 1957. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who disbanded them, was elected in 1990 in a mass movement that overwhelmed the millions of dollars the United States spent on his opponent, Marc Bazin. A few months after Aristide took office, the army made a coup and ran the country from 1991 to 1994, using an organization called the FRAPH to do its dirty work.

Of course, the Bush administration has not announced its goal openly. It still talks about "restoring democracy in Haiti,"

denying that it kidnapped the popularly elected Aristide when it sent him to the Central African Republic.

But the newly appointed prime minister, Gérard Latortue, made the designs of the United States absolutely clear when he visited Gonaïves, Haiti's fourth-largest city and his home town, on March 20. Latortue was appointed by Boniface Alexandre, the judge who is acting as Haiti's president, after a "Council of Seven Wise Men," themselves appointed by some unknown and totally unconstitutional process, selected him.

Latortue and his cabinet traveled to Gonaïves in two U.S. Army "Black Hawk" helicopters and a "Chinook" transport helicopter flown by U.S. military pilots.

While the "Black Hawks" hovered overhead and French Legionnaires patrolled the outskirts of the city of 200,000, Latortue thanked Gonaïves for defeating "the dictator Aristide." He promised drinking water for Gonaïves's poor neighborhoods and other improvements.

Latortue shared the podium in the central plaza there with Justice Minister Bernard Gousse, who has proclaimed he is opening up an investigation of Aristide and his government on civil rights and

corruption charges. But also on the platform was convicted mass murderer Jean-Pierre Baptiste—also known as Jean Tatoune—who had been convicted and sentenced to life for the 1994 massacre of Aristide supporters in Raboteau, a poor neighborhood of Gonaïves.

Besides amenities like helicopters, the Bush administration is giving Latortue political support as well. Referring to the new cabinet, in which he himself undoubtedly had a heavy hand, U.S. Ambassador James Foley told the Associated Press that "Latortue chose wisely" and that Haiti could expect significant U.S. and international aid to help rebuild the country. While Aristide was in charge, the U.S. embargoed aid and loans to Haiti.

Herard Abraham, the general running the country in 1991 when Aristide became president for the first time, will be the minister of interior and national security, a key post. Abraham has reportedly called for the re-establishment of Haiti's armed forces.

When the armed contras took over Cap-Haïtien in February, he and a number of convicted murderers active in FRAPH were freed.

On March 20, the same day that Lator-

tue made his visit to Gonaïves to embrace the Macoutes and FRAPH, the People's Democratic Movement held a People's Forum on human rights, repression and national construction in Port-au-Prince. The movement, a coalition of 30 groups concerned with alternative economic development, deliberately chose the Global Day of Action that was protesting occupations everywhere.

That same day, the New York-based Committee to Resist the Feb. 29th Coup d'Etat in Haiti organized a large contingent in the New York march and rally against occupation. The contingent of Haitians, Dominicans and North Americans was cheered by shoppers and onlookers.

The marchers passed out fliers announcing an April 7 meeting at Brooklyn College's Whitman Hall that will feature Mildred Aristide and notables from the African American and Haitian communities in New York.

Together with the International Action Center, the committee is connecting the struggle to end the U.S.-French occupation of Haiti to the struggle to end the occupation of Iraq and Palestine. □

Spotlight anti-union terror in Colombia

Coca-Cola workers go on hunger strike

By Teresa Gutierrez

Dozens of SINALTRAINAL union workers in Colombia began a hunger strike against the Coca-Cola bottling company there on March 15 to protest dire conditions in the plants.

The hunger strike is in response to ongoing tactics by Coca-Cola officials to break up the union and lay off workers. The workers are also confronting a long-standing policy of ruthless intimidation, including Coca-Cola's collaboration with deadly paramilitaries.

The hunger strike is taking place in front of Coke bottling plants in the cities of Barrancabermeja, Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cartegena, Cúcuta, Medellín and Valledupar. It is aimed at FEMSA, Coca-Cola's largest Colombian bottler.

Last Sept. 9, the company closed the production lines at 11 of its 16 bottling plants, dismissing 91 workers. And in the last few months, the company has pressured more than 500 workers into "voluntarily resigning" from their contracts in exchange for a lump sum payment. Most of the union leaders have refused to resign or take the money.

SINALTRAINAL's president, Javier Correa Suarez, stated in a March 10 communiqué, "We denounce before the international and national community ... that the [Coca-Cola] administration trapped workers within the bottling plants as a way of pressuring them to renounce their work contracts in exchange for a small economic payment.

"Coca-Cola has been using this form of aggression since 2000. A Colombian judge and the Constitutional Court confirmed that the company committed the crime of illegally constraining workers. This new occurrence is happening as we are negotiating our contract demands with the bottling plants of Coca-Cola that are owned by Panamco Colombia S.A.

"With these acts, the company is look-

ing to foment terror to force the workers from their jobs if they do not succeed in forcing them to resign. On the contrary, we are demanding that the company respect the ruling by the judge on the lawsuit we filed and that it abide by the collective bargaining contract we have negotiated.

"This shows once again that Coca-Cola plants in Colombia have not stopped their violent actions against workers, and want to destroy SINALTRAINAL, direct hiring and collective bargaining by any means necessary."

'Unthinkable, undrinkable' campaign

The struggle to protest Coca-Cola for its policies in Colombia and around the world is on the rise. Beginning in July of 2003, students, unionists and progressives in the U.S. and around the world have picked up the call to not drink Coke.

The Campaign to Stop Killer Coke reports that more and more student organizations are taking Coke vending machines out of their campuses. This includes Carleton College in Minnesota.

United Students Against Sweatshops called for solidarity pickets throughout the U.S. the week of March 22 in support of the hunger strike in Colombia.

According to the Stop Killer Coke Campaign, dozens of union locals throughout the country have ousted Coke machines from their union halls after passing resolutions against Coke's role in Colombia. These include United Auto Workers Local 22, the largest General Motors local in Detroit. The militant International Longshore and Warehouse Union, from the U.S. to Canada, was one of the first to pass a resolution in solidarity with Colombian workers and kick out Coke from its offices. Last July, in San Francisco the longshore workers were instrumental in organizing a major news conference to launch the "Unthinkable, undrinkable"

campaign in the U.S.

The Communications Workers, Plumbers and Fitters Local 393, Canadian Labor Council, Service Employees Local 73, South Bay Labor Council, and the San Francisco Labor Council have all passed resolutions in support of the campaign.

The Boston School Bus Drivers Union, USWA Local 8751, removed Coke machines from four bus garages. Steve Gillis, the president of this Massachusetts local, traveled to Colombia in December 2001 to participate at the tribunal organized by SINALTRAINAL. Gillis is also a leader of Boston Labor ANSWER.

Notably, in Texas—a "right-to-work" state—the Harris County AFL-CIO Council united with SINALTRAINAL leader William Mendoza Gomez to confront Coke's board of directors last year.

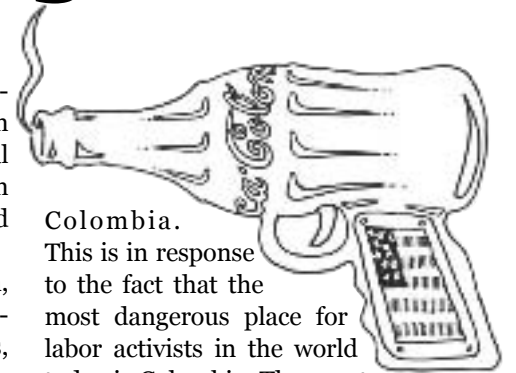
What's at stake in Colombia

Union busting is not foreign to the workers in the U.S. Many a worker in this country has fought tooth and nail as well as died for the right to organize a union in their work place and to defend other labor rights.

In fact, May Day, which is commemorated by millions around the world, was borne from the intense and militant struggle of workers in the U.S. against capitalist exploitation.

This intense class struggle is raging in Colombia today.

Pitched battles to defend not only unions, but the lives of workers and generations to come, are raging in war-torn



Colombia. This is in response to the fact that the most dangerous place for labor activists in the world today is Colombia. Three out of every five unionists killed in the world are Colombians.

To fight union busting and the growing attacks on workers in Colombia means that activists literally take their lives into their hands. To be an active unionist in Colombia today is to truly be a working-class hero. She or he is a class-conscious militant who has faced naked repression and said, "I will not be turned back, I will continue the fight."

The fight of SINALTRAINAL workers against Coca-Cola's merciless policies is a good example of the raging class struggle in Colombia.

It is a struggle where the intervention and support of the movement in the U.S. can literally save lives.

The vice president of the SINALTRAINAL union in Barrancabermeja, Juan Carlos Galvis, has said: "If we lose the fight against Coca-Cola, we will first lose our union, next our jobs and then our lives."

The movement in the U.S. must do everything it can to prevent that from happening. □

The truth behind the Haiti coup

Hear a special message from President Aristide on his kidnapping and the U.S. coup

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Después del golpe de terror y mentiras del gobierno: **Votantes en España expulsan a derechistas pro Bush**

Por John Catalinotto

Tres días después de la explosión de una bomba en Madrid el 11 de marzo, una elección nacional sacó al régimen español derechista. Este mismo régimen, encabezado por el Primer Ministro José María Aznar, había arrastrado el destino de los pueblos de España a la interminable guerra de conquista de Washington.

Ahora George W. Bush y Tony Blair presionarán al nuevo gobierno social democrático de Juan Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Las amenazas diplomáticas de Washington y Londres estarán dirigidas a forzar a Zapatero a echarse atrás en sus promesas de traer a todos los 1.300 soldados españoles que se encuentran en Irak.

La nueva crisis que se desarrolla en el estado español requiere un cuidadoso análisis por el movimiento obrero mundial, análisis que comienza con la situación internacional general.

El colapso de la URSS y de Europa Oriental en 1989-1991 abrió una enorme área del mundo a la expansión capitalista. Los ideólogos imperialistas prometieron un futuro glorioso con “el fin de la historia”. Sin embargo, en menos de una década, la expansión ha terminado y los sermones son ahora sobre “guerras interminables.”

Desde el colapso financiero asiático en 1997, la crisis de la economía mundial capitalista se ha profundizado.

Esta crisis económica es la raíz de la tensión política que a su vez los lleva a una agresión imperialista. El Pentágono atacó e invadió a Yugoslavia, Afganistán e Irak e intervino en Haití, y ahora amenaza con el “cambio de régimen” a la República Popular de Corea, Irán, Cuba, Venezuela y Zimbabwe.

Al tratar de analizar el significado de estos asaltos terroristas a Madrid, es muy importante recordar que el aparato del estado capitalista tiene un monopolio sobre toda información. La policía, el ejército y los servicios secretos controlan los reportes oficiales, mientras que la propaganda sobre lo que ha pasado es diseminada por medios obedientes. Para la clase obrera mundial no existe razón alguna para creer que ellos nos están diciendo la verdad, solo la verdad y nada más que la verdad.

Por otra parte, aún este monopolio no siempre permite controlar el resultado, como los últimos acontecimientos en el estado español ha mostrado.

Bombas de terror en Madrid

El 11 de marzo entre las 7:35 y las 7:45 de la mañana, unas bombas destruyeron cuatro trenes que viajaban desde pueblos obreros hasta el centro de Madrid. Según los reportajes explotaron 10 bombas. Las explosiones mataron a más de 200 personas e hirieron a 1.500. Las víctimas eran obreros y estudiantes, personas de 13 diferentes nacionalidades, incluyendo a inmigrantes de América Latina y Europa Oriental.

Las bombas produjeron horror en los residentes de Madrid. Organizaciones progresistas y obreras, partidos comu-

nistas dentro de España y de todo el mundo, luchadores guerrilleros en otros países—por ejemplo, las FARC de Colombia—enviaron sus condolencias y solidaridad a las víctimas de Madrid y condenaron el ataque.

Algunos compararon este ataque al sufrimiento de la población civil de Irak causada por el bombardeo del Pentágono sobre Bagdad y Basra hace un año.

Es común para los estrategas imperialistas el usar a civiles como objetivos para avanzar sus fines políticos y el saqueo económico en el mundo. Madeleine Albright, la Secretaria de Estado durante la administración del Presidente Bill Clinton en 1996 declaró abiertamente durante una entrevista televisiva con Leslie Stahl de la cadena CBS que las muertes de medio millón de niños iraquíes por las sanciones valía la pena si eso derrocaba a Saddam Hussein.

Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los aviones estadounidenses bombardearon e incineraron barrios obreros de Tokio y Dresden aún antes de las atrocidades finales en Hiroshima y Nagasaki. Desde entonces ha habido terribles bombardeos contra civiles en Corea y Vietnam.

Pero para las organizaciones obreras Marxistas, al igual que para los frentes de liberación auténticos, sería una total aberración el utilizar a la población obrera como blancos. En España, la población que sufrió el ataque del 11 de marzo provenía de los barrios que apoyan a las organizaciones obreras y el 90 por ciento de estos estaban contra la guerra contra Irak. Además, los resultados esperados de este ataque son que los gobiernos imperialistas de Europa señalen a los inmigrantes, en especial a las comunidades Árabes y Musulmanas, para aumentar la represión. También tratarán de suprimir las movilizaciones contra la guerra.

En España, otro objetivo es la población Vasca, una de las naciones bajo el estado español. Estuvo muy claro, que por sus propias razones, el régimen reaccionario de Aznar culpó a la organización Vasca ETA por el ataque.

Los Vascos han luchado por su autodeterminación durante muchas décadas. Sus activistas políticos han sido torturados en prisiones españolas. Los reportajes en los noticieros llamaron el ataque del 11 de marzo el más grande de los actos terroristas en la historia española. Convenientemente olvidaron que durante la Guerra Civil Española, los aviones alemanes conocidos como la Legión Cóndor quienes estaban aliados con los fascistas de Franco bombardearon el pueblo de Guernica en el país Vasco, matando a 1.634 personas e hiriendo a 889.

Quizás el terrorismo estatal es omitido de los análisis del establecimiento de prensa, aún cuando la obra de arte por Picasso, Guernica, capturó este horror para siempre.

Situación política en España

El gobierno del Partido Popular de Aznar prestó a la cruzada de Washington y Londres en contra de Irak un apoyo político crucial el año pasado justamente



Madrid 20 de marzo.

cuando se preparaban para lanzar la guerra criminal imperialista. La estrategia de Aznar ha sido la de llevar a España al campo de los Estados Unidos con la esperanza de que los monopolios españoles compartan los botines de guerra imperialistas. Esto fue visto en la reciente aventura fallida de los mercenarios en África para derrocar al gobierno de la ex colonia española de Guinea Ecuatorial, así como en el apoyo de España para la campaña de los EE.UU. contra Cuba.

El gobierno de Aznar también era conocido por tomar una línea dura contra el movimiento de liberación nacional vasco y especialmente contra la ETA, su ala armada. Aznar debió haber considerado que culpar a la ETA justificaría su mano dura y ganaría apoyo.

Hasta el 11 de marzo el grupo de Aznar se esperaba que ganara la elección nacional del 14 de marzo. Las encuestas predijeron una victoria electoral más estrecha que en 2000, pero aún así, una victoria.

Después del atentado, la primera reacción del Partido Popular fue la de culpar a la ETA y solamente a la ETA, no importara la verdad. Muy pocos lo creyeron. El atentado en Madrid fue algo completamente distinto de los ataques usuales de la ETA contra la policía, el ejército, el gobierno, o contra personalidades políticas. También, la organización vasca siempre había tomado responsabilidad por sus ataques, y esta vez negó repetidamente cualquier participación.

Después incluso de que la policía descubriera evidencias implicando a grupos al estilo de al-Qaida, según reportes, el gobierno de España intentó minimizar estos con rapidez y mantener el enfoque en la ETA. El gobierno de los EE.UU. ayudó a su aliado en esto, deseando asistir al partido de Aznar en ganar la elección.

La ira enfoca a Aznar

El 12 de marzo, el pueblo español salió a las calles por millones en manifestaciones convocadas por todos los partidos, y que fueron apoyadas completamente por el gobernante Partido Popular. Antes que nada la gente quería mostrar su soli-

daridad con las víctimas del atentado y su oposición al terror.

Pero las multitudes que salieron comenzaron también a expresar su ira en contra del gobierno por haber mentido y por haber intentado manipular su dolor.

En este momento, no hay forma para que las organizaciones progresistas y de la clase trabajadora establezcan una evaluación independiente de los hechos respecto a quien plantó las bombas. Atentados semejantes dirigidos contra trenes y estaciones de trenes en Italia en los años 1970 resultaron ser acciones de grupos fascistas con conexiones al servicio secreto italiano y la CIA. El estado español—especialmente sus órganos policiales— está también lleno de restos fascistas.

Sin una manera de descubrir tales conexiones independientemente, el análisis tiene que comenzar con las repercusiones políticas, con lo ocurrido como es percibido. El 14 de marzo, el día de los comicios, la mayoría de la gente de España creyó que un grupo al estilo de al-Qaida era el responsable de los atentados, y que Madrid fue el blanco porque Aznar había enviado tropas para ocupar a Irak. Más que eso, la mayoría de los españoles sabían que, por razones específicamente electorales, y para suprimir los sentimientos en contra de la guerra, Aznar les mintió abiertamente en un momento cuando desesperadamente querían escuchar la verdad.

‘Su guerra, nuestros muertos’

Para el 13 de marzo, miles de manifestantes asediaban las oficinas del Partido Popular, acusando al gobierno de mentir, gritando ‘Su guerra, nuestros muertos’. Era evidente que consideraban que las bombas habían estallado en Madrid porque el gobierno se había adherido a la aventura imperialista en Irak.

En las elecciones votaron 3 millones más de los que participaron cuatro años antes. Votaron para castigar al PP, lo que significó en general que votaran por Zapatero del Partido Socialista de los Obreros de España. El PSOE aumentó los representantes en el parlamento de 350, de 125 a 164 miembros. El PP bajó de 183 a 148. Zapatero, que formará un gobierno de minoría, ahora ha dicho que va a sacar las tropas españolas de Irak.

Los votantes no consideraron los partidos a la izquierda del PSOE. La Izquierda Unida, en la cual el Partido Comunista de España participa, perdió cuatro de sus nueve escaños.

Lo importante no es que el PSOE de Zapatero va a cambiar la política española drásticamente en una dirección progresista. Sino que la población ha repudiado las políticas militaristas y viciosas del PP.

Los Estados Unidos y el Reino Unido van a ejercer enormes presiones contra Zapatero y los socialistas para forzarles a retroceder en su compromiso para acabar con la participación de España en la ocupación de Irak para el 30 de junio. Y los trabajadores lo van a presionar para que cumpla su promesa. Se puede esperar que la lucha continúe sobre esta cuestión en los próximos meses. □