

WORKERS WORLD

workers.org

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

GCIU

MARCH 16, 2006

VOL. 48, NO. 10

50¢

MUNDO OBRERO

Iraquíes culpan intervención de EEUU 12

VENEZUELA

U.S. movement builds solidarity 8

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

On Katrina 3



MORE FBI REPRESSION

Union center invaded 4

POLLS ON IRAQ

Troops, Iraqis want U.S. out 10

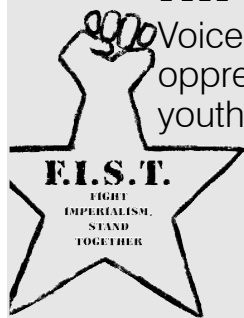
LAVENDER & RED

Civil rights era 7



HIP-HOP

Voice of oppressed youth 2



On 3rd anniversary of war on Iraq Global protests to demand: U.S. OUT NOW!

By David Hoskins

Anti-war activists in at least 25 countries and over 100 cities worldwide are calling for demonstrations on the weekend of March 18-19, the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, to demand an end to the war and occupation. Assemblies of social organizations at the European Social Forum in Vienna, Austria and the World Social Forum in Bamako, Mali, and Caracas, Venezuela, joined the call for the actions.

In the United States, the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) has called for large local demonstrations in cities throughout the country. Actions are set now in New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Baltimore, Detroit, San Francisco, Atlanta, Denver and others cities and towns in 32 states, according to the TONC website.

There will also be a five-day march from Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans from March 14-19, focusing on the war and on the Katrina disaster, and a march from Tijuana, Mexico, to San Francisco from March 12-27 raising demands regarding the rights of immigrants and especially those from Latin America.

TONC's call for a weekend of anti-war resistance has resonated with activists and revolutionaries. Over 500 organizations and prominent individuals have endorsed the nationally coordinated local actions.

Larry Holmes, a Vietnam-era veteran, anti-war activist and now a TONC spokesperson, says that on March 18 and 19 the "central demand will be the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq—no timetables and no redeployment, just immediate withdrawal."

Other demands will include: end all colonial occupations including Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Haiti; build levees not bombs, support the struggle of Katrina survivors, overturn the "Patriot Act"; no war against Iran; and money for jobs, health-care, housing and schools instead of war.

The largest East Coast actions are expected in New York and Boston. In Boston the anti-war movement and organized labor are working side by side to ensure that the voices calling for immediate withdrawal are heard. Boston TONC and United Steel Workers Local 8751 are working within the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition in preparation for the protests. Local religious and cultural leaders have also endorsed the protest program. Organizers say they are planning for protestors to march down Malcolm X Boulevard to the State House where activists will rally and speak out against the war (see article on Boston's organizing).

Organizers in New York City are preparing for a day of coordinated protests at military recruiting centers in communities around the city, including Harlem. These actions will culminate with a mass convergence on the Times Square recruiting station. Protestors will then march from Times Square to the United Nations headquarters.

UN march to focus on threats to Iran

According to TONC organizers, the march to the UN will focus on Bush's attempt to get UN Security Council support for action against Iran. The marchers will also demand that the UN inspect the gross human rights violations surrounding Hurricane Katrina and not the unfounded accusations leveled against Iran.

Many of the demonstrations around the country will target recruiting centers. Military recruiters cynically play on the struggles of working-class youth and young people of color in their attempt to maintain and expand the armed forces and get replacement troops for those occupying forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The anti-war movement can help expose the myths perpetuated by military recruiters who lie and try to persuade poor youth

Continued on page 5

NYC meeting says 'FREE PELTIER'



Supporters of Leonard Peltier filled the Community Church meeting room on March 6 in New York to give a boost to the Native political prisoner and his defense committee. Speakers included Tiokasin Ghosthorse, left, with First Voices Indigenous Radio; Peltier's attorney Mike Kuzma, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, below right; attorney Lynne Stewart, below and Toni Zeidan, top right. Sara Flounders of the International Action Center chaired (Pictured with Stewart).

—Workers World New York bureau



WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

SUBSCRIBE TO WORKERS WORLD

Trial subscription: \$2 for 8 weeks
One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994
www.workers.org

WOMEN'S HISTORY

- Joann Little & self-defense 6
- Effa Manley in Hall of Fame 7

Fight the abortion ban!

EDITORIAL 10

HIP-HOP CULTURE REFLECTS Youth oppression under capitalism



This week ...

By Larry Hales

"...Or does it explode?" This ominous question ends Langston Hughes' poem, "Harlem," which begins with, "What happens to a dream deferred?"

In the mid-to-late 1970s, there was a musical explosion emanating from poor Black and Puerto Rican youth in the South Bronx. To understand hip-hop culture, which encompasses a style of dress, speech, graffiti art, and a certain political orientation towards the capitalist state, it is essential to know exactly what was happening in the United States, especially in the nationally oppressed communities leading up to its inception.

During the 1970s, the state of the capitalist economy and the effect it would have on workers was becoming evident. The Vietnamese had emerged victorious from a devastating war in 1975. Thousands of drafted and enlisted U.S. soldiers and marines, many of them people of color in disproportionate numbers, lost their lives. Many thousands more were physically and/or emotionally maimed for life.

The U.S. imperialist ruling class's brutal war against the Vietnamese people had drawn billions of dollars away from the social needs of people in the United States. The soldiers who were forced to fight the war returned home with no safety net. Many had become addicted to drugs and alcohol and wound up homeless.

The country was in an economic recession. Major industrial manufacturers were already closing plants around the country especially in the Northeast, which later became known as the Rust Belt. Whites had already begun to move from urban to suburban areas, resulting in 'white flight'. Development in the inner cities virtually ceased, leaving what social services that existed and the public school systems in these areas woefully inadequate. Public hospitals were usurped by privately run facilities, creating a sub-standard health care system for the poor and oppressed.

The prison system, which housed 200,000 inmates in 1970, had begun its steady climb towards its current level of over 2.1 million prisoners, the largest population worldwide. The racist death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Many Black people who fled the low-paying jobs in the South found higher paying, unionized jobs in the North following the Vietnam War.

But a decade later, with massive job losses rooted in the intensified global competition among capitalists for more profits, Black and women workers were among the first fired due to the loss of manufacturing jobs especially in the auto industry. These systemic layoffs began in the mid-1980s as the economy grew more high-tech and computer-driven.

Origins of hip-hop

Hip-hop music, or rap music, first burst on the scene with the Last Poets—a group of men who had spent time in the U.S. prison system. Their first offering of rap music was as early as 1973. The Last Poets spoke to the frustration of Black people from the civil rights movement when confronted with the reality that racism was deeply ingrained in the United States and part of the capitalist

system. From them, hip-hop evolved into mostly party music by deejays and emcees at block parties.

In 1982, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five released the song, "The Message." The hook of the song is, "...don't push me, cuz I'm close to the edge/I'm trying not to lose my head/huh, huh,/it's like a jungle sometimes/makes me wonder how I keep from going under." The song was about the daily, deplorable conditions that Blacks live under, especially in urban areas with gross unemployment and underemployment, police brutality, drug epidemics and much more.

It had been two decades since the civil rights struggle for basic human rights for Black people had won some concessions. But as Malcolm X stated in 1965 shortly before he was assassinated, "Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter." He was referring to the national liberation movements at that time.

But what this quote means today is that women, people of color, immigrants, gays, lesbians, bi and trans communities and others who suffer special oppression are all part of the international working class that needs to free itself of the exploitation of the ruling class and capitalism.

As hip-hop culture developed, it highlighted conditions in the U.S. under capitalism and also anti-cop and anti-government sentiments, before being co-opted by big business. Chuck D of Public Enemy called hip-hop "the CNN of the Black community."

In 1988, Public Enemy burst on the scene with the album, "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back." This album was the most vociferous militant rap album of the day, arriving at a time when inner cities were being devastated by the booming prison-industrial complex, brutal cops and the crack epidemic. The use of crack had become an epidemic because of a lack of jobs and education for youth, scant social services and no services for drug addiction.

The album bristled with a militant flavor, with songs about prison like "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos" or that express righteous anger as in "Prophets of Rage."

Perhaps the most well-known rapper was Tupac Shakur—the son of Afeni Shakur, godson of Assata Shakur and stepson of Mutula Shakur, all Black liberation leaders. Tupac seemed to embody the Black struggle and could communicate the hope of the community in "Keep Ya Head up" or the daily struggles of a young single Black mother in "Brenda's Got a Baby," in which he ends with, "No money no babysitter, she couldn't keep a job/She tried ta sell crack, but end up getting robbed/So now what's next, there ain't nothin left ta sell/So she sees sex as a way of leavin' hell/It's payin' tha rent, so she really can't complain/Prostitute, found slain, and Brenda's her name, she's got a baby."

To this day, many hip-hop artists stay true to the conscious, positive roots of the music. When a group of hip-hop artists traveled to Cuba, organized by the Black August Collective, and met revolutionary political exile Assata Shakur, one result was Common's "A Song for Assata," released in 2000. The song brings a synopsis of her struggle to many who may not have heard her story.

Common opens the song saying, "We make this move-

Continued on page 3

THE LAST POETS



JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
(404) 627-0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Armory St.,
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 983-3835
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.,
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 566-1115
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
(773) 381-5839
Fax (773) 761-9330
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 130322,
Houston, TX 77219
(713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
5274 West Pico Blvd.,
Suite 203
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 936-1416
la@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
(610) 453-0490
phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
(585) 436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St.,
Suite 230
San Diego, CA 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco,
CA 94103
(415) 561-9752
sf@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College,
PA 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

★ In the U.S.

Protests on anniversary of Iraq war	1
Hip-hop culture reflects youth oppression	2
Trial set for two of Somerville 5	3
New epidemic of racist police brutality	3
Mumia on The forgotten ones: Katrina	3
FBI invades New York central labor office	4
On the picket line	4
Boston's anti-war movement	5
Chicago college learns about Katrina survivors	5
A look back at the Joann Little case	6
Lavender & red, part 56	7
Effa Manley in Hall of Fame	7

★ Around the world

Conference builds support for Venezuela	8
Havana film exhibit welcomes new directors	8
What's behind Bush's South Asian maneuvers?	9
Indian workers confront 'Butcher Bush'	9
Iraqi people, U.S. troops want end to occupation	10
General strike in Guinea	11
Firestone blocks union aid to Liberia strike	11

★ Editorials

Big gun on campus	10
Fight the abortion ban	10

★ Noticias En Español

Después del ataque en Samarra	12
-------------------------------	----

WW CALENDAR

BOSTON

Sat., March 25

The Fight for Justice!: Benefit Concert for the Somerville 5. Hibernian Hall, 184 Dudley Street, Roxbury, MA 7-10 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. \$3 for youth and \$20 for adults. No one turned away for lack of funds (617) 522-6626 or iacoboston@iacoboston.org

LOS ANGELES

Mon., March 20

Protest military recruitment at Recruitment Center in South Central L.A. 3 p.m. At Rodeo, east of LaBrea. For info, phone IAC (323) 936-7266.

NEW YORK

Fri., March 10

Workers World Party Forum. Celebrate International Women's Day 2006. "Women's liberation: A socialist perspective. Special guest delegation of Cuban women: Dora Carcaño, International Democratic Women's Federation, and Martizel González, Cuban Women's Federation. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30 p.m.) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 48, No. 10 • March 16, 2006
Closing date: March 8, 2006

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Milt Neidenberg

Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas

Internet: Janet Mayes

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

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.

Send an e-mail message to WWnews-subscribe@workersworld.net.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



100% SOY BASED Ink System

Trial set for two of Somerville 5

'Drop racist frame-up charges'

By WW Boston bureau

The Committee to Defend the Somerville 5 is calling on supporters to put pressure on Middlesex County District Attorney Martha Coakley to immediately drop the racist frame-up charges against the five defendants—Calvin Belfon Jr., Cassius Belfon, Earl Guerra, Isaiah Anderson and Marquis Anderson.

The five are young Black men ranging from 15 to 18 years old and former students at Somerville High School. They had gone out the night of April 20, 2005, to enjoy a carnival in Medford, Mass. But the night turned into one of horror that changed their lives forever.

The five were beaten, Maced, arrested and psychologically traumatized by ten white Medford police, then charged with numerous crimes. According to the committee, what was an unprovoked police attack by racist cops was quickly covered up, and the police, courts, D.A., local media and press and education officials have all worked together to frame these young men. The five have no prior police records. Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner described them as "well respected, serious students and promising athletes."

The committee says a massive police cover-up ensued, with the police spreading outrageous lies about what happened that night. Police charged the five with assault with a deadly weapon, assault and battery, and disorderly conduct.



WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN

Dorchester, Mass. June 2005, above. Right, August 2005

"Police attacks and police terror against youth of color are an everyday occurrence. While the U.S. enters its third year of war against the people of Iraq, they are at the same time waging war against poor people and people of color here at home," said Gerry Scopettuolo of the Somerville 5 Committee.

The police, with the backing of Coakley, have now forced the cases of Calvin Belfon and Isaiah Anderson to Superior Court. Belfon and Anderson are being tried as adults. They face the most severe charges of the five youths. If convicted they could spend at least two years and possibly more in prison. Their trial starts March 13.

"We need the largest presence possible on this date to express our outrage at the railroading of these five young Black men," said Robert Traynam, also of the Somerville 5 Committee.

The committee urges supporters to picket and pack the court as well as to contact Middlesex County District Attor-



ney Martha Coakley, 40 Thorndike St., Cambridge, MA 02141; phone: 617-494-4300, 617-679-6500 or 617-679-6522; fax: 617-225-0871, and to make the following demands: drop all the racist-frame-up charges immediately; demand an independent community investigation into Medford police; stop racial profiling and police brutality.

Also, "The fight for Justice: A benefit concert for the Somerville 5," is scheduled for Saturday March 25 at the Hibernian Hall, 184 Dudley St., Roxbury, Mass. The evening will include cultural events, a fashion show and a speak-out. The cost is \$3 for youth, \$20 for adults, no one turned away for lack of funds. For tickets and more information: 617-522-6626. □

New epidemic of racist police brutality

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

Police brutality has reached epidemic proportions in communities of color across the nation. Police terror from Benton Harbor, Mich., to Boston to Cincinnati to Houston to Los Angeles to Milwaukee to New York City is institutionalized within this capitalist society especially in relation to oppressed communities and youth, including lesbian, gay, bi and trans youth.

Hip-hop culture

Continued from page 2

ment towards freedom for all those who have been oppressed, and all those in the struggle," and closes with Assata's own words on freedom. The Black August Collective has held hip-hop benefit concerts honoring freedom fighters and political prisoners for the past eight years.

Most recently, hip-hop artist Kanye West—winner of three Grammy awards—has spoken out against gay bashing in the industry and received scrutiny by the mainstream media when on network television he criticized Bush's disregard of Black people in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The writer is a leader of FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, youth group. Contact FIST@workers.org on how to get involved.

A March 2 article—"Hub youths say police harassment is constant"—in the African American weekly The Boston Banner describes the wholesale occupation and terror of oppressed communities in Boston. Numerous Black, Latin@ and Cape Verdean youth, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, described semi-apartheid conditions. These included police wantonly stopping and frisking, racist verbal and physical threats, coercion and beatings, random questioning and worse before, during and after school and work hours.

"I basically get stopped every day," said one youth of color to the Banner. "They ask you questions: 'What's your name? What's your address? What school do you go to?' They search you. They know us all. But they do it all the time. And they always ask us the same questions."

Other youths reported to WW that in the evening and late-night hours nothing less than police-state occupations take place where local, state, and federal agents invade oppressed communities under the guise of fighting "the war on drugs, gangs and violence," when their real role is to terrorize and subjugate mostly working and poor people of color.

If arrested, these youths and others' names are placed into a Massachusetts state database called "criminal offender record information" or CORI, where an arrest, even if later dropped, is accessible by employers, schools, government

agencies, newspapers and more. Attempting to expunge a so-called "record" can take years and thousands of dollars in legal fees, reports the Banner.

Bishop Filipe Teixeira is a well-known anti-police-brutality activist in the Greater Boston area and member of the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition (BRPHRDC). He supports those like 18-year-old Devone Jacques, a Haitian man brutally beaten on Feb. 24 by the Boston Municipal Police in front of his home in Dorchester, a borough of Boston.

Teixeira, along with over a dozen witnesses including Jacques' mother, witnessed 10 to 12 police officers kicking Jacques on the ground as he was cuffed at his wrists and ankles. The police then picked him up and threw him into a police van from which Jacques slid out and banged his head on the street. Upon throwing him back in the van, police Maced him. Jacques was slowly transported to the hospital, placed in jail for three days and released on bail after being charged with assault and battery on a police officer.

Despite police harassment against supporters like Teixeira, who has been issued minor municipal citations such as parking tickets after speaking out, a network is developing to support Jacques and all youth in the city terrorized by the police and other state agents. □

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

The forgotten ones: Katrina

Taken from a Feb. 23 audio commentary.

Amidst the blizzard of congressional, bureaucratic, and administrative reports on Hurricane Katrina, the only thing left out is what was left out from the very first day and every single day thereafter— the people.

It has been six months after the nation's worst natural (and political) disaster and still, things are as unstable, as unsure, as chaotic for the tens of thousands of people who were too poor to leave during the night of the catastrophe.

While politicians fight over air time and report after report is issued, the mostly Black residents of the city (especially those who dwelled in the Lower Ninth Ward) are spread across the country, fighting FEMA for housing funds, seeking jobs, trying to put their lives together.

Meanwhile, corporate and city planning agencies are writing off vast areas of the Ninth Ward, and planning for a "new" New Orleans, one that will be, shall we say, a good deal less chocolate.

Many former residents are crunched into tiny hotel rooms, some are squeezed into private homes, some are even homeless, while 100,000 trailers acquired by FEMA stand idle, empty, unused.

It is a telling measure of social and class difference, that when so many people are living in such distress, the white corporate media goes into a silly cycle because the city's mayor told a group of Katrina survivors that New Orleans would be a "chocolate city" again.

A recent study on the future of New Orleans suggests that the "new" New Orleans will be whiter, and wealthier than the city which was struck by the winds and waters of Katrina.

The study, headed by John R. Logan, entitled "The Impact of Katrina: Race and Class in Storm-Damaged Neighborhoods" (www.s4.brown.edu/Katrina/report.pdf), shows how 80 percent of Black New Orleanians may never return. Indeed, nearly 50 percent of white working-class residents may not return either.

Logan, a sociology professor at Brown University, reports that local and state political and business leaders are looking to make sure that New Orleans has a new constituency—one whiter and wealthier than those who came before.

Remember the high and lofty promises that were spit into microphones when Katrina was still news? Words, blather, promises. There's another reason why monies promised have never really reached the Crescent City—war. The Iraq War is like a fiscal vacuum cleaner, sucking up every buck not nailed down.

Hurricane Katrina has also spawned another, little-discussed problem: the profound toxicity that abounds in the region, where lead, arsenic, crude oil, benzene, and dozens of other substances have leached into the earth, into brick, and into the tropical air.

One is reminded of the 9/11 attacks, when city and federal officials assured residents that the wafting white dust wasn't a health danger to those breathing in Manhattan. Now, years later, we know that these were lies designed to give false peace to people in peril.

Katrina, although on the back burners of most news agencies, lives in the minds of millions as the worst of America when it involves Blacks in distress.

Recently, an African activist living in Paris told how, when questioned about the recent riots in France, he turned the tables. As Brima Conteh explained:

"We had a couple of African Americans who wanted to come over to see us during the riots, and the first question we asked them was, 'We want to know what you're doing about Katrina.'

"Even in France, people say, look the U.S. this and that—the U.S. is seen on a different level despite the racism. But people started asking questions, if you have these big Black American stars, what the hell is happening over there?" [From: Tram Nguyen, "Lessons From France: African Activist Brima Conteh Talks About the Roots and Reverberations of the Unrest in Paris," *Colorlines Magazine* (Spring 2006), p. 9]

The images of Katrina have not faded. They echo around the earth, bouncing off satellites, teaching, telling, revealing. In the very beginning the images told us that this nation, the richest since Rome, didn't really give a damn about Black poor people. It has been half a year, and that message resonates today just as clearly as it did yesterday. □

FBI invades New York central labor office

By Workers World
New York bureau

In the early morning hours of March 2, the FBI raided the headquarters of New York City's AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, which represents more than 1 million workers in 400 affiliated unions. Agents sealed the office for hours before carting off 50 boxes of paper and electronic files.

The alleged reason for the raid was to establish a "paper trail" linking council president Brian McLaughlin, who is also a business agent for Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, with a bid-rigging scheme in the awarding of New York City street lighting contracts. McLaughlin is also a state assembly member from Queens.

But the image of 20 FBI agents sealing off and searching the headquarters of one of the largest labor councils in the country and hauling off files had all the earmarks of a fishing expedition. Particularly since no one has yet been charged in an undercover probe that also involves the city's Department of Investigation (DOI) and dates back to the late 1990s, according to billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who finally admitted being "briefed" on the investigation.

This raid should raise an alarm among workers, their unions and progressive forces. None have forgotten that at least since the days when Rudy Giuliani was district attorney, the FBI in this federal district developed a reputation of being viciously anti-union. Giuliani's relentless attack on the Teamsters led to a federal trusteeship of the union. Later the federal charges were pursued against Teamster President Ron Carey after the successful 1998 UPS strike until he was finally acquitted. Many workers have reacted with surprise and shock since learning of the latest FBI sweep.

Ed Ott, a progressive trade unionist and the labor council's policy director, spoke to Newsday about the raid. "[He] said he arrived yesterday at 8 a.m. at the union offices at 31 West 15th Street and was asked his name by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation," the paper reported. "Told he was not a subject of the investigation, he was asked to

leave, which he did." (Newsday, March 3).

Daily News columnist Juan Gonzalez, an active unionist at the paper, called news of the raid a "thunderbolt" that hit labor leaders while they were gathered for a fundraiser to help CWA Local 1180 President Arthur Cheliotos pay off campaign debts from a 2001 City Council race.

"In a city that has seen its share of rascal labor leaders, yesterday's raid came as a shock. Because in all the years that McLaughlin, a tall strapping former electrician from Queens, has been a union leader there has never been any public hint of scandal around him," wrote Gonzalez on March 3.

"Under his leadership, the Central Labor Council, a toothless tiger for decades, gradually emerged as a major force. Just ask the people at Wal-Mart, the nation's biggest private employer—and one of the most miserly to its workers—about McLaughlin. He's kept Wal-Mart from opening its low-wage operations in this town, at least until they agree to pay a living wage and provide health insurance to their workers."

The raid raises many questions for workers, unions and the progressive movement. What did the FBI take? Did it include records from the hundreds of unions who belong to the labor council? The FBI and DOI admit the investigation has been going on for years. So why was the raid conducted now—when the Transport Workers Union is still fighting for a contract and TWU leaders still face possible imprisonment, hotel workers' contracts are set to expire soon, and the city's 300,000-strong public employee workforce is poised to begin contract bargaining? Why now, when the labor movement needs to be strong and united?

"All of a sudden there is a dark cloud over McLaughlin," Gonzalez wrote. "There is no indictment, no official accusation of wrongdoing, but the terrible cloud looms nevertheless." And it's a dark cloud that benefits the ruling class, the corporations, the super-exploiters like Wal-Mart, and the highway robbers like the MTA who want to keep the workers and their unions on the defensive at a time when there are stirrings of new resistance and struggle.

Labor quickly closes ranks

Aware of this, labor leaders—many of them furious about the raid—worked quickly in the days after the sweep to pull together a "rapid response" team, in consultation with the New York State and national AFL-CIO, that would allow the NYC Central Labor Council to continue to function. Juan Gonzalez described it in his March 7 Daily News column:

"Under a plan fashioned by Denis Hughes, president of the New York State AFL-CIO, McLaughlin would continue to serve as president, but Ed Ott, a top staff person, would assume some of the public functions normally handled by the president.

"At the same time, the labor council... would create a small 'rapid response' team of about a dozen city labor leaders to handle the federal probe without any involvement from McLaughlin, a Queens assemblyman. The council would also hire its own independent attorney to handle the feds.

"With the federal investigation of McLaughlin likely to take months, Hughes and other top union leaders have reluctantly concluded that the council can't risk being paralyzed until the results are known. 'Dennis has stepped in and taken charge and the national is onboard,' a labor source said."

As of March 7, the Central Labor Council was planning an emergency meeting to finalize the strategy and close ranks in unity to keep its critical daily work going on behalf of more than 1 million workers in 400 metropolitan area unions. A key step in implementing this strategy would be for the leadership to reach out to these rank-and-file workers for support in resisting this outrageous federal raid. This would move the union movement forward in unity to build for coming labor struggles. □

ON THE PICKETLINE

By Sue Davis

Teamsters strike Sikorsky

Some 3,600 skilled workers at Sikorsky, which produces helicopters and other advanced military and commercial equipment, walked off the job on Feb. 20 because they refuse to pay more for their health care. Teamsters Local 1150 shut down Sikorsky headquarters in Stratford, Conn., and four plants in Bridgeport, Shelton and West Haven, Conn., and West Palm Beach, Fla.

On March 9 Teamster President James Hoffa hosted a rally at the main gate in Stratford in support of the strikers. This is the largest Teamster strike since the successful UPS walkout in 1996.

Teamster Bruce Peters told the New York Times that the workers voted to strike because management "was trying to pass all the burden for health care on to the workers so that people like George David [CEO of Sikorsky's parent company United Technologies Corp.] and the president of Sikorsky, Steve Finger, can reap all the benefits." (March 3)

While hourly workers have been asked to make sacrifices for the sake of global competitiveness, Peters and other workers were outraged to learn from a recent shareholder filing that David, in addition to a \$1.7-million salary and a \$3.8 million bonus, received \$20.8 million in new stock option grants in 2005 and had \$26.3 million in pretax gains from exercising old options. David also has \$167 million in options he hasn't yet exercised.

Even though Sikorsky has offered 3.5 percent raises over the three-year contract and a one-time \$2,000 ratification bonus, Peters pointed out that the workers would be forced to pay higher weekly premiums and co-pays with as much as a 20 percent hike in doctor bills that the company currently covers. "All increases we get will be eaten up by the medical costs," Peters told the Times.

Macy's workers fight takebacks

Members of Local 1-S of the department store union (RWDSU) also took a stand against proposed increases in health-care benefits when they picketed Macy's flagship store in Manhattan on Feb. 27. The 3,500 workers at four stores in New York City and Westchester County voted on Feb. 20 to go on strike if negotiations didn't yield a better contract.

According to the proposal, workers would have to pay \$435 a month for family coverage on top of paying a deductible of \$3,000 and co-pays for doctor visits and prescriptions. An RWDSU leaflet estimated that a worker making \$8 an hour would have to pay \$8,220 a year for health care—more than half the worker's annual \$15,600 salary.

Just as the contract was set to expire on March 3, Local 1-S reached a settlement that would "keep jobs at Macy's among the best in the department store industry." The terms of the five-year contract will be disclosed after Local 1-S members vote on it in the near future.

Court blocks proposed DOD work rules

A federal judge slapped the Bush administration's hand on Feb. 27 when he barred the Defense Department from implementing a new personnel system. The American Federation of Government Employees and 12 other unions representing more than 350,000 defense employees sued last November to stop the proposed system.

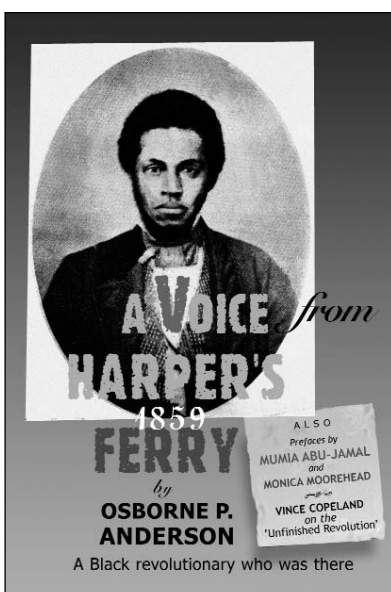
U.S. District Judge Emmet G. Sullivan's 77-page ruling said the Pentagon's National Security Personnel System failed to ensure collective bargaining rights, did not provide an independent third-party review of labor relations decisions and would strip employees of a fair process for appealing disciplinary actions.

The ruling was the second time in six months that a federal judge stopped the Bush administration from rewriting federal personnel rules so that they diminish fair labor practices. A Bush appointee ruled against similar changes at the Department of Homeland Security in August 2005. The DHS is appealing that decision. Altogether, the rulings affect nearly 800,000 civilian employees.

Workers at IRS protest privatization

Members of the National Treasury Employees Union picketed the Internal Revenue Service during a lunch-hour rally on March 1 to protest a measure to privatize some tax-debt collection. They chanted slogans like "Hey hey, ho ho, bounty hunters got to go" and "Don't be fooled by White House lies, it's not wise to privatize."

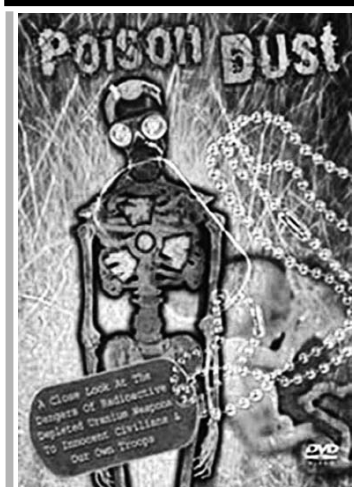
The NTEU strongly opposes an IRS initiative to outsource some of the agency's debt collection, arguing that putting taxpayer data in the hands of private collectors presents a privacy and security risk. Besides, says the NTEU, the move won't even save money. Private contractors will be paid much more than federal employees to do the same work. Another reason for opposing the measure is that having non-union workers on the rolls would undermine the union. □



A VOICE from HARPER'S FERRY 1859

By Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. With an essay on 'The Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland and prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead. 128 pp, photographs. World View Forum, \$18 online at www.leftbooks.com

Just released on DVD



Filmmaker Sue Harris interviewed U.S. soldiers returned from Iraq, where they had been exposed to the radioactive dust created when shells coated with DU are fired. Many suffer mysterious ailments and have children with birth defects. Includes interviews Ramsey Clark, Juan Gonzalez, Dr. Michio Kaku and many others.

Online at www.leftbooks.com

Boston's anti-war movement 'taking it to the streets'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Boston

As the "Stop the violence, stop the war at home and abroad" March 18 march and rally draw near, a broad spectrum of communities in the Greater Boston area is working vigorously to build this unique and historic event. The activists are taking it to the streets.

Initiated by the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition, March 18 activities here will begin with a rally in Roxbury in the heart of Boston's Black community followed by a march through various communities of color and move through the Downtown Crossing, the major shopping district of Boston, then on to the State House.

Participants in the RPHRDC are now engaged in a massive visibility and outreach campaign. Distributing thousands of leaflets and stickers to houses, churches

and community businesses, members are reaching out to African-American, Haitian, Cape Verdean, Latin@, Native and working-class white neighborhoods with multi-lingual March 18 literature. Engaging in community standouts on street corners and public transportation stops as well as greeting the communities with a sound truck adorned with anti-war, anti-racist placards are just some of the numerous ongoing activities.

On March 4 after a RPHRDC mobilizers' meeting at the United Steelworkers bus drivers and monitors offices, members hit the streets again in a well-coordinated outreach plan conducted by Tony Van Der Meer, RPHRDC co-chair. Clemencia Lee, a co-director of the Cultural Café and a paraprofessional in Boston's public school system, said, "I am supporting the anti-war movement because the war is hurting our community; it's hurting our whole entire system; our way of living,

It's difficult living in this society and not getting the needs we need to have met as human beings."

Like Lee, Rachael Nasca pointed to the devastating impact of the U.S. war on Iraq and other nations: "Women are multi-impacted by the war. We suffer the most in terms of our jobs. We're paid less, which means when more money is going into the war budget, we are paid still less. There are cutbacks in all social services and our children suffer because of the education cutbacks and others. And our children are being used as cannon fodder in foreign wars," said Nasca, a member of AFSCME 3650, the clerical workers union at Harvard University.

Under the banner of "Stop Poverty, Racism, Sexism & War!" The Women's Fightback Network and the Cambridge Women's Center will have a Women and Girls Contingent March 18. Other contingents will be lesbian/gay/bi/trans

(LGBT) and labor.

"We've got to get out there. We've got to get people united. We have a wonderful coalition that's very diverse and it's very exciting and I think this is the kind of organization that's actually going to be able to stop the war," said Nasca.

Lee agreed: "We could do so many more better things with the resources that are going into the war. I believe we have to learn how to love each other, work with each other and war plus war does not equal peace. The U.S. needs to take its hands off Iraq, Haiti, everywhere else that this globalization's at. I'm going to stand up straight on this issue. I was brought up to fight," concluded Lee as she left to hit the streets with Nasca and a multiple-vehicle caravan.

The Boston Rosa Parks Committee can be reached at 617-524-3507, rosaparksday@brphrd.com or via the web at www.brphrd.com. □

Chicago college learns about Katrina survivors

By Eric Struch
Chicago

After nearly six months of bureaucratic hoop-jumping at Harold Washington College in Chicago, a new student group, the Progressive Student Forum (PSF), held its first meeting on Feb. 20 to discuss the treatment of Hurricane Katrina survivors.

The PSF is a multi-national group of students, all of whom have a background in community organizing or other types of political activism. Harold Washington is part of the community college system here, its student body mostly African-American and Latin@, with many working-class white students and recent Asian immigrants.

Working closely with the Black Student Union, the PSF organized the meeting for Black History Month around the theme, "Black History Month Means Struggle, Stop Ethnic Cleansing in New Orleans!" The featured speaker was People's Hurricane Relief Committee organizer Malcolm Suber.

Suber painted a picture of New Orleans as a city where the African-American community was under attack before the storm, saying, "The hurricane hit way before Katrina." The disaster only intensified an already existing situation. Most people who needed shelter after Katrina also needed it before, said Suber, who emphasized that what was shown on television doesn't begin to convey the magnitude of the destruction. It must be witnessed to be believed.

Suber said Katrina provided the opportunity the city administration had been looking for to displace the African-American community, to carry out "ethnic cleansing by neglect." This catastrophe also provided the opportunity for the rulers of New Orleans to reach another goal—the destruction of the city's public school system. All 5,000 teachers have been fired and their union has been broken. There is no public educational system in New



Orleans any more.

The city's white rulers are treating what remains of the African-American community as their private social laboratory to study the feasibility of a completely privatized "educational system." All functioning schools in New Orleans are now charter schools that do not recognize the teachers' union and are beyond any sort of public oversight.

Suber criticized current New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin, calling him "an African-American front man for the New Orleans bourgeoisie." Although Nagin will be running against several rich white men in the next election, the African-American community does not see him as representative of their interests, said Suber. In the last election, Nagin received only 20 percent of the Black vote.

Suber sees a clear danger that many of the African-American survivors who were forced to flee Katrina will be disenfranchised during the next election. New Orleans has had an African-American mayor since 1978. Suber made it clear that no one in the Black community wants to return to the days when rich whites had a monopoly on the mayor's office.

Suber considers the handling of the Katrina disaster to be an attack on the African-American nation at its very heart.

He said that in order to move the revolutionary movement forward in the heartland of imperialism, the anti-war move-



WW PHOTO: ERIC STRUCH

Protest at Chicago's FEMA office.

ment must take up Katrina survivors' demands.

Their demands are: (1) The right of survivors to return; (2) no spending of money without the people's approval; and (3) the people must direct the reconstruction.

Activists at the meeting planned to attend a demonstration at FEMA headquarters in Chicago that was held on Feb. 28. □

U.S. OUT NOW!

Continued from page 1

that joining the military can ensure a quality job, health care and educational opportunities. Fight Imperialism—Stand Together (FIST), a multinational revolutionary youth group, will be helping to organize young people and students to fight back against the recruiters who target them in their homes, schools and communities.

As the U.S. government enters its third year of occupation in Iraq it also marks a third year of the intensification of exploitation and racism against the workers and nationally oppressed peoples living inside the United States.

The failure of the U.S. government to even try to mount an effective rescue operation in response to Hurricane Katrina laid bare the domestic racism and inequality of the U.S. imperialist system for the world to see. Its refusal to assist Katrina's survivors who are struggling to reunite with their loved ones and find meaningful work and adequate housing has added to this exposure.

Meanwhile, inside occupied Iraq the resistance steadily grows and the inability

or unwillingness of the U.S. occupation force to establish a stable society there has diminished what little support U.S. government policies had, even within the United States. Thousands of U.S. and British soldiers and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians and resistance fighters have been killed in the three years since Bush ordered the invasion.

The upcoming protests will provide activists with an opportunity to advance the resistance to war and occupation in the U.S. itself. The most class-conscious elements of the movement will not only contribute to building the anniversary protests, they will intervene to educate working and oppressed people about the necessity of revolutionary change. They will demonstrate that the bloody war on Iraq grows out of capitalism and imperialism, and what is needed is to replace this system with a socialist system that is organized to meet people's needs and not for war and profit.

More about the anniversary activities is on the TONC website at www.troopsoutnow.org. □

Black women & self-defense

A look back at the Joann Little case

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The most basic demand of women's liberation is the right of every woman to decide the destiny of her own life and body. This includes the right to defend herself against rape and the right to decide whether or not she will bear children.

Today in the U.S. there is an all-out attack on these rights led by a political right-wing in the service of ruling class interests. A South Dakota bill signed into law on March 6 that outlaws abortion in the state, even for victims of rape and incest, is the latest blow.

But one little-known struggle waged in the U.S. South gives us an historic lesson in how a fightback for women can be waged under the most difficult circumstances—and how a communist party can play a key role in advancing women's liberation in the context of national liberation and working-class struggle.

Double oppression

In August 1975, Joann Little, a 20-year-old African American woman, fled her jail cell in Beaufort, N.C., after killing the white deputy sheriff who had attempted to rape her. Little used the jailer's ice-pick weapon against him in her desperate struggle to resist. When Little surrendered to authorities, citing self-defense, she was arrested and put on trial for murder.

The historic campaign that saved Little from execution or life in prison was the first successful U.S. struggle to assert the right of African-American women to self-defense against white rapists.

Only once before in the U.S. had a

national struggle been waged for this right in the case of a specific woman. It started in 1944 in Alabama, after Recy Taylor, a 24-year-old African-American woman, was abducted by six white men, gang-raped and grievously injured. Local Communist Party organizers in Birmingham launched a campaign to bring the assailants to trial. Committees in her support were set up in 43 states, with eminent members such as African American historian W.E.B. DuBois, educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown and poet Countee Cullen, as well as white Southern anti-racist writer Lillian Smith. (Earl Conrad and Eugene Gordon, "Equal Justice under the Law," 1946)

The struggle to prosecute Taylor's

rapists was ultimately unsuccessful. But it was courageously waged in a still-segregated South, where the police, the elected officials, and representatives of the judicial system were all white and all part of an edifice of state power first erected during slavery for the super-exploitation and oppression of African-American people by a white slave-owning class.

This was the system still in place in rural North Carolina on the night Joann Little defended herself. Though legal segregation in the South had been challenged and defeated through mass struggle, white supremacy remained the order of state rule in much of the region.

Therefore, African American women still experienced crushing double oppression in full force. Slave owners had not just held African-American women as property and exploited their labor as workers. The owners had used the women's ability to reproduce as a source of profit, forcing them to bear children and then selling their children into slavery.

As a Workers World editorial on Joann Little's struggle stated: "Southern slaveholders considered rape one of the rights of ownership, and that attitude prevails in the minds of white racists today. All Joann Little did was to protect her body and her life. She is not a criminal. The crime is that she is being tried at all." (WW, June 11, 1975)

The national and international context in 1975 was very different from that during the 1940s struggle for Recy Taylor. The Vietnamese people, led by communists, were on the verge of victory against the U.S. imperialist war. Both women's liberation and lesbian and gay liberation were in full bloom as movements, with 1975 designated as the first International Women's Year by the UN.

In an era of high unemployment, 60,000 marched in Washington for "Jobs for All." Native nations, including the Menominee in Wisconsin and the Seneca in Buffalo, were waging an intense struggle for land rights. Prisoners throughout the U.S. were organizing against repression, including the Atmore-Holman Brothers in Alabama. One rebellion took place in the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women shortly after Little was released on bail. Women there battled club-wielding guards who attacked them as they protested the "atrocious condi-



Joann Little, right, at protest in Richmond Va in June 1975

WW PHOTO

tions" in the prison sweatshop laundries. (Workers World, June 27, 1985)

'My life is in the hands of the people'

The Prisoner Solidarity Committee (PSC), a mass unit of Workers World Party, played a key role in winning Joann Little's freedom. It was led by the Norfolk, Va., branch of WWP, which helped to establish the Joann Little Defense Committee.

The PSC organized rallies, marches, vigils, leafleting and petitioning in Little's defense nationwide in cities including Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Durham, N.C., Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Rochester, N.Y., and New York City. A huge community forum in Washington, D.C., connected the struggle of Little and the Wilmington (N.C.) Ten, nine Black men and one white woman who had been arrested for self-defense against attacks by armed Ku Klux Klan members and local police. (Workers World, June 6, 1975)

In Philadelphia, WWP's youth arm, Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF), collected 2,000 signatures on a petition demanding an immediate end to Little's prosecution and supporting "the right of women and prisoners to defend themselves against sexual attacks and physical abuse."

At a Richmond, Va., march, the Gay Caucus of YAWF carried a banner: "Gay people demand: Free Joann Little! Free all political prisoners!" Joan Butler, a founding member of Richmond YAWF, said, "Speaking as a white woman, I know that the rape laws are not for my protection. They are an instrument of the ruling class designed to intimidate and terrorize the Black com-

munity." (Workers World, July 11, 1975)

The Winston-Salem, N.C., branch of the Black Panther Party was staunch in its defense of Little and in connecting the issue of self-defense to international struggles. Political Affairs Director Larry Little said: "It's Richard Nixon who should be in jail for the murder of the Vietnamese people."

A moving statement of support came from Prisoners Against Rape, a group with a membership of prisoners and ex-prisoners convicted of rape, and women active in feminist groups. They said: "[We know] that rape serves to perpetuate male dominance, female submission and stereotype myths, which force women to comply with existing social, political, and sexist institutions.... Unite to give power to oppressed people! Down with sexism! Free sister Joann Little!" (Workers World, Jan. 10, 1975)

After the Center for Constitutional Rights documented "overwhelming racial prejudice and presumption of guilt in a 23-county area in Eastern North Carolina," Little's trial was moved to Raleigh, the capital. One of the prosecutors for the state had previously defended the Ku Klux Klan.

But Little herself said, "My life is not in the hands of the court. My life is in the hands of the people." Over a thousand people demonstrated during the trial outside the courthouse. And on Aug. 22, 1975, the people prevailed as a jury declared Joann Little "Not guilty!" Little's defense lawyer, Karen Galloway, said, "Because of the issues in this case of racism and sexism, we knew we had to take Joann's case to the people and the people freed her...." (Workers World, Aug. 22, 1975)

Monica Moorehead, a leader of Norfolk's Prisoners Solidarity Committee in 1975 and now a member of WWP's Secretariat, says that the struggle to free Joann Little has relevance for women's liberation today: "One of the most important lessons of the Joann Little case that is applicable now is that extending working class solidarity to the most oppressed is not an act of charity but holds the key to building an effective fightback movement to liberate our entire class from all forms of bigotry and exploitation by the bosses. Every leaflet, every slogan and every demonstration not only demanded that the murder charges be dropped against our heroic sister Joann, but also that the walls of the prisons be torn down. Because, just as they were then, prisons still remain concentration camps for the poor and oppressed. It is important to politically generalize every individual crime against humanity under capitalism, whether it's Joann Little or the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners." □



Boston, March 1978

WW PHOTO



Wake County Couthouse, Raleigh, N.C. July 1975.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Effa Manley in Hall of Fame

A fighter for Black baseball players' rights

By Monica Moorehead

When it comes to professional baseball in the U.S., the most recognizable woman's name is Marge Schott, the deceased owner of the Cincinnati Reds who made racist remarks about Black players on her team. Hopefully, one day it will be Effa Manley's name that will wipe out the horrific memory of Schott when it comes to baseball owners.

On Feb. 27, Manley became the first woman elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. That Major League Baseball remains a male-dominated sport, on and off the field, makes Manley's election just that much more important.

What makes this development even more significant is that Manley, who died at the age of 84 in 1981, was connected to the Negro Major Leagues, which were all-Black professional baseball teams. The NML was established in 1920 because Black and other players of color were barred from joining the then all-white, richer Major League Baseball.

Until the civil rights struggles emerged in a major way during the 1950s and 1960s, sports of all kinds, amateur and professional, reflected racist Jim Crow laws—much like the rest of U.S. society. Black and white spectators sat in segregated sections when Black teams played

white teams on the field.

Effa Manley and her spouse, Black businessman Abe Manley, were co-owners of the NML's Newark Eagles. The Eagles won the NML championship in 1946, one year before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in MLB when he was signed to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Effa Manley's mother had been a white woman married to a Black man—a marriage that was illegal throughout the entire South and frowned upon in other parts of the country during most of the 20th century. According to Larry Lester, a member of the Hall of Fame election committee and an NML historian, although she was conceived during a relationship her mother had with a white man, Effa Manley grew up in this racially mixed family.

Because Effa "grew up" as a Black woman, this helped her develop an anti-racist consciousness. She got involved in the civil rights movement and became treasurer of the Newark, N.J., chapter of the NAACP. As a member of the Citizens League for Fair Play, she organized a successful 1934 boycott of 300 stores in Harlem that refused to hire Black salesclerks. At one of the Eagles games in 1939, she organized an "Anti-Lynching Day" at Rupperts Stadium.

While she was admired for her advertising skills, she was also known for her

tenacity in fighting for the right of Black baseball players to higher guaranteed salaries and more humane playing and traveling schedules. The Manleys supplied the Eagles with an air-conditioned Flexible Clipper bus, a first for the Negro Leagues. They also established winter leagues in Puerto Rico for players who would be unemployed during regular off-season.

She fought for all Black players to be fairly compensated when white teams finally signed them. When Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers, she publicly called the team's white manager, Branch Rickey, a "crook" for not compensating Robinson's former NML team, the Kansas City Monarchs. Rickey reportedly paid less than 5 percent of the former NML players' labor value when he signed them to the Dodgers—a practice that lasted until 1950. (deadballera.com)

Leslie Heaphy, another NML historian and member of the voting committee, said the following about Effa Manley: "While Abe had the money, she was really the one running the show. She was very much ahead of the other owners who were afraid to speak up. She really pushed to make sure they received those payments." (New York Times, Feb. 28)

Effa Manley was one of 17 people elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame this year, the highest annual total ever. All the



Abe Manley, Effa Manley

others were either members of the NML or associated with the pre-NML era. This large number of mainly Black inductees was a result of a \$250,000 grant given to the Hall of Fame by MLB to do a study of the statistics on Black baseball players from 1860 until 1960.

If these players had been allowed to play in the MLB from the beginning, one can only speculate how many storied MLB current records would have been dramatically altered. Before Manley's death, she sent letters to the MLB election committee lobbying them to allow NML players into the Hall of Fame.

Manley and the 16 others, all deceased, will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on July 30. The epitaph on Effa Manley's gravestone reads, "She loved baseball." □

CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

Gay youths, Black & white, led North Carolina fight

By Leslie Feinberg

Gay youths, Black and white, led breakthrough struggles against racism and Jim Crow apartheid in North Carolina—the Durham and Chapel Hill freedom struggles—during the early 1960s, and won victories that reverberated throughout the Deep South.

Historian James T. Sears, a significant white contributor to Southern struggle history, devotes a whole chapter about three of the main organizers of the North Carolina movement in his book "Lonely Hunters—An Oral History of Lesbian and Gay Southern Life, 1948-1968."

Quinton Baker, African American and gay, was a key leader. Baker was born on the coastal plain of North Carolina in 1942. He grew up in Greenville, a town of 21,000, making a living by shining shoes. While not transgender in today's terms, Baker once explained, "when you speak the way I speak in the South, you stand out. For a lot of people my speech pattern was feminine." But, he added about growing up in his community, "Back then, you could be funny but not ostracized. The attitude was one of quiet acceptance."

Baker was a senior in an all-Black high school on the day—Feb. 1, 1960—when four African American first-year students at Agricultural and Technical College (A&T) ordered coffee at a downtown Greensboro, N.C., restaurant from a counter that only served whites. They were refused service.

The next morning, 27 Black A&T students arrived together and ordered coffee

at that counter. "We are prepared to keep coming for two years if we have to," one of the youth vowed.

The "sit-ins" electrified the South. One week later, the sit-in movement sparked similar protests in North Carolina cities with historically Black colleges: Durham, Elizabeth City, High Point and Winston-Salem. Another week passed and the sit-ins at lunch counters to protest racist segregation had spread from Nashville, Tenn., to Tallahassee, Fla.

Sears noted, "By the end of March, 68 cities in 13 Southern states reported sit-ins, including a wade-in at the all-white swimming pool in Biloxi, Miss., a read-in at the library in St. Petersburg, Fla., and a

host of kneel-ins at all-white churches."

Hundreds of youth activists were arrested and locked up, where they faced serious charges. City officials in Orangeburg, S.C., gave the go-ahead to turn power hoses on student demonstrators and then held them in an open stockade in 40-degree weather. Tallahassee cops teargassed youth activists. Klan mobs met civil rights demonstrators with bats and pipes in Bessemer and Montgomery, Ala.

This struggle marked the qualitative opening of a youth-led civil rights movement, and it was the real beginning of the larger student struggle of the 1960s and 1970s. By the day Baker graduated high school in May 1960, a few businesses had

agreed to end white-supremacist segregation of their lunch counters. Within one year, the struggle won desegregation of lunch counters in 126 Southern cities.

Baker was drawn into this vortex of struggle. He said he looked forward to the fall of 1960 when he would enter North Carolina College (NCC) in Durham. Black college students were organizing. Lacey Streeter, another native of Greenville, led the NAACP college chapter at NCC.

Baker later recalled, "By the time I got to college I was so ready and prepared [for struggle] that it became almost more important to me than the academic work. It was the force."

He added, "My first semester I was in the NAACP and I was demonstrating. I didn't stop for the four years I was there!"

As Baker organized boycotts, sit-ins, rallies and street demonstrations, his tactical and organizational skills became renowned. He helped other young leaders to develop. He became president of the NAACP state youth organization and an NAACP Commando.

Baker later recalled, "A lot of student leaders and activists were often gay men," adding that the men weren't often aware of lesbian activists.

Baker worked closely with two gay, white anti-racist activists. ...

The full text of this article in the *Lavender & Red* historical series can be read online at www.workers.org. Next: *Black and white, gay and straight—civil rights activists build unity in Jackson, Miss., struggle.*



Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at www.workers.org. Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

drag king dreams

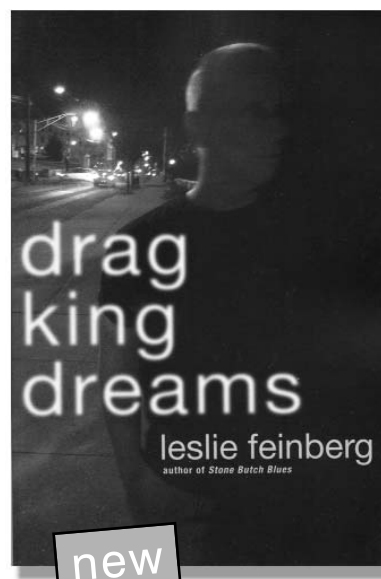
leslie feinberg

Award-winning "Stone Butch Blues" author Leslie Feinberg's long-awaited novel about love and struggle in NYC's East Village

Author Leslie Feinberg is a political organizer, editor and journalist. "Stone Butch Blues" won the American Library Association's Lesbian and Gay Book Award, and a Lambda award; the nonfiction "Transgender Warriors" won the Firecracker Alternative Book Award.

Here's the next transgender classic.

"Drag King Dreams" takes readers on an unforgettable new gender journey. Max Rabinowitz, a bouncer in an East Village drag club, is sleepwalking through life. But as war, racist profiling and trans-bashing explode, an amazing circle of co-workers and friends who defy gender and sex labels help Max awaken from dreams to action.



Order online at Leftbooks.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Progressives build support for Venezuela

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
Washington, D.C.

From March 3-6 representatives of the progressive movement inside the United States met here in a National Conference in Solidarity with Venezuela. Its aim was to increase support for the Venezuelan Revolution and prevent further aggression from the U.S. government against that Latin American republic.

The conference took place at George Washington University, just a few blocks from the U.S. State Department, where many anti-Venezuelan projects originate. Over 400 people attended, representing dozens of organizations.

Participants discussed and supported a proposed May 20 March on Washington to Stop U.S. Intervention against Venezuela and Cuba. Organizations and individuals can get more information about the march by sending e-mails to May20@yahoo.com.

Participants also read and discussed a resolution establishing a National Network of Solidarity with Venezuela and a calendar of grassroots Venezuela solidarity actions. Anti-war actions already planned for March 18-20, the third anniversary of the U.S. war against Iraq, were included in the calendar and groups were encouraged to have Venezuela contingents in the demonstrations.

A special resolution was also passed denouncing the U.S.'s Plan Colombia.

Representatives of the governments of both Venezuela and Cuba who spoke at the conference showed the strong connection between these two countries. Through their examples of generosity and dignity they are now the hope of millions, not only in Latin America but throughout the world.

The presence of many students and youth, not only from Washington but from as far away as Canada and Florida, showed the Bolivarian Revolution's appeal. Young activists mixed with seasoned organizers who have been in the anti-war and Latin America solidarity movements for decades. Organizers also came from community-based, religious and labor groups. African Americans and Latin@s had a strong presence throughout the conference.



Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Nellie Bailey and Cuban Ambassador Dagoberto Rodriguez.

Many organizations endorsed the conference, including the Alliance for Global Justice, All-African People's Revolutionary Party, Bolivarian Circles, the National Network on Cuba, CISPE, FMLN-MD, Latin American Solidarity Coalition, Nicaragua Network, the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, Ocean Press, National Lawyers Guild, Global Exchange, Global Women's Strike, Iranian Cultural Association, International Action Center and several student groups. A full list of sponsors can be found at www.lasolidarity.org/venezuelaConf.html.

Unite in solidarity with Venezuela

An evening of music and poetry on Friday night, March 3, opened the events. The next morning, Chuck Kaufman, a main organizer of the conference from the Nicaragua Network, welcomed the attendees, stressing that the gathering brought together a united group in solidarity with Venezuela.

Attendees took part in three panels and 40 workshops throughout the weekend. Workshops linked solidarity with Venezuela to events in the U.S. Topics like "The Aid Offered by Venezuela and Cuba to Katrina Victims" and "Venezuela Comes to the Aid of the North American Public" helped put this vision in perspective.

The Katrina workshop included Kali Akuno, National Outreach Coordinator of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement; Lourdes Madriz, Consul General of Venezuela in New Orleans; and Joaquin Gutierrez, Second Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C.; it was chaired by Ignacio Meneses of the U.S./

Cuba Labor Exchange.

Madriz described the help Venezuela offered to Katrina survivors in the aftermath of the storm, including fuel, interpreters, monetary assistance and more.

Gutierrez gave background on the medical aid offered by Cuba, which the Bush administration rejected. He said that though Cuba early on offered to send a team of doctors, the Cuban government held off making a public announcement or releasing a photo of the 1,500-plus doctors waiting with bags packed until other countries asked why they had not made an offer to assist, since they sent doctors everywhere else.

Madriz noted that one of the first doctors from the U.S. to graduate from medical school in Havana was from New Orleans, and did return to help.

Akuno gave background on the struggle in New Orleans, how little has been done by the U.S. government, how bad conditions remain six months after the storm, especially in Mississippi, Southern Louisiana and the rural areas outside New Orleans, where towns were literally wiped off the map. Most of these areas have received no help at all. Mobile homes intended for these areas still sit in Arkansas and Texas.

Akuno explained that in the tourist area around New Orleans's French Quarter, some hotels are built on top of levees—that's how wide they were. But in the Ninth Ward and areas with a predominantly African American population, some levees were only two feet wide. He also reported on how both FEMA and the Red Cross divided people in shelters into three groups—Black, white and immigrant. If the immigrants could not provide documentation, the INS was on hand to deport them.

U.S. attempts at subversion

People also discussed the Venezuelan Revolution, its advancement and constitution, and its regional and international relations, including the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). Several workshops discussed Washington's aggression against Venezuela, particularly through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and USAID, including the reactionary role of the AFL-CIO in the April 2002 coup that tried to overthrow President Hugo Chávez Frías and in the destabilization campaign later.

Several workshops discussed different ways of building solidarity. Others were about Latin America and the Caribbean, including Colombia, Cuba and Haiti.

The conference packet contained a resolution submitted by progressive elected officials to the Michigan State Legislature that expresses solidarity with Venezuela and demands that terrorist Posada Carriles, now in the U.S., be extradited to Venezuela.

Among the many speakers were Rev. Roy Bourgeois of the School of the Americas Watch and Bill Fletcher, director of the Trans-Africa Forum.

During a cultural and political event held at All Souls Church on March 4, Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez spoke eloquently about how aid from Cuba is proving essential in eradicating illiteracy in Venezuela and in the success of its health programs.

Cuban Ambassador Dagoberto Rodriguez spoke in turn of how Venezuela has made economic cooperation possible through ALBA, the Latin American alternative to U.S.-sponsored "free trade" agreements. Jorge Marin from the Martin Luther King Bolivarian Circle of Boston and Berta Joubert-Ceci from the International Action Center co-chaired the event.

This very successful conference follows previous events in solidarity with Venezuela: the Evening in Solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela held last November in New York City's Town Hall and in Los Angeles the Feb. 17-19 organizing conference in New York of the Bolivarian Circles in the U.S.

Betsey Piette, Cheryl LaBash and Steven Ceci contributed to this article.

Havana film exhibit welcomes new directors

By Sue Harris
Havana

At the invitation of the Institute of Artistic and Industrial Cinema in Cuba (ICAIC) Janet Mayes, assistant editor of the video "Poison DUst" and I presented this feature-length video at the international section of ICAIC's exhibition of New Film Makers Feb. 21-26.

"Poison Dust", which was the only film presented from the United States at the exhibition, is about the dangers from depleted-uranium (DU) use in weapons. The Pentagon used DU weapons in large quantity in Yugoslavia in 1999 and in the 1991 and 2003 attacks on Iraq.

President of ICAIC Omar Gonzalez told the group of foreign filmmakers about the period when Cuba simultaneously lost all its trading partners in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and was more drastically blockaded by the imposition of the Helms-Burton and Torricelli acts. At that time, ICAIC lost the ability to distribute films as well as the ability to develop new technology or even repair old equipment.

For a while ICAIC was unable to make more films and even lost the distribution rights to films that were already world famous, like "Strawberries and Chocolate."

ICAIC had no money and no equipment, but it could provide an excellent environment for film makers to network with each other. Whatever their attitude toward the Cuban Revolution, new directors from France, Spain, Argentina, Switzerland, Canada and the U.S. came to take advantage of the environment for their work in Cuba to make their work known to the world.

ICAIC showed numerous new films by Cuban and international directors, including cartoons, documentaries and dramas, but also some classics by Tomas Gutierrez Alea (Titon) like "The Survivors," which was like a Cuban version of Anton Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard." Cuban filmmaker Santiago Alvarez, who made documentaries about Vietnam and U.S. protests against Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, also showed footage of police brutality on the

West Coast in the 1970s.

If you wondered if people outside the U.S. knew about mass protest in the U.S. at that time, Alvarez's stunning documentaries demonstrate that the marches and banners were seen in Cuba.

While the ICAIC is starting to catch up in equipment and technology from the hard days of 1991, there are still glaring deficiencies in their ability to make equipment available to all their directors and to preserve some of their classic films. The print of "The Survivors" was quite damaged and there were no copies to sell. Most films for sale and many shown at the festival were shot with VHS camcorders. Nevertheless, the work was skillful, and for the most part moving and stimulating.

The exhibition was for new works by students and new directors. "Poison DUst" was probably chosen more for its political content than its technical expertise. ICAIC's review in their exhibition bulletin showed a deep understanding of what the documentary was about.

While telling the story of three young men from New York whose mysterious

ailments appeared after their National Guard unit's 2003 tour of duty in Iraq, "Poison DUst" exposes the role of radioactive depleted-uranium weapons in the wars fought in the Gulf. There is a 58-minute and 84-minute version of the film.

The longer version of Poison DUst will be shown on Cuban television, with ICAIC's own translator doing the subtitles. We provided a commentary for Cuban television and showed the film to students at the international cinema school, an NGO-affiliated private film school south of Havana.

ICAIC shows how cinema improves without a profit motive. Its primary motive for making a film is educational. Nor is ICAIC's goal "art for art's sake," either. Its goal is to make an impact on people's consciousness about the world around them from a socialist perspective.

ICAIC was not afraid of tackling issues that might be considered "sensitive" in Cuba, like shortages of material goods or gender issues. Choice of topic was at the center of many lively discussions during our stay. □

What's behind Bush's South Asian maneuvers?

By Deirdre Griswold

In the world of diplomacy, it's often what's left unsaid that requires the most careful consideration.

George W. Bush has generally not been regarded as shy when it comes to naming his "enemies." In fact, his menacing bluster against Iran, Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an "axis of evil" in 2002 was about as crudely open as any president could be in laying out before the world his aggressive plans.

But that was the "old" Bush. That was before his plan to easily conquer Iraq with a few weeks of "shock and awe"—and then roll on to impose Washington's dominion over many others—turned to ashes. It was before the Iraqi resistance shipwrecked the global empire plans of Washington's neocons and breathed a renewed spirit of struggle into parts of the world that were supposed to be passively carved up by Bush's friends in the oil business.

These days, Bush draws huge, angry demonstrations whenever he goes abroad, unless he sneaks in and out in the dead of night. His approval rating even at home is in the low 30s, undercut only by that of his vice president, who sunk to 18 percent approval after shooting his hunting friend in the face.

So when Bush went on a recent trip to Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, he avoided sounding bellicose. He talked about promoting "democracy," of course, and fighting "terrorism," but he didn't talk about an endless war this time. His

emphasis in India especially was on building a partnership of economic cooperation and development.

Leaving aside style, however, the content of this trip has plenty of menace for the billions of people in Asia.

What Bush didn't talk about was how his overtures to India are linked to U.S. imperialism's desire to offset China's growth as a world power. Nor is the English-language press in China saying anything about this, either. It is maintaining a calm demeanor in the face of what could be a serious development.

In New Delhi, Bush announced a deal by which the U.S. would actively cooperate with India's development of nuclear power, even though India withdrew from the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and has developed nuclear weapons.

This move has left many in the imperialist world who have applauded the U.S. hard-line stance against Iraq, Iran and the DPRK not knowing what to say now. Of course, it's now known that Iraq never had nuclear weapons, while Washington's ally Israel has secretly produced many of them.

But this latest move by Bush toward India proves that the non-proliferation issue is as phony as a three-dollar bill. What kind of credibility will the administration have as it tries to haul Iran before the Security Council for building nuclear power plants, claiming that is a dangerous development, when nuclear weapons are sprouting up in countries all around them?

The British publication Guardian had this to say on March 4:

"The U.S. is now treating India like its uniquely special ally Israel, also outside the NPT, which maintains a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear capacity and is believed to have 200 warheads.

"Part of the rationale for the agreement is helping to reduce the dependence of India's booming economy on oil and thus cut greenhouse gas emissions. Another element is accepting a fait accompli which is likely to benefit a U.S. nuclear industry that is keen to sell fuel and reactor components. The hard-fought terms mean that 14 of India's 22 reactors will be placed under scrutiny; military ones will not. The military will also retain control of fast-breeder reactors, highly efficient producers of the plutonium needed for warheads—whose numbers could rise from an estimated 50 today to 300-400 in a decade. That is a stunning reversal after 30 years of efforts to deny India nuclear technology, including sanctions when it conducted a nuclear test in 1998.

"The U.S. has defended this volte-face in terms of Realpolitik and shared values, while China (a 'big five' nuclear power under the NPT) is clearly another key, common factor."

Bush pushed the "shared values" argument hard. India is a democracy, he said repeatedly, as though that somehow made it all right. Yes, India has capitalist democracy—and has had it for decades. When the Indian government was close to the Soviet Union, the fact that it had many

political parties didn't stop the U.S. from threatening it with sanctions. Nor did it keep Washington from building up a military dictatorship in neighboring Pakistan that threatened India. On this trip, however, Bush was almost insulting to Pakistani dictator Gen. Pervez Musharraf, after all that Musharraf has done for the Pentagon, allowing the U.S. to use it as a base for its war of regime change in Afghanistan.

India's capitalist democracy hasn't brought much to the vast majority of people in India, either, which has the largest population of extremely poor people in the world. U.S. investment in information technology in India in recent years has only widened the gap between rich and poor. (See accompanying article on protests over Bush's visit.)

So this isn't about democracy. And it isn't just about trade or economic cooperation with India. This move was decided on by the brain trust in the Pentagon and State Department, headed by Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice, respectively, that sees China as the biggest problem for U.S. imperialism down the road, and is starting to prepare for that now.

With all the other things that the U.S. should be doing with its great resources and technology—dealing with the enormous threats looming from global warming is just a start—the last thing the people of any country need is a U.S.-instigated arms race in Asia. □

Indians protest 'Butcher Bush'

By Heather Cottin

As George W. Bush arrived in New Delhi on March 2, hundreds of thousands of anti-imperialist protesters from a coalition of left and Muslim organizations thronged the streets there and in Mumbai (Bombay), calling him "the greatest terrorist." Unable to appear safely in public, Bush had to make his speech to a select audience in the Delhi zoo. Only rich people, government potentates and some caged animals were there to hear him.

Bush's handlers decided he could not appear before the Indian Congress, where he would face heckles from members of parties angry at U.S. policies in Iraq and Afghanistan. He couldn't go to the Red Fort, another popular site for speechifying, since too many Muslims lived nearby.

The Bushes stayed at the most expensive hotel in India and took photo ops with bears and water buffalo. The Indian corporate media reported he was traveling with 16 canines designated "officers" in the U.S. Army, which were housed at another posh hotel.

The Indian media downplayed the huge anti-Bush rallies in the streets, which was hard to do given the widespread outrage at U.S. imperialism. A coalition of forces joined to castigate Bush, and even the New York Times took note of their slogan: "Butcher Bush, get back!"

Indian author and political activist Arundhati Roy noted in an interview on Pacifica radio's Democracy Now (March 3) that the protesters in the streets of New Delhi numbered almost 1 million. She said they included 53 widows from her native state of Kerala.

In Kerala and the rest of India, "tens of thousands of farmers have committed suicide because of the closing net of debt around them," Roy explained. Economic reforms demanded by imperialist-dominated banks and the World Trade Organization have favored big agribusinesses and undermined small farmers all over the world, without providing them alternative ways to survive.

In some areas of India water and communal lands have been privatized under pressure from U.S. corporations. These moves have the support of national and local Indian governments, even in states such as Kerala and West Bengal, run by communist parties.

The capitalist media tried to make it appear that those opposed to Bush were primarily from India's Muslim population. But the hundreds of thousands of protesters on the streets of New Delhi and Mumbai and at anti-imperialist demonstrations around the country came from a variety of organizations that included Muslims, communists and other anti-



Bush burned in effigy in Kolkata.

imperialist forces.

Demonstrators in the cities of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Siliguri and Bangalore, and in the states of Kerala and Gujarat, protested Bush's visit. The huge coalition of forces included members of the New Socialist Movement and the human rights groups Jan Sangharsh Manch and Aman Samuday. The flags of the Socialist Unity Center of India (SUCI) were prominent as demonstrators burned Bush effigies and posters. In Kolkata (Calcutta), thousands of people poured off the sidewalks to join a huge anti-imperialist demonstration. As police responded with clubs, the city came to a complete standstill.

Bush's visit was ostensibly about ending a decades-long moratorium on sales of nuclear fuel and reactor components to India, which will allow that country to increase nuclear weapons production. But many Indians see Bush's visit as legitimizing and promoting the U.S. ruling class's economic domination in India.

The top 10 percent of India's population have been growing richer, thanks to U.S. imperialist economic policies. The rest are being left further and further behind. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization says that in India in the 1990s, while the number of millionaires increased sevenfold, the number of hungry people actually rose.

The U.S. has outstripped Britain, the former colonial ruler, to become India's number one trading partner. According to figures on the Indian Embassy's web site, U.S.-India trade nearly doubled between 1993 and 2000. From investment in information technology to steel production, U.S. firms are overrunning India, exploit-



ing cheap labor and natural resources. On Bush's trip, the Indian bourgeoisie clamored for more investment, which is bound to widen the gap between rich and poor.

The system that keeps the majority of Indians impoverished is profitable for U.S. firms as well as for India's dependent bourgeoisie. While the Indian government spends half its budget on its military, many millions of people are host to intestinal parasites, since nowhere is tap water safe. There is no electricity in the countryside just 25 miles outside the capital.

India has the greatest number of poor people in the world. Of India's over 1 billion population, "300 million Indians are earning less than one U.S. dollar a day" and "800 million people are living below the poverty line." (Hindustan Times, March 5)

As the transnationals scramble to sell products like Coca-Cola and Pepsi in India, the anger of the people is mounting. The demonstrations against Bush, whom the Socialist Unity Center called a "brigand whose hand is tainted with the blood of millions of innocent people," express the resistance of hundreds of millions of oppressed people against the crimes of imperialism and national capitalism, which subjugate the majority of Indians. □

Big gun on campus

The verdict is in, it's unanimous and it's no surprise: The Supreme Court made a reactionary and militarist ruling that the Pentagon has the right to recruit on college campuses and at law schools, despite its bigoted anti-gay practices. Therefore, the robbed judges declared, any college that denies full access to Pentagon recruiters will be barred from federal funding.

This ruling is a threat to every college or university administration and board of trustees: Give the uniformed body snatchers full access to students or lose your share of the \$35 billion a year in federal aid. At risk is not just Defense Department contracts, but monies for scientific and medical research, transportation and Department of Education grants.

Faculty from dozens of schools had jointly filed a suit named *Rumsfeld vs. Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights (FAIR)*. This suit against the Defense Department included New York University, University of San Francisco, Georgetown and Stanford. The suit argued that the anti-gay policies of the Pentagon violate hard-won campus anti-discrimination policies.

Six years ago, the Supreme Court had set back gay rights in a 5-4 decision that ruled the Boy Scouts had a free-speech right to oust a gay scoutmaster because his very existence in the organization challenged their discriminatory "moral message." The suit by the universities argued that the same legal logic should apply in this situation. They defended their free-speech right to oust an anti-gay employer, the Pentagon, whose presence conflicted with the schools' anti-

discriminatory moral message.

However, the Supreme Court judges ruled 8-0 that faculty could say whatever they wanted, but the bottom line is: You must give Pentagon recruiters the same rights as any other employer.

The Pentagon is not just any other employer. In this "job," workers come back in body bags or deeply wounded physically, emotionally and psychologically. In this job, workers are ordered to bomb, gun down and torture other workers and their families as the U.S. occupies whole countries.

This case did not take up most of these issues. The legal basis for the challenge to military recruitment on campuses was solely based on the Pentagon's war against its own GIs—gay and lesbian, bisexual and trans—a relentless witch hunt that further demonstrates the vicious character of the imperialist military.

But the generals and admirals have demonstrated that this policy can be briefly lifted—as it was during the first Gulf War when they need to beef up troop force. However, after that war, LGBT soldiers received less than honorable discharges, stripping them of veterans' benefits.

This Supreme Court ruling is a direct challenge to youth on campuses across the country to mount a fierce counter-recruitment struggle as youth protest the war on Iraq itself. It's time to take the struggle against the war—at home and abroad—to every campus and into the streets.

To connect with those fighting military recruiting, see www.troopsoutnow.org.

Fight the abortion ban!

South Dakota Gov. Michael Rounds on March 6 signed a ban on abortions that is a full-fledged assault on women's right to life. The ban allows no exceptions for victims of rape or incest or to protect a woman's health. Legislators sponsoring the law are betting that the two new rightist justices on the Supreme Court, John Roberts and Samuel Alito, will use it to overturn legal abortion.

This deliberate attempt to turn back the clock hits hardest at young, rural, poor women, who are disproportionately African American, Latina, Asian and—in the state of South Dakota especially—Native.

Why is this happening? The ruling class is so desperate to control their empire abroad and so ruthless in their demand for ever-greater profits that they're ratcheting up the oppression of working and poor people in this country. But they need some sort of grassroots political organization. The religious right is providing some of the muscle needed to keep these politicians in office long enough to carry out the reactionary corporate agenda.

But they've forgotten a major history lesson—if they ever knew it. Sooner or later, the oppressed always rise up in rebellion.

That's what led to abortion being legalized in 1973. In unprecedented numbers women took to the streets all

over the country to demand the right to control their bodies and their lives.

Are things different today? A poll published March 8 by that well-known conservative mouthpiece Fox News showed that, even by their reckoning, 59 percent of respondents would not support such a ban in their state.

The timing of the ban two days before International Women's Day is especially galling, adding insult to injury. Ever since 1910 IWD has symbolized the determination of women all over the world to end centuries'-old oppression. Its shining hour was in 1917 when the strike of women workers in St. Petersburg was the first shot in the Russian Revolution.

Let's revive the revolutionary spirit of IWD and build a broad, united fightback movement against all forms of oppression. Into the streets! □

MUMIA SPEAKS

An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

Columns by the Black journalist on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica Moorehead, Larry Holmes and Teresa Gutierrez.

Order from International Action Center
39 West 14 St. #206, New York, NY 10011 \$3

Iraqi people, U.S. troops Both want end to occupation

By LeiLani Dowell

Three separate polls, two taken in Iraq and one in the United States, show that the majority of the people in both countries are opposed to the occupation of Iraq—including those troops sent to occupy it.

A poll released on Feb. 28 by Le Moyne College/Zogby shows that a great majority of U.S. troops stationed in Iraq—72 percent—"think the U.S. should exit Iraq in the next 12 months." Of those, 29 percent said the U.S. should leave "immediately."

The poll also revealed the confusion of many of the troops stationed in Iraq about the purpose of the war. Forty-two percent said the U.S. mission "is either somewhat or very unclear to them, that they have no understanding of it at all, or are unsure." Eighty-five percent said that the U.S. mission is primarily "to retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9-11 attacks."

Despite all the propaganda to the contrary, however, only 24 percent believed that "establishing a democracy that can be a model for the Arab World" was a major reason for the war. Three-quarters of the troops polled had served multiple tours in Iraq, according to a press release from Zogby International.

Meanwhile, the newest Washington Post-ABC News poll of people living in the United States says that over half of those polled—52 percent—believe that the U.S. should begin withdrawing forces. According to the Washington Post, "The poll found that 56 percent also say the United States is not making significant progress toward restoring civil order in Iraq." Furthermore, 48 percent said the U.S. and its allies are failing to move ahead in "establishing a democratic government."

Perhaps the most insightful poll was released on Jan. 31 by the Program on International Policy Attitudes. Entitled "What the Iraqi Public Wants," the poll divided the Iraqi population into Kurds, Shia and Sunnis, and shows that 80 percent of all Iraqis polled believe that the "U.S. government plans to have permanent military bases in Iraq." Seventy-six percent believed that the U.S. would refuse "if the new Iraqi government were to tell the U.S. to withdraw all of its forces within six months." Eighty-seven percent would approve the government's endorsing a timeline for U.S. withdrawal, as opposed to only reducing the forces "as the security situation improves." Almost half of those polled—47 percent—said they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in Iraq.

According to the report, "The major source of urgency for withdrawal is the feeling ... that it is offensive for their country to be occupied. A secondary reason is that U.S. forces attract more attacks and make the violence worse. The majority of those polled expect that should the U.S. withdraw in six months, the day-to-day security of ordinary citizens, willingness of factions in parliament to cooperate, and

availability of public services would increase; while violent attacks, inter-ethnic violence, the amount of crime, and the presence of 'foreign fighters' would all decrease."

The report also states that "a majority or plurality says the U.S. is doing a poor job" in all areas of nonmilitary involvement—assisting with economic development, assisting with the oil industry, training Iraqi security forces, helping to build Iraqi government institutions, helping to mediate between ethnic groups, infrastructure, and helping Iraqis organize their communities to address needs. "Of the seven nonmilitary activities Iraqis were asked about," the report asserts, "approval is ... lowest for U.S. efforts to help mediate between ethnic groups (65 percent overall)."

These numbers come amid intense fighting throughout Iraq, with 15 killed on March 6, including a puppet Iraqi major-general and one U.S. soldier whose death brought the official U.S. troop toll to 2,300. In addition, a report from Amnesty International states that torture of detainees in Iraq is still routinely occurring, despite promises to the contrary in the wake of the Abu Ghraib scandal. AI says that 14,000 detainees are being held in coalition military prisons; last year, the U.S. said it plans to expand prison capacity to 16,000, at an expense of \$50 million.

On March 6, the radio show *Democracy Now!* interviewed two Iraqi women who had traveled to New York to speak out about the situation in Iraq. One of them, civil engineer and blogger Faiza Al-Araji, described the propagation of "civil war" in Iraq, amidst the explosion of recent fighting: "Somebody is pushing the country to ... the option of civil war. Why? Who is the benefit? Iraqis are against civil war."

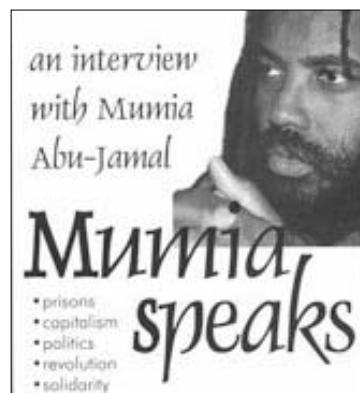
"If you have the chance to go ... in the streets of Iraq and ask everyone, 'Are you with the civil war?' they will say, 'No.' ... If you have [an] official meeting with the leaders of religion and political parties and social parties ... they will say, 'No.' So the question is: Who is pushing the country to choose civil war? ..."

"The only one who will benefit from this civil war is the occupation force, because it will give them the justification to stay forever in Iraq. They are building army bases to stay in Iraq. So, we have no other explanation."

When interviewer Amy Goodman asked Al-Araji if she was Sunni or Shia, she replied, "I don't like this question. I'm Iraqi. And I'm insisting I am Iraqi. I don't want to use these new titles [that] have ... entered Iraq after [occupation head Paul] Bremer. When he entered Iraq he made this division of the Iraqi people. And we refuse it. ..."

"We are brothers and sisters. We are Muslim This is the identity of the nation.... But they are trying to divide the people, to go to the sub-identity, to make a cause of fighting or to provoke the people against each other. And we refuse it."

Medea Benjamin of Code Pink, which is organizing the U.S. tour of the Iraqi women, reported that the U.S. State Department denied visas to two other women invited on the delegation and gave as a reason that these women had no family ties in Iraq and might stay in the U.S. They lack family ties because in both cases their entire families had been killed when U.S. tanks fired into the civilian cars in which they were driving. □



General strike evokes Guinea's independence struggle

By G. Dunkel

A five-day general strike was suspended in the West African country of Guinea on March 4, after the government, the business association and the two union confederations that called the strike reached an agreement on relatively substantial wage increases.

The unions—the National Confederation of Guinean Workers (CNTG) and the Labor Alliance of Guinean Workers (USTG)—reserved the right to renew the strike if the government or businesses fail to live up to the agreement. Workers had been demanding a fourfold increase in wages. The protocol of agreement sets as an aim the doubling of wages.

This sounds like a tremendous pay increase, but most workers in Guinea bring home less than \$1 a day. Prices have shot up ever since the government made an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and started floating its currency March 1, 2005. Even though Guinea has a vast agricultural potential, with rich, well-watered soil, the price of rice—a staple—has shot up to \$22 for a 110-pound bag, well beyond the reach of most workers. Rice is generally imported.

Working people in Conakry, the capi-

tal, are so poor they are unable to buy food in advance and generally shop for each meal.

Besides agriculture, Guinea is endowed with diamonds, gold, iron ore, rare metals and uranium. It contains two-thirds of the world's aluminum ore, bauxite. But except for the African countries hit by war—Angola, Liberia, Congo, for example—it is one of the poorest countries on the continent.

Guinea's poverty, even though it has been independent for nearly 50 years, can be traced back to French President Charles de Gaulle's reaction when Sékou Touré, a union leader who was leading Guinea's struggle for independence, said no to remaining in the neocolonial trading bloc France wanted to construct in West Africa. Touré said, "We prefer liberty in poverty than riches in slavery."

In retaliation, the French did not even leave a light bulb behind. They took records, rolling stock, cars and trucks, office furniture, telephones and any moveable telephone equipment. They emptied pharmacies, piled up their medicines and burned them. They imposed a nearly total financial and economic blockade of Guinea, which survived only with limited aid from the Soviet Union and lost two decades of development.

When Lansana Conte took power in 1984 in a military coup, Touré's economic policies had already moved towards a free market, capitalist model. Even after Conte ran and won two elections, the narrow elite that had established itself maintained a tight hold on most of Guinea's available income, after the demands of the World Bank and IMF were satisfied.

The organizing and support for the strike ending March 4 was extremely solid. One of the few gas stations that stayed open in Conakry was between the barracks for the military police and the parliament building. Despite the police presence, youths attempted to close it Feb. 28, the second day of the strike. Banks, most transportation, and mining as well as most government offices were closed and stayed closed until the strike was suspended.

Both the CNTG and the USTG held a meeting the day the strike ended in the main Trade Union Hall in Conakry, where Guinea's independence was proclaimed in 1958. Radio France International carried some of the meeting live, and the cheers, applause and satisfaction of the leaders over their victory was evident.

Hadja Rabyatou Sera Dialla, leader of the CNTG, said, "This hall is historic. The independence of Guinea, it was proclaimed here and today, we are still here! I am crying because, for me, today is 1958... All Guineans observed the strike, even the

beggars who came to this Hall to say that they were observing the strike because the people who gave them food didn't have any. Today is your victory. Thanks to you, we have been heard. We told our lenders that we no longer have any debts, the African people have already paid our debts..."

Luis M'bemba Soumah of the Free Union of Teachers and Researchers of Guinea, said "Today is historic. Guineans were blocked by fear, but we have swept it aside. Now it is finished! I hope that things are going to get better. We are going to keep our eyes on them, the members of government. They asked us to stop the strike and we said 'Nyet' but when the union leaders said stop, we did!"

El-hadj Ibrhima Fofana of the USTG said that Sera Dialla was a woman that unions could count on to stand up to the pressures of the government, the parliament and even women's organizations, which didn't support the strike. Fofana added, "The unions have given the government a choice: pay off our debts or nourish the people of Guinea."

A general strike that lasts for five days and stays solid indicates that the people of Guinea are fed up with the hunger and poverty they face every day and will take strong measures to improve their lives. The strike was suspended but the vigilance will endure. □

Their spin or ours?

An article in the Feb. 13 Adweek reports, "The Bush administration spent \$1.4 billion in taxpayer dollars on 137 contracts with advertising agencies over the past two-and-a-half years."

The article cites a Government Accountability Office report that shows contracts include work related to "marriage-related initiatives," "present[ing] the Army's strategic perspective in the global war on terrorism," and warning about the "consequences and potential dangers of buying prescription drugs from non-U.S. sources."

On a much, much smaller budget, Workers World newspaper brings you its own spin—that is, the truth behind the lies. We defend the right of marriage for all genders and sexualities. We expose the "war on terror" as a war of imperialist conquest, and we show that the real terrorists sit in the boardrooms of corporations and banks, inside the Oval Office and on Capitol Hill. And we point out that free health care is not only possible, it already exists in countries like socialist Cuba and Bolivarian Venezuela.

We always have the interests of the working and oppressed as our top priority. Won't you help us continue telling it like it is?

Join the Workers World Supporter Program

Supporters who contribute \$75 a year receive a year's subscription, a monthly letter and five free trial subscriptions. Sponsors who contribute \$100 also get a book published by WW Publishers. Sustainers also get five books or videos.

- \$75 Enclosed to become a WW Supporter.
- \$100 Enclosed to become a WW Sponsor.
- \$300 Enclosed to become a WW Sustainer.
- One time donation of \$ _____.
- Enclosed 1st monthly payment: \$6 (Supporter) \$10 (Sponsor)
- \$25 (Sustainer)
- Please send me more information about the Supporter Program.
- Enclosed is my first payment of \$ _____ I plan to finish payment by _____ (date).
- Enclosed is my total payment of \$ _____.

Please fill in your name and address below.

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Clip and return to

Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl., New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994 • fax: 212.675.7869 • www.workers.org • email: ww@workers.org

Firestone blocks union aid to Liberia strike

By G. Dunkel

When U.S. rubber unions took up collections for sick fellow workers or the recent Katrina disaster, no one harassed them. But when they tried to show support for fellow rubber workers who struck Firestone Natural Rubber in Liberia, the transnational corporation on Feb. 22 blocked this display of international working-class solidarity.

The Liberian workers had good reason for their strike. Dan Adomitis, president of Firestone Natural Rubber, told CNN in November 2005 that it was reasonable for him to expect one of "his" workers on Firestone's million-acre rubber plantation in Liberia to tap 650 trees a day. It only takes 2 to 3 minutes a tree, Adomitis said, expecting nobody to do the calculation.

Tapping 650 trees at 2 minutes a tree means that the Firestone worker has to do 1,300 minutes of work a day, that is, over 21 hours. That's the minimum time. For this, the worker gets paid \$3.19 for the entire day. Only if both spouse and children help can the worker make the quota.

Liberia has suffered from 14 years of war, so jobs are extremely scarce and hundreds of thousands of people have not held regular paying jobs for years. Families were willing to take the jobs Firestone offers, even if they have to do unpaid labor.

But Liberian workers learned that Firestone was using toxic chemicals on the trees, which caused them and their children and spouses to get sick. Then Firestone started deducting one-third of their daily pay for unspecified reasons. The workers struck in November 2005 and testified for a NGO that started a suit against Firestone. They also raised issues like unsafe

working conditions, unsanitary, company-provided housing and discrimination.

Any strike is tough but in a country where having a job is unusual, workers strike only as a last resort.

Eight Steelworker locals that represent workers at Bridgestone-Firestone plants in the United States sent a fact-finding tour to Liberia. After the tour, the U.S. locals decided to take up plant-gate collections to help the workers on strike in Liberia.

"We've stood for years at the same locations collecting for members who are ill or other locals on strike. Most recently, we collected to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina," Lewis Beck, president of United Steelworkers Local 1055, said in a press release on the USW web site. Local 1055 represents the workers at a BF plant in LaVergne, Tenn.

But this time, Beck and his coworkers were collecting to support rubber workers who toil on Bridgestone-Firestone's giant rubber plantation in Liberia. Local 1055 was the first of eight USW-represented locals scheduled to participate in the gate collections.

On Feb. 22, the company stopped workers at the plant gate from collecting donations to help the struggling rubber workers in Liberia.

"Situations like this remind me why our contract negotiations are so difficult. I think the company sometimes forgets that its workers are people trying to take good care of their families," Beck said. He and other members of the local were planning to meet with lawyers to discuss the possibility of filing legal charges.

The AFL-CIO highlighted the USW struggle on its Corporate Greed Blog (blog.aflcio.org/?p=127). □

Después del ataque en Samarra Iraquíes culpan intervención de EEUU por la violencia

Por John Catalinotto

Aún nadie ha revelado evidencia contundente que compruebe quién destruyó el templo en Samarra, Irak, que ha provocado batallas entre las comunidades sunita y chiíta. Pero sin importar quién haya encendido la mecha que destruyó la cúpula dorada, las fuerzas de ocupación lideradas por los Estados Unidos son las responsables por estos asaltos adicionales contra la población iraquí.

Desde el 27 de febrero, cinco días después de la explosión, ninguna organización o estado ha aceptado públicamente la responsabilidad por el acto. Esto de por sí, muestra que quien haya sido el que llevó a cabo tal acto, sus intenciones eran la de culpar a otras fuerzas. Estaba asegurado que tal destrucción incitaría batallas entre las dos principales comunidades árabes en Irak, la chiíta y la sunita. Si estas batallas aumentaran a gran escala, podrían llevar a que Irak se fragmentase en muchos estados pequeños lo cual haría mucho más fácil su manipulación por el imperialismo.

El blogger iraquí Riverbend dijo que Bagdad despertó con la noticia de que “hombres vestidos con uniformes de la seguridad iraquí entraron al templo y detonaron los explosivos, dañando el edificio y dejándolo sin posibilidad de reparación. Varios templos en Bagdad fueron atacados. Yo creo que lo que tiene a todos muy consternados es el hecho de que la reacción fue muy ligera, como si se estuviera esperando.”

Batallas sectarias ocurrieron luego del ataque reportándose que se realizaron por grupos organizados. Se sospecha de las brigadas Badr. Estas brigadas son la milicia del Consejo Supremo de la Revolución Islámica (CSRI), asociada al líder chiíta Gran Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani. El CSRI colaboró con las fuerzas estadounidenses cuando éstas invadieron y profanaron la ciudad santa de Nayaf para abatir la insurrección liderada por el chiíta Muqtada al-Sadr.

Desde la provocación en Samarra, los noticieros capitalistas de los Estados Unidos han presentado los eventos en Irak de tal manera como para exagerar las diferencias entre las comunidades sunita y chiíta. Sin embargo es algo informativo y al menos alentador, el conocer el contraste entre los reportes de la prensa empresarial y los de los iraquíes tanto dentro como fuera del país que se oponen a la ocupación por los Estados Unidos. Estos indican que en muchos casos se han dado manifestaciones después del ataque con miras a forjar unidad entre los chiítas y sunitas en contra de la ocupación.

Solidaridad chiíta-sunita

El analista Dahr Jamail, un periodista que está en contra de la ocupación quien pasó ocho meses reportando directamente desde Irak, escribió el 24 de febrero que “los sunitas fueron los primeros en ir a las manifestaciones de solidaridad con los chiítas en Samarra, al igual que condenaban los ataques a los templos. Las manifestaciones de solidaridad entre los sunitas y chiítas se dieron en todo Irak, incluyendo a Basra, Diwaniyah, Nasiriyah, Kut y Salah al-Din.

“Miles de chiítas marcharon gritando consignas antiamericanas por toda la Ciudad de Sadr, la región pobre de chiítas en Bagdad, la cual acoge a casi la mitad de la población de la ciudad capital. Mientras tanto en la ciudad de Kut, principalmente chiíta, al sur de Bagdad, miles marcharon gritando consignas contra América e Israel a la vez que quemaban las banderas de los Estados Unidos y de Israel.”

Los noticieros turcos reportaron el 25 de febrero que el clérigo chiíta Moqtada al-Sadr, “públicamente concertó la paz entre líderes políticos y religiosos sunitas. Cuatro jefes del movimiento Sadr hicieron un ‘pacto de honor’ con la conservadora Asociación Sunita de Musulmana Eruditos haciendo un llamado a ponerle fin a los ataques contra los templos, al derramamiento de sangre y condenaron cualquier acto que lleve a la sedición. La reunión también anunció la formación de una comisión para ‘determinar las razones de las crisis con vista a resolverlas,’ a la vez que hicieron un llamado para el retiro de las tropas estadounidenses.”

Moqtada al-Sadr ordenó a su ejército Mehdi que no usara más sus uniformes negros, por miedo a que otros estuvieran disfrazándose como fuerzas Mehdi para provocar confrontaciones armadas entre chiítas y sunitas. A pesar de que al-Sadr se unió en un bloque electoral con las fuerzas reaccionarias CSRI y al-Dawa, las cuales han apoyado la ocupación y se considera que están alineadas a los chiítas en Irán, muchos en la resistencia ven al Ejército Mehdi como al que entre todas las agrupaciones en la comunidad chiíta, sea el que más probablemente se una a los grupos mayoritarios sunitas que están ahora luchando contra la ocupación.

Además de intentar evitar una guerra civil, fuerzas dentro de las comunidades chiítas y sunitas en Irak se están uniendo para rechazar la indeseada y dolorosa ocupación imperialista.

Sami Ramadani, un iraquí exiliado en Bretaña, escribió el 24 de febrero en el periódico British Guardian: “No han sido los símbolos religiosos sunitas en contra de los cuales cientos de miles de manifestantes protestan, sino las banderas de los EEUU. La consigna que los unió el miércoles fue: ‘No a América, no al terrorismo’.”

“Los clérigos más escuchados por los militantes jóvenes inmediatamente culparon a la ocupación por el atentado. Estos incluyeron a Moqtada al-Sadr, Nasrallah, líder del Hizbulah en el Líbano; Ayatolah Khalisi, líder de la Congreso de Fundación Nacional Iraquí; y el Gran Ayatolah Khamenei, el líder espiritual de Irán”. Khamenei culpó a los servicios de inteligencia de los EEUU e Israel.

“Junto al Gran Ayatolah Sistani”, siguió Ramadani, “ellos además lo declararon un ‘pecado’ grave el atacar a los sunitas, como también lo declararon todos los clérigos sunitas sobre los ataques contra los chiítas. Fue reportado por la BBC que Sadr hizo un llamado a vengarse contra los sunitas—de hecho, Sadr dijo ‘ningún sunita haría esto’ [bombardear el templo] e hizo un llamado a vengarse contra la ocupación”.

¿Dividir a Irak en tres partes?

La responsabilidad legal de Washington

de proteger el templo fue claramente expuesta en una declaración del Tribunal Bertrand Russell que dijo: “La destrucción de la mezquita Al-Askari en Samarra, Irak representa otra violación más de las obligaciones que una fuerza de ocupación militar tiene bajo las leyes humanitarias internacionales”. Estos reglas sobre la guerra y la ocupación fueron precisadas en las convenciones firmadas en la Haya y en Ginebra hace más de 50 años.

La responsabilidad del imperialismo estadounidense, sin embargo, va mucho más allá de la violación de estas reglas. La administración de Bush concientemente publicó mentiras en el intento de justificar la invasión ilegal de Irak. Luego, EEUU erigió un régimen de ocupación para apoderarse del petróleo iraquí y establecer bases militares permanentes y un centro de operaciones para controlar el Medio Oriente y el Asia Central.

En abril del 2003, cuando el Secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld todavía creía que podía forzar a todo Irak aceptar los planes de EEUU a través de una guerra de “sacudida y terror”, los líderes de los EEUU podían haber creído que era posible establecer un gobierno títere, débil y sumiso en Irak. A los pocos meses de la ocupación de Bagdad por el Pentágono, sin embargo, la resistencia iraquí dejó claro que la ocupación de los EEUU no sería fácil.

Washington contempló otras estrategias

Para noviembre del 2003, los comités de expertos estadounidenses ya proponían que Irak se dividiera en tres partes. Leslie H. Gelb, presidente emérito del poderoso Consejo sobre Relaciones Extranjeras escribió, “La única estrategia viable, entonces, puede ser la de corregir al defecto histórico [de Irak] y moverse en etapas hacia una solución de tres estados: kurdos en el norte, sunitas en el centro, y chiítas en el sur”. (New York Times del 25 de noviembre de 2003)

A finales del 2004, la corporación Rand realizó un estudio para la Fuerza Aérea de los EEUU. Una de las metas principales del estudio era la de “identificar las divisiones claves y descubrir las líneas vulnerables sectarias, étnicas, regionales y nacionales y evaluar como éstas divisiones pueden generar desafíos y oportunidades para los Estados Unidos”.

La Constitución de Irak, escrita por los Estados Unidos, y todas las reglas para seleccionar representantes en las elecciones iraquíes, incluían elementos de esta fragmentación en tres partes. Esta fragmentación institucional fomentó conflictos entre comunidades, aún cuando estas diferencias no eran consideradas significativas en el pasado.

El provocar una guerra civil entre las comunidades en Irak es una acción peligrosa para los EEUU, pero la creciente fuerza de la resistencia ha puesto a los imperialistas en una situación desesperada. Hay evidencia de que los EEUU ya está usando la llamada “opción salvadoreña”, la cuál quiere decir, que EEUU está estableciendo escuadrones de la muerte en Irak para conducir una guerra secreta contra cualquier persona que se oponga a la ocupación.

Cientos de científicos y académicos iraquíes han sido asesinados misteriosamente. Como el periodista Robert Fisk escribió el 14 de julio, 2004, en el periódico británico The Independent, “Las autoridades universitarias sospechan que hay una campaña cuya meta es despojar a Irak de sus académicos para acabar con la herencia cultural de Irak, la cuál empezó cuando América entró a Bagdad.”

John Pace, un oficial de la ONU que salió de Irak a mediados de febrero, le dijo al Independent (27 de febrero) que “muchos de los asesinatos fueron ejecutados . . . bajo el mando del Ministerio del Interior” del gobierno títere respaldado por los EEUU.

Hay elementos en la resistencia iraquí, por ejemplo en el Partido Baath, que se oponen y atacan la intervención de cualquier elemento iraní en Irak, ya sea de grupos pro-Irán como las Brigadas Badr o de agentes iraníes. A su vez, grupos pro-iraníes atacan el papel de los Baathistas en la resistencia.

Esta hostilidad viene en su mayor parte por la guerra entre Irak e Irán de 1980-1988, dos naciones capitalistas oprimidas por el imperialismo. EEUU pudo manipular sus antagonismos para debilitar y atrasar ambos países Medio Orientales. Los pueblos de Irak e Irán tienen interés en vencer esta hostilidad para poder combatir mejor la amenaza directa del imperialismo que ambos enfrentan hoy.

Los aliados de los EEUU en la región, especialmente los británicos, tienen su propia experiencia utilizando la norma de “dividir para dominar” contra las naciones colonizadas. Los británicos fomentaron hostilidades para incitar la partición de la India colonial en India y Pakistán en 1948. En el norte de Irlanda, los colonialistas británicos provocaron violencia sectaria para justificar su ocupación y represión de la comunidad mayormente católica que apoyaba la liberación del dominio británico. Los imperialistas estadounidenses y europeos usaron las diferencias entre los pueblos de Yugoslavia para fragmentar esa república federal socialista en media docena de mini-estados que pueden así ser gobernados más fácilmente.

Y además, la política del gobierno de Israel siempre ha tenido el objetivo de debilitar Irak dividiendo ese país en tres partes y/o dejarlo completamente ingobernable.

La ocupación estadounidense ha traído muerte y destrucción a Irak y no ha podido establecer una sociedad que funcione. Cada vez más gente en los EEUU está consciente de ese fracaso y del horrible costo de la guerra.

Una encuesta hecha por Zogby Internacional/Le Moyne College, publicada el 28 de febrero, encontró que el 72 por ciento de las tropas estadounidenses dice que EEUU debe retirarse dentro de 12 meses, incluyendo un 29 por ciento que dijo que EEUU debe retirarse inmediatamente. Una encuesta hecha por la CBS News reportó que solamente un 30 por ciento de la población que respondió aprobaba la política de Bush en Irak.

Ya es más que tiempo para movilizar ese sentimiento popular y obligar a los EEUU a que termine su ocupación de Irak. □