

## MUNDO OBRERO

La muerte de Milosevic 12

## NYC TRANSIT TENSION

TWU can mobilize 3



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

## WATER WORKS

Detroit unions fight to save jobs 3

## ECUADOR'S INDIGENOUS 'No to FTA'

9

## MILOSEVIC'S DEATH

Blaming the victim 11



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

## 150 MILES OF SOLIDARITY

Walking to New Orleans 5

## 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

# JOBS ARE A RIGHT! Students, workers plan general strike in France

By LeiLani Dowell

All major French union confederations and student bodies called on March 20 for a general strike and protest marches on March 28 to pressure the government to withdraw a job law that would allow workers under 26 to be fired without reason.

In France, unlike in the United States, workers' right to their jobs is protected by law, and it is difficult for management to fire workers once they have been hired. The new law would set up a two-tier system, removing that right to a job from young people.

The call for a general strike follows massive demonstrations on March 18 when more than 1.5 million people—including high school and college students, workers, retirees and families—protested in the streets against the new law.

According to the French Press Agency (AFP), police fired tear gas and assaulted scores of demonstrators with water cannons. Hundreds of youth fought the cops, smashing windows, overturning vehicles and hurling objects at the cops for six hours. One trade unionist, beaten mercilessly by police, lies in a hospital in a coma.

Actions on campuses, including strikes and sit-ins, have affected 60 of the country's 84 universities, with 21 closed and 37 others "badly disrupted." Protests have also occurred in dozens of high schools.

The First Employment Contract (CPE) was pushed forward by French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, without consultation with youth or trade unions. The government also used a constitutional article to hasten the law's passage by limiting parliamentary debate.

CPE offers a two-year contract for youth that Villepin claims will ease unemployment. However, the law's provision that youth

can be fired at will actually make it more difficult for them to find and hold long-term employment. In addition, AFP reports that the financial compensation for those fired will be less than for those on current short-term contracts. The law would apply to all youths under 26, whether the job is their first or not, despite the word "first" in its name.

### U.S.-style work rules

Austria's Der Standard magazine said the CPE is an attempt to introduce U.S.-style "hire and fire" rules to the country.

The government deceptively framed the law as part of "equal opportunities" legislation after youth rebellions in November of last year. While overall youth unemployment in France is 23 percent—one of the highest rates in Europe—it is as high as 50 percent in the largely African and Muslim immigrant suburbs where the rebellions took place last fall.

The government is now attempting to divide the youth to diminish their power. As opposed to the college students, the youth involved in the unrest on March 18 were labeled "hooligans and thugs from a number of neighborhoods" by Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. France's daily newspaper Liberation pointed out the flaw in the right-wing minister's argument: "As if many young people in the suburbs were not also students ... as if those excluded from the education system did not also hope to escape the threat of unwarranted dismissal."

In fact, youth interviewed in the suburbs say they support the efforts of the students on the campuses and understand the implications of the law. According to the Associated Press, "Youths [in the suburbs] do not expect any quick results from the contract and wonder how it is any different from temp work. They insist

*Continued on page 9*

## Worldwide protests say: U.S. out of Iraq NOW



New York City, March 18. See 6-8

PHOTO: ROBERTO J. MERCADO

# Early 1960s: 'Gay is good!'

By Leslie Feinberg

The dynamism of the lunch counter sit-ins and freedom rides of the African-American civil rights movement gave rise to an East Coast current of white gay and lesbian activists within Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis—the national gay and lesbian organizations. These young gay men and lesbians were more militant and began to reject advice from the homophile movement to try to “fit into” society, to not make waves, and to rely on professionals and establishment figures to bequeath them social rights.

Historian John D’Emilio said of this new, more militant political current of the early 1960s, “Inspired by the example of civil rights activists, it abandoned the accommodationist approach of the 1950s. Militants adopted an ideology based on equal rights for minorities, engaged in direct action techniques of protest, and affirmed the propriety of homosexuals and lesbians leading their own struggle for justice. Their confidence and determination won for the movement and for gay women and men generally a visibility that their predecessors had failed to achieve.” (“Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities”)

For example, Franklin Kameny “argued relentlessly for gay activists to embrace an aggressive direct action strategy modeled on the civil rights movement.”

Kameny coined the phrase “Gay is good” in 1966 after hearing African Americans declare “Black is beautiful!” The 1968 North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO) formally adopted the slogan in 1968.

Kameny had been fired as a government employee in 1957 after his arrest a year earlier on charges of “lewd conduct” was discovered by investigators. Kameny continued to fight the Civil Service Commission decision blocking him from any federal employment until 1961, when it was clear that he had

exhausted every avenue of appeal through the commission and the courts. That same year, Kameny co-founded a Mattachine chapter in Washington, D.C.

Kameny rejected the accommodationist homophile movement’s “genteel, debating society approach” that “impelled [it] to present impartially both or all sides” of every political position. “We cannot stand upon an ivory-tower concept of aloof, detached dignity,” Kameny told a New York City Mattachine meeting audience in July 1964. “This is a movement, in many respects, of down-to-earth, grass-roots, sometimes tooth-and-nail politics.” And, he stressed, “[O]ur opponents will do a fully adequate job of presenting their views, and will not return us the favor of presenting ours; we gain nothing in virtue by presenting theirs, and only provide the enemy ... with ammunition to be used against us.”

Kameny scorned the dominant medical model that homosexuality was an “illness.” He publicly stated instead, “I take the stand that not only is homosexuality ... not immoral, but that homosexual acts engaged in by consenting adults are moral, in a positive and real sense, and are right, good and desirable, both for the individual participants and for the society in which they live.”

In April 1962, activist Randy Wicker confronted the WBAI radio station public affairs director in New York City about a broadcast in which psychiatrists had discussed homosexuality as a sickness. Wicker demanded, and won, a program in which gay men were able to speak as experts about their lives.

Wicker took his media campaign about the homosexual rights movement to publications from the Village Voice to Harper’s.

Kameny and Wicker drew the ire of the more politically right-wing leadership of the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis.

*Next: Mid-1960s gay activists target U.S. government.*



**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](http://www.workers.org). Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

## A new book from leslie feinberg, transgender author and activist

Leslie Feinberg, one of today's most prominent transgender rights activists, and an organizer in national and international progressive movements for over 25 years, will be on a book-signing tour in San Francisco, March 24 and 25. She'll be in Los Angeles, March 23 and 28 with her new novel,

### DRAG KING DREAMS.

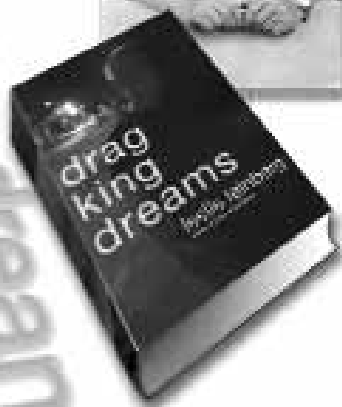
Leslie's 1993 novel, **Stone Butch Blues**, translated internationally, won the American Library Association Award for Gay and Lesbian Literature and the LAMBDA Small Press Literary Award. Her non-fiction work, **Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman**, is the first analysis of the historical roots of transgender oppression.

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 sleep-walking 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 helps Max awaken from dreams to action.

“In this wonderful new novel Leslie Feinberg shows us where we live today.”  
— E. Lynn Harris

Autographed copies of Drag King Dreams are available only from [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com).



For information about the book tour sponsored by Leftbooks and the International Action Center call:

San Francisco 415.561.9752  
Los Angeles 323.936.7266

## This week ...



### ★ In the U.S.

- Lavender & red, part 58. . . . . 2
- MTA and TWU on collision course, again . . . . . 3
- Detroit Water Department workers face layoffs . . . . . 3
- Honor Fred Hampton Shut down Chicago City Hall . . . 3
- John Black: Foe of Hitler, organizer of workers. . . . . 4
- On the picket line. . . . . 4
- Chicago: 200,000 protest anti-immigrant bill . . . . . 5
- 'Walking to New Orleans' to show solidarity. . . . . 5
- Taking to the streets across U.S.. . . . . 6
- Mumia Abu-Jamal message to protesters. . . . . 8
- John Crofford . . . . . 10

### ★ Around the world

- Students, workers plan general strike in France . . . . . 1
- Worldwide protests condemn U.S. occupation of Iraq . 8
- Popular tribunal on Haiti . . . . . 8
- Ecuador Indigenous-led uprising. . . . . 9
- Belarus beat back Bush . . . . . 10
- A political assassination blamed on the victim . . . . . 11
- Hundreds of thousands march for Milosevic . . . . . 11

### ★ Editorials

- Bush and the Iraq war . . . . . 10

### ★ Noticias En Español

- La muerte de Milosevic . . . . . 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 [iacboston@iacboston.org](mailto:iacboston@iacboston.org)

### NEW YORK

#### Fri., March 24

Workers World Party Forum. Fred Goldstein on U.S. imperialism & Iran and Minnie Bruce Pratt on the Mobile to New Orleans march of Katrina survivors and anti-war military veterans. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30 p.m.) At 55 W. 17 St., 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](mailto:editor@workers.org)  
Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)  
Vol. 48, No. 12 • March 30, 2006  
Closing date: March 22, 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, G. Dunkel, 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](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to [WWnews-subscribe@workersworld.net](mailto: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.



JOIN U.S. 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](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
P.O. Box 424,  
Atlanta, GA 30301  
(404) 627-0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
426 E. 31 St.,  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
(410) 235-7040  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Boston**  
284 Armyory St.,  
Boston, MA 02130  
(617) 983-3835  
Fax (617) 983-3836  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

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

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

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

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
5920 Second Ave.,  
Detroit, MI 48202  
(313) 831-0750  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 130322,  
Houston, TX 77219  
(713) 861-5965  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

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

**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 9202,  
Philadelphia, PA 19139  
(610) 453-0490  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Richmond, Va.**  
P.O. Box 14602,  
Richmond, VA 23221  
[richmond@workers.org](mailto:richmond@workers.org)

**Rochester, N.Y.**  
(585) 436-6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:dc@workers.org)

# TWU can mobilize to win Transit authority and union on collision course, again

By Milt Neidenberg  
New York

Once again, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the 33,700 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 are on a collision course. And more than 7 million subway and bus riders who daily use the New York City transit system face an uncertain future.

The MTA demands that the TWU submit to binding arbitration, which the union has adamantly rejected. The confrontation began two months ago when the rank and file rejected a tentative agreement by seven votes out of the 22,461 that were cast; 11,000 members didn't vote.

Following a petition drive for a second vote by a substantial number of the rank and file, TWU President Roger Toussaint recommended that mandate to the executive board, which approved it 24 to 12. The MTA has ignored their decision and submitted new and tougher proposals, which wiped out the original contract.

The MTA restored the two-tier pension contribution to new hires, which is illegal and outside its jurisdiction. The MTA also withdrew a \$131.7 million pension refund promised to more than 20,000 members who had overpaid contributions in the 1990s. These bosses demanded consolidation of titles, opening the door for the expansion of one-person train operation throughout the system.

Management stripped the maternity leave stipends, the assault pay increases for conductors, operators and bus drivers, and extended the contract expiration date in order to water down the wage package. Language was restored that require sick members to get a doctor's note for every absence and allowed transit inspectors to stop by unannounced to check if a sick worker is home.

Toussaint has characterized the MTA's arrogant, racist and sexist attitudes as "plantation justice."

## MTA bosses declare war on union

The MTA bosses have torn up the tentative agreement they signed. They filed these provocative confrontational proposals with the Public Employee Relations Board, the agency that sets up binding arbitration under the infamous anti-union Taylor Law. This was payback for the three-day strike that paralyzed the financial center of the world and infuriated billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Gov. George Pataki.

In a showdown with the union on safety and security, the MTA ordered that 64 subway stations around the city be left unstaffed during lunch breaks between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Local 100 charged that leaving stations unattended for even a brief time puts straphangers in peril.

Token booths have already been closed. The MTA plans to reduce personnel with technology that could increase accidents and injuries in a work environment already fraught with danger. Recently the union cited an incident involving a computer-run passenger train on an experimental trip that almost crashed into a stationary test train. (The Chief, March 17)

In the same issue, The Chief reported an accident in which a train was derailed as it entered the subway yard, injuring two workers. According to the account, the injured workers needed hospital emergency care, which the supervisor withheld for nearly two hours until a second supervisor showed up to escort them. No doubt this was done to shield management from charges of unsafe operations.

The article describes how management "sent over technicians to do breathalyzer tests and take urine samples and ordered

the injured workers go immediately from the hospital to their downtown headquarters for an 'incident assessment.'" The bosses' concern is that too many accidents and sicknesses increase their insurance premiums. A union representative finally convinced the supervisors that one of the injured workers was "too heavily medicated with pain killers to go downtown that night."

These are not isolated on-the-job incidents for transit workers, who labor amid dirt, dust, diesel fumes. They face the risks of accidents and long-term health problems. (This writer recalls working in the Bethlehem Steel Co. in Lackawanna, N.Y. The bosses would bring hurt workers into the strip mill to spend their shift on a cot in order to avoid recording their injuries as lost-time accidents.)

Toussaint called a news conference at City Hall on March 19 and "demanded that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority agree to a second vote on the proposed contract. ... He was joined by 16 city and state officials ... [who] said the union deserved another chance to ratify the contract." Tom Kelly, an MTA spokesperson "dismissed the idea of a re-vote ... the TWU rejected the contract, which voided the offer and began the state-mandated process for arbitration." (New York Times, March 20)

The new vote has not begun, but the MTA has declared war on the union. The MTA officials don't give a damn how the vote turns out. They have only contempt for the union and for Toussaint's challenge to get back to the bargaining table and address the issues of the tentative agreement in good faith.

## Organize, organize, organize

The MTA bosses' arrogance can only infuriate the 33,700 rank-and-file transit workers. These workers need to unite and

Dec. 2005

WW PHOTO:  
G. DUNKEL



challenge binding arbitration, which will render life-and-death decisions affecting them for the next three years and beyond.

It's time to prepare to fight back. If workers work-to-rule on trains and buses, deliberately using all the safety procedures to minimize accidents, it would be a good beginning. Rank-and-file committees need to set up early to prepare the union to fight binding arbitration. There is much outreach to be done and the TWU has the reputation, the resources and the power to voice a call for unity in the city.

Public sector unions are on the same track as the TWU. Delegates from the United Federation of Teachers, whose contract is coming up, recently called for "no contract, no work." American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37 is having a difficult time getting a decent contract from Bloomberg. The Professional Staff Congress—professors, adjuncts and technical workers in the City University system—has been working under an expired contract since November 2002.

This is a city in which impoverished workers are being forced to make hard choices between paying rent, putting food on the table or clothing their families. Unemployment in oppressed communities here is in the high double digits. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and huge military appropriations are eating up money and resources that city workers need. In this, the largest U.S. city, the intense concentration of workers from oppressed nationalities raises the possibility of organizing beyond bureaucratic and factional boundaries.

One million-plus workers in 400 local unions could forge a formidable and unstoppable weapon to win significant gains. □

## DETROIT

# Water Department workers face layoffs

By David Sole  
Detroit

According to Victor Mercado, director of the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD), an impending layoff of workers throughout the department is needed. Why? To make Wall Street bankers happy.

In a meeting with union officials on March 16, Mercado explained that the department's creditors, holding billions in bonds issued by the department, require there be a sizable reserve fund to make sure their interest payments never are threatened. As the reserve fund has shrunk below targeted levels, Mercado feels compelled to restore money for the bankers by laying off workers. DWSD paid out over \$300 million in interest last year alone.

Letters to many of the unions representing workers at DWSD went out March 13 listing job titles that may face layoffs. No numbers have been published, but speculation is that five percent of the workforce may be given pink slips. Management meetings have been told that all capital improvement projects are being reviewed, which could especially affect city engineers.

Workers, from those who operate the water purification plants to those who clean up hundreds of millions of gallons of

wastewater each day, are nervously waiting to see if the ax falls on them. Many of the jobs are already understaffed, with workers putting in 12-hour shifts. Many vacant positions have been eliminated from the budget over the past two years. And some unions, like UAW Local 2334, representing chemists and technicians, have had their numbers reduced almost 20 percent by attrition from levels just a few years ago.

For years the unions have been protesting the awarding of huge contracts to private firms by the department. Often private contractors who come in have to be trained by city workers on how to do the work. Waste and mismanagement also plague the department.

Mercado himself was hired at a salary of almost \$250,000 a year for a job that used to pay \$90,000. One of his first actions as director was to bring in Infrastructure Management Group as consultants, at a cost of tens of millions of dollars a year. IMG specializes in privatizing public utilities.

DWSD is a non-profit, public entity. All its funds are generated from water and sewerage rates, which have steadily risen over the years. Along with higher rates have come tens of thousands of water shut-offs to customers unable to pay the big bills.

Attempts by the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization to get the city and the DWSD to adopt a Water Affordability Plan have been "under study" for many months. In mid-March the Detroit City Council raised water rates another six percent without tak-

ing any action on a plan to help the poorest customers keep their water service.

Water department unions have announced plans to picket the Water Board Building on Tuesday, March 21, at 4:30 p.m. to protest the layoffs. □

## HONOR FRED HAMPTON

# Shut down Chicago City Hall

A struggle has been going on in Chicago since mid-February about who will write the definitive history of the events of Dec. 4, 1969, the night of the military assault on 2337 W. Monroe that took the lives of Ill. Chairman Fred Hampton, pictured and Mark Clark of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Will it be Superintendent Phil Cline and his thugs-in-blue who were responsible for the Massacre on Monroe? Or will it be the African-American community under the leadership of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee? POCC Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. is leading a struggle to rename that stretch of Monroe, "Honorary Chairman Fred Hampton Way."

Hampton says, "We're calling for mass numbers of the people to come out and shut down City Hall (121 N. LaSalle) on Wednesday, March 29 at 10 a.m. Wear



all-black. We're calling on all communities—we commend the Latin@ community for the courageous stand they took over this whole HR 4437 issue last Friday [March 10]. ...

"It's not just about the street signs. ... Once you start making the concrete connections, you know what I'm saying— you can't talk about Chairman Fred without talking about the present incarceration of POCC Minister of Defense Aaron Patterson, who was locked down and beat up in the same courthouse that former Chairman of the BPP Bobby Seale was chained and gagged at, 38 years ago...

"Who we be? POCC! What's our call? Free them all! Where we gonna be at March 29? City Hall!" The POCC can be reached by mail at: POCC, P.O. Box 368255, Chicago, IL 60636.

—Eric Struch

# JOHN BLACK 1921-2006

## Foe of Hitler, organizer of hospital workers

By Deirdre Griswold

John Black, who died on March 7 at the age of 85, was well known to a wide spectrum of the progressive movement—not just in the United States, but around the world.

When he joined Sam Marcy and others in founding Workers World Party in 1959, he brought to it his experiences in the anti-fascist underground in Germany when he had been a teenager. He also was already a veteran of the struggle to win better wages and benefits for low-paid workers here.

John would go on to become a leading organizer of health care workers, even as he publicly opposed U.S. imperialist interventions and befriended socialist countries like Cuba and the German Democratic Republic.

He was blunt and often disconcertingly honest. His habit of holding a person's gaze with a long, questioning stare charmed his friends and disarmed his adversaries. He knew a lot, had been through a lot, and used his skills very effectively both on the picket lines and in negotiations with hospital bosses.

John's father was a Texan businessman who worked in Berlin and married a German woman. Their son grew up there during the tumultuous years after World War I, when harsh reparations imposed on Germany by the victorious Allies increased the chaos and mass suffering. Millions of workers joined the Communist and Socialist parties. The middle class was also in crisis and looking for a leader.

By the time a worldwide Depression began in earnest and millions of Germans were absolutely destitute, the Nazi Party was already using anti-Semitism and anti-capitalist demagoguery to appeal to the ruined and dispossessed—but secretly it was being funded by captains of industry like Fritz von Thyssen and Alfred Krupp.

Hitler's fanatical anti-communism and hatred of Jews also attracted financing from U.S. multi-millionaires like Henry Ford of Ford Motor Co. and Irene du Pont, then head of General Motors. They wanted the U.S. to side with Germany in a war against the Soviet Union—and expected fat contracts to sell military vehicles.

Union Banking Corp. and WA Harriman & Co. were also among the U.S. firms with ties to Hitler. George W. Bush's great-grandfather and grandfather, respectively, were executive officers of these two companies.

John's parents were conservative, but he admired the family gardener who, like many workers, was a communist. By the time John was a teenager, he was active in the anti-fascist underground, turning out leaflets in the cellar on a hand-pressed gelatin duplicator.

His parents sent the rebellious youth to a prestigious Huguenot school where some of Germany's future leaders were being groomed. Before long, he was expelled, along with other leftist students. Years later, those who had survived the war received a settlement of \$10,000 each. John donated part of his to a defense fund for Mae Mallory—a New York Black Nationalist jailed for supporting people in North Carolina who had fought back against the Ku Klux Klan.

Part of his work for the resistance included skiing in and out of the country along mountainous, unpatrolled areas of the border, carrying documents and valuables. At one point, he left home because his mother threatened to call the police on him. The police caught him once and brought him to Gestapo headquarters. In conversations with comrades, he told of once visiting a government building in the GDR and realizing that it was the former Gestapo building and that his "blood was painted over" on one of the walls.

Just before he reached 18, he left Germany to avoid being drafted or prosecuted and went to England, where he worked for a while with the Communist Party. Because of his critical views about the political situation in Germany, he was accused of being a Trotskyist. Indignant, he read some of Leon Trotsky's writings to disprove his accusers, but was surprised to find out that he agreed with Trotsky's general positions.

John's father had registered him as a U.S. citizen so, in 1940 at the age of 19, he went to New York. He worked in a restaurant and then in a paper box factory, where most of the workers were low-paid immigrant women. There he met Sam Marcy and Dorothy Ballan, the leaders of many



John Black

militant struggles by the paper-box workers' union.

Like them, he became a member of the Socialist Workers Party and believed that prosecuting the class struggle, not succumbing to bourgeois patriotism during the second imperialist world war, was the way to defeat fascism and the ultra-right.

Once the Cold War began, however, the Marcy tendency diverged from the SWP leadership on many world issues. Marcy and his close collaborator Vince Copeland argued in the party's National Committee for strenuous support of the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions and for defend-

ing the socialist camp, which was under siege, especially in Eastern Europe. These differences led the group to split from the SWP and form Workers World Party in 1959.

By this time, John Black was in Buffalo, N.Y., working in a hospital. He soon married Bernice Bates, a member of a Black community theater group. By 1961, he was working with Local 1199 in organizing hospital and health care workers.

John and Bernice moved several times as the family grew and John's work took him on organizing drives to New York City, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Eventually, he became the first president of District 1199P, representing hospital and nursing home employees in Pennsylvania.

In an oral history, Moe Foner, the founder of the hospital workers' union, told how a strike at Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville, N.Y., got settled after a front-page photo of John Black and other pickets being clubbed by police while rushing the hospital appeared in the New York Times the next day.

Bernice Black remembers that strike well. "Ossie Davis walked the picket line, carrying our son Doug. Sarah Lawrence College students brought baba au rhum cakes and other tidbits to the strikers." William Lawrence had founded both the hospital and the prestigious women's college.

The leaders of 1199 viewed organizing dietary, laundry and housekeeping workers as part of the civil rights struggle, since most were people of color who were being paid starvation wages. Malcolm X on several occasions spoke in support of the organizing drive.

The family eventually settled down in State College, Pa., where John worked with Students and Youth Against Racism in campaigning for the freedom of revolutionary Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. In his book, "Live from Death Row," Mumia acknowledges John Black's unflagging support. John also worked with students on a weekly show, "View from the Left," aired on Penn State's radio station.

While still a union leader, he went on delegations to the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Bulgaria to counteract the virulent anti-communism created by the Cold War.

Even after retiring in 1986, John kept up his travels to countries demonized by the U.S. government. He defied the travel ban and visited Cuba in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, he went to Iraq on a solidarity delegation headed by Ramsey Clark to see and bring back information on the devastating sanctions imposed there, which turned out to be a prelude to an all-out U.S. military assault on that country. While returning from that trip, he suffered a serious heart attack. A group of doctors, who had been assessing Iraq's medical needs, saved his life with nitroglycerin.

Despite declining health, John kept up his political agitation and his interest in revolutionary history. At the time of his death, he was still doing research on two favorite subjects: the Illuminati, a movement that was a precursor to the French Revolution of 1789, and the life of Tan Malaka, founder of the Indonesian Communist Party.

John Black is survived by his spouse Bernice, their children Mark, Douglass and Jennifer, and two grandchildren—Shango and Zoe. A memorial will be held on May Day at Friends Meeting House in State College, Pa. □

### Mutiny in the Indies By John Black

1933-Dutch naval personnel join forces with Indonesian sailors against the Dutch imperialists. A long suppressed story available in a pamphlet from: WW Publishers, 55 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011

## Strike at Univ. of Miami

More than 900 service workers at the University of Miami in Florida went on strike March 1 to demand union representation as well as wage hikes, health benefits and workplace protections. The employees of Unico Service Co. want to be represented by SEIU.

University President Donna Shalala—the former Secretary of Health and Human Resources under President Clinton—announced a minimum of 25 percent wage hikes on March 16. The university will immediately raise its current base pay from \$6.40 an hour, the current state minimum wage. The new minimum pay for food service workers will be \$8 an hour, housekeepers will make \$8.55 an hour, and landscapers will make at least \$9.30 an hour. Health care benefits, including medical, dental and vision plans, will be offered.

The university, which opposes the union, had previously disavowed any responsibility for payment and working conditions of its janitors, housekeepers, food servers and landscapers. Most are immigrants from the Caribbean and South America.

However, University of Miami's announcement did not request that Unico obey labor laws or resolve labor rights violations and workplace safety issues. That's why the strike will continue, says SEIU Local 11, which has charged the company with two violations of labor law—using coercion to attempt to stop union organizing and intimidation during the strike. (SEIU press release, March 16)

University of Miami service workers are among the lowest paid in the country. In comparison, Unico janitors at Harvard University earn \$13 to \$14 an hour and receive full health benefits. But winning that contract took an intense two-year struggle.

## Teamsters rally behind Sikorsky strike

Thousands of Teamsters turned out March 9 to show support for the 3,600 workers in Local 1150 who have been on strike at Sikorsky Aircraft since Feb. 20. At company headquarters in Stratford, Conn., Teamsters President Jim Hoffa affirmed that all 1.4 million Teamsters stood behind the striking workers, who make helicopters and other advanced military and commercial equipment.

The main issue, as in so many strikes these days, is who will pay for health care. Though Sikorsky has offered a pay raise that keeps up with inflation, the workers chose to walk the line rather than have health care benefits—and therefore their paychecks—slashed.

Though union negotiators offered a new proposal on March 13, Sikorsky immediately rejected it, issuing a little-changed version of its original proposal. In the meantime the company refuses to come to the bargaining table. Call Sikorsky at 800-946-4337 and tell them to end the strike by meeting the workers' just demands.

## NYC building workers focus on health care

Contract talks started March 14 for 28,000 doormen, elevator operators and other workers who service 3,500 elite New York City apartment buildings. SEIU Local 32BJ's contract expires on April 21. The last time the union went on strike was in 1991.

Next to wages, the biggest issue is health care costs. The Realty Advisory Board, which negotiates on behalf of building owners, claims owners are squeezed by spiraling fuel costs and rising taxes and wants a wage freeze in the first year of the contract to offset higher health care costs.

Pointing to the high-flying residential real estate market, union negotiators nixed that, even though the 2004 contract for office building workers had such a wage freeze.

Union negotiators want to extend the apartment building contract to four years, so that it would expire at the same time as the office building contract, giving both unions more clout. □

## CHICAGO

# 200,000 protest anti-immigrant bill

By Eric Struch

Some 200,000 mostly Latin@ workers hit the streets on March 10 to show their opposition to the racist Sensenbrenner bill in the most massive mobilization of workers from oppressed nationalities since the Vietnam War era.

Congressman F. James Sensenbrenner, an arch-reactionary from Wisconsin, is the sponsor of House Resolution 4437, the so-called "Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005." This racist bill would turn the formerly civil "crime" of being undocumented into a criminal act. It would also criminalize people or groups who aid those who want to stay in this country. This aspect of the bill is meant to intimidate those who would show solidarity to undocumented workers and drive a wedge of fear into the working class.

HR 4437 also provides for the con-



Protesters at the anti-war demonstration on March 18 fly the Mexican flag.

WW PHOTO: LOU PAULSON

struction of a 700-mile wall across the U.S.-Mexican border, similar in scope and purpose to the Israeli wall currently under construction in occupied Palestine.

This bill would break up families, affecting more than 1.6 million children. It would deport asylum-seekers to their

home countries, which are often U.S.-supported and -financed dictatorships, to face possible torture and even death.

Jose Artemio Arreola and Omar Lopez of the Coalition Against HR 4437 put out the call for this massive mobilization five weeks ago. More than 70 organizations in

the Latin@ community, such as Centro Sin Fronteras, responded along with their allies in the Korean, Filipino, Irish, Polish, and South Asian communities. Over 100 factories as well as numerous restaurants gave workers the day off, basically admitting that most of them would be showing up at the march instead of work no matter what the bosses did. The protest was virtually a general strike for immigrant workers rights.

The march began at noon at Union Park in the Near West Side and proceeded downtown for a rally at the Federal Building that tied up Loop traffic for more than five hours. A small and isolated group of fewer than 20 ultra-right anti-immigrant Minutemen feebly "counter-demonstrated" in Grant Park. The corporate media gave it equal time.

Mass mobilizations of the type that took place here March 10 are what can stop the bosses' drive to split our class. □

## 'Walking to New Orleans' to show solidarity

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Hurricane Katrina survivors, U.S. veterans, and other activists participated in an historic event, "Walking to New Orleans," from March 14 through 19. United in political purpose, more than 100 people marched 150 miles from Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans, La., under the slogan, "Every bomb dropped on Iraq explodes on the Gulf Coast."

The slogan, taken from the Rev. Martin Luther King's famous 1967 anti-war statement, "Every bomb dropped in Vietnam falls in Harlem," concisely expressed the solidarity of the dedicated march participants with each other as U.S. civilians and service people, and also in solidarity with the people of Iraq, in ending a war that is taking a brutal toll there and within the borders of the U.S.

An impressive list of community co-sponsors organized for the march, ranging from Common Ground Collective and People's Hurricane Relief Fund in New Orleans; the Gulf Coast from S.O.S. (Saving Our Self) in Mobile; MIRA (the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance); Bayou Liberty Relief in Slidell, La., and C-3 NOLA.

Veterans groups involved included national and local units of Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, Gold Star Families for Peace.

The deep importance of the event showed in the range of people who committed to a grueling trek that involved a week of sleeping on the ground out-of-doors, cold-water bucket hygiene, and marching through rough terrain in heat, cold and toxic dust from chemically contaminated ground near the storm's center.

Some marching were neither veterans nor survivors but had either been born in the South or lived there at some time—people who identified their home towns as Jackson, Miss.; Carbondale, Ala.; Macon, Ga.; Memphis, Tenn.; Baltimore; Orlando, Fla.; Houston, Texas; and other deep and border Southern towns—as well as at least 16 states outside the South.

Cindy Sheehan, who lost her son Casey in the current Iraq war and drew national attention to the opposition of military families to the war by camping out at President George Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas,

participated on the march.

Stephen Funk, the gay Filipino Marine who was the first Iraq war resister, marched, as did conscientious objector Sgt. Camilo Mejía. Both Funk and Mejía emphasized the intertwining of injustice—in the hypocritical discrimination of a U.S. "don't ask, don't tell" military that recruits lesbian and gay people as cannon fodder while denying their very identity—and in the fate of Latin@ soldiers driven to enlistment by the poverty draft and immigrants who join the armed services in desperation to get citizenship for themselves and their families.

### Connecting wars here & abroad

Many participants commented during the march that they were walking a road made for this new generation by the Black civil rights and nationalist struggles in the South in the 1960s, and for generations before.

At the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Ocean Springs, Miss., where the multi-national group of marchers were welcomed at the end of their second day, the Rev. Jesse Trotter said, "Not so many years ago we would not have even been able to meet together legally as we are tonight," referring to the apartheid-like segregated system of the South that was finally broken by massive organizing.



Trittta Neveleff of Jackson, MS. (left) and Vivian Felts, director of SOS (Saving Our Self) in Mobile, Ala., March 14.

As marchers passed through large and small Gulf Coast towns, from Mobile to Irvington and Codene, Ala.; from Biloxi to Gulfport, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula, Miss.; from Slidell to New Orleans, La., they were greeted everywhere with peace signs, thumbs-up, cheers and car and truck horns blaring approval.

Many observers spontaneously joined the march at points along the route—like the four 10th-grade students from Vancleave, Miss., who said that armed-service recruiters were at their high school "every other day" and said everyone their age was against the war.

Perhaps most significant was the positive reception for the marchers in Slidell. One local resident, Naurine White, an



Two generations of Alabama activists, Quinton Amerson and Mamie Mackey, Katrina survivors, in Congo Square, New Orleans, March 19.

African American born in New Orleans who has lived in Slidell for 20 years and has a son in the military, commented, "This is still a very conservative, very segregated town. So conservative that this is where David Duke [Grand Wizard of the new Ku Klux Klan] moved when he started to re-build the KKK."

At one point in Slidell, as marchers passed a production facility for the military that makes Strykers armored vehicles built for two persons and used in Iraq, a group of white workers came out to the fence and gave the peace sign.

The South is the most militarized region of the U.S., dependent especially on the civilian jobs associated with military bases. It is, of course, also the region where the ruling class, from slave-owners to big business, has used racism and extreme violence to pit white workers against people of oppressed nationalities.

So the warm response to the march suggests that the double crisis generated by the Iraq war and the failed governmental response to the Katrina catastrophe has opened a possibility for working-class unity across nationality lines.

In Slidell, the Arabic news network Al Jazeera was interviewing participants. Iraq War veteran young Michael Blake summed it all up with this statement: "We are here in solidarity with the Iraqi people, with the people serving overseas, and with the people of the Gulf Coast. We want peace and justice."

Minnie Bruce Pratt, born and raised in Alabama, took part in the entire march. Go to [www.workers.org/2006/us/new-orleans-0330/](http://www.workers.org/2006/us/new-orleans-0330/) to hear her daily podcasts and see a slideshow of the march.



Iraq Veterans Against the War in Gulfport, Miss., March 16.

WW PHOTOS: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

## Taking to the streets across U.S.

# Movement stays vigilant against v

By LeiLani Dowell

Tens of thousands of people joined nationally coordinated local protests throughout the United States on the weekend of March 18-19, the third anniversary of the war on Iraq, to demand the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. occupying troops from this oil-rich country.

In Tacoma, Wash., about 1,000 people marched in a demonstration organized by Black community and church groups. More than 300 crowded a downtown square in Buffalo, N.Y. In downtown Grand Rapids, Mich., the local press reported "skirmishes" with protesters who had taken to the streets "without a parade permit." Jersey City, N.J. peace activists chanted and passed out literature in front of a military recruiting office in Journal Square before joining a Times Square protest in New York City.

Hundreds marched through gentrified downtown Detroit—the poorest major city in the U.S., in the state with the highest unemployment. Chants spoke to the extreme need for jobs, education and health care. Across the Detroit River in Canada, Windsor anti-imperialist activists, including a strong delegation from the Lebanese community, rallied.

In Charlotte, N.C., about 100 people marched to a military recruiting office, encircling the building. In Denver, 2,500 people marched from majority Black inner-city East High School along Denver's longest street, all the way to the State Capitol. In Washington, D.C., demonstrators marched from Vice President Dick Cheney's residence to Dupont Circle. In Seattle, 5,000 anti-war demonstrators marched through the downtown area.

Despite a concerted attempt by the San Francisco Chronicle and other big business media to deter protesters from attending, the country's largest anti-war demonstration took place on the streets of San Francisco. The protest, called by ANSWER, wound its way through downtown San Francisco, stopping at several hotels to express solidarity with hotel workers.



WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

Demonstrators chanted loudly when passing the Chronicle, which, under new ownership, is working hard to bust its workers' unions. Several anti-war demonstrations also took place in other Bay Area cities; thousands also rallied in Los Angeles.

In Columbus, Ohio, two marches converged on Statehouse Plaza. The "Faith March" arrived from south of the plaza after an interfaith prayer service. The "Rise Up! March" contingent arrived from the north, complete with homemade drums, banners and signs.

In an event called "Music, Art, Words," members of the Cleveland community presented poetry readings and sang songs, bringing home with fresh intensity the need to end the war in Iraq and work for socialism. Heart-wrenching prints showing the pathos of war lined the walls of Pilgrim Church, along with an original charcoal drawing of Malcolm X.

### NEW YORK CITY

Protests began at recruiting centers throughout the city, with more than 100

rallying at the recruiting station in Harlem at 125th Street.

Anti-war and community groups in Queens—the most internationally diverse county in the U.S.—held a morning protest outside the U.S. Army "Career Center" in the predominantly Latin@ neighborhood of Jackson Heights. Several dozen activists chanted, distributed fliers in Spanish and English, and picketed for over an hour while Army recruiters peered nervously out of second-floor windows. After a brief speakout, protesters then marched for several blocks through the neighborhood before traveling to Manhattan to join the city-wide demonstration at Times Square organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition.

More than 7,000 rallied in Times Square near the infamous recruiting center. They then marched to the United Nations demanding "no war on Iran" and the right of Katrina and Rita evacuees to return to New Orleans and the other devastated areas of the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Many young people took part in the

spirited march as it spread along 42nd Street. Activists from BAYAN USA carried a banner stretching nearly half a block that read "U.S. Troops Out of the Philippines." A large "Free Leonard Peltier" contingent was also present, while Palestinian flags blew in the wind. This demonstration received a lot of national media coverage.

### CHICAGO

A broad alliance of over 100 community and political organizations staged a day-long series of anti-war rallies in different neighborhoods of the city, followed by feeder marches, car caravans and "Peace Trains" converging at a rally and march down Michigan Avenue, Chicago's major commercial street. Police estimated the crowd at 7,000 to 15,000.

Three years ago, a crowd of 15,000 protesting the U.S. attack on Iraq took over Lake Shore Drive and Michigan Avenue. In response, the Chicago police arrested and detained as many as 1,500 protesters, shoppers and other passers-by. Since that time, Mayor Richard Daley's administration has denied all requests for permits for anti-war protests on Michigan Avenue, instead using police power to force demonstrations onto side streets.

Veteran antiwar and LGBT activist Andy Thayer, acting for the coalition, submitted this year's permit application with exactly the same itinerary of a big-business pre-Christmas parade called the "Festival of Lights."

The city was forced to either admit to their unconstitutional pro-war bias or grant the permit, which they did. Organizers dubbed it the "Festival of Rights" and staged it complete with anti-war floats, a marching band and drill team.

Rallies and marches began in the morning. A rally in the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt Park, principally organized by the National Boricua Human Rights Network, was joined by a Palestine Solidarity Contingent and marchers from the Committee on Filipino Issues, and swelled to as many as 500 as it marched toward Union Park. A Mexican@ contingent marched from Pilsen.



PHOTOS: ROBERTO MERCADO

Speakers include Brenda Stokely, NYC Million Worker March Movement; Larry Holmes, Troops Out Now Coalition; Mia Cruz, FIST and Bernadette Ellorin, BAYAN-USA-- second row: Brian Barraza, Mexican American Workers Assoc.; Nellie Bailey, Harlem Tenants Council, listens to Katrina survivor and Elamics Deeks, Al-Awda-NY.

# war & injustice

## SAN DIEGO

Activists, veterans, students and families came together in San Diego to protest the third anniversary of the occupation.

Members of the San Diego International Action Center (IAC) and FIST joined forces with local members of Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, and the California Coalition Against Poverty for a feeder march under the slogan "Tear Down the Walls! No Wall Is for Peace!"

According to a statement from the organizers, the march was a "demand for an end to all occupations from Iraq to Palestine, Haiti, Afghanistan and everywhere; justice and the right to return for Palestinians; justice for Katrina survivors and all people of color; and freedom for Ahmad Saadat, Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners, including the children of Palestine."

Feeder marches ended at a peace festival in historic Balboa Park, where San Diego IAC speaker Gloria Verdieu linked together the struggles of Katrina survivors, immigrants and Palestinians. Verdieu told listeners, "We must link these issues because the U.S. government links them. African Americans and immigrants make up the majority of the poor and working people in the U.S. We continue to pay a huge cost for U.S. war and occupation, with our tax dollars, our sweat, our sons and daughters who join the military because they see no other alternative means for supporting our families.... We must unite all people, black, brown, yellow, white!"

## BOSTON

In a decisive progressive step forward for the Boston anti-war movement, over 2,000 came out for a march and rally to demand "Stop the Violence—Stop the War at Home and Abroad."

Uniting against poverty, racism, sexism and war and demanding that the troops be brought home now, this historic action was built, led and joined by mostly people of color, youth and women especially under the auspices of the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition.

Speakers represented anti-police brutality activists, cultural workers, education, housing and health care organizations, immigrants, labor, LGBT organizations, liberation struggles including Haiti, Palestine and the Zapatistas, unions, women's struggles, youth and veterans.

Askia Toure, an African American elder and cultural worker, invoked the presence of the ancestors to open the rally and said, "I hope that we continue in this process of struggle, transformation and liberation."

Felix Arroyo, Chuck Turner and Sam Yoon, members of Team Unity, an alliance

of Boston City councilors of color, received warm greetings and sustained applause.

Mahtowin Munro of the United American Indians of New England captured the spirit of the day with these words: "This fight against the war, against imperialism, is a fight that we have been fighting since 1492, since Columbus first got here. It's a fight that we're going to win."

After the rally, participants stepped off for the march, led by youth of color. Onlookers clapped, raised fists, chanted in solidarity or joined the march. Banners and Cuban, rainbow, Palestinian, Puerto Rican and Venezuelan flags flew proudly.

En route participants stopped briefly several times at Boston police headquarters to protest police brutality; at a proposed site of a Boston University Biolab where activists say weapons of mass destruction would be developed; at Downtown Crossing, the heart of Boston's shopping district; and at the Federal Building where the Department of Homeland Security and other repressive state agencies are housed. The march ended at the Boston Common in front of the State House.

Other actions took place in New Haven, Conn.; Springfield, Mass.; Rutland, Vt.; Portland, Me., Concord, N.H., Providence, R.I., Phoenix, Ariz., and dozens of other U.S. cities and towns. Active-duty GIs and veterans joined protests in Fayetteville, N.C., at the edge of Fort Bragg, and in New Orleans.

*Sharon Danann, David Dixon, Judy Greenspan, Larry Hales, Kris Hamel, Justin Jimenez, Cheryl LaBash, Dustin Langley, Mary Owen, Lou Paulsen and Bryan Pfeifer contributed to this article.*



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN



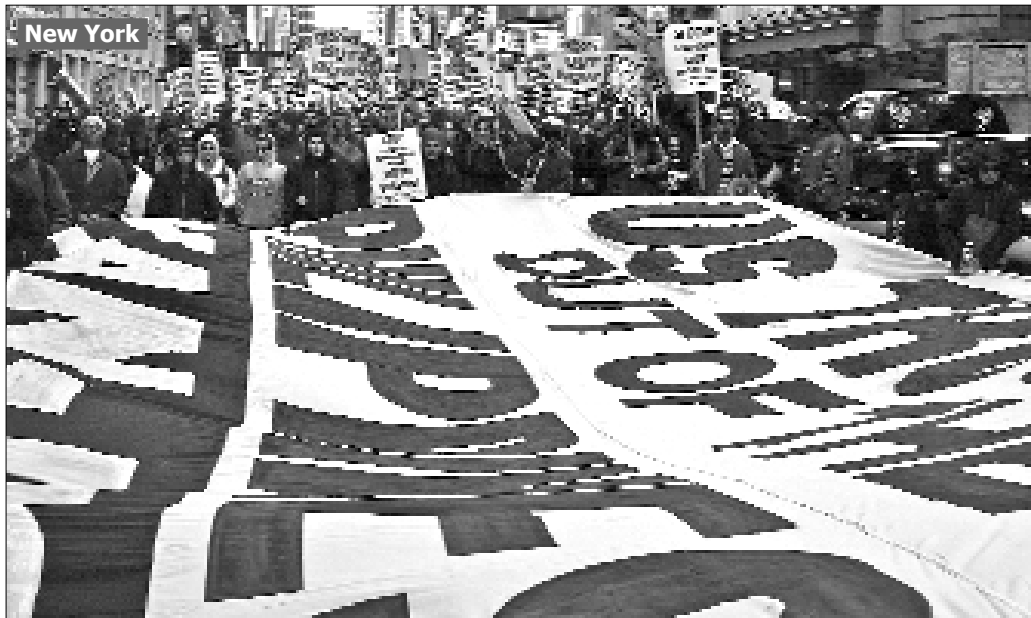
WW PHOTO: BEVERLY HIESTAND



Iraqi-American Kadouri al-Kaysi in New York.



WW PHOTO: MALCOLM CUMMINS



Giant Bayan banner reads U.S. out of the Philippines.



WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Monica Moorehead presents Mumia's message to the March 18 protest in New York.

**From deathrow Mumia Abu-Jamal tells March 18-19 protests:**

## 'Down with the neo-con war in Iraq!

From a March 5 audio commentary.

Ona move! Long live John Africa! Thanks for inviting me to join ya'll in this international protest against this mad war in Iraq. I say mad 'cause it was waged solely because neo-cons have been itching for this battle for years.

In a report put out by the Project for a New American Century, the group wrote that it needed a new Pearl Harbor to launch their plots. In an open letter of January 1998, to the former President Clinton, eighteen members of this project called for the removal of Saddam Hussein, saying it should be the aim of American foreign policy.

9-11 provided the pretext for war and by then eleven of those project members were at high levels of government. They forced this war on the American people to seize the rich oil reserves in Iraq and to dominate the region directly.

They brought this country and the Middle East to the brink of disaster for their own financial, corporate and imperial ends. The promises of freedom and democracy in Iraq were as empty and as meaningless as the promises to rebuild New Orleans or to bring help to those thousands who suffered in the wake of hurricane Katrina.

That wasn't incompetence, and neither was Katrina. They both were acts of capitalism's innate cruelty, where Iraqis can be bombed, invaded and occupied based on lies and where African Americans can be left alone to face the full fury of nature, and then left alone again to starve, to suffer, to drown, for days.

Yes, stop the war in Iraq but how about stopping the war against poor Black folks here at home, 'cause both arrive from the same source: this system. Let's build a movement against both wars.

From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal, author of "We Want Freedom, a Life in the Black Panther Party".

Go to [prisonradio.org](http://prisonradio.org) to hear more of Mumia's audio commentaries. Go to [leftbooks.com](http://leftbooks.com) to order his "We Want Freedom..." book.

# Worldwide protests condemn U.S. occupation of Iraq

By John Catalinotto

Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide demonstrated on March 18-20 to mark the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and three years of occupation of that once-sovereign country.

The protests began first in Sydney, Australia, Tokyo, Japan and Manila in the Philippines. They then spread like a wave across the globe: Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, South Africa, Greece, Cyprus and Hungary, Spain and Portugal, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Some of the largest actions were national protests in the capitals of countries with large contingents of troops supporting the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq: 50,000 in Rome, Italy, and a similar number in London, England. Good-sized demonstrations also took place in Warsaw, Poland, and in Seoul, Korea on March 19. There were groups in at least 40 countries in all that reported their protests on the Internet or were covered in the media by March 21. There may well have been more in the Arab world and Africa

that will be reported later.

There is a temptation to compare the anniversary protest with those of Feb. 15, 2003, when over 10 million people came out on the streets worldwide in a desperate attempt to stop Washington from launching its war of aggression. But it is a false comparison because three years ago masses of people wanting to avoid war came out in the belief that their action would be heard in the White House. The Bush administration pushed on with the war as it is now doing with the occupation.

Now the people who demonstrated know that they are involved in a protracted struggle with a powerful enemy—U.S. imperialism and its allies in Western Europe and Japan. Many people, even from these imperialist centers, are in open solidarity with the armed Iraqi resistance. This was shown by the successful speaking tour of Abdeljabbar al-Kubaysi, a spokesperson for one of the resistance groups, who toured Portugal and Spain before addressing the crowd at Piazza Navona in Rome on March 18.

Tacit support for the resistance was also demonstrated by the calls for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the occu-

pation troops. Other demands warned against imperialist intervention against Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela.

The call to organize protests first came last fall from anti-war coalitions in Britain and the United States. Support for the actions on the anniversary of the invasion of Iraq won international support at the European Social Forum in Vienna, the World Social Forum meetings in Bamako, Mali, and Caracas, Venezuela, and at regional meetings in Asia.

The international call was clearly for immediate withdrawal and expressed appreciation for the heroic efforts of the Iraqis to drive out the occupiers. This was seconded by 55 communist parties, who signed a statement—an initiative of the Communist Party of Greece—with similar demands supporting the March 18-20 actions.

In January, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez in Caracas called for the formation of an international anti-imperialist organization to take united actions. No such permanent group has been established. But the worldwide anniversary protest of the occupation of Iraq gives an early picture of what such a movement could do. □



Lisbon, Portugal



Berlin



Caracas

## Popular tribunal on Haiti

# Two death-squad leaders convicted in Miami

By the Haiti Solidarity Network

Some 250 people gathered at the southern campus of Florida International University (FIU) in Miami on March 11 to attend the third session of the International Tribunal on Haiti, a people's organization examining crimes committed connected with the rebellion and coup that overthrew Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 and during its aftermath.

An 11-member jury on March 11 found "rebel" leaders Guy Philippe and Louis Jodel Chamblain guilty of massacres carried out by paramilitary gunmen under

their command on Haiti's Central Plateau between 2002 and 2004.

Seven witnesses testified about the crimes against humanity committed by United Nations occupation troops, the Haitian National Police (PNH) and the Washington-backed "rebels" in the years before and after the coup.

Philippe was a former Haitian soldier and then a police chief, who fled Haiti to the Dominican Republic in November 2000 after he was discovered with other high-ranking police officers plotting a coup against President René Préval. Chamblain was the vice president of the FRAPH death squad following the first coup against Aristide (1991-1994).

The two became the most prominent leaders of the 200 ex-soldiers and Tonton Macoutes who waged war from the Dominican Republic against Haiti's constitutional government from July 2001 to January 2004. Both are still free in Haiti.

Presiding Judge Ben Dupuy, assisted by Judges Lucie Tondreau and Lionel Jean-Baptiste, opened the session by explaining the court's purpose: "The tribunal will examine current reports of killing, torture, illegal detention and other serious violations of international human rights, as well as the events leading up to the overthrow of Haiti's elected government in February 2004."

Dupuy added: "The Tribunal's second purpose is to develop a case file that will be referred to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague."

René Préval's victory in presidential elections last month will not affect the court's mission. "Even if Haiti does transition to an elected government, that will not end this Tribunal's work," Dupuy said. "The return of democracy to Haiti will require establishing the truth about the overthrow of democracy in Haiti and the crimes against humanity committed against the Haitian democracy movement over the last two years."

In the third session, four more U.N. officials were added to the 22 previously indicted: Jordanian Brig. General Mahmoud Al-Husban, Brazilian Capt. Leonidas Carneiro, Chilean Gen. Eduardo Aldunate Herman, and Brazilian Gen. Carvalho de Siqueira. Investigating Judge Brian Concannon accepted the updated indictment and the prosecution team of Desiree Wayne and Kim Ives began to call their witnesses.

Lawyer Tom Griffin presented a summary of the Commission of Inquiry's final report, which he wrote. The Commission, headed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, had visited Haiti for a week in October 2005 and interviewed over 50

Continued on page 9

## 'Walking to New Orleans'

Hear the account from Minnie Bruce Pratt holding newspaper on [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) or read it on page 5.

You can subscribe to Workers World Newspaper online at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) or from:

**Workers World**  
55 W.17th 5th Fl., St. NY, NY 10011  
212-627-2994





## ECUADOR

# Indigenous-led uprising challenges FTA, U.S. domination

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Ecuadorian Indigenous organizations are in the leadership of the most recent uprising in that country, which began on March 13. Tired of being lied to, exploited and excluded, they have taken on the courageous road of challenging the Free Trade Agreement that is secretly, behind closed doors, being negotiated with the United States by President Alfredo Palacios.

The treaty with the U.S., already signed by Colombia and Peru, is scheduled to be finalized on March 23 in Washington, D.C.—but not with the acquiescence of the Ecuadorian masses.

Their demands also include the termination of the government's contract with U.S.-based Occidental Petroleum, rejection of Ecuador's participation in Plan Colombia, the ousting of U.S. troops from Manta military base and the convening of a Constitutional Assembly.

On the 13th, the Ecuadorian Confederation of Indigenous Nations (CONAIE), the principal and most influential Indigenous organization, and the Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nation (ECUARUNARI) initiated a series of actions in which their voices were heard loud and clear. They closed down traffic on highways all over Ecuador with marches, demonstrations and roadblocks made of burning tires, tree trunks and rocks.

Organizations of peasants, students, workers, home makers, professionals, retirees and small businesses supported and actively participated in various actions. The transport union has been threatening a national strike, since 4,000 trucks have been idled due to roadblocks.

This campaign is called the National Mobilization in Defense of Life and says "No to the FTA, out with Oxy, no to Plan Colombia, yes to Life and yes to the

National Constitutional Assembly." Within a few days it had paralyzed commerce and traffic in 11 of Ecuador's 22 provinces.

The government has responded with fury. Marchers, including women, children and elderly persons who are suspected of participating in the revolt and oppose the FTA, have increasingly been harassed, teargassed and detained. They are subject to searches and seizures even in their own homes.

The police have used brutal force to prevent demonstrators from reaching the government palace and the cathedral in the capital, Quito. On March 20, in response to the government's failure to respond to their demands while escalating repression, CONAIE renewed the actions and started a general Indigenous uprising, calling for broadening it into a national peasant and popular uprising. Their slogan is "shuk shunkulla" (one heart), "shuk makilla" (one fist), "shuk shimilla" (one voice).

The police in turn have been detaining any person who "looks Indigenous." They board buses that arrive from the southern part of the country and detain by force all those with Indigenous features or whom ever they suspect are protesting against the FTA.

A march to Quito from the Amazon region that started in mid March was stopped for more than three hours by police; 25 of the marchers were detained and their whereabouts are unknown.

As of March 21, 30 peasants had been hurt and hospitalized and 100 had been arrested. Luis Macas, president of CONAIE, and Humberto Cholango, president of ECUARUNARI, have been threatened with arrest if they do not stop the national uprising. Their response has been to call for an increase of the resistance until the government ceases its negotiations

with the U.S. for a "free trade" agreement.

The Indigenous and peasants appear determined. Maria Sillo, who makes \$15 a week by selling the vegetables she plants, says, "This trade deal will starve us to death. We prefer to die fighting this deal than to starve to death." The FTA would flood Ecuador with cheap, subsidized U.S. agricultural products to the detriment of the country's small farmers.

Sillo echoes the reasoning of the ECUARUNARI/CONAIE organizers who wrote in a news release: "Now 50 out of 100 Indigenous children suffer from chronic malnutrition, hunger; with the FTA that will affect the production of food, it will be millions of children and adolescents along with their parents that will suffer hunger and will have to migrate to the big cities or to other countries."

President Palacio took office 10 months ago after a popular uprising ousted Lucio Gutierrez. Ironically, Gutierrez had been elected with the strong backing of the Indigenous movement, but soon sold out to U.S. interests.

Palacio has not been any different. None of the promises made to the people have been met, including the convening of a Constitutional Assembly. The popular movements charge that he has ruled only for the benefit of the oligarchy and U.S. corporations, and has added ultra-reactionaries to his cabinet. For example, he named a representative of the flower industry, which will be a major beneficiary of the FTA and is an infamous transnational exploiter of women in particular, as his secretary of commerce.

Under Palacio's administration, the repression of the social and popular movement has increased. He has repeatedly declared states of emergency in order to suspend civil rights, including the rights to associate and mobilize freely, and carry out indiscriminate house searches. Like President Alvaro Uribe in neighboring Colombia, he has called social and popular leaders criminals.

He has accused the protesters of "destabilizing" Ecuador. A March 19 report by Reuters quoted Enrique Proano, Palacio's spokesperson, as saying: "We will not allow these marches to reach Quito because they aim to destabilize democracy," adding, "The armed forces have dispatched a contingent along the highways leading to Quito."

Palacio has also facilitated U.S. intervention in the region by collaborating with the U.S. and Colombian military against the insurgent forces of Colombia. U.S. troops are now stationed in the Manta base.

His government is also helping the U.S. in its quest to isolate the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. During the current uprising, the president of the Ecuadorian Congress stated that "external forces" were responsible for the Indigenous and popular uprising, directly blaming Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.

But recent history has shown what the unwavering determination of the Ecuadorian masses, led by the Indigenous, can accomplish. In 2000 they helped overthrow President Jamil Mahuad; in 2005 it was Gutierrez's turn. Now the future is in their hands. □



## Students, workers in France

Continued from page 1

it does not solve the real problem for them: discrimination because of their foreign-sounding names and addresses in the troubled suburbs."

Mohammed, a 20-year-old in the suburb of Clichy-Sous-Bois, said, "This contract just means two years of anxiety. Villepin is lying when he says it's for us."

Critics of the protests claim that the youth are being naïve about their prospects for a future in a neoliberal society. London's Daily Telegraph editorializes, "[The protests] constitute a rejection of globalization, a refusal to accept that the opening of the world economy ... has rendered the old French social contract unaffordable."

Yet the protests in France accompany the growing struggle against globalization that is occurring around the world, most notably in Latin America, with successes along the way. According to an opinion poll taken on March 17, almost 70 percent of the French public now opposes the CPE. Unions continue to support the

effort of the youths, knowing that unity is strength and also that the CPE is a stepping stone to the erosion of labor laws for all French workers.

Bruno Julliard of the UNEF students' union told AFP, "Today we can clearly see that the mobilization is stronger than ever. Either the government listens to reason and withdraws the CPE, or it will be obliged to do so next week—because we will be back in the street."

Despite the outpouring of opposition, Villepin has called only for "dialog" and refused to offer the rescinding of the CPE as an option. Following this refusal, France's main union confederations and university and high-school students met on March 20. "All the unions are calling to make March 28 a day of demonstrations, strikes and work stoppages," said Rene Valadon, secretary of the Force Ouvriere (FO) union confederation. The two other major union groups, the CGT and the CFDT, also support the call for a general strike. □

## Haiti tribunal

Continued from page 8

witnesses and victims of coup-related violence.

Griffin also testified about the testimony the Commission received about Philippe's crimes on the Central Plateau. His presentation was buttressed by a videotaped interview with, Cléonord Souverain, who described how Philippe's "rebels" massacred five of his family members in their home in June 2002. Souverain was the Lavalas leader in Belladère.

Two other Commission members—trade unionist Dave Welsh and John Parker, director of the International Action Center's West Coast office—also gave detailed and rousing reports about the testimony they had gathered from witnesses and victims of coup-related violence in Port-au-Prince's Belair neighborhood.

Mario Joseph, Haiti's foremost human rights defense lawyer, testified about the human rights situation in Haiti during the coup, and specifically about the role and responsibility of Philippe and Chamblain.

Dr. Evan Lyon, who works with Partners in Health in Cange on the Central Plateau, also explained, how the paramilitaries commanded by Phillippe and Chamblain victimized and terrorized people both before and after the coup.

One of the most moving moments was when Agnès Mentor, a former officer of

the Special Unit of the Presidential Guard (USGPN), testified about her polio-crippled nephew, whom she raised as her own child, currently held without charges in the National Penitentiary. Her voice broke and tears flowed as she told how the police had arrested him because they knew he was her adopted child.

Mentor, now exiled in Boston, also gave an eye-witness report of the Oct. 26, 2004 massacre in Port-au-Prince's Fort National neighborhood during which masked policemen summarily executed 13 young people.

Finally, Benissoit Duclos, the former head of Haiti's Taxi Driver Union and director of the government-run Conatra bus company, explained how the large "Dignité" bus fleet was destroyed, mortally wounding Haiti's economy. He testified that the U.S. government-backed National Endowment for Democracy (NED) had infiltrated the union movement.

Despite numerous difficulties, the work of the Tribunal's third session succeeded, due in large measure to the work and support of three Miami-based groups: the community organization Veye Yo, the support group Haiti Solidarity, and the FIU-based Bolivarian Youth, who hosted the event.

Based on a report published in *Haiti-Progress*.

## Bush & the Iraq war

George Bush has been acting optimistic about Iraq these days. Who is he fooling? For three days in a row, he has faced public audiences and the press corps. Probably for the first time in the three years since the invasion of Iraq, he has had to answer a few hard questions.

And he has managed, at least for the three days, to stick to the same litany of lies the administration used to justify the war in the first place: Saddam Hussein had to be removed, he was a danger to the U.S. population, he was friendly to al-Qaeda and to terrorism, and he had dangerous weapons. All lies, all blared out so many times in the media that Bush thinks a significant part of the population might believe them, and acts as if he believes them himself.



Tokyo, march 18

Bush's problem is not just that he tells lies. In that he is little different from other U.S. presidents. His problem is that as he tells the lies to the media and the U.S. public, the Iraqi resistance answers them on the ground.

It was hard to believe Bush's most recent statement that the U.S. is winning in Iraq. Soon afterward, 200 Iraqi resistance fighters answered with an attack on a prison, freeing 30 prisoners, including a few dozen considered fighters, killed 18 guards and took one casualty while burning down the jail. The next day resistance fighters attacked a paramilitary force's headquarters, killing a high officer of the Third Public Order Brigade. (New York Times, March 22) So much for a U.S. victory.

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela hit the nail on the head when he lambasted Bush and exposed the weak U.S. position: "The U.S. empire is defeated in Iraq. They just don't want to admit it," Chávez said on March 21.

Even Saddam Hussein, who spends most of his time in one of the infamous prisons the U.S. has set up in Iraq, came out looking better than Bush as the third anniversary of the criminal U.S. aggression approached. The Iraqi president, facing charges in a puppet court, used the opportunity to issue an urgent and compelling call to his compatriots to stop fighting among themselves and join together to drive out the U.S. occupiers.

Bush could only promise more years of hard fighting, bringing suffering to Iraqis, to U.S. troops, and to people at home deprived of the vast sums of public money wasted on the war. But victory itself—that lies with the Iraqi people who are fighting to drive the U.S. occupiers out. □

## JOHN CROFFORD 1935-2006 Proud, gay, disabled & communist

By Paul Wilcox and Joyce Chediak

John Crofford, a former activist with the New York City branch of Workers World Party, died on March 1 at age 70. John was a communist, a gay man, an artist and a disabled worker living on Social Security.

John came to WWP in 1980 when the Party launched a fightback against the Reagan administration's cuts to domestic programs, including his own SSI. For 15 years, John kept the mailing lists for WW and other organizations. He did this at a time of mass activity when there were tens of thousands of names to track. There was no merge software yet to compare one mailing list to another. John spent hours each day meticulously comparing lists by hand, striking out duplicate names to cut mailing costs.

He used his artistic skills to create professional displays of books and literature for demonstrations and conferences.

John had much pride of class and great dignity. He firmly believed in the ability of the working class to run society. He felt that leadership should be collective, giving everyone who wanted it a chance to participate in decision-making. He did not think that the movement should have "stars," but that each person's contribution to the struggle should be valued and each contributor respected. He felt that the work he did on mailing lists, and other necessary but invisible movement work, was just as important as giving a rousing speech.

John had earlier earned his living as a window-display designer for department stores. While providing an avenue for his creativity, the work was strictly freelance and without benefits. Later, a neurological disorder left him in chronic pain and unable to work. He received no pension despite his many years of employment and survived solely on SSI, always on the edge.

Crofford valued each worker's unique journey to political consciousness and



John Crofford and Linda Cohen in 1996

wanted others to understand and appreciate his own. He made his contributions to the struggle while in relentless and unremitting pain. Speaking words took great effort. He referred to this as his "invisible" disability. This personal burden sensitized him to the myriad ways in which others in the working class are not seen, their value diminished and their voice denied.

His opposition to racism dated from his time in the military in the late 1950s when he socialized with his African-American military buddies off base and saw how they were treated in neighboring towns.

As a gay man from the pre-Stonewall era, John knew well the alienation and danger involved in gay life at that time, articulated in the current much-praised film "Brokeback Mountain." He wryly joked about gay men of his era going to psychiatrists to be "cured." He didn't want such a cure.

It was his pet peeve that so many villains—from the hunchback of Notre Dame to Darth Vader in the Star Wars series—were modeled upon people with disabilities. Disabled people, he would say, are not monsters.

John Crofford will be remembered as a passionate fighter on every issue affecting the working class, at home and abroad. □

## Belarus beat back Bush

By Stephen Millies

Alexander Lukashenko was reelected President of Belarus on March 19 with 82 percent of the vote. George Bush lost.

The White House promptly rejected the election results and demanded a new election. Bush didn't even allow a recount of the votes in Florida during the controversial 2000 election.

Lukashenko's biggest rival, Alexander Milinkevich, got just 6 percent. Terry Nelson, the political director of Bush's 2004 campaign, was a top advisor to Milinkevich's campaign. Nelson has now signed up with Sen. John McCain in the 2008 U.S. presidential election.

Barely half of registered voters vote in most U.S. national elections. The turnout in Belarus was 92 percent. Voters could cast their ballots March 19 or several days earlier. This made it easier for working people, especially working women, to vote. Nobody had to wait in line for hours, like Black people did in Youngstown, Ohio, in 2004.

Both the U.S. and European governments poured in millions of dollars openly and covertly to defeat Lukashenko. The Feb. 26 New York Times admitted that the Bush Administration was spending \$12 million in 2006 to overthrow the Belarus

leader. Another \$2.2 million was allocated by the quasi-governmental National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is also trying to topple Hugo Chavez in Venezuela.

The European Union awarded \$2.4 million to a German company to broadcast hostile radio and television programs into Belarus. The Polish regime set up Radio Racja with similar goals. Though he is an opposition figure in Belarus, Milinkevich was allowed to address the Sejm, the Polish Parliament.

The NED, Britain's Westminster Foundation and Germany's Foreign Ministry gave money directly to Lukashenko's opponents, according to the Times.

Yet Milinkevich never thought he could win the election. His hope was that by yelling "fraud" loud enough he could provoke a confrontation with the government.

After the election, Bush's candidate called for his supporters to come out to the main square of Minsk, the nation's capital, on Sunday evening. Belarus has nearly 10 million people. But only 3,000 to 10,000 people turned out. There was no police repression. The Washington Post estimated that just 5,000 people came out the following night.

Belarus is the only country carved out of the former Soviet Union that didn't

allow a fire sale of its state-owned industry. Unlike Russia, there are no billionaire "oligarchs"—like the now-imprisoned Mikhail Khodorkovsky—who were able to loot factories and natural resources.

There is a stock market in Minsk. But 80 percent of industry is still state-owned. That is a good reason why the unemployment rate in Belarus is 1.5 percent, as compared to 18 percent in Poland in 2005, and 48 percent for Black men in New York City in 2003.

Average wages increased by 24 percent last year. Pensions also went up. The sales tax was cut. So why shouldn't President Lukashenko get an overwhelming number of votes?

Lukashenko also angered Bush by denouncing the invasion of Iraq and defending Cuba, Iran, People's Korea and Venezuela in his address to the United Nations General Assembly last fall.

Three million people died in Belarus during three years of Nazi occupation. In a country the size of Kansas there were 260 death camps and 70 Jewish ghettos. Over 200,000 people died in the Trostenez camp.

The people of Soviet Belarus fought back, killing nearly a half-million fascist soldiers in guerilla warfare. The Nazis called these partisans "terrorists."

Both Bush and the European Union

have threatened sanctions against Belarus because their candidate lost. They failed to make Belarus their colony and let the Pentagon use it against Russia.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice labeled Belarus, along with Cuba, People's Korea and Zimbabwe, as "outposts of tyranny." But for workers everywhere Belarus is an outpost of resistance. □

### THE DEFENSE SPEAKS

It promised to be 'the trial of the century'. But as soon as the defendant began to expose U.S. and NATO's war crimes in the breakup and bombing of Yugoslavia the media coverage of The Hague Tribunal went silent.

Read this book and understand WHY.

### Milosevic's Defense Is Impossible To Dismiss...

'The US/NATO court trying Slobodan Milosevic was always totally illegitimate. It could never be taken seriously as a court of justice. Milosevic's defense is powerful, convincing, persuasive and impossible to dismiss.'

—Harold Pinter, author, and winner of 2005 Nobel Prize in Literature

Order online [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)



# Milosevic assassination blamed on the victim

By Sara Flounders

In the summer of 2004 I met with former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in Scheveningen prison when I was approved as a defense witness. Before I could get in, I had to pass four totally separate checkpoints and was unable to take in anything but papers. Each level of security was more rigid than the one before.

No one who has met with President Milosevic over the past four years would believe he would risk killing himself rather than finish his trial. And no one who visited Scheveningen in The Hague would believe the outlandish claims that somehow he was able to smuggle in unapproved medications on a regular basis. They would instead suspect that the authorities were desperately trying to cover up their own crimes.

My role as witness was based on my trip to Yugoslavia on behalf of the International Action Center in the spring of 1999, during the 78-day U.S./NATO bombing. I visited bombed schools, hospitals, heating plants and market places, recording the harm done to civilians. In addition, I had written since 1993 on the behind-the-scenes U.S. role in the strangulation and forced dismemberment of Yugoslavia.

Even after my name was accepted as a defense witness, it was a complicated and lengthy procedure to get through to Milosevic. Though all was approved on the day of the visit, it still took four hours to get through the checkpoints into the special unit inside the prison where defendants appearing before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) were kept—totally segregated from the general population and closely monitored.

Scheveningen prison is a maximum-security high-tech facility. Milosevic and other indicted prisoners were housed in a special unit within the larger prison. This section is spread over four floors, with 12 cells each. The unit is specially patrolled by United Nations guards. Cameras are everywhere. Every movement of the prisoners is monitored and controlled. When the president was first placed in his cell, lights were kept on 24 hours a day and his every motion was monitored.

## Where did rifampicin come from?

Now the Dutch authorities claim that Milosevic was taking a rare, difficult-to-acquire antibiotic used to treat leprosy or tuberculosis that has the unique ability to counteract the medicine he was taking to control his high blood pressure. How did this medicine, rifampicin, get into Milosevic's system? He was held in a maximum security prison in triple lockdown in a special contained unit within a larger Dutch prison once used by the Nazis to detain Dutch resistance fighters.

When rifampicin was allegedly found last Jan. 12 in Milosevic's blood, the ICTY kept the report of the blood tests secret, even from Milosevic and his doctors, who were complaining that something terribly wrong was damaging the defendant's health. While the prisoner and his defense committee and assistant lawyers were demanding health information, the ICTY officials sat on this report. If ICTY officials responsible for Milosevic's health really believed he was sneaking toxic medications into the prison, why hadn't they publicized this report much earlier?

Equally outlandish are the claims that Milosevic staged his illness to delay the

trial. The prosecution delayed the trial, first by adding charges against the president regarding Croatia and Bosnia when they realized they had no war-crimes case on the original Kosovo charges, then by bringing hundreds of witnesses to generate 500,000 pages of prosecution testimony from February 2002 to February 2004.

Each time Milosevic was too sick to continue in court, the prosecution moved to impose counsel and to take away the prisoner's right to present his own defense. Milosevic was determined to use the trial as a platform to defend not only himself but the people of Yugoslavia, and to indict the U.S., Germany and the NATO powers for their role in the criminal destruction of his country. He welcomed the trial as the only platform where he could make the historical record. In his words to the court he constantly described why, despite his bad health, he was determined to continue.

When I met Milosevic it was in the special room that was the only place where the ICTY allowed him to work or have the court papers to prepare his defense. Whenever his blood pressure rose and he was unable to continue the court sessions, he was also barred from any access to his defense materials.

During each step of the trial Milosevic's cardiovascular problems, especially his high blood pressure, had resulted in several delays in the trial. At each step the ICTY officials tried to use the issue of his health as they made constant efforts to deny him the right to conduct his own defense. Neither the illness nor the delays helped his defense.

The ICTY charged that Milosevic was secretly medicating himself and avoiding taking prescribed medicines. Milosevic answered this charge himself for the court record on Sept. 1, 2004: "You probably don't know the practice in your own Detention Unit. I take my medication in

the presence of guards. I'm given them. I take them in the presence of the guard, and the guard writes down in the book the exact time when I ingested those medicines."

Despite the life-threatening cardiovascular risk raised in every dispute with the prosecution, tribunal officials refused even to secure regular check-ups of the president's health condition. They also denied access for months to specialists who were willing to come to Scheveningen, thus delaying his care.

The president's own explanation of his problem was more consistent and credible than the ICTY's. In a letter addressed to the Russian Embassy two days before he died, Milosevic wrote that he had taken no antibiotics in more than four years. He asked why the medical report on the discovery of rifampicin was kept secret from him for almost two months. He wrote that he believed that "active steps are being taken to destroy my health." He warned that he was sure he was being poisoned and that his life was in danger.

## A political tribunal

The ICTY's handling of President Milosevic's death has been like its handling of the entire trial: an attempt to blame the victim for the crime.

The ICTY is not a real international court, with the ability to try any accused war criminal. It is a political court set up by the UN Security Council at the insistence of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 1993 in violation of the UN Charter. Its scope is limited to trying the peoples of the former Yugoslavia; the vast majority of the prisoners are Serbs. It is a propaganda apparatus and internment camp for political prisoners, disguised as an unbiased court. It aims to punish the victims for the crimes committed against them and to absolve the imperialist powers who invaded, bombed, dismembered



New York March 18

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

and forced the privatization of the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia.

When Milosevic discussed the trial with me, his scope of historical knowledge, his energy despite his illness, cut through my own jet-lag and fatigue from the four-hour entrance hurdle and allowed us to finish the interview with enthusiasm for the next step of the tribunal.

Now the world is asked to believe that Milosevic is responsible for his own death. It is a scenario so incredibly complex, an elaborate suicide story that is as improbable as the charges he was facing. The bought-and-paid-for corporate media are accepting and propagating the story of his death in the same servile fashion they accepted the very existence of this illegal court and the justification for the destruction of Yugoslavia.

Milosevic is now gone. But his summation, answering two years of the prosecution case, and his opening defense speech live on. He has left a ringing indictment of U.S. and European big-power intervention in the Balkans in a historic document that follows an "I accuse" format. His speech, which contains extensive documentation and factual detail, has been published in Serbian, Greek, French, Russian and English. This response, "The Defense Speaks—for History and the Future" (IAC 2006), will stand long after the tawdry war propaganda has collapsed. □

## SERBIA

# Hundreds of thousands march at funeral

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered for Slobodan Milosevic's funeral in Belgrade on March 18. Cathrin Schuetz, a leading member of Milosevic's defense committee (ICDSM) from Germany, said, "The view from the podium was impressive. People filled the main square and the side streets as far as the eye could see." (Junge Welt, Jan. 20)

From the time Milosevic's body was flown from The Hague to Belgrade on March 15 to his burial in his nearby hometown of Pozarevac, the corporate media in Western Europe and the United States attempted to minimize the number of mourners. First reports put them at "hundreds," and later ones claimed they were all older, retired people.

Schuetz made it clear that not only was the funeral march massive—one Belgrade radio station said 500,000 were present—but that it was made up of people of all ages who expressed both sorrow at Milosevic's death and rage at those who persecuted him.

Among the international delegation from the ICDSM were former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Velko Valkanov from Bulgaria, Aldo Bernardini from Italy,



Belgrade

June Kelly from Ireland and a member of the political bureau of the Communist Party of Greece. Russia sent a delegation, in which all parliament parties were represented, among them Konstantin Satulin of President Vladimir Putin's party, Sergei Baburin, vice-speaker of the parliament, chairperson of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Gennadi Zyuganov and retired Gen. R. Leonid Ivashov.

The pro-Western government in Serbia prevented Milosevic's closest family members from attending the funeral, including his widow and political comrade of almost

five decades, Mira Markovic, and their son Marko Milosevic, because criminal charges in Serbia—widely recognized as trumped up and political in nature—hang over both of them.

Clark had visited Yugoslavia with a delegation from the International Action Center twice during the U.S.-NATO 78-day bombing attack in 1999. Speaking at the funeral ceremonies, he concluded, "History will prove Milosevic was right. Charges are just that, charges. The tribunal did not have facts."

—John Catalinotto

## La muerte de Milosevic: Un asesinato político en el cual se culpa a la víctima

Por Sara Flounders

En el verano del 2004 conocí al presidente yugoslavo Slobodan Milosevic en la prisión de Scheveningen cuando fui aprobada como testigo para la defensa. Antes de que entrara, tuve que pasar cuatro puntos separados de revisión donde no podía llevar nada más que papeles. Cada uno de los niveles de seguridad era más rígido que el anterior.

Nadie que se haya reunido con el Presidente Milosevic en los últimos cuatro años creería que él arriesgaría suicidarse antes de terminar su juicio. Y nadie que haya visitado a Scheveningen en la Haya, podría creer las increíbles afirmaciones de que él de alguna manera podía introducir por contrabando medicamentos sin receta. En vez de ello, sospecharían que las autoridades estaban tratando desesperadamente de encubrir sus propios crímenes.

Mi papel como testigo estuvo basado en mi viaje a Yugoslavia en representación del Centro de Acción Internacional en la primavera de 1999, durante los 78 días de bombardeo por la alianza EEUU/OTAN. Visité escuelas, hospitales, plantas de calefacción y mercados que fueron bombardeados, grabando los daños acacidos a los civiles. Además, he escrito desde el 1993, sobre el papel jugado por los Estados Unidos en la estrangulación y el forzado desmembramiento de Yugoslavia.

Aún después de que mi nombre fuera aceptado como testigo de la defensa, fue un proceso largo y complicado para llegar a Milosevic. Aunque todo fue aprobado el día de la visita, tomó cuatro horas para pasar los puntos de observación hasta llegar a la unidad especial dentro de la prisión donde totalmente segregados, lejos de la población general y vigilados sigilosamente estaban los acusados que se presentarían ante el TICY [Tribunal Internacional Criminal para la antigua Yugoslavia].

La prisión de Scheveningen es una de alta seguridad con tecnología avanzada. Milosevic y otros prisioneros estaban en una unidad especial dentro de la prisión. Esta sección comprende cuatro pisos, con 12 celdas cada uno. Estas unidades son especialmente vigiladas por guardias de las Naciones Unidas. Hay cámaras por todas partes. Cada movimiento de los prisioneros es observado y controlado. Cuando el presidente fue llevado por vez

primera a la celda, las luces se mantuvieron encendidas las 24 horas del día y cada movimiento era observado.

### ¿De dónde salió el medicamento rifampicin?

Ahora las autoridades holandesas dicen que Milosevic estaba tomando un antibiótico muy raro y difícil de obtener, que se usa para tratar la lepra o la tuberculosis y que tiene la especial habilidad de repeler la medicina que él estaba tomando para el control de la presión arterial. ¿Cómo es que esta medicina llegó al sistema de Milosevic? Él estaba en una prisión de alta seguridad en una celda especial dentro de una prisión holandesa grande que antes era utilizada por los nazis para detener a los luchadores holandeses.

Cuando la medicina rifampicin fue supuestamente encontrada en la sangre de Milosevic, el 12 de enero, la TICY ocultó el reporte de los resultados de sangre, aún del mismo Milosevic y de sus médicos, quienes se quejaban de que algo muy malo estaba dañando la salud del prisionero. Mientras que el prisionero, su comité de defensa y sus abogados asistentes estaban demandando información sobre la salud de Milosevic, los oficiales de la TICY mantenían en secreto este reporte. Si los oficiales de la TICY responsables por la salud de Milosevic realmente creían que él estaba introduciendo medicinas tóxicas a la prisión, ¿por qué ellos no publicaron este reporte mucho antes?

### Demora hizo daño a Milosevic

Igualmente ridículas fueron las aseveraciones de que Milosevic fingió su propia enfermedad para postergar el juicio. La fiscalía postergó el juicio, primero al agregar acusaciones en contra del presidente relacionadas con Bosnia y Croacia cuando se dieron cuenta que no tenían base para un caso de crímenes de guerra en las acusaciones originales sobre Kosovo, y luego llevando cientos de testigos para generar 500.000 páginas de testimonio desde febrero del 2002 hasta febrero del 2004.

Cada vez que Milosevic estaba demasiado enfermo para continuar en la corte, la fiscalía imponía la presencia de los abogados, quitándole así al prisionero su derecho de presentar su propia defensa. Milosevic estaba decidido a utilizar el juicio como plataforma para defender no sólo a sí mismo sino también al pueblo

yugoslavo, y a la vez acusar a EEUU, Alemania y los poderes de la OTAN por su papel en la destrucción criminal de su país. El veía el juicio como la única manera de crear un récord para la historia. En sus declaraciones en la corte, él constantemente describía el por qué, a pesar del mal estado de su salud, estaba resuelto a continuar.

Cuando conocí a Milosevic fue en el cuarto especial que era el único lugar donde el TICY le permitió trabajar o tener los documentos para preparar su defensa legal. Cada vez que su presión arterial subía y no podía seguir con las sesiones en la corte, le prohibían también el acceso a los materiales para su defensa.

En cada etapa del proceso legal, sus problemas cardiovasculares, especialmente su alta presión, resultaban en demoras del juicio. En cada paso los oficiales del TICY intentaron utilizar la cuestión de su salud mientras hacían todo esfuerzo para negarle el derecho de conducir su propia defensa. Ni la enfermedad ni las demoras le ayudaron en su defensa.

El TICY acusaba a Milosevic de automedicarse en secreto y de evitar tomarse los medicamentos ordenados. Milosevic mismo contestó estas acusaciones en su testimonio oficial el 1ro de septiembre: "A lo mejor ustedes no conocen las prácticas en su propia unidad de detención. Yo tomo mis medicamentos bajo la presencia de los guardias, y los guardias escriben en su libreta la hora exacta en que yo los he ingerido".

A pesar del amenazante riesgo a su vida envuelto en cada disputa con la fiscalía, los oficiales del tribunal incluso rehusaron asegurar que tuviera exámenes físicos regulares. También negaron por meses el acceso a los especialistas que estaban listos a venir a Scheveningen, postergando así su tratamiento.

La explicación del presidente sobre su problema era más consistente y creíble que la del TICY. En una carta dirigida a la embajada rusa dos días antes de su muerte, Milosevic escribió que no había tomado ningún antibiótico en más de cuatro años. Preguntó el por qué el reporte médico sobre el descubrimiento de la rifampicin le fue ocultado por casi dos meses. Él escribió que creía que "pasos activos están siendo tomados para destruir mi salud". Advirtió que estaba seguro de que estaba siendo envenenado y de que su vida corría peligro.

### Un tribunal político

El TICY ha tratado la muerte de Milosevic de la misma manera que ha tratado el juicio: intentando echar la culpa del crimen a la víctima.

El TICY no es una corte verdaderamente internacional con la capacidad de someter a juicio a cualquier persona acusada de crímenes de guerra. Es una corte política establecida por el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU ante la insistencia de la Secretaria de Estado Madeleine Albright en 1993 en violación a la Carta de las Naciones Unidas. Su esfera de acción está limitada a someter a juicio a personas de la antigua Yugoslavia; la mayoría de los presos son serbios. Es un aparato de propaganda y un campo de concentración para presos políticos, disfrazada de corte neutral. Su meta es castigar a las víctimas por crímenes cometidos contra ellos y absolver a los poderes imperialistas que invadieron, bombardearon, despedazaron y forzaron la privatización de la Federación Socialista de Yugoslavia.

Cuando Milosevic habló conmigo sobre el juicio, su enorme conocimiento histórico y su energía a pesar de su enfermedad aliviaron mi propio cansancio por el viaje y por la exhaustiva entrada de cuatro horas a la prisión, y nos permitió terminar la entrevista con entusiasmo para continuar la próxima fase del juicio.

Ahora se le ha pedido al mundo que crea que Milosevic es el responsable de su propia muerte. Es un argumento tan increíblemente complejo, una elaborada historia de suicidio que es tan improbable como los cargos que Milosevic enfrentaba. Los medios masivos corporativos aceptan y diseminan la historia de su muerte de la misma manera servil que aceptaron la existencia de esta corte ilegal y la justificación para la destrucción de Yugoslavia.

Milosevic ya se ha ido. Pero su recapitulación, sus respuestas en dos años de juicio, y su ponencia de defensa al comenzar su caso, siguen vivas. Él ha dejado una denuncia acerba de los grandes poderes intervencionistas estadounidense y europeo en los Balcanes, en un documento histórico que sigue el esquema de "Yo acuso". Su discurso que contiene documentación extensa y detalles basados en los hechos, ha sido publicado en serbio, griego, francés, ruso, e inglés. Esta respuesta, "La defensa habla, para la historia y para el futuro" (IAC, 2006), prevalecerá luego de que se haya acabado toda la barata propaganda de guerra. □



Protestas en San Juan, Puerto Rico, se unen a las acciones contra la ocupación de Irak, tratando de detener los reclutadores militares.

MO FOTO: TOM SOTO