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WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

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As Pentagon sends more troops

Battles rage across Iraq

Resistance broadens after Pentagon atrocities

By Deirdre Griswold

April 14—The stakes keep getting higher. Even as George W. Bush was telling a news conference at the White House last night that now his lofty goal in Iraq is to “change the world for the better,” the Pentagon was making plans to send overseas another 10,000 to 20,000 troops. And Iraqis of all backgrounds were saying they would fight to the death to win back their country.

In the past week there was fierce fighting between U.S. troops and the Iraqi resistance in Baghdad, Falluja, Ramadi, Kerbala, Kufa, Najaf, Kut, Mosul and Nasariyah, and clashes in many smaller cities. The death toll among Iraqis has been horrific. In Falluja alone, the head of the main hospital reported 600 dead in less than a week—mostly the elderly, children and women. This account and many eyewitness reports refute the claim of the Pentagon that it only targets “fighting men.”

U.S. forces have sustained their largest casualties since the end of the “official” war a year ago. In the first 13 days of April, at least 82 U.S. troops were killed and more than 560 wounded. (The Sun [UK], April 14)

However, this tells only half the story. According to Robert Fisk and Patrick Cockburn, “At least 80 foreign mercenar-

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ies—security guards recruited from the United States, Europe and South Africa and working for American companies—have been killed in the past eight days in Iraq. ... At least 18,000 mercenaries, many of them tasked to protect U.S. troops and personnel, are now believed to be in Iraq, some of them earning \$1,000 a day. ... [A]lthough many of the heavily armed Western security men are working for the U.S. Department of Defense—and most of them are former Special Forces soldiers—they are not listed as serving military personnel. Their losses can therefore be hidden from public view.” (The Star, April 13)

The intransigence of the Bush administration, and the absence of any real opposition to this hideous war of conquest from within the U.S. capitalist political establishment, makes it clearer than ever that it will be ended only through the combined efforts of the Iraqi resistance and the massive anti-war movement around the world.



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

San Francisco.

In the United States, where a call to restore the draft is already creeping into editorial and opinion columns in the corporate media, and where disillusioned veterans are starting to return from the battlefields—many facing the threat of being sent back to fight again—the prospect of another militant, Vietnam-

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Brooklyn, Detroit rallies: Truth behind Haiti coup revealed 6-7



Brooklyn, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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Abu-Jamal

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11:30 am Begin march through West Philadelphia neighborhoods

1:00 pm Arrive at the Kingsessing Recreation Center located at 50th and Kingsessing Streets 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, much more.

Nothing short of his freedom will do!
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Hear PAM AFRICA

leader of the International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal who will give an update on the

APRIL 24 MOBILIZATION
Tuesday, April 20
at 7 pm

at the office of the **International Action Center**
39 West 14th St., Rm. 206
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For more information call:
212-633-6646



A new book by Mumia, an historical account of the Black Panther Party, will be released on April 24. Cover shows a teenaged Mumia in Phila. Black Panther Party office in the early 1970s.

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CHICAGO

Thu., April 22
Internationalism—The Legacy of Malcolm X. Featuring: Suzanne Adely, Palestine Solidarity Group; Larry Holmes, Steering Committee International ANSWER; Ayinde Jean-Baptiste, Ad-Hoc Committee to Protect Constitutional Democracy in Haiti; Sarah Smith, Chicago Youth Delegation to Cuba; Thick Routes Performance Collage; Music of the primeridan; Sanabel Palestinian Debka Group. Sponsored by: International Action Center-Chicago; Chicago Volunteers for International ANSWER; and the Malcolm X College Student Government. 7 p.m. At Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Jackson Blvd.-Auditorium. For info (773) 250-7006 or ChicagoANSWER@comcast.net.

NEW YORK

Fri., April 16
Workers World Party meeting features Ben Dupuy, secretary general of the National Popular Party of Haiti and founder of Haiti Progrès, speaking on the perspective now in Haiti following the coup. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

Sat., April 17
Native History for Today's Youth. Hosted by People's Video Network Youth Camp. Donation. 6:30 p.m. At 39 West 14th St., Rm. 206. For info (212) 633-6646 ext. 24.

SAN FRANCISCO

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

LOS ANGELES

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

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Abolish the racist death penalty • Free Mumia & all political prisoners!

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Washington, D.C., April 25 contingent will demand:

'Stop the war on women!'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The International Action Center will march in Washington on April 25 with an anti-war contingent sponsored by the International ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism.

Contingent organizers stress: "Come out to march for women's reproductive rights and against the economic oppression of women and end the war abroad—and at home!"

The historic march on Washington is called to oppose the Bush administration's accelerated attacks on women's reproductive rights, including access to abortion, contraception and sex education.

Organizers of the overall march include Black Women's Health Imperative, Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood. This coalition has stated that the goal of the April 25 mass march is to uphold "choice, justice, access, health, abortion, global and family planning." (www.marchforwomen.org)

Activists from around the country are mobilizing to take part in April 25, including hundreds of groups representing women, people of color, labor, lesbian/gay/bi/trans communities, civil rights and social service groups, students, AIDS activists and religious organizations, as well as health clinic workers and service providers across a wide political spectrum.

Women fight back against war, racism, poverty

ANSWER's April 14 call stated, "The Bush administration and the ultra-right are working to overturn the gains the women's movement has made over the last thirty-five years. Women have the right to control their own bodies and their lives."

An IAC statement linked government attacks on women with U.S. repression against working people, both at home and abroad. Domestic services are cut back as military spending increases astronomically. Women within the U.S. lose more and more of their reproductive choices while the U.S. invades or overthrows any country asserting any degree of self-determination.

The IAC demands "full reproductive rights for all women, with all of the social and economic programs required to exercise those rights," including safe, legal abortions on demand; government funding of quality, accessible health care, childcare, and housing; social services for all who need them; and jobs at decent pay.

In its call, the IAC affirms the connection between the struggle for reproductive rights, the end to attacks on immigrant women and people of color, and the extension of full rights, including marriage and adoption rights, to lesbian/gay/bi/trans people.

Central to all these struggles is "an end to the U.S. government's program of poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and repression at home, while pursuing war and occupation abroad from Iraq to Haiti."

The anti-war contingent will organize at two meeting locations before assembling on the Mall: (1) 7th St. between Madison Dr. and Constitution Ave. NW and (2) 7th St. between Jefferson Dr. and Independence Ave. SW. Activists can also meet up with the contingent at the main assembly area on the Mall on the southeast corner of 7th St. and Madison Dr. NW.

Activists who want to take part in the anti-war contingent are urged to look for the anti-war banners of the IAC and ANSWER.

For more information about the anti-war contingent, call (202) 544-3389 in Washington, call (212) 633-6646

in New York, or visit the websites www.iacenter.org and www.internationalANSWER.org

War and reproductive rights

The Bush administration cynically justified its wars on Afghanistan and Iraq as also "liberating women"—while U.S. political strategy devastated conditions for women in both countries.

U.S. military attacks continue to kill Afghan and Iraqi people, most recently over 600 in the city of Falluja, the majority women, children, and elderly people. (Associated Press, April 11)

The U.S. exerts imperial control over women worldwide with tactics like denial of funds to United Nations agencies that distribute contraceptive information and devices. The result? A projected 2 million unwanted pregnancies, 800,000 induced abortions, 4,700 maternal deaths, and

77,000 infant and child deaths, in countries where from 40 percent to 60 percent of pregnancies are unwanted. (Population Fund)

Impoverished women in the U.S. have been denied abortion funding through Medicaid since 1976, with the passage of the Hyde Amendment. Federally funded abortions are also denied to many other groups including federal prisoners and military personnel.

A U.S. woman soldier, like those recently sexually assaulted by fellow soldiers, would have to prove rape or pay for her own abortion if she found herself pregnant, while the women of Iraq watch their children and loved ones die from depleted uranium armaments dropped by the U.S.—or from the resulting cancers.

The Bush administration's war on the world for profits is also a war on women and their reproductive rights. □

70-mile march to protest education cuts



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

By LeiLani Dowell
Richmond, Calif.

With an April 9 rally send-off, activists in Richmond, Calif., began an eight-day, 70-mile march to protest severe budget cuts in education and disparity of educational funding throughout the state.

The April 9 action was attended by supporters from across the Bay Area and throughout the state, including union, anti-war and environmental justice activists. Grupo Cuahutonal, an Aztec dance troop from Berkeley, opened the rally. Speakers included parents, elementary school students, teachers and college activists.

Students from elementary, middle, high schools and colleges—along with parents, teachers and other community activists from West Contra Costa County in California—will spend this year's spring break walking about 12 miles a day from San Pablo to the State Capitol in Sacramento.

They will sleep in schools, parks and churches, and pick up activists with similar concerns in the cities of Vallejo, Vacaville, Dixon and Davis along the way. They are scheduled to participate in speaking events on campuses and a rally at Solano Prison.

Marchers are demanding full funding of Proposition 98, passed in 1998, which establishes minimum state-funding levels

for schools and earmarks a large portion of state revenue for education. While initially promising to fully fund Prop 98, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger cut \$2 billion of the \$4 billion increase schools were owed under that initiative in his January budget.

Marchers are also demanding Schwarzenegger relieve the county of its 1991 debt owed the state—the county pays about \$1.8 million on it annually—and provide equity in funding for schools across the state. The West Contra Costa School District receives less money for average daily attendance than many others in the state.

Struggling with an extreme budget deficit, the School Board voted in March to cut \$16.5 million from its 2004-2005 budget. To do this, the board has eliminated libraries and sports and music programs, and given layoffs notices to all librarians, library assistants and psychologists, as well as some elementary school principals, music teachers and others.

Following a trend that is being seen increasingly throughout the Bay Area, the district has asked parents to make donations to subsidize sports programs. While the district has received over \$600,000 in overall donations since the announcement of the budget cuts, community members are clear that this is only a temporary solution and they express outrage that they should have to beg for education funding at all. □

Oakland march to docks, site of police attack



On April 7, the first anniversary of a brutal attack by the Oakland, Calif., Police Department on anti-war protesters, hundreds returned to the scene of the attack on the Oakland docks. Last year, police had arrested many of those most seriously injured in the attack. Twenty-five protesters are now awaiting trial.

After a rally outside police headquarters, demonstrators retraced the march route to the port—home to shipping companies that are profiting from the brutal occupation of Iraq through Pentagon contracts.

During the 2003 attack, police injured 50 demonstrators by indiscriminately firing shotguns filled with wooden dowels and shot-filled beanbags as the crowd was leaving. Many protesters were hospitalized. So were members of Interna-

tional Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 who were reporting for work. Some injured protesters were then run over by cops on motorcycles.

As a result, there has been a flurry of lawsuits against the police department.

The Oakland P.D.'s violence was so great that it was recently cited for its actions on April 7, 2003, in a letter issued by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. In its report the commission characterized the attack as "one of the world's worst cases of government defamation and violence against activists in 2003."

Meanwhile the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has quietly rewarded Oakland over \$424,000 to pay for police overtime during the early weeks of the war against Iraq.

—Story and photo by Bill Hackwell

Have they bitten off more than they can chew?

Wal-Mart: Enemy of the people

By Milt Neidenberg

It could have become a city within a city. Maybe they would have called it Walton, after the patriarch Sam Walton—founding father of Wal-Mart, the largest retail supermarket in the world. But it didn't happen.

Wal-Mart had tried to ram through a 71-page ballot initiative that would have turned the city of Inglewood, Calif., population 112,000, over to this global, predatory behemoth, which has surpassed Exxon Mobil as the world's biggest corporation. Wal-Mart wanted at least 60 acres of land, the size of 17 football fields, to build a supercenter. The voters—half Latin@, half Black and 20-percent unemployed—rejected Wal-Mart's demands for broad exemptions from environmental ordinances, zoning laws, public hearings and state law.

It was truly a David vs. Goliath struggle. Wal-Mart spent over \$1 million on mailings, telephone calls, newspaper ads, radio and television, and door-to-door canvassing. The campaign cost the company about \$100 a vote, yet the referendum was rejected by 61 percent of the voters—an astonishing feat for a coalition of labor, community groups and churches pitted against a transnational corporation with \$250 billion in sales and a captive workforce of 1.3 million. For the moment, Wal-Mart's plan to build 40 supercenters in California has suffered a setback.

From megastores to supercenters

Wal-Mart's supercenters have generated huge profits. The stores offer groceries and general merchandise. By placing more than 100,000 products in one location, the company can entice those people who frequently come in and buy cheap groceries to also roam the store for many other products. According to CEO H. Lee Scott, Wal-Mart studies 300 sites for each of the 200 supercenters it plans to build. As the supercenters try to grab land and resources within city limits, they will face repetitions of the Inglewood struggle.

During a four-month bitter strike/lock-out that pitted 70,000 grocery workers against four grocery chains in Southern California, one of the four, the union-buster Safeway, donated \$300,000 to the campaign to beat back Wal-Mart's efforts to build the supercenter in Inglewood. It was not out of generosity, but self-interest. Two of these large grocery chain stores close for every new supercenter that opens.

Wal-Mart has led a technological revolution in retailing, installing computerized ordering and distribution. It has so streamlined its on-time deliveries that products are often sold at retail even before the wholesale distributor gets paid for them. The company has also lowered wages and benefits by almost 6 percent compared to its competitors.

Wal-Mart has topped the Fortune 500 list for the last three years. Five of the 10 richest people in the world in 2002 were members of the ruling Walton family of this vast retailing empire, according to Forbes magazine. With a total of more than \$100 billion in personal assets, the infamous five have become the beneficiaries of a global structure and a primary leader in the drive to lower wages and benefits.

In the five weeks ending April 3, Wal-Mart sales exceeded \$20 billion, far greater than the combined total of the next 10 largest retail giants.

Wal-Mart views the Inglewood setback as short-lived. It wields enormous economic and political power in Washington. Democratic Party presidential candidate John Kerry, while he publicly denounces Wal-Mart's labor practices as "disgraceful," holds an undisclosed amount of stock in the company. (Arkansas Democrat Gazette, March 7)

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, a non-partisan organization that tracks political funding, Wal-Mart's Political Action Committee has become the second-largest donor of political handouts. Over 80 percent of Wal-Mart's checks have been sent to the Bush election campaign. Nearly 20 percent of its 60,000 "domestic managers" have been intimidated to finance the PAC through payroll deductions of at least \$8.60 a month.

Don't call them workers!

From the moment the workers—called "associates" and primarily women—clock in, they are at the mercy of their bosses. Their time sheets are often manipulated by Wal-Mart managers to cut down what are already poverty wages. They begin their day with a pep rally. Managers, acting as cheer leaders, begin the chants: "Gimme a W." The "associates" must respond enthusiastically. "Gimme an A," shout the cheerleaders. And so it goes until Wal-Mart is spelled out. They rush to their work stations and their "happy" stressful day begins and ends under the strong-arm tactics of management.

The average "associate" is rewarded with an annual salary of \$13,861 for full-time work, according to a February 2004 report from Rep. George Miller of California. But about 70 percent of the "full-time" workers average only 28 hours a week, making their gross average wage less than \$11,000 a year. The national poverty-level wage for a family of three is around \$16,000. It is clear that the workers can't live on what they earn, leading to a turnover that has reached 150 percent in many of the megastores.

According to the United Food and Commercial Workers, the majority of Wal-Mart employees don't have healthcare coverage, which would cost them 20 percent of their wages. Family coverage would cost more than twice that. The University of California at Berkeley reported that California taxpayers subsidize Wal-Mart employees by a total of \$20.5 million a year in healthcare costs.

Wal-Mart's power goes far beyond its domination of the retailing industry. It has intervened in the public school crisis to recruit candidates for its low wages. It withdrew \$20 billion from the tax-free Walton Family Foundation to bankroll a program to privatize the public school system through school vouchers. It has joined with the infamous Bradley Foundation of Milwaukee, which first introduced the slave-labor workfare programs, to broaden the voucher program.

Wal-Mart has begun to dominate the retailing industries of other countries. In Mexico, its practice mirrors the U.S. takeover of Mexico's trade infrastructure. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. accounts for more than half of all Mexican supermarket sales. (Wall Street Journal, March 31) According to the World Trade Organization, Wal-Mart has negotiated with Chinese government officials to increase its megastores in China to 35, with plans to build more. And it continues to comb the globe for areas where U.S. capital has created the most favorable climate for exploiting the working poor and oppres-

PHOTO: UFCW
UFCW Local 789, St. Paul, Minn.

sed. This is globalization in the hands of predators like Wal-Mart.

Biting off more than it can chew?

Is spreading their supercenters nationally and internationally potentially too ambitious, and too far reaching? Michael Exstein, a retail equity analyst for the Wall Street brokerage house of Credit Suisse First Boston, stated in a March 3 report that the "corporate landscape is littered with companies that have mistaken leading market shares for dominant market share. ... Wal-Mart may well be at one of those inflection points. ... The end result for shareholders could be a stock that may not reflect near-term economic performance but ... focuses on an increasingly hostile public environment."

In "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," Frederick Engels clarified the bankruptcy of capitalism on this critical issue. Writing about capitalist crises, he said they "demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces ... [and] show how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose."

Wal-Mart has harnessed and usurped the high-tech revolution in retailing in a way that serves only to deepen the exploitation of the masses. It is only under socialism that the forces of production, appropriation and exchange can be harmonized with the socialized character of labor so that the vast production of goods and services worldwide can serve all humanity.

Labor opens up the struggle

Since the late 1990s, the United Food and Commercial Workers have stepped up efforts to organize Wal-Mart workers. They help employees file complaints on issues such as the company's violations of overtime, refusal to pay for healthcare and its discriminatory practices against women. Dozens of class-action suits have been filed.

If Wal-Mart is to be organized, the UFCW can't do it alone. It will have to marshal forces that include the Black and Latin@ communities, other oppressed nationalities, youth, seniors, women's groups and the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement. To change the relationship of class forces, there must also be unity with the movements of immigrants, of environmentalists, against globalization and the ever-growing anti-war movement to foster the growth of an independent class-wide movement. It will take shape only from the bottom up.

Wal-Mart represents all that is endemic to monopoly capitalism—private ownership by a few of all the productive forces, and the insatiable appetite for amassing profits. Cycles of imperialist wars and economic depressions are always at the expense of the workers here and the poor and oppressed abroad. Internationalism will flourish as fierce battles break out between labor and capital.

The Inglewood victory could be a tick, a turning of the clock toward a long and protracted war against Wal-Mart and everything the predatory retailing giant stands for. □



ON THE

Mushroom pickers win union after 17 years!

Persistence pays off. That's the lesson of the Pictsweet workers' 17-year struggle to win a union contract with the largest mushroom grower in Southern California. Though the 300 workers at Pictsweet Mushroom Farms in Ventura had voted in the United Farm Workers in 1987, the company refused to recognize the union. But on Feb. 13 the California Agricultural Labor Relations ruled that the company had to accept a three-year contract.

The strong UFW contract includes better pay, employer-paid family health care coverage, paid holidays and vacations and a union plant safety committee. Up to now Pictsweet workers made \$6.50 an hour picking mushrooms in dark, dank rooms lit only by lights on the workers' helmets. Workers with union contracts doing similar work made \$3 per hour more.

What helped turn the situation around was legislation passed in 2003 that mandates mediation when growers unfairly delay contract negotiations with farm workers who have voted for a union. Even though agricultural workers in California have been able to form unions since 1975, growers routinely stall negotiations to deny workers their rights. Before passage of the law, only 185 companies had signed union contracts since 1975 out of 428 where farm workers had voted for the UFW. That means 57 percent of farm workers who want to unionize are still struggling for representation.

New School contests adjunct union vote

The New School in New York City may once have been a progressive institution. But the fact that it's contesting a union drive by adjunct faculty members who

West Coast strike paves way

East Coast grocery workers' victory

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

The big business media rarely illuminates the possibilities or the lessons of workers' struggles. The impact of the five-month-long Southern California grocery workers' strike and the discussions it has opened up inside the labor movement are no exception.

On March 31, close to 30,000 Baltimore and Washington, D.C., grocery workers overwhelmingly approved a new four-year contract. Ninety percent of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27 members voted to approve it after weeks of tough negotiations by UFCW Locals 27 and 400.

It also followed aggressive preparations for a strike by both locals and broad community support.

While it's important to report on the exact settlement, it's also critical to get a reading on how the workers themselves viewed the vote and the contract. In this case it is clear that the vast majority felt

that the union scored a huge victory.

Every settlement and strike must also be looked at in the context of the general class struggle. Are the workers on the defensive? Is capitalism intensifying its attacks?

Safeway opened negotiations asking for the same concessions the company attempted to ram down the throats of the Southern California workers: elimination of health-care plans and major cuts in every area. Giant Food and Kroger announced that they would lock the workers out in the event of a strike at Safeway.

Under the new agreement, health care benefits will remain intact with an increase in the deductible from \$100 to \$200. Pensions are preserved and the workers will receive a \$1.25/hour wage increase over four years. This was a defeat for the dreaded bonus system that has been a thorn for many workers in the labor movement recently. Bosses would much rather give a one-time bonus than a general wage increase.

On the other hand, new workers will receive lower holiday and Sunday wages than the current workers. This was a concession. The original demand of Safeway was to extend this to all workers.

The weeks and months leading up to the potential showdown between workers and grocery bosses brought with it sincere concerns and discussion on how to prepare. It is hard to describe the genuine fear as the union and workers scrambled to learn the lessons of the strike on the West Coast and prepare for a possible difficult and lengthy East Coast battle.

Key to union activists' preparation for a strike was community support, including more aggressive tactics, and unity between both locals. Serious discussions of the union's weaknesses and strengths were begun in weeks prior to the contract negotiations at packed union meetings—which were punctuated by passion, laughter and sometimes deafening silence.

The importance of community support both in Baltimore and Washington was clearly understood, not only in terms of the support for Southern California, but also how it would impact the local contracts.

In Baltimore the AFL-CIO Labor

Council and community groups like the All Peoples Congress successfully shut down Safeway during the course of weekend picketing. Council President Ernie Greco was arrested. More aggressive plans were in the offing.

In Washington, the AFL-CIO Council, which represents about 150,000 unionized workers, organized 24 community units composed of 400 people who engaged in leafleting inside and outside of Giant and Safeway stores for weeks.

Both locals began printing picket signs, selecting strike captains, setting up strike funds and establishing food banks to prepare for the possibility of a strike.

Negotiations were conducted jointly with a general committee.

But what cannot be ignored is the contribution of the Southern California workers. As a result of the workers' resolve, Safeway, Kroger and Albertson's lost an estimated \$2 billion during the five-month strike. In simple terms, they wore the grocery bosses' butts out.

At the contract ratification meeting in Washington the workers did the right thing when they acknowledged the sacrifices made by the Southern California grocery workers by giving them a standing ovation. Workers' history will also salute them. □

PICKETLINE

By SUE DAVIS

average \$2,700 per course without benefits puts it into the same anti-labor camp as Wal-Mart.

And make no mistake about who is leading that effort: the New School president is former Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey, who currently sits on the Congressional 9/11 Commission.

In a mail-in vote on Feb. 27 a majority of 1,600 eligible part-time faculty members cast ballots, voting to be represented by the United Auto Workers. Kerrey asked on March 5 that the results be thrown out, because the vote wasn't "sufficiently representative." Of 65 percent of the adjuncts voting, 530 voted for the union, with 466 opposed. Such elections are normally binding on employers, though corporations increasingly contest them.

Joe Haske, who has taught drawing at Parsons School of Design for 22 years, told the March 17 Village Voice that Kerrey's rejection of the vote was undemocratic. "Do you think if we'd lost they'd want to overturn it?" he asked.

Haske and other adjunct faculty members said they viewed unionization as the only effective way to have a voice at the school. "In all the years I've been here I have never found a way to address problems or complaints without worrying about losing my job," he said.

Last month's vote followed a nine-month-long hearing process at the National Labor Relations Board, where New School lawyers succeeded in knocking out a substantial number of would-be bargaining unit members, saying they were either managers or barred from unionizing under previous rulings.

During the tense days leading up to the vote, New School students presented Kerrey with 1,000 signatures from classmates who support the faculty's right to organize.

Meanwhile, part-time faculty members are also organizing at other area campuses, including Pace University. And adjunct teachers at New York University, who voted to be represented by the UAW in 2002, are considering a walkout this spring to protest NYU's failure to agree to a contract. □

Angry Detroit workers picket City Hall



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

The reaction was swift. Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick announced layoffs and cutbacks in his April 12 budget address. By 4:30 p.m., angry city workers picketed outside City Hall.

The April 12 announcement follows 3,000 layoffs in Detroit's underfunded school system. United Auto Worker Local 2334 President David Sole stressed

that every bomb that falls on Iraq is falling on Detroit, too. As Martin Luther King Jr. said of Vietnam, resources needed for cities here are being diverted to a war abroad.

On April 21 at 4:30 p.m., workers and community activists will picket and pack a budget hearing at City Hall.

—Cheryl LaBash

After 7 months on picket line

D.C. laundry workers win union, contract

By Sharon Black
Washington, D.C.

Sterling Laundry's owner boasted publicly that he would rather burn down his business than allow his workers to join a union. In a show of arrogance and racism, he referred to the mostly immigrant women workers as "cows."

But he had to eat his words on April 7.

After enduring a seven-month-long strike in bitterly cold weather, Sterling workers won union recognition and their first contract. An aggressive campaign by the workers and their supporters to deny Sterling local laundering contracts resulted in a three-year contract providing workers with a pension plan, health care and the largest wage increase in company history.

These workers will join the more than 2,300 other industrial laundry workers who are protected by UNITE contracts in the mid-Atlantic region.



Laundry striker and the Rev. Graylan Hagler.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

AFL-CIO Metro Washington Council President Jos Williams stated, "This resounding victory by laundry workers adds to the unstoppable momentum for social justice in our community that we witnessed in the recent supermarket workers' campaign. Solidarity, persist-

ence and creativity work!"

The Rev. Graylan Hagler, minister of the Plymouth Congregational Church, provided almost daily support. The Baltimore All Peoples Congress collected food and formed car caravans to show its support. □



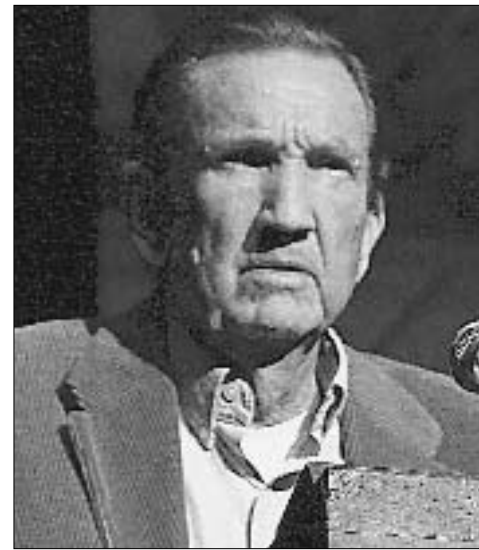
Pat Chin



Ossie Davis



Teresa Gutierrez



Ramsey Clark

2,000 rally in Brooklyn to

By Monica Moorehead
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dynamic. Spirited. Unprecedented. These words describe a truly historic rally that took place on April 7 in the Whitman Theater at Brooklyn College. A multinational crowd of 2,000, mainly people from Haiti and the English-speaking Caribbean, packed the hall to hear a program entitled "An Evening with Friends of Haiti: The Truth Behind the Haiti Coup."

A broad range of speakers and cultural performers ignited the stage for three-and-a-half hours to express heartfelt anti-imperialist solidarity with the besieged Caribbean country. Haiti has once again suffered a horrific atrocity with the U.S.-orchestrated kidnapping of its democratically-elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, on Feb. 29.

This is the second time that Aristide was forcibly removed from office due to blatant interference by U.S. imperialism. The first time was in 1991 under the first George Bush administration. In 1994, Washington was forced to return Aristide to Haiti due to the pressure of the Haitian masses. He was reelected president in 2000. His term was to expire in 2006 according to the current Haitian Constitution.

The Feb. 29 coup came on the heels of the bicentennial celebration of Haitian independence in 1804, which followed the successful slave revolution against France led by the legendary general,

Toussaint L'Overture. "Two hundred and one years ago today, Toussaint L'Overture died in a French prison cell for the crime of having freed his people from slavery," said Karine Jean-Pierre, from Haiti Support Network (HSN).

Right now, over 1,000 U.S. Marines along with other foreign troops occupy the island. They are there on behalf of an imperialist-backed alliance of former leaders of outlawed paramilitary death squads—including the despised Tonton Macoutes—and the Haitian capitalist class. Together, they have illegally taken over the reins of government.

'Illegal, illegitimate' regime

The rally was co-chaired by Kim Ives and Karine Jean-Pierre with Pat Chin and Sara Flounders from the International Action Center (IAC). La Troupe Makandal, a Haitian drum group, was an integral part of the rally as they provided powerful African rhythms after each speaker. Behind each speaker or performer on stage were large still photos of the Haitian masses in struggle.

Ives remarked, "Washington has gone to great lengths to give the present Haitian coup a constitutional color. But with every passing day, one thing becomes ever clearer to the world: The government set in place by U.S. Marines in 2004, just as in 1915, is illegal, illegitimate and foisted on the Haitian people. Their coup is doomed to fail.

"We are here tonight to seek the truth

about the hidden hand and shadowy forces behind the Feb. 29 coup d'état."

Distinguished African American actor Ossie Davis captivated the audience as he read an 1893 speech by Frederick Douglass, the former slave and first U.S. ambassador to Haiti. Douglass's prophetic speech said in part, "My subject is Haiti, the Black Republic... Her proximity should alone make us deeply interested in her welfare, her history, her progress and her possible destiny, yet we turn the cold shoulder. The reason for coolness between the countries is this: Haiti is Black, and we have not yet forgiven Haiti for being Black... I regard her as the original pioneer emancipator of the nineteenth century."

Dr. Luis Barrios, a Dominican priest in New York, explained the Haiti Commission of Inquiry's findings. The commission, comprised of HSN and IAC representatives, recently sent a delegation to the Dominican Republic to help bring world attention to the reactionary role the Dominican government played in the Feb. 29 coup.

Barrios stated, "Our investigation has proven beyond a doubt that the territory of the Dominican Republic was used for training and arming the so-called Haitian rebels, with the knowledge of the national authorities, and that their attack was launched from Dominican soil... In press accounts, U.S. military officials have confirmed that 20,000 M-16 rifles were given by the U.S. to the Dominican military after November 2002."

Teresa Gutierrez, a leader of the New York Committee to Free the Cuban Five and a Commission of Inquiry delegate, spoke on how the Bush administration would like to repeat in socialist Cuba and Venezuela what it did in Haiti. She exposed Bush's so-called war on terrorism by raising the case of the five Cuban patriots languishing in U.S. federal prisons for daring to defend Cuba's sovereignty against right-wing Cuban-American terrorists based in Miami.

Waters: 'I salute Haiti'

Rep. Maxine Waters, who came from California, electrified the audience as she spoke with great passion about her ongoing contacts with Aristide by cell phone as he was being kidnapped by U.S. forces and sent to the Central African Republic. She was part of a delegation that later traveled to CAR to accompany Aristide to Jamaica, where he and his wife Mildred are now guests of the government.

Waters focused much of her remarks on the complicit roles that Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice played. She stated, "Aristide was elected by the people. Rice was not elected by anybody." She ended her rousing remarks with, "I salute Haiti! I salute Aristide! I salute Lavalas! I support real democracy!"

Ben Dupuy, secretary-general of the National Popular Party (PPN) in Haiti, told the audience, "U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell calls investigations into the

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HAITI
A Slave Revolution
200 YEARS AFTER 1804

Ramsey Clark
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Frederick Douglass
Ben Dupuy
Paul Laraque
and others



Johnnie Stevens



Sara Flounders



Ray Laforest



Ben DuPuy

WW PHOTOS: G.DUNKEL

denounce U.S. coup in Haiti

latest Haitian coup, even that called for by CARICOM, a waste of time. This shows how much they fear the truth getting out. To add insult to injury, the U.S. is promoting diversionary investigations into Aristide's alleged drug trafficking, human rights abuses and corruption.

"Meanwhile, to carry out their coup, Washington is collaborating with death-squad leaders and soldiers universally recognized as corrupt, drug-dealing human-rights abusers." He called Aristide's ouster a "coup-napping."

Sara Flounders and People's Video Network coordinator Johnnie Stevens traveled to the CAR along with Ives in March to break the media blockade. They demanded to see and interview Aristide.

Flounders told the cheering crowd, "CARICOM, representing the 15 Caribbean nations... and the 53-nation African Union have demanded an inquiry into the coup. What a courageous stand! All the U.S. plans for Haiti are unraveling because people are so outraged at this criminal act.

"Just as we see in Iraq today, there is growing resistance to U.S. plans. Brutal occupation is being met with a level of resistance never thought possible," Flounders said. "The U.S. tanks rolling into Port-au-Prince, Haiti, are no different than the U.S. tanks rolling into Fallujah, Iraq."

'Reparations must be paid'

Stevens talked about the neocolonial conditions that still exist in the Central African Republic, where Aristide was held under U.S. orders: "There is one flight a week to Central African Republic on Air France. French newspapers are the only print media available. The population of

3.6 million lives on land that contains a wealth of diamonds—making up 54 percent of the CAR's exports. Yet their average life expectancy is 42 years, with infant mortality close to 100 per every 1,000 live births. Nearly half the people cannot read or write.

"Who is profiting from the diamond mines?" Stevens asked. "While most people survive by growing their own crops, the country is paying high interest on an \$881 million foreign debt, mainly to French- and U.S.-controlled banks. ... The conclusion to this story is that reparations must be paid."

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who founded the first Haiti Commission of Inquiry in 1991, declared, "If you don't stand up for Haitians, for their rights and their freedom, you don't see the urgent need of the world."

Omar Sierra, representing the Bolivarian Circles in Venezuela, recalled the important support national liberation leader Simon Bolivar received from the Haitian people in the 19th century. He said it is crucial for all Latin American peoples to come to Haiti's aid today.

Other speakers included Alina Sixto, Family Lavalas New York/Tri-State Area; Rep. Major Owens of Brooklyn; Mario Dupuy, Aristide's state secretary of communication; Don Rojas, Amy Goodman and Bernard White, WBAI-Pacific Radio; Ray Laforest, Haitian labor organizer, District Council 1707; Brian Concannon, human-rights attorney; Brooklyn College student Starr Bernard; Serge Lilavois, Support Committee for PPN; Los Angeles anti-police brutality activist Michael Zinzun; Dominican activist Marc Torres; and Haitian performers Marguerite

Laurent and Phantoms.

New York City Councilmember Jose Serrano and Baltimore City Councilmember Kwame Abayomi sent solidarity messages.

Acclaimed filmmaker Katherine Kean presented a video she made of Aristide speaking in CAR. An audio message from death-row political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal was played.

The rally was sponsored by the Coalition to Resist the Feb. 29 Coup in Haiti. This coalition includes Ajoupa, Haiti Action Committee, International Action Center, International ANSWER, Komite Beton, Lavalas Family, Leve Kanpe, OBNH, Patisan Jezikri and PPN Support Committee.

Pat Chin, co-editor of the book "Haiti: A Slave Revolution," told Workers World: "The response to this rally shows that all the confusion that once divided the movement is being swept away. As we get the information out there, more people are beginning to understand that Aristide was ousted because even though he made numerous concessions to the International Monetary Fund's 'death plan' for Haiti, he still didn't go far enough to please Washington.

"His ouster is not about alleged human-rights violations or corruption—things that the U.S. is known for worldwide. It's not just Aristide, but the popular movement he symbolizes, that's in imperialism's crosshairs." □



Congresswoman Maxine Waters

WW PHOTO: G.DUNKEL

Rep. Waters keynotes meeting on Haiti

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Detroit

Excerpted from a Pan-African News Wire article

Speaking to a capacity audience at the Wayne State University Law School Auditorium on April 8, Congresswoman Maxine Waters called for the return of ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the Caribbean nation of Haiti.

"Let me make it clear. I support President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the people of Haiti," stated Congresswoman Waters.

The meeting was sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice and the Ground Work for Just World organization.

Congressman John Conyers of Detroit, the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, co-spon-

sored the meeting and welcomed Waters, who was accompanied by her husband, Ambassador Sydney Williams, who served as the United States envoy to the Bahamas under the Clinton administration.

Ms. Waters described her trip to Haiti in January for the 200th independence day celebration. She pointed out that the opposition forces to President Aristide attempted to sabotage the ceremonies by staging violent demonstrations where they burned tires to prevent guests from traveling in the nation's capital and other cities throughout the country. When arriving in the northern city of Gonaives, Waters and Ambassador Williams were protected by the security forces accompanying President Aristide.

"When we were planning to travel to Haiti, we were informed by the State Department that we should not go because

they could not guarantee our safety," said the Los Angeles based representative who was the former chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus. "Yet we made a decision to go anyway despite the clear threats from the opposition to spread stories that we were financed by Aristide."

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center in New York City, helped lead a delegation to the Central African Republic to demand to see the ousted President Aristide in early March. Aristide was eventually allowed to hold a press conference and leave the country to take up temporary residence in neighboring Jamaica.

Flounders, who is co-editor of a new book on the history of the country entitled "Haiti: A Slave Revolution—200 Years After 1804," outlined over two centuries of blockades and military interventions by both the United States and France against

the Caribbean nation.

At the WSU Law School, Flounders condemned the actions of Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Roger Noriega, who she said had coordinated the coup against President Aristide.

Congressman Conyers, who is the leader of the Congressional Black Caucus Haiti Task Force, praised those in attendance, saying "a new movement to support the democratic process in Haiti has been born."

Others attending the meeting included Detroit Councilwoman JoAnn Watson and Wayne County Clerk Kathy Garrett. Representatives of the National Conference of Black Lawyers and the National Lawyers Guild were also in attendance. A statement from the NCBL was circulated exposing the role of the Bush administration in the overthrow of a democratically-elected government in Haiti. □

The revolt of 1920 and Iraqi resistance today

By Richard Becker

"Give us the signal and we will resume the 1920 revolt," chanted supporters of Moqtada al-Sadr at a demonstration in Baghdad on April 1. If the U.S. military commanders in Iraq didn't shudder at hearing that chant, their British co-occupiers surely did. It was in the year 1920 that the people of Iraq rose up together after learning that they had become colonial subjects of the British Empire.

The April 1 demonstration came at the midway point in a week that transformed the occupation of Iraq into a crisis of the first magnitude for Washington. The previous Sunday, March 28, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headed by U.S. dictator L. Paul Bremer had ignited the crisis by shutting down a newspaper reflecting the views of al-Sadr, a Shia religious leader. The shutdown led to a series of mass protests. When the U.S. attempted to crush the protests with brutal force, a popular uprising erupted in many Iraqi cities beginning on April 4.

At the same time, the U.S. occupation forces were preparing an all-out assault on Falluja, an industrial city of about 300,000 located west of Baghdad, which has been a center of the Iraqi resistance since the beginning of the occupation a year ago.

Falluja is a working-class city whose population is predominantly, but not exclusively, Sunni Muslim. Sunnis constitute about 85 percent of the world's Muslims, and are divided into four major branches. In Iraq, Shiites (the other major branch of Islam) constitute around 60 percent of the population.

Who is the Iraqi resistance?

While it may not be possible to answer this question exhaustively at present, it is clear that the resistance in Falluja and throughout Iraq is very diverse in its political makeup. In a Jan. 31 interview by the Anti-Imperialist Camp with resistance activist Jabbar al-Kubaysi, who identified himself as a "left Baathist," a question was asked about the components of the resistance that might form a common political front.

Al-Kubaysi replied: "There are four main currents spread throughout the country. There is ourselves, Iraqi Patriotic Alliance, which I can roughly describe as anti-imperialist, Arab nationalist, striving for democracy and social justice as well as respecting and defending our Islamic heritage.

"There is the Sunni Islamic Committee which regroups the main Islamic leaders being strongly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood which is collaborating with the enemy. They are ready to work with everybody who is resisting including Christians and Communists.

"The third force is the Nasserites who are about to reorganize. And finally there are the anti-imperialist communists of the Central Command who are long-term friends of us who we are hoping to be able to convince." [The Central Command is a split from the official Iraqi Communist Party, which is collaborating with the occupation and is a member of the puppet Iraqi Governing Council.]

When asked about Shia participation in the resistance, al-Kubaysi answered: "First of all Shiite people are well represented in most of the forces named, in some they are even the majority. You have to overcome the idea spread by the Americans that the Shia society is its own, fully separated entity. Most of the Shia people consider themselves Arab Iraqis and participate as such in political life."

It is worth noting that this interview was done two months prior to the current uprising.

Al-Kubaysi's comments point to a reality about Iraq that has been left out of most of the corporate media coverage: Iraq, especially urban Iraq where more than 60 percent of the population today resides, is not neatly divided by religion or nationality. The process of capitalist development in Iraq, like in so many other countries, has led to a breakdown in the old feudal structures and a massive rural-to-urban migration over the past century.

Washington's depiction of Iraq, echoed in the mainstream media, features a Kurdish north, a Shia south and a "Sunni Triangle" in the center.

The term "Sunni Triangle" is, in fact, a recent propaganda fabrication. Included in the "Triangle" is Baghdad, although it is at least one-third Shiite and also is home to large numbers of Kurds, Assyrians, Turcomens and others. Excluded from the "Triangle" is the north of Iraq, despite the fact that a big majority of Arabs, Kurds and Turcomens are Sunnis.

Washington seeks weak and divided Iraq

The falsification of Iraqi reality by U.S. leaders and their complicit media is neither accidental nor benign. The occupiers are relying on a divide-and-conquer tactic to maintain control, a strategy of pitting

Iraqi against Iraqi.

Under the new U.S.-drafted "constitution," Iraq would become a federative state with a weak central government. The long-term aim is to transform the entire oil-rich and strategic Gulf area into a region of weak states that can be easily dominated by U.S. imperialism.

While it would be a mistake to ignore the religious aspect of the resistance, the capitalist media's relentless characterization of the resistance in religious terms must be seen as part of the larger divide-and-rule strategy.

Commenting on the differences in reporting on Iraq by most U.S. media as compared to Arab sources such as Al-Jazeera TV, Nabil Dajani, professor of communications at the American University in Beirut, said: "Every reporter is influenced by his or her cultural background. They still look at what is going on in Iraq as terrorists. They still look at it as a Sunni triangle or as Shiites. They can't see Iraqis as Iraqis..."

"Americans have the right to look at it in terms of the Sunni-Shiite and Al-Jazeera has the right to see it as resistance to occupation."

An April 9 Washington Post article reported that, "The Sunni-Shiite divide, already narrower in Iraq than in some parts of the Muslim world, is by all accounts shrinking each day that Iraqis agree their most immediate problem is the occupation."

The same article quoted Mohammed Najem Mausoumi, as he donated blood for Falluja in the predominantly Shia Kadhimiya community of Baghdad. "We don't need a call from the mosque."

"Like others in the cheerfully crowded tent," the Post article continued, "he bristled at being asked whether he was Shiite or Sunni."

Falluja has emerged as a symbol of national resistance and pride for Iraqis across the political and religious spectrum. Thousands of Baghdad residents in cars, buses and on foot formed a giant relief convoy into the besieged city on April 8, defying U.S. armor to enter.

Sunni and Shia mosques in the Iraqi capital organized many of the participants. This conscious and increasing coordination poses a potentially insoluble problem for the occupation, just as it did when it first emerged 84 years ago in the Revolt of 1920.

Revolt of 1920

In May 1920, the Arabs of Iraq, Syria

and Palestine rose in mass revolt when they discovered that rather than achieving independence after hundreds of years of Ottoman (Turkish) rule, they had instead been incorporated into the largest colonial empires of the day, the British and French.

Syria and Lebanon became French colonies, according to the agreement signed in San Remo, Italy, on April 24, 1920. Iraq, Palestine and Jordan were taken over by Britain. All of this was done under the cover of "mandates" from the League of Nations—forerunner to the United Nations.

As part of this backroom deal, U.S. oil companies were given a 23.75 percent share of Iraq's oil, with equal amounts awarded to Britain, France and the Netherlands. Iraq owned exactly zero percent of its vast oil resources.

The British approach in Iraq, which it militarily occupied in 1918, was similar to that employed throughout its empire; i.e., to secure its control by pitting different sectors of the colonized people against each other, while seeking to co-opt the elites of each community or nationality. In Iraq, this meant fomenting antagonism between Shia and Sunni, and between Arab and Kurd.

But to the surprise of the British something very unusual for the time took place. Marxist historian Hanna Batatu wrote of the 1920 revolt: "For the first time in many centuries, Shias joined politically with Sunnis, and townsmen from Baghdad and tribesmen from the Euphrates made common cause.

"Unprecedented joint Shia-Sunni celebrations, ostensibly religious but in reality political, were held in all the Shia and Sunni mosques in turn ... the proceedings culminating in patriotic oratory and poetic thundering against the English.

"Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that with the events of 1919-20, and more particularly with the bond, however tender, that was created between Sunnis and Shias, a new process set in: the painful, now gradual, now spasmodic growth of an Iraqi national community." ("The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq," Princeton University Press, 1978)

It took the powerful British military several months to put down the Revolt of 1920. More than 10,000 Iraqis were killed, as well as 2,000 British troops, including their commander. Tens of thousands more were wounded, at a time when the population was barely 3 million people. Winston Churchill, then in the British

colonial office, ordered the development of poison gas bombs to be used against the revolt, and in 1925 dropped those bombs on rebelling Kurds in northern Iraq.

The history of Iraq under British rule from 1920-1958 was the history of one rebellion after another, rebellions in which the people of all communities and religious affiliations joined.

That tradition of determined opposition to foreign occupation and domination is emerging once more in the new Iraqi resistance. □



World movement protests U.S. escalation in Iraq

By John Catalinotto

The murderous Pentagon onslaught that began April 6 against the people of Falluja and the newly liberated cities in southern Iraq aroused an immediate angry reaction from the anti-war movement around the world.

The biggest demonstration was in Baghdad itself on the Moslem Sabbath on April 9. Some 200,000 people, including those from both Sunni and Shiite communities, came out in solidarity with the resistance. In other mostly Moslem countries, demonstrations started after Friday prayers.

The quickest reaction was perhaps that in Montreal and Toronto, where demonstrations took place April 7 during the evening rush hour.

The most widespread actions, however, were those in the land of the perpetrator of war crimes in Iraq, the U.S. itself. Groups in 60 U.S. cities hit the streets between April 9 and April 12, responding to a call from the ANSWER Coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—to protest the latest U.S. escalation.

ANSWER showed its strength by acting decisively in a crisis, issuing its call to action in the wee hours of April 7. Founded in mid-September 2001, following the 9/11 attacks, to oppose Bush's announced march to war, ANSWER has taken the lead at critical moments to stand up against U.S. imperialism.

Whether the protests were large or small, the people understood the importance of taking action.

Standing in front of the federal courthouse in Minneapolis April 9, protester Meredith Aby said what many demonstrating believed: "We knew it was more important to take a stand and say this was wrong than building up a larger turnout."

The protests both measured and expressed the changing mood of the U.S. population, which now for the first time registers a clear majority opposing the occupation of Iraq in the polls. Also for the first time George Bush was behind in an election poll by 50-43 percent, a drop in support strongly related to the Iraq war and Bush's loss of credibility.

Many articles in the corporate press more fairly described the demonstrators as regular people and did not distort their views as much as in the past. Before, much of the media had attempted to marginalize the protesters.

Along with the growing number of people now passively opposing or at least questioning the war on Iraq, a section of the anti-war movement was beginning to express a more open solidarity with the Iraqi resistance. They could still march together with those who identified with U.S. soldiers whose lives are also on the line. Both marched under the slogans, "End the occupation and bring the troops home, now!"

Another slogan ANSWER promotes—"Money for jobs, health care and education, not for war and occupation"—appeared throughout the weekend's protests.

From coast to coast

The largest U.S. protest was in San Francisco on April 10, where 3,000 people rallied in United Nations Plaza. Its major sentiment was in support of the growing popular resistance by the Iraqi people. The crowd included relatives of U.S. soldiers in Iraq and veterans.

One person held a picture of his brother, asking that he and the other soldiers be brought back from Iraq. Another carried a sign, "Long live Falluja."

Speaking for the Free Palestine Alliance and ANSWER, Eyad Kishawi reminded the crowd that "The slaughter of hundreds of Iraqis in Falluja by the U.S. is taking place on the 56th anniversary of the massacre of 250 Palestinians at Deir Yasin by Israeli death squads. We will commemorate the massacre of Deir Yasin, the massacre of Jenin and the massacre of Falluja as we continue to rise up in the face of imperialism."

Pierre Labossiere of the Haiti Action Committee condemned the U.S. occupation of Haiti. "What did the Haitians do for the U.S. military to come down on them, besides having a democratically elected president?"

In New York, 700 to 1,000 people marched through mid-town Manhattan in rush hour on April 9, which was the Good Friday holiday. A protest of 500 took place at the same time in Los Angeles.

In Washington, D.C., where 500 marched on April 10, people came out of restaurants, homes and businesses to join with the marchers. Chants of "Impeach Bush" echoed through Lafayette Park at the opening rally across from the White House. Another 500 demonstrated in Boston that day.

In downtown San Diego April 10, several hundred people held signs and banners and, led by ANSWER leaders Carl Muhammad and David Tworkowski, chanted against U.S. aggression in Iraq. Protesters also attended a rally, whose speakers included Fernando Suarez de Solar, the father of a soldier killed in Iraq. Activists then marched to the San Diego Federal Building, where they joined forces with a large group of Somali people who were demanding the release of their community leader Omar Abdi Mohammed, held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials, a victim of post-9/11 racial profiling.

Dozens of demonstrations occurred throughout the U.S. in other big cities like Chicago, Atlanta and Birmingham. In Seattle at least 100 people turned out and cars driving past on Second Street honked in support of the demonstrators.

In small cities, too

Protesters also turned out in medium and small cities and towns—including Fayetteville, Ark.; Ferndale, Mich.; Pocatello, Idaho; and Gettysburg, Pa. Over 70 anti-war activists and supporters gathered in downtown Buffalo on April 12 at supper time, with many joining their first antiwar protest.

In Charlotte, N.C., 200 had come out on April 5 to protest a Bush appearance at a fund-raising luncheon. A march started at Central Piedmont Community College, where Bush had the nerve to give a speech on the economy and job retraining. Many students joined the march. A favorite chant was "What do we want? Regime

San Francisco

WW PHOTO:
BILL HACKWELL



Tokyo

change. Where do we want it? The White House." Many joined another protest on April 10 to protest the escalation in Iraq.

Over 150 antiwar protesters took part in a picket line, rally and march in the small city of Kingston, N.Y., on April 10. The day before over 40 people had attended a rush-hour demonstration at Mason Square Triangle in the heart of the working-class and oppressed communities in Springfield, Mass., on only 24 hours' notice.

In Europe, Japan

European countries were in the midst of Easter holidays. Nevertheless, protest actions were scheduled in cities in the Spanish state, in Milan, Italy, and in Brussels, Belgium. In Germany, where pacifist marches are often planned for Easter, some protests also reflected the new developments. There was also a protest in Melbourne, Australia.

Perhaps the most dramatic protests were in Japan. In reaction to the deadly U.S. offensive, members of the Iraqi resistance had seized many foreigners in their country. Three of those seized were young Japanese known back home as anti-war activists.

The resistance fighters who seized them demanded that Japanese troops leave Iraq. The Japanese anti-war movement agrees with this demand. Thousands of protesters have brought the demand daily to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's office.

New York

WW PHOTO:
JOHN CATALINOTTO





INTIFADA: A word for the world

Most often, due to the dominance of U.S. imperialism, English words are imposed on the world. Superman. Internet. But there's one very important word that an oppressed nation, the Palestinians, have brought from Arabic to the rest of the world's languages: Intifada.

When the first Palestinian uprising broke out in 1987 against years of brutal treatment from the occupying Israeli police and army, intifada was the Arab word to describe it and began to be used interchangeably with uprising in the rest of the world.

But four to six years of the first Intifada, and now more than three of the second—or Al-Aqsa Intifada—have given it a particular meaning and a capital letter.

It has come to mean an uprising with deep roots in the population, an uprising of people who possess little in the way of weapons compared to the oppressor state and lots of courage and determination. Indeed, the first Intifada became identified with young people throwing stones at Israeli troops in tanks.

It also means a revolt that can die down for a while and then spring up again. In Palestine, there was relative quiet between the Oslo Accords in 1993 and Ariel Sharon's provocation at the Al-Aqsa mosque in the fall of 2000. But then the Intifada sprung up again. In this one, the Palestinians are still lightly armed compared to the U.S.-armed Israelis—a rifle against a helicopter gunship. But the struggle exhibits the same courage, the same willingness to sacrifice, the same deep support among the population fighting for national liberation.

Now it seems to have jumped to another country. With the jump, the word's meaning will also grow, but it will still fit.

The world watches on television as Iraqis armed with assault rifles go up against tanks, helicopters and planes with artillery, rockets and bombs. U.S. troops in armored cars wearing flak jackets face Iraqi youths in shirts and pants, standing in the streets and firing their weapons without cover.

There are more trained soldiers on the Iraqi side than in Palestine. Everyone seems to have weapons. But the courage, the depth of support, the anger against the oppressor is common.

During the siege of Falluja the world's think tanks made their pundit-like comments on the situation in Iraq. Jane's Information Group suggested that 500,000 U.S. and allied troops would be needed to repress the Iraqis. Stratfor suggested that the rising by the Mehdi Army would soon wear down.

But a spokesperson from the Cato Institute made the following comment: "What we're seeing now is the result of overstaying our welcome. What we [the U.S. occupiers] have now inherited, it seems, is our own version of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank—only with a much larger piece of real estate."

The word is already international. U.S. rulers now fear that the slogan, "globalize the Intifada," is becoming more of a reality. □



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Bulletin from Venezuela

'We are obliged to win'

By Teresa Gutierrez & Berta Joubert-Ceci
Caracas, Venezuela

Two years ago the U.S.-backed oligarchy in Venezuela attempted to oust the popularly elected president, Hugo Chávez Frias. The failed coup was commemorated this year amidst a growing and thriving revolutionary movement of the Venezuelan people.

To commemorate the failed coup, the Second Encounter in Solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution was organized in Caracas with approximately 200 invited international guests. The event will end on April 17. But the highlight was when Chávez spoke on April 13 in Miraflores—the presidential palace—to a waiting crowd of Venezuelans from the neighborhoods. Although there had been no plans for a mass event—the focus was on seminars, invited guests and a thorough discussion of major Latin American and world events—thousands spilled into the streets and waited for hours to hear Chávez. It was a glaring example of the kind of support Chávez has among the people.

People in the crowd held pictures of Che Guevara and Simon Bolivar and held signs reading, "Con Chávez y sin miedo" (with Chávez and without fear) and "Yankees go home."

Chávez's stirring two-hour talk hit the U.S. government and Bush administration very hard. He correctly pointed out that the coup

that failed two years ago was designed in Washington. He gave a moving account of how the Venezuelan people, the heroic and firm people of Simon Bolivar, had wrested him from the clutches of the pro-U.S. oligarchy two years ago. Chávez said he had thought he might have to be in prison or out of office for six months or a year, and that he never expected to be back in Miraflores within 48 hours. The affectionate support of the masses for their leader was very clear for the world to see.

Chávez vowed, "I have not gotten this far to betray the people!" And he made it clear, to cheers in the crowd, that this revolution was not going back; the gains of the last two years, including improved education and health care, would not be reversed.

Chávez reaffirmed that he does not recognize the current puppet regime in Haiti, after the U.S.-backed coup.

He also spoke about world events. He expressed Venezuela's solidarity with the people of Iraq. He talked about how the collapse of the Soviet Union emboldened the imperial empire—but stressed that the empire was not the end of history and the mass struggle was proving this.

Chávez called on the Venezuelan people to strengthen unity and consciousness. He concluded that the battle will be long "but we have no other option," he told the people. "We are obliged to win." □

Brazil's landless seize property, demand land reform

By Andy McInerney

When former trade union leader Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva was elected president of Brazil in January 2003, landless peasants were key allies to Lula's Workers Party victory. Expectations ran high that with a worker in the highest governing position in Latin America's biggest, richest and most populous country, the extreme poverty faced by millions of Brazilians would finally be addressed.

Today, the Landless Movement (MST)—representing 4 million of Brazil's poorest peasants—is mobilizing again. MST leaders charge that Lula's government is moving too slow to address the concerns of the landless. Across the vast country, peasants are seizing property of what they call "unproductive estates," as well as seizing government offices and blockading roads.

Ninety percent of Brazil's land is owned by 20 percent of the population, while the poorest 40 percent of the population own just 1 percent of the land. Some 50 million of the country's 175 million people live in poverty.

Beginning in mid-March, peasants seized some 50 estates and began farming the land themselves. Most notably, the peasants seized the Veracel eucalyptus tree plantation in the northeastern Bahia state. Veracel is half-owned by a Swedish-Finnish paper company and is one of the largest private investors lured to Brazil by Lula's government—so foreign investors took note.

"No one can live on eucalyptus," an MST spokesperson told the German Press Agency DPA. Peasants uprooted 10 acres of the trees and planted vegetable gardens on the plots.

On April 6, thousands of peasants took over government offices and blockaded roads in another northeastern state, Pernambuco. Two more farms were seized in Sao Paulo state on

April 11. Dozens of MST activists have been killed in clashes with police, government troops and rightist paramilitary gangs armed by landowners in the past year alone.

The recent actions are part of a campaign to step up pressure for land reform. During the first week of April, MST leader Joao Pedro Stedile called for the movement to set Brazil "ablaze" with protest, provoking panicky reports in the newspapers of Brazil's elite and foreign investors.

Lula has responded cautiously, trapped between the interests of those who elected him and the interests of the domestic and international agribusiness concerns whose state he serves. In an effort to pacify the peasant movement, his government set aside \$500,000 to purchase land for landless families and pledged to provide land for 355,000 by 2006. The MST calls for providing land for 1 million peasants over the next four years.

"At the rate at which the government is working, our goal will never be reached," UPI quoted MST regional leader Claudiomir Viera saying on April 7. "We have to take over the land."

Lula also cautioned the peasants not to step over the bounds of legality—in this case, the property rights of Brazil's powerful economic elite. "Agrarian reform in this country will be carried out because of social justice and better distribution of productive land so that our people have the opportunity to work," he said. "But it won't be carried out by force, neither by the workers nor those that oppose it."

Lula's government has generated enthusiasm across Latin America, in part because he has resisted U.S. political and economic plans on the continent and in part because he has taken friendly stands toward socialist Cuba and the progressive Venezuelan government. His biggest test, though, will be whether his government can be a vehicle for the aspirations of Brazil's poor peasants and working class. □

As Pentagon sends more troops

Battles rage across Iraq

Continued from page 1

type anti-war resistance is on the horizon.

Sunni-Shiite unity dismays Pentagon

The sharp escalation of the fighting came after a Shia Muslim cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, called on his followers to rise up against the U.S. occupation. The Pentagon had already targeted al-Sadr. U.S. troops had closed his newspaper, al-Hawza, on March 28 and then put a price on his head.

The strategy of U.S. and British imperialists has long been to try to foment antagonism among various sectors of Iraqi society. While U.S. overseer L. Paul Bremer III talks about "nation building" and the "protection of minority rights," the invaders have tried to pit Sunni and Shiite Muslims against one another. But that strategy was dealt a strong blow when the Shiites in a wide area rose up just as the Pentagon was laying siege to the city of Falluja, in a predominantly Sunni area.

Jonathan Steele and Rory McCarthy reported from Baghdad about a huge solidarity rally there:

"Up to 200,000 Iraqi believers, many of them Shias, crowded into the precinct of Baghdad's largest Sunni mosque yesterday to denounce the American occupation and pledge solidarity with the people of Falluja as well as the uprising led by the Shia cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr. It was the largest show of joint support by Iraq's Sunni and Shia communities.

"Long live Moqtada, long live Falluja, long live Basra, long live Kerbala," they shouted, naming the various cities where Shias have attacked coalition forces. Many punched the air with their fists.

"It is a year since America with its ally, the British devil Tony Blair, launched its attack. The Americans invaded the land of Iraq, but they did not penetrate its people or their souls," Dr. Harith al-Dhari, the main preacher at the Umm al-Qura mosque thundered into a loudspeaker, as the overflow crowd sat on the lawns and concrete concourse.

"A year has passed and where is the democracy they promised? Instead, we have terror and censorship and rivers of blood," he went on." (The Guardian [UK], April 10)

Faced with such widespread opposition, the U.S. claims to be seeking negotiations, both in Falluja and with al-Sadr in Najaf, all the while moving in fresh troops. Anticipating an assassination attempt by the U.S., al-Sadr told Lebanon's al-Manar television, "I call on the people not to allow my death to cause the collapse of the fight for freedom and an end to the occupation."

Guerrillas show 'new sophistication'

A report by Thomas E. Ricks, appearing in the Washington Post of April 14, quotes U.S. military sources in Iraq as saying that the resistance in the south is showing a "new sophistication" in its tactics. Guerrillas successfully destroyed three bridges on the route taken by a U.S. convoy moving south from Baghdad toward Najaf, the Shiite holy city where al-Sadr is holding out.

"The dropping of the bridges was very interesting, because it showed a regional or even a national level of organization," [Army Col. Dana J.H.] Pittard said in an interview. He said insurgents appeared to be sending information southward, communicating about routes being taken by

U.S. forces and then getting sufficient amounts of explosives to key bridges ahead of the convoys.

"With occupation forces battling Sadr's Shiite militiamen south and east of Baghdad and Sunni Muslim insurgents to the north and west, the timing of the Iraqis' tactical development is nearly as troubling for U.S. forces as its effect. But the explanation for the change is not yet clear, military commanders said.

"Here in southern Iraq, which is overwhelmingly Shiite, U.S. officers say the best guess is that former soldiers who served under President Saddam Hussein have decided to lend their expertise and coordinating abilities to the untrained Shiite militiamen.

"It's a combination of Saddam loyalists and Shiite militias," Maj. Gen. John R. Batiste, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said"

Naomi Klein reported on this remarkable unity from Baghdad:

"For months, the White House has been making ominous predictions of a civil war breaking out between the majority Shiites ... and the minority Sunnis But this week, the opposite appeared to have taken place. Both Sunnis and Shiites have seen their homes attacked and their religious sites desecrated. Up against a shared enemy, they are beginning to bury ancient rivalries and join forces against the occupation. Instead of a civil war, they are on the verge of building a common front. You could see it at the mosques in Sadr City on Thursday: Thousands of Shiites lined up to donate blood destined for Sunnis hurt in the attacks in Falluja. 'We should thank Paul Bremer,' Salih Ali told me. 'He has finally united Iraq. Against him.'" (Los Angeles Times, April 9)

U.S. snipers target ambulances

Klein described the U.S. atrocities that had precipitated this unity:

"At Al Thawra Hospital, I met Raad Daier, an ambulance driver with a bullet in his abdomen, one of 12 shots he says were fired at his ambulance from a U.S. Humvee. At the time of the attack, according to hospital officials, he was carrying six people injured by U.S. forces, including a pregnant woman who had been shot in the stomach and lost her baby.

"I saw charred cars, which dozens of eyewitnesses said had been hit by U.S. missiles, and I confirmed with hospitals that their drivers had been burned alive. I also visited Block 37 of the Chuadir District, a row of houses where every door was riddled with holes. Residents said U.S. tanks drove down their street firing into homes. Five people were killed, including Murtada Muhammad, age 4."

This, multiplied by thousands of other tragic stories, is what the occupation has done, and this is why the Iraqi people are so furious and will attack anyone they see as part of it.

What the U.S. military and their Commander-in-Chief continue to deny, but is attested to by hundreds of reporters and other observers, and by the facts on the ground, is that the Iraqi people as a whole have grown to detest the U.S. occupation. It has brought them nothing but death, destruction and the transfer of control over their country and resources to the predatory billionaire corporations favored by the Bush clique.

The administration, which invaded a country that had done absolutely nothing to the U.S.—despite Bush's desperate use of innuendo to somehow blame Iraq



200,000 in Baghdad April 9 rally in solidarity with the people of Falluja.

for 9/11—is now in a deadly spiral of answering the people's resistance with more violence, which merely increases the resistance.

In his news conference, Bush restated his administration's plan to hand over "sovereignty" to Iraqis on June 30. Which Iraqis? The ones installed by Washington, of course. Yet even they are so shaky these days that bourgeois critics are demanding the president explain how his plan is going to work.

Iraqi soldiers refuse to fight

The U.S. is finding it impossible to build an Iraqi puppet state that can be relied on to carry out its demands. This was made very clear when, according to the Washington Post of April 11:

"A battalion of the new Iraqi army refused to go to Falluja earlier this week to support U.S. Marines battling for control of the city, senior U.S. Army officers here said, disclosing an incident that is casting new doubt on U.S. plans to transfer security matters to Iraqi forces. It was the first time U.S. commanders had sought to involve the postwar Iraqi army in major combat operations, and the battalion's refusal came as large parts of Iraqi security forces have stopped carrying out their duties.

"The 620-man 2nd Battalion of the Iraqi Armed Forces refused to fight Monday after members of the unit were shot at in a Shiite Muslim neighborhood in Baghdad while en route to Falluja, a Sunni Muslim stronghold, said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who is overseeing the development of Iraqi security forces. ...

"Eaton said members of the battalion insisted during the ensuing discussions: 'We did not sign up to fight Iraqis.'

"The refusal of the battalion to perform as U.S. officials had hoped poses a significant problem for the occupation. The cornerstone of the U.S. strategy in Iraq is to draw down its military presence and turn over security functions to Iraqis.

"Over the past two weeks, that approach has suffered a severe setback as Iraqi security forces have crumbled in some parts of the country. In recent days perhaps 20 percent to 25 percent of the Iraqi army, civil defense, police and other security forces have quit, changed sides, or otherwise failed to perform their duties, a senior Army officer said Saturday."

Coalition of the not-so-willing

In this heroic uprising, untrained Iraqi civilians armed only with rifles or stones

picked up from the street are facing down helicopter gunships and troops armed with tanks, mortars, rockets, machine guns and night-vision equipment.

The fighting has been accompanied by a rash of kidnappings of foreigners inside Iraq, especially aimed at countries that have bowed to Washington's pressure and sent troops there.

As a result, a number of countries have announced they may be pulling back their personnel. Russia is sending seven planes to Iraq on April 15 to begin the evacuation of 800 contract workers from Russia and other former Soviet republics. The president of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, says she is considering withdrawing Philippine troops and aid workers—a demand of anti-war forces at home. Thailand and Spain say they intend to withdraw their troops this summer.

The 9/11 commission

Even as this volcano of resistance has erupted in Iraq, the commission investigating 9/11 has been grilling Bush and Clinton administration officials on what the government knew about threats from al-Qaeda and how prepared it was for terrorist attacks. It has drawn out much testimony showing that Bush and his Cabinet badly wanted a war on Iraq and were focused on that objective when the 9/11 attacks occurred.

However, in approaching the question of the "security" of the United States, the bipartisan commission is not asking any questions about the many egregious atrocities committed for decades around the world by U.S. imperialism's military and secret police, which were bound to antagonize millions of people. It is only asking questions that will lead to restructuring the executive branch of the government in order to make it more efficient at carrying out repression.

In the age of jet planes and the Internet, no wall, no matter how fortified, is big enough to isolate this country from the rest of the world. The best security for the workers here is to resist the aggressive war policies of this government—and of the Democrats, too, who are calling for more troops to Iraq—and build solidarity with all peoples around the world fighting for justice and self-determination.

Putting Bush and his co-conspirators on trial for war crimes would do more to protect the people of this country than any new intelligence super-agency of the type that is likely to come out of the 9/11 commission. □

EDITORIAL

¿Qué es lo que empuja al imperio?

En los 90 años desde el comienzo de la conflagración mundial entre las potencias imperialistas que se dio a conocer como la Primera Guerra Mundial, el capital financiero de los Estados Unidos ha afilado sus justificaciones por guerra.

Según esta vuelta ideológica, el problema siempre descansa más allá de las playas de América del Norte. El problema siempre es externo. Y el Pentágono nunca es el agresor, es su defensor.

La “interminable guerra contra el terror”, aprobado y financiado tanto por los Republicanos como por los Demócratas, ha sido pintado como una respuesta a los ataques del 9/11. Pero las evidencias ya han comprobado que la guerra contra Afganistán ya estaba en camino meses antes de septiembre. Y la guerra para controlar a Irak comenzó con el papi Bush y continuó durante los ocho años de la administración de Clinton.

Haití, Palestina, Colombia. Donde sea que Washington envíe sus tropas o armas la excusa es siempre que los Estados Unidos necesitan resolver los problemas de “allá”. Pero sus problemas son de efecto y no de causas.

El centro de los problemas mundiales está aquí, en el vientre de la bestia. Muchos aquí se oponen a la campaña militar de los Estados Unidos correctamente caracterizándoles como “una guerra por el imperio.” Pero, ¿cuál es la fuerza motora de la campaña por el imperio?

V.I. Lenin, el líder Marxista de los comienzos del siglo 20, de la Revolución Rusa, desarrolló el más profundo y científico análisis del imperialismo en su libro escrito en 1916, “Imperialismo: La más alta Fase Capitalismo.” El escribió, “Si fuera necesario dar la más breve definición de lo que es el imperialismo, tendríamos que decir que el imperialismo es la fase monopólica del capitalismo.”

El monopolio nació de la competencia y la concentración del capital que comenzó durante la temprana fase del capitalismo en Europa, los Estados Unidos y después en el Japón. Esto sentó las bases para el nacimiento de las gigantes industrias monopolizadas de hoy, fundidas con el capital bancario. Estos gigantes juegan un papel decisivo en la vida económica y política. En vez de exportar productos, el imperialismo está exportando el capital—arrastrando consigo a cientos de millones de personas a la relación social entre los explotadores y los explotados. La interminable busca por más y más ganancias es la fuerza motriz detrás de la globalización capitalista.

Una vez que el globo fue repartido por las potencias imperialistas en sus esferas de dominación económica, una guerra entre ellos re divide las partes explotadas en 1914. Desde entonces, ya sea que los imperialistas haya enviado sus ejércitos a pelear entre sí en combate abierto, o batallar por la hegemonía con sus títeres locales, o luchado en guerras para conquistar como en Afganistán o Irak, es el imperativo por dentro del monopolio capitalista el de expandir sus mercados o morir lo que alimenta la guerra imperialista.

Pero esta “interminable” guerra está creando una tormenta de fuego de resistencia por aquellos que están bajo las botas de la ocupación por el Pentágono. Y la concentración de los monopolios también ha creado una clase mundial obrera. Esta es la clase, incluyendo sus más oprimidos sectores, que pueden dar fin a las guerras imperialistas de una vez por todas cuando se deshagan de las contradicciones detrás de estos—la apropiación privada de los vastos mecanismos de la producción creada por la labor colectiva.

Lenin afirmó que los monopolios, estos mismo productos de la labor de los trabajadores en todo el mundo, están listos para que las clases laborales y los oprimidos se lo tomen y los manejen ellos mismos. Solo esta clase puede transformar la apropiación privada en la propiedad social.

Al deshacerse del motivo de ganancias retirará el gatillo de la guerra imperialista. Para estar realmente contra la guerra, nosotros debemos estar contra el imperialismo y luchar aquí mismo contra el dominio de los gigantes monopolios. □

Huelga general paraliza a Nepal

Por Deirdre Griswold

Abril 7—¿Debió ser sorprendente de que la administración de Bush esté apoyando al reino del Rey Gyanendra de Nepal, con dinero y equipo militar, aún cuando virtualmente la población entera se ha alzado en contra del déspota monarca?

Nepal, un país de 24 millones de habitantes en las alturas de la Himalayas, está en medio de una completa crisis política. El 6 y 7 de abril se reportó que el país entero “se paralizó” cuando una huelga general organizada por el Partido Comunista de Nepal (maoísta) cerró “todas las tiendas, escuelas, negocios y fábricas.”

La huelga se organizó en protesta a los asesinatos, arrestos y desapariciones de líderes de grupos activistas e individuales.

Los Maoístas han estado a la cabeza de una creciente insurgencia en el país. En meses recientes, ellos han lanzado importantes ataques contra las estaciones policiales y otros objetivos gubernamentales, incluyendo la residencia del Ministro del Interior, Kamal Tapa. El 5 de abril ellos entregaron a la Cruz Roja Internacional 37 agentes de la policía, soldados y oficiales del gobierno que habían capturados el 21 de marzo después de una batalla de 12 horas en el pueblo de Beni, a 180 millas al oeste de Katmandú.

Los rebeldes han estado exigiendo la libertad para dos de sus líderes, Matrika Pasad Yadav, miembro del buró gubernamental y el jefe regional Sureh Ale Magar, quienes fueron capturados en India y entregado al régimen de Nepal.

El mismo día, cientos de rebeldes contra el gobierno atacaron la estación de policía en Yadukuwa en el centro de Nepal, según Xinhua, la agencia de prensa de China. A la misma vez, otras fuerzas políticas continúan con protestas diariamente contra la monarquía en varias ciudades. En Katmandú, la capital, decenas de miles de activistas comenzaron a unirse desde el 1 de abril, para protestar cerca del palacio. El siguiente día, la policía atacó a los manifestantes con garrotes y por primera vez dispararon en contra de los manifestantes hiriendo a por los menos 205.

El 3 de abril, un mitin público se dio lugar en la cual los principales oradores fueron el presidente de la asociación de abogados de Nepal, el presidente de la asociación por los derechos humanos más grande de Nepal, el presidente de la asociación de profesores de Nepal y el presidente de la asociación de doctores de Nepal. Este mitin moderado fue atacado por la policía con gas lacrimógeno.

Al día siguiente, 10.000 personas regresaron a batallar con la policía frente al palacio. Las manifestaciones continúan en Bhaktapur, un pueblo de la edad media en las afueras de Katmandú y la ciudad occidental de Pokhara.

La fuerza política de estas manifestaciones, convocadas por cinco partidos parlamentarios, incluyendo el Partido Comunista de Nepal (Unificado Maxista-Leninista), para estar cambiando. Mientras que el UML solo pide una monarquía constitucional, las demandas de los manifestantes son de una república.

El presidente rey tomó el poder en el 2001 después de su hermano, el monarca constitucional King Birendra, y la mayor parte de la familia real fue masacrada. Los asesinatos misteriosos fueron atribuidos al príncipe coronado, pero él también murió, supuestamente de heridas hechas por el mismo, preparando así el camino para Gyanendra. El nuevo rey abandonó las reformas constitucionales hechas



Nepal

una década antes y ha estado robando virtualmente por decreto desde que el hizo a un lado el gobierno elegido en el 2002.

Washington ha estado sufriendo al régimen de Gyanendra con armas de fuego modernas y equipos de visión nocturna para combatir al creciente movimiento guerrillero, el cual tiene el apoyo del campesinado.

La cadena noticiera inglesa BBC reportó en abril 6 que los Estados Unidos estaban invirtiendo \$17 millones de ayuda militar en el Ejército Real de Nepal.

“Ahora que el Rey Gyanendra ha perdido el control total de 40 de los 75 distritos del país, la administración de Bush cree que si hay razón de preocuparse,” dijo el reporte.

“Esta es la decisión de que la única manera de prevenir que Nepal se torne en un ‘estado fracasado’ o aún peor ‘una nación defraudada’ es de incrementar el flujo de ayuda militar.”

Hace diez años el Partido Comunista Unido de Nepal fue por un breve período el partido político más grande de Nepal en el parlamento y formó el gobierno bajo el Rey Birendra. Sin embargo, fue una coalición con el partido monarca y no pudo lograr ni siquiera la más modesta reforma de tierra en el país donde la gran mayoría de la gente son campesinos empobrecido y la servidumbre todavía es legal.

El fracaso de lograr nada por medio de las elecciones produjo una división entre la izquierda parlamentaria y los Maoístas, quienes comenzaron una lucha armada por una república socialista dos años después, en 1996.

A finales de agosto el gobierno comenzó a negociar con los Maoístas, pero ellos abandonaron las mesas cuando el gobierno se rehusó a aceptar las demandas para tener elecciones para una nueva asamblea constituyente.

La BBC reportó en 6 de abril que “a solo diez días antes del colapso de las negociaciones de paz en agosto anterior, el ejército mató a 21 personas en el distrito oriental de Ramechhap. Las víctimas fueron obligados a formar una línea para ser ejecutados al fin del conteo. El reporte por la Comisión Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de Nepal sobre este asesinato concluyó en que casi todos los cuerpos mostraban evidencia de haber sido disparados en la cabeza a muy corta distancia. Esta culpó a la ERN (Ejército Real de Nepal).”

Ahora, algunos de los partidos que estaban al lado del gobierno están en las calles, apoyando la huelga convocada por los Maoístas. La Agencia de Prensa Francesa reportó el 6 de abril que “Los maoístas, quienes controla gran parte del campo publicaron sus declaraciones de apoyo por la huelga por los partidos, los mismos con quien las guerrillas regularmente chocaban cuando Nepal tuvo un gobierno elegido.

“El líder maoísta, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, mejor conocido como Prachanda, o ‘El fiero,’ convocó la ‘unidad entre todas las fuerzas políticas’ en contra del rey.” □

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