

MUNDO OBRERO

Marx y la guerra
contra Irak 12

IMMIGRANTS RESIST



New Bedford,
Mass. rally

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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Demanding an end to Iraq war Tens of thousands march to Pentagon

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Washington, D.C.

Tens of thousands of protesters marched against the U.S. war on Iraq March 17 in Washington, D.C., converging on the Pentagon to demand, "Bring the troops home now!"

Scheduled to mark the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the 40th anniversary of the March on the Pentagon against the Vietnam War, the action was called by the International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition.

The march capped a week of anti-war protests in Washington. The Troops Out Now Coalition set up a seven-day tent encampment in front of the U.S. Capitol to demand an end to war funding.

In synch with the TONC theme "From Protest to Resistance," on March 15 nine encampment participants, including members of TONC, Code Pink and the Green Party, tried to enter the Rayburn Building where congressional hearings on the war were under way—and were arrested for trying to attend the supposedly public hearing.

The next day, March 16, a contingent of 20 members of the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—stormed through the building lofting banners and chanting demands that the troops be brought home now. Police tried but failed to stop them.

That evening, several thousand people from a coalition of faith-based organizations marched in torrential rain and sleet to the White House. There, police arrested over 200 taking part in civil disobedience.

Over the March 17-18 weekend, protests took place throughout the United States, from coast to coast—and internationally from Spain to Korea. Hundreds more actions, including those coordinated through the group United for Peace and Justice, were planned to take place through March 20, the actual anniversary of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In Washington on March 17, anti-war marchers faced a pro-

war presence organized by Move America Forward, a right-wing organization with close ties to the Republican Party; the America First Foundation; Free Republic, an "internet activism site for conservatives"; and Veterans for Victory, an entity headed by two retired Army officers who were central to the initial assault on Baghdad and pursuit of Saddam Hussein. (Source Watch) Heavily armed cops and U.S. flags draped from a rope fence encircled the pro-war rally, camouflaging its size, which appeared to be in the hundreds.

A March 9-11 CNN poll showed that only 32 percent of people in the United States say they support the war in Iraq. Support for

WEEK-LONG ENCAMPMENT
Confronts Congress 7

U.S. ANTI-WAR PROTESTS
S.F., L.A., Denver, Chicago 6-9

the war has dropped from 72 percent at the time of the invasion in 2003.

As the anti-war protesters streamed across Memorial Bridge to face the Pentagon, the pro-war protesters lined the route of march, holding signs with racist slogans, shouting anti-gay and anti-woman comments and making threatening and obscene gestures.

Commenting on this moment, Brenda Stokely, a labor organizer and a leader of the Million Worker March Movement, said: "The people that are marching against the war reflect what the U.S. really looks like. These opponents, white men, a few white women—they want to take us back to the period when the lands of Native Americans were seized, when there was kidnapping of African people and lynching of African Americans. Certainly they have no problem with killing Iraqi people. Looking at them, and looking at us, I know I'm on the right side."

Continued on page 6

Marking the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, protesters connect the struggle against war abroad with the struggle at home.

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL



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Women, prison, and HIV

By Melissa Kleinman

Women in prison are suffering from HIV, and their pain and their courage are going unnoticed.

A health care worker who has been providing care to incarcerated HIV-infected women in Massachusetts prisons since 1992 describes the situation of one of her patients: "Z is 25 years old. Last year, Z moved back to her mother's house after her husband died of AIDS, and her mother moved her stepfather back into her room with her. That was the way they lived when she left home at 16. She says that she protested, that she ran out into the yard crying about incest, but they sat her down at the kitchen table and told her that it couldn't be incest because he was not her real father. How can this be?"

"I ask her why her mother does this to her. She says her stepfather doesn't care that she is HIV-positive, he doesn't wear a condom when he sleeps with her, and she thinks that her mother is 'getting him back' this way. She wears her hair long, in two big pony tails set high on her head like a little girl. She talks in a little-girl voice and won't look me in the eye when she tells me that she has to go home when she gets out, to her mother and stepfather, because she has no other place to go."

This health care worker paints a picture of the life of just one of her many HIV patients. Most people rarely hear the numbers or the crises of these women.

The number of women in the prison system who have HIV in comparison to men is alarming. Even though women are less likely to be incarcerated than men, incarcerated women are three times more likely to be infected with HIV than are incarcerated men. One in 10 inmates in U.S. prisons and jails is a woman.

In many U.S. states more than 20 percent of the female inmate population is HIV-positive, while 9 percent of incarcerated men are HIV-positive. In the state of Nevada, 30.6 percent of the female prison population is living with HIV.

According to 2003 figures, over 14 percent of the women incarcerated in the state of New York were living with HIV—twice the rate of male prisoners. In New Jersey state prisons, 9 percent of incarcerated women were known to be infected with HIV. In Connecticut, the prevalence of HIV infection among women incarcerated in the state prison is 15 percent.

HIV has additionally affected women of color in recent years. In the general U.S. population, Black women account for 64 percent of new HIV infections. These women are also disproportionately represented in correctional facilities due to overwhelmingly institutionalized racism.

The number of women incarcerated in U.S. prisons has increased more than six-fold since 1980. Almost two-thirds of women in prison in 1998 were women of color. Black women were twice as likely as Latina women and eight times more likely than white women to be in prison.

Black women make up 44 percent of the female jail population and 48 percent of women in state prisons.

Linkages among histories of childhood sexual abuse, physical abuse, drug use and sex work are believed to explain the disproportionately high prevalence of HIV infection among incarcerated women. According to self-reported data, as many as one-third to two-thirds of incarcerated women report prior sexual abuse, and as many as two in five report a history of childhood sexual

abuse. More than 80 percent of women in prison have experienced significant and prolonged exposure to physical abuse by family members or intimates.

Prostitution can be one of the few opportunities for poor women, including impoverished women of color, to survive. Women of color aged 14 to 24 years old accounted for 42 percent of the women arrested and imprisoned for sex work in 2001 in the United States. According to the Minnesota Department of Correction, 25 percent of women incarcerated for prostitution in the state are Black. At the same time unemployment for single Black mothers in the state of Minnesota is over 10 percent, and is double the percentage of unemployed single white mothers.

Poverty is a direct cause for women to become sex workers. A 2004 U.S. Census Bureau report shows that the poverty rate for Black women was 25 percent, more than twice the percentage for non-Black women. Black households had the lowest median income amongst all national groups; poverty rates were highest for families headed by single women. The poverty rate for Black or Latina female-headed households is nearly 40 percent. In comparison, poverty rates for households head by single men came in at 13.5 percent.

It is apparent that the status of women in the United States, especially that of poor and oppressed women, plays a huge role in their high rates of incarceration and HIV infection rates. But this does not have to be the norm.

Where capitalism in the United States presents few options and engenders further oppression of women, in Cuba, by contrast, women are finding socioeconomic opportunities. In fact, one of the most significant changes brought about by the Cuban Revolution has been to the lives and status

of women. Since the Revolution, which has put gender issues to the forefront of policy making, Cuban women have seen a fundamental transformation in almost every aspect of their lives.

The Cuban Constitution explicitly guarantees that women have the economic, political, social, cultural and family rights and opportunities equal to those of men. These guarantees are found in Article 32, which states that women and men enjoy the same economic, political, cultural, social and family rights; Article 42, which states that sex discrimination, among other forms of discrimination, is forbidden by law; and Article 44, which stipulates women's right to equality in the home, at work, in health provision and in their entitlement to state benefits.

Equality for working women in Cuba is guaranteed by law—one of the fundamental measures taken to achieve social justice, the main objective of the Revolution. The Labor Code ensures equal rights and opportunities for women in all fields of work. Women are assured an equal salary for equal work, while in the United States white women still make 74 cents to every dollar a white man makes.

In other ways Cuba shows its commitment to the equality of women, who compose 36 percent of female deputies in the National Assembly. Cuba ranks fifth in the world, after the Scandinavian countries, for the percentage of parliamentarians who are women. The average for Latin America was 14.7 percent in 1999.

In Cuban's central government, 18 percent of ministers and 22.7 percent of deputy ministers are women. Just over 16 percent of the State Councils are women.

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Workers World
 55 West 17 Street
 New York, N.Y. 10011
 Phone: (212) 627-2994
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 Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
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 Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel,
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National Office
 55 W. 17 St.,
 New York, NY 10011
 (212) 627-2994;
 Fax (212) 675-7869
 wwp@workers.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

Denver
 denver@workers.org

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

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

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

Milwaukee
 milwaukee@workers.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Yorkers demand:

'Justice for Sean Bell'

By Leilani Dowell
New York

A rally organized by Peoples' Justice was held March 19 to denounce the killings of Sean Bell and many others at the hands of the New York Police Department. The rally was the second following the indictment of three of the five officers who fired 50 bullets at 23-year-old Bell and his two friends on what was supposed to be the morning of his wedding.

The officers were indicted on first- and second-degree manslaughter and reckless endangerment charges, and are now suspended without pay. Many, including Bell's family, are asking why the officers were not charged with first-degree murder and attempted murder.

Protesters carried signs with "exhibits" of NYPD killings over the years: Anthony Baez, Anibal Carrasquillo, Amadou Diallo, Malcolm Ferguson, Yong Xiu Huang, Anthony Rosario, Timothy Stansbury, Hilton Vega and hundreds more.

Peoples' Justice, a broad citywide coalition of activists and grassroots organizations, made important demands at the rally: the appointment of an independent prosecutor to investigate Bell's death; community control; independent investigations of past police killings and abuses; the firing of New York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and Chief Anthony J. Izzo; turning the police commissioner position into an elected one; and an end to "anti-crime" programs and

Protest in Queens, N.Y.
March 19.

PHOTO:
JOHNNIE STEVENS

task forces.

The coalition will be holding a Town Hall meeting on the evening of April 18. For more information, visit www.peoplesjustice.org. □



Supporters pack courtroom for Panther veterans

By Valerie Edwards
San Francisco

Ray Boudreaus, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Richard O'Neal, Harold Taylor and Francisco Torres entered the courtroom on March 13 shackled—despite objections made by their defense attorneys at the Feb. 14 arraignment here before Judge Little. The ages of these prisoners range from 57 to 70.

The courtroom was filled with supporters on March 13 at 9 a.m., the same as it had been on Feb. 14.

A determined early morning demonstration of more than 100 people in support of these prisoners began an hour earlier in front of the Hall of Justice building. Numerous drivers passing by honked their car horns and raised their fists in solidarity.

The six men were arrested on Jan. 23 and, along with Herman Bell and Jalil Muntajim—who have been in New York prisons for more than 30 years—on charges that supporters maintain were a frame-up, charged with the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer and a sweeping conspiracy involving numerous acts between 1968 and 1973.

These Panther veterans are now known as the San Francisco 8.

The first charges in this case were

thrown out in 1975 when a federal court ruled that torture "has been illegally used to extract confessions."

Now, with funds made available by Homeland Security's post-911 war against terrorism, the San Francisco Police Department has reopened the investigation of the 1971 murder of Sgt. Young and put Detectives Erdelatz and McCoy—members of the original torture team—in charge.

The reopening of this case extends the efforts of the U.S. government to make torture acceptable, not only in its so-called war against terrorism, but also on the domestic front.

The shackled defendants sat silently



WW PHOTO: VALERIE EDWARDS

for the ten minutes it took the federal prosecutors and defense attorneys to decide on the date and time for the next hearing. The judge laughed several times while this was going on. Whatever caused her laughter, it was hugely offensive.

The issue of the shackling of these men, who have been serving their communities for 30 years, has been postponed again.

The next hearing will be April 27.

The Committee in Defense of Human Rights was formed by Brown, Boudreaus,

Taylor and Jones in 2005 after they were jailed for refusing to cooperate with the 2003 grand jury witch hunt.

The website www.cdhrsupport.org states that the SF8 case is a continuation of the Cointelpro attack on the Black movement and community, and that "this case could set an intolerable moral standard and disastrous legal precedent."

Please go to the website for information, updates and downloadable flyers and to make donations. □

Women, prison, and HIV

Continued from page 2

In the provincial assemblies, 31 percent of delegates are women. Within the legal system, 62 percent of lawyers, 49 percent of judges and 47 percent of the Supreme Court are women.

Statistics reveal the role women play in a wide number of fields. Women compose 66.1 percent of all professionals and technicians, 51 percent of all doctors, 43 percent of scientists, 33.1 percent of managers. Overall, 50 percent of professional posts are held by women. Sixty-two percent of all university students are women, and 49.5 percent of graduates with higher degrees are women. In 2001, in seven out of nine branches of the sciences, women represented over 50 percent of graduates.

By any standard, the position of women in Cuba ranks among the highest. The culture of equality promoted by socialism and the infrastructure created dur-

ing the decades following the Revolution have brought fundamental changes and improvements to the lives of Cuban women.

The question for women on U.S. soil remains unanswered: How much have human beings in U.S. society advanced and gained, when the women of this society, in particular those who are poor and oppressed, are denied the opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, and are instead locked behind concrete walls, dying of AIDS and cut off from the possibilities that would help them grow and flourish?

Melissa Kleinman is a FIST member and a Denver public-health-care HIV/AIDS worker.

Sources for this article come from Women in Prison Project, Positive Populations Vol. 3, No. 5 and cuba-solidarity.org

Mumia Abu-Jamal to receive Sacco & Vanzetti award

The Community Church of Boston will present the 30th annual Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award to death-row political prisoner and renowned journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal on March 25.

The award will honor Abu-Jamal for the work he has accomplished, despite government repression.

The event, co-sponsored by South End Press and Jericho-Boston, will take place from noon to 3 p.m. in the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston Street in Copley Square. It will celebrate Abu-Jamal, the struggle to free all political prisoners, and the legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti.

Tickets for this event, the Community Church of Boston's major annual fund-

raiser, are \$20.00—\$5.00 for seniors, youth and students. But all are welcome, regardless of ability to pay.

The program features Pam Africa—activist, community organizer and president of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Pam Africa will accept the award on behalf of Abu-Jamal.

Other speakers will include Lynne Stewart, human rights attorney and recipient of the 2005 Sacco and Vanzetti Award; Boston's popular political hip-hop group "The Foundation Movement"; Kazi Toure, former political prisoner and co-chair of Jericho-National; and youth performers from Voices of Liberation.

— Peter Cook

After a year on the picket line

AK Steel lockout ends

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

AK Steel locked out 2,505 members of the Armco Employees Independent Federation at the Middletown, Ohio, plant on Feb. 26, 2006. The workers spent the next year on the picket line, enduring hardship and loss but repeatedly rejecting management's "final" offers.

During that time AEIF merged with the Machinists union, hoping the Machinists' multi-union pension plan would make it easier to get AK to retain their defined-benefit pensions. The AK bosses wouldn't budge, however. They insisted on converting to 401K plans, in which a set amount is contributed but the funds invested are at the mercy of the stock market—witness Enron—for hourly employees.

Now, after quits and retirements, the remaining 1,759 members of Machinists Local Lodge 1943 have overwhelmingly ratified a four-and-a-half year contract. The 401K will

not be imposed. The workers will keep their traditional pensions. By June every union member will be back to work; by September most of the scabs will be getting pink slips.

Other highlights of the agreement include raises and quarterly bonuses based on the amount of steel shipped. Setbacks include changes in classification and increased outsourcing that will ultimately cost jobs.

Whatever the shortcomings, workers explain that it was the best they could win, and they say they're relieved the battle is over. It was a tremendous victory that their union was able to push back the pension raiders, especially in this period of widespread attacks on defined benefits. And the fact that a union could win against a hardnosed company with a history of locking out workers—AK locked out members of the United Steel Workers in Mansfield, Ohio, for three-and-a-half years before settling—is encouraging to all unions fighting to save workers' pensions. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

Miss. shipyard workers strike

More than 7,400 workers went on strike on March 2 at the Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss., owned by Northrop Grumman, which builds ships for the Navy. The workers are demanding higher wages and better benefits to make up for sharp post-Katrina increases in the price of everything from milk to gas to rent. The shipyard is the state's largest employer. Although workers there make some of the highest wages in Mississippi, they say the offer of a \$2.50-per-hour raise over three years is not enough. Local rents and housing prices have doubled, and a gallon of milk that had cost \$2.59 is now \$4.19. Add to that a proposed \$50-per-month increase in health care premiums and the workers won't have a nickel left over. "Folks have already been through a hard time with Katrina," William Hammond, a forklift driver and father of three, told the March 12 New York Times. "They left their houses to get this company up and running, and this is how they show their appreciation? It was an insult to the employees, that little offer they made us."

Bill George, a pipe welder, noted that half of the workers are still living in trailers. Natasha Smith, a painter, said her rent had risen from \$669 to \$801 a month. "We're single parents, and we can't make it on what they're paying us."

John Reed, an electrician, said, "We're living out here paycheck to paycheck, and we're tired of it." The walkout is believed to be the first major strike related to Hurricane Katrina. Backed by the support of the local community, members of the Electrical Workers union and the Pascagoula Metal Trades Council are determined to stay out until they win. "If we can survive Katrina, we can survive this," said Reed.

Smithfield solidarity March 31

As part of its ongoing campaign to unionize workers at the Smithfield pork processing plant in Tar Heel, N.C., the Food and Commercial Workers have called a Southeast Day of Action to take place on March 31.

Supporters will picket 16 Harris Teeter supermarkets, most of which are in North Carolina, to tell the chain to stop selling all pork products made by Smithfield workers at Tar Heel. To register to participate in the protest and/or to sign an e-petition addressed to Harris Teeter, go to www.smithfieldjustice.com.

Harley-Davidson workers win strike

Rejecting a contract with lower wages for new hires and reduced medical and retirement benefits, more than 3,000 workers at Harley-Davidson's plant in York, Pa., went on strike Feb. 2. Ten days later they ratified a contract by a huge margin in which the company will continue to pay full health care premiums and new hires will receive the same pay scale. The workers' wages will increase 12 percent over the three-year contract. "This agreement is a significant improvement over the proposal rejected by workers earlier this month," said Tom Boger, lead negotiator for Local 175 of the Machinists and Aerospace Workers, in a Feb. 22 union media release. When the bosses of the company—which earned nearly \$1 billion in profits in 2006—were forced to halt production of the most profitable motorcycle models for 10 days at plants in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, they did the math and coughed up a decent contract.

Calif. Nurses Assoc. joins AFL-CIO

The California Nurses Association (CNA)—and its national arm, the National Nurses Organizing Committee (NNOC)—was granted a charter to join the AFL-CIO on March 8.

CNA represents 325,000 registered nurses (RNs), while CNA/NNOC represents 75,000 RNs in all 50 states. That affiliation came two days after the AFL-CIO adopted a new health-care policy statement. The statement endorses a single-payer-type system that would "update and expand Medicare benefits" to everyone eligible in the U.S.

Rose Ann DeMoro, executive director of CNA/NNOC, said the union was thrilled to have the opportunity to work within the AFL-CIO to "transform our current dysfunctional system to achieve guaranteed, universal healthcare for all, based on an improved and expanded Medicare." (www.calnurse.org, March 9)

In an unrelated but welcome action, 800 registered nurses at Kaiser Permanente facilities in Southern California voted to join the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals. Kaiser recognized the card check affiliation on March 2. Over 10,000 nurses, pharmacists and nurse practitioners at Kaiser are represented by unions.

Stop & Shop workers win

Over 43,000 full- and part-time workers at Stop & Shop supermarkets in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island who are represented by five locals of the Food and Commercial Workers ratified a three-year contract on March 11 with good wage increases and retirement security. But the biggest win was improved health care provisions.

The waiting period for new hires to become eligible for health care benefits was cut in half, and part-timers—who make up 80 percent of the workforce—do not have to make monthly contributions for their premiums.

In a joint media release, the five UFCW locals, which had voted to strike, attributed their win to a united strategy during negotiations combined with community outreach and union-wide support. □

PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Teachers say: 'No give-backs!'



WWW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE

Passing motorists honk in support of striking Philadelphia Community College workers March 14.

By Betsey Piette

A strike by 1,400 Philadelphia Community College workers entered its second week March 19 in the face of the college administrators' demands that workers take what amount to cuts in pay and benefits. The Faculty and Staff Federation, which represents teachers and support staff at the two-year college, called the strike March 12 after more than a year of negotiations.

Faculty and support staff have been working without a contract since August. Union leaders say the administration is trying to offset the increasing cost of health care by reducing the salary package.

The union is seeking annual salary increases of 3.75 percent for five years. The college has offered 3.62 percent over the same period. "What the administration is offering wouldn't keep up with inflation," said John Braxton, co-president

Continued on page 8

SAN FRANCISCO

Labor Council supports anti-war action

The San Francisco Labor Council unanimously adopted a resolution on March 12 supporting the week of anti-war actions taking place around the country marking the fourth anniversary of the war against Iraq.

They voted to support the Troops Out Now

Coalition encampment in front of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., which demanded Congress cut all spending for the war, the march on the Pentagon on March 17 and the demonstration in San Francisco on March 18.

— By Joan Marquardt

Anti-war crowd cheers labor resolution to 'Halt war funding!'

By Sharon Danann
Cleveland

At a March 15 rally on Cleveland's Public Square, called by U. S. Labor Against the War, the winter cold seemed dispelled as the crowd applauded a resolution that had been passed the day before by the North Shore AFL-CIO—formerly the Cleveland AFL-CIO. The labor resolution expressed opposition to continued funding for the war in Iraq. The resolution stated that "money already appropriated is more than adequate to bring all the troops home safely."

The March 15 Cleveland rally culminated an eight-day, round-the-clock vigil honoring the 655,000 Iraqis killed as the result of the war, in addition to over 3,100 U.S. GIs. The vigil

brought together northeast Ohio's anti-war and homeless communities in a newly deepened alliance.

Tim Smith of the Northeast Ohio Anti-war Coalition and Artists for Peace spoke movingly of his gratitude to the members of the homeless community who gave their knowledge, skill and support to get the vigil through the bitter cold nights.

James, a homeless man, told how the vigil had changed his life. He said that he had never expected to be speaking at the podium of a rally. Smith and others who took part in the anti-war vigil had convinced him not to join the military, James said, where he would have to follow someone's orders to shoot an innocent civilian. The crowd cheered James. □

Movement announces May 1 actions for immigrant rights

By Namwiinga Simwiinga-Khumalo and Heather Cottin
Washington, D.C.

The National May 1st Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights held a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on March 15 to announce plans for “A Day Of No Work, No Shopping, No School, No Economic Activity.” May 1 will be what the May 1st Movement has dubbed “The Great American Boycott II.”

At the news conference, labor activists, leaders of immigrant-rights groups, anti-war organizers, African American leaders, and representatives of Latin@ and LGBT organizations called for an end to the terrorist attacks, raids and deportations against immigrants nationwide. The press conference was organized and chaired by Teresa Gutierrez, a leading representative of the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant Rights based in New York.

Bishop Felipe C. Teixeira of the Immi-



Bishop Felipe C. Teixeira speaks to the press March 15.

WW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN

gration Pastoral Center in Massachusetts said that the recent anti-immigrant raids in that state had shown “the face of racism and discrimination. No human being is illegal.”

Teixeira spoke of the children’s cries after the Nazi-like raids by Immigration Custom Enforcement, who hauled away women workers in New Bedford, Mass. The bishop said the number of children

left motherless was much greater than the news media reported. He called for a bigger May 1 protest, saying, “Together, united, we can defeat the imperialism of the USA.”

Emma Lozano of the Chicago immigration-rights group Centro Sin Fronteras, which supports the right of sanctuary for Elvira Arellano, urged immigrants to use their economic power. “They don’t question us when we spend our money. They question our right to work,” she said.

“We will hurt them in their pockets,” Lozano continued. “This country has exploited undocumented labor for over a century and grown rich off of it. We are not asking for anything. We are demanding our rights.”

Organizing for the Great American Boycott II is intensifying all over the country in the face of growing ruling-class hostility toward immigrant workers. Homeland Security has deported over 200,000 people in the last year. Thousands of immi-

Continued on page 8

Rally in solidarity with immigrants draws 800

By Peter Cook
New Bedford, Mass.

Approximately 800 immigrants and supporters filled the auditorium of the Greater New Bedford Vocational High School March 17 to denounce the arrests and deportation of more than 350 immigrant workers, mostly women, on March 6.

More than 200 of those arrested here have been sent to a detention facility in Texas and at least five minors have been sent to a facility in Florida. The crowd responded with chants of “Sí se puede” (It can be done) and “El pueblo unido jamás será vencido” (The people united will never be defeated) as speaker after speaker called for an end to the ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement—raids and deportations, legalization for all immigrants and an immediate reunification of the families.

Members of families torn apart by the ICE raid spoke of the devastating impact that it has had on them and their children. One young man whose wife is being

detained in Texas spoke of the horrible conditions of the facility. He reminded everyone that these raids are happening not just in New Bedford but throughout the U.S.

Juan García of the Comité de Inmigrantes en Acción from Providence, R.I., called for everyone to come out on May 1 to demand “Stop the raids and deportations!”

This March 17 rally was sponsored by a coalition of organizations including Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), Immigrants Assistance Center, Organization Maya K’iche, the Community Connections Coalition of Greater New Bedford, Community Economic Development Center (CEDC), Catholic Social Services, United Interfaith Action and the Latino Health Institute.

Participants came from cities and towns throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island including Springfield, Boston, Chelsea, New Bedford, Fall River, Providence and Pawtucket.

In another act of solidarity, approxi-



March 17 rally in New Bedford.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

mately 140 people responded to a call by the Boston May Day Coalition by demonstrating outside ICE regional headquarters in Boston on March 13 to demand full

amnesty and an end to the raids.

Information about making donations to help the families impacted by the raid can be found at www.miracoalition.org. □

SAN FRANCISCO LABOR COUNCIL:

Support May Day 2007 actions for worker, immigrant rights!

The San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO unanimously adopted the following resolution on March 12:

Whereas, on May Day 2006 history was made. The world watched as millions took off from work and school to march for the rights of immigrants and all workers, in the largest International Workers Day demonstrations in the United States in living memory; and

Whereas, the March 25th Coalition, based in Los Angeles, which spearheaded the massive protests for immigrant rights in the spring of 2006 [that were victorious in defeating the repressive HR 4437 Sensenbrenner bill], has joined with a broad coalition of organizations in the Latino, Black, Filipino, Labor and other communities, to form the May 1st National Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights, calling for mass demonstra-

tions on Tuesday, May 1, 2007, in cities across the country including Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, New York City, San Antonio, Houston, Seattle, Phoenix, San Francisco, Detroit, and many other cities demonstrating “the growing unity among US and foreign born workers”; and

Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council on April 3, 2006, in a “Resolution in Support of Immigrant Workers”—noting the AFL-CIO’s February 16, 2000 “historic resolution in support of amnesty for immigrant workers”—called for mobilizing in support of “full legalization and equal rights for undocumented immigrants” and supporting the call for the May 1, 2006 national day of protest; and

Whereas, on May 22, 2006, the San Francisco Labor Council adopted the “National Statement to Support Human and Civil Rights for All

Immigrants”, issued by the National Network on Immigrant and Refugee Rights, calling for “fair and just immigration reform for all” and solid worker protections, and opposing then-current legislation which would have created new “guest worker” (transient servitude) programs; and

Whereas, on March 10, 2007, 22 organizations in the immigrant community and their allies came together in San Francisco to begin planning for a march for worker and immigrant rights in San Francisco on May 1, 2007, in conjunction with the national demonstrations; and

Whereas, federal immigration authorities including ICE have been conducting brutal raids on workplaces and people’s homes—from the arrest of 1,300 workers at Swift & Co. meatpacking plants in six states on December 12, 2006, to more recent raids in the Bay Area, at

the Smithfield hog processing plant in North Carolina and elsewhere—terrorizing and separating families, intimidating the workers and interfering with union organization at the workplaces, in a massive violation of civil and union rights; therefore be it

Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council endorse and encourage participation in the May Day marches and other protest activities in San Francisco and cities nationwide, behind the banner of

- 1) Legalization and equal rights for immigrant workers;
- 2) Stop the brutal raids on immigrant workers;
- 3) No “guest worker” programs;
- 4) A moratorium on deportations;
- 5) Uniting workers of all nationalities and races in the struggle for our rights and our future. □

DENVER

Activists mobilize against the war

By Workers World Denver bureau

A weekend of mobilizations in Denver against the war in Iraq kicked off on March 16.

There were many events.

Members of Colorado Communities United Against Police Brutality celebrated the victory of anti-racist activist Shareef Aleem against trumped-up charges, met with victims of police brutality and talked openly with people from the metropolitan area about building a parallel People's Review Board.

The city of Denver is forming a Civilian Review Board, which will consist of two separate boards and will include cops. COCUAPB wants to form a board to mobilize and build awareness and fight back against police brutality. The group

announced plans for a broader community meeting to continue building the board.

On March 17, over 500 people met at Halliburton's corporate headquarters for a rally before marching downtown, through an open air mall and up to the State Capitol where hundreds more were gathered. Workers World Party member Larry Hales spoke about the Iraq war's true cause, and its connections to the oppression of people of color in this country. Hector, a member of the Revolutionary Anti-imperialist Movement, echoed those sentiments.

At the Capitol, speakers talked about the toll on social services at home caused by war funding. Daniel Salcido from the Mexican National Liberation Movement talked about the war against the Arab world and its similarities to the war against the Mexican people—which includes the

theft of than half their land. He also spoke about what's behind the rise of migration to the United States from Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America. A member of Iraq Vets Against the War and Military Families Speak Out spoke about the troops and their families.

The event ended with a speech by Dahlia Wasfi, an Iraqi Jewish woman who spent her early years in Iraq and whose extended family still lives in the south of Iraq. She spoke about the complicity of Democrats as well as Republicans, saying the differences are scant and that both parties represent the same interests. She talked about the Iraqi people's daily struggles and how the anti-war movement should support the Iraqi resistance to the occupation of their country and theft of their oil. □



Stop the War at Home contingent on March 17 in Washington, D.C., demanded freedom for U.S. political prisoners and for workers' rights, not war.

WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL

Tens of thousands march to Pentagon

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Stokely was part of the vibrant and militant "Stop the War At Home" contingent that demanded freedom for all U.S. political prisoners, an end to police brutality, an end to raids on immigrants, and rights for Hurricane Katrina/Rita survivors.

Marching in that contingent were the Troops Out Now Coalition marchers behind a huge yellow and red sign, together with the May 1st Immigrant Rights Coalition protesters. This latter group called on the crowd to fight the devastating raids on immigrant workers and organize for a national boycott of work on May Day 2007, asking people to contact www.maydaymovement.blogspot.com.

Anti-war labor was also represented by the Million Worker March Movement with a bright orange banner recalling the Oct. 17, 2004, march on Washington to demand jobs and an end to war, and by the progressive Filipino organization BAYAN. A central BAYAN goal in the United States is to organize Filipino immigrant workers, 70 percent of whom are women.

With them advanced the Jericho Movement with a red dragon banner representing freedom for political prisoners after prison walls are torn down. Ashanti Alston, national coordinator for the Jericho Movement, said: "We are here to free political prisoners who have been languishing in jail for four decades—freedom fighters from the wars of liberation here, wars against women, against workers. We are here so people will make the connection between the war at home and the one abroad. The empire may still be in power in this country and around the world, but people here have not given up!"

Other marchers carried signs calling for the release of the Cuban Five, pro-revolutionary political prisoners falsely accused and convicted of terrorism in the United

States for defending their homeland against U.S.-engineered attacks.

Snapping in the frigid wind were more banners of the Stop the War At Home contingent, including: "Stop U.S./Israeli Terror, No Occupation in Palestine and Iraq," the Pakistan/U.S. Freedom Forum, and a Workers World Party sign reading "Globalize the Workers' Struggle."

The Women's Fightback Network of the International Action Center carried the message: "Stop the War on Women from New Orleans to New Bedford to Iraq." This referred to not only U.S. military war but also recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids targeting mostly women workers in Massachusetts, as well as Washington's deliberate mishandling of the Hurricane Katrina/Rita crisis, devastating a vulnerable population that was perhaps 80 percent women of color. Representatives from the Solidarity Coalition for Katrina/Rita Survivors marched with the contingent.

There was strong participation by young people in the Stop the War At Home contingent. For example, members of "Rosa 7053," the youth group of the Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee, were present. They have been working actively for Katrina/Rita survivors, immigrant rights, HIV/AIDS issues, and "against injustice at home and abroad."

Members of FIST—including a brand-new chapter from Baldwin-Wallace College near Cleveland as well as young people from New York and Raleigh, N.C.—also marched. Lauren Wilczynski said, "I'm here because if you say you care about a cause, you are lying if you don't do something about it."

FIST members led the entire Stop the War at Home group in spirited chanting through the line of march, including a crowd-rocking rendition of "War—what is

it good for? Absolutely nothing!"

Confronting the Pentagon

The march crested Memorial Bridge and spilled onto the abutments around the Pentagon. There were signs from Pittsburgh and Louisville, from New Jersey and Iowa. The rainbow flags of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement flew high. People flowed into a freezing wind-swept parking lot where a program of activist leaders addressed the crowd.

Ramsey Clark, founder of the International Action Center and former U.S. attorney general, warned of current dangers to the Bill of Rights, and of the escalation of U.S. military action, as did Mara Verheyden-Hilliard of the Partnership for Civil Justice.

Cynthia McKinney, former Democratic representative from Georgia, gave a rousing speech calling for a living wage for workers, the right of return for Katrina survivors, and opposition to the Military Tribunal Act and the PATRIOT Act.

A wide array of U.S. military veterans and members of their families spoke. They included Michael Berg, Melida Arredondo and Carlos Arredondo of Gold Star Families for Peace, and Anita Dennis of Courage to Resist—all of whom had sons killed in Iraq.

Cindy Sheehan, co-founder of GSFP, whose son Casey died in Iraq, declared, "This is an illegal, immoral war—a war for the corporations," and added, "Bush and Cheney are war criminals." Other speakers called for impeaching the president and vice-president.

Elliott Adams, national president of Veterans for Peace, also spoke. Garrett Ropenhagen of Iraq Veterans Against the War and Darrell Anderson, an Iraq war resister also from IVAW, said there is active GI resistance to the war, fueled by the growing

understanding that veterans are not getting care and support from the U.S. government when they return from combat.

Active-duty members of the military have the right to state concerns about the war and ask for the withdrawal of the troops. Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto and former Marine Sgt. Liam Madden spoke about their founding of Appeal for Redress, to encourage organizing against the war within the armed services. (appealforredress.org)

Hutto specifically called for money to go to jobs, schools and the relief of Katrina/Rita survivors, not to war. Madden stressed, "Only our resistance will end this war." Michael Letwin of New York Council of Labor Against the War repeated this sentiment in his remarks.

The connection between the war abroad and the war against people inside the United States was made by Malik Rahim, co-founder of Common Ground Relief, which fights for rebuilding and reparations for the displaced people of New Orleans.

Larry Holmes of the Troops Out Now Coalition electrified the crowd with his call for unity. He said: "We are not only fighting against imperialism but against the war at home—against racism and police brutality, for the release of all political prisoners including Mumia Abu Jamal, for justice for the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We want an immediate end to the raids against immigrant workers. On May Day a year ago millions of immigrants came out against the war being waged against them. This year they will come out again on May Day. They need you with them in the streets so they won't be standing alone against the raids and deportations. The people united will never be defeated!"

Several speakers addressed links between the war on Iraq and other parts of the world. Ben Dupuy, leader of the

From protest to resistance

Stop the War encampment puts Congress on notice

By Leilani Dowell
Washington, D.C.

Organizers and activists who participated in the Encampment to Stop the War from March 12 to 18 are calling the event an overwhelming success in the ongoing struggle to end imperialist wars at home and abroad. Proclaiming the need to move “from protest to resistance,” the encampment exposed the Democratic Party as another wing of the imperialist war machine, brought more activists into the anti-imperialist movement, and made a ruckus that the capitalist media could not ignore.

People traveled from across the United States to camp out directly in front of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., in an event organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC). The encampment was visited daily by hundreds of tourists, participants of conferences in the area, and D.C. locals who offered their support and enthusiasm for the action.

Memphis Rudder, 21, and Patrick Bigley, 20, panhandled and hitchhiked from Jonesboro, Ark., for 20 hours to arrive at the encampment in the middle of torrential rains and hail.

As the regional coordinator for World Can't Wait in Arkansas, Rudder wheat-



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH
D.C. police arrest TONC leader Larry Holmes at March 15 anti-war funding protest.

pasters posters against the war around her town in the middle of the night with her 1- and 2-year-old children asleep in the back seat.

Rudder told WW: “It’s an emergency situation and it will take emergency steps to end the war. This encampment is the most important idea for action right now. Congress will end the war when they have to take an alternate route out of their building. It’s going to take a mobilization of millions. We must do something and not just talk—activists have to become organizers, and organizers become leaders.”

Bigley served in the Navy on an aircraft carrier, where he loaded bombs that were dropped on Iraq during the current U.S. war. He decided to leave the Navy after experiencing disrespectful and exploitative treatment of himself and other soldiers by military hierarchy, and seeing videotapes that officers would show to selected Navy personnel to motivate them against Iraq and Iraqis. Bigley noted: “The officers called them ‘terrorist havens’ but anyone could clearly see from the air what is a hospital or a school.”

He said of his decision to leave the Navy:



PHOTO: SDS CHAPEL HILL

FIST youth march inside Rayburn building March 16.

“I loaded bombs on jets, and I got tired of killing people, of the bombs dropping on schools and hospitals. I’m glad I’m here to try to end the war.”

From protest to resistance

Using the encampment as a home base, activists participated in a number of militant activities to show that the people are opposed to the war and any new war funding.

On March 14, a delegation of women, organized by the Women’s Fightback Network and joined by Code Pink, went to the Iraqi Embassy to demand the release of three Iraqi women and their young children from prison. The three women were sentenced to death by hanging for resisting the U.S. occupation of their country. In response to international protest, the women—who were originally tried without a lawyer—were granted an appeals trial; however, they and their children still remain imprisoned.

Holding signs that read “U.S. democracy = criminal death penalty” and “Resistance is not a crime—stop the executions!” the women’s delegation also denounced the reinstatement of the death penalty in Iraq following the appointment of the puppet interim government there. Officials nervously peeked out of the building windows, and the assistant to the ambassa-

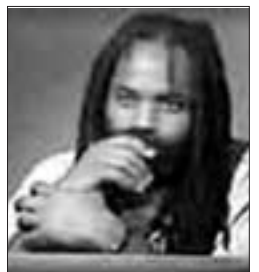
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From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

Stop the War now!

From a March 13 audio column.

Go to prisonradio.org to hear more of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s columns.



The Troops Out Now Coalition is making one of the boldest calls yet, since the war began in March 2003. It calls for folks to go beyond protest to resistance, to civil disobedience; to bringing the struggle to the halls of Congress; to bring an immediate end to an ignoble war; to force Congress to do what they can do this very day—cut off funds now!

Every dollar sent down this rat hole (is it now a billion dollars a week?) is money that is stolen from school budgets, stolen from health needs, diverted from our housing needs, and tracked toward the overflowing coffers of Halliburton, KBR, and other defense contractors!

This war, in that sense, is a war against the poor of America itself. And don’t bring up the soldiers—you only need to look at the military ghetto known as Building 18 at Walter Reed Veterans’ Hospital—to see they don’t give a damn. Boy, speakin’ of rat holes!

A midterm election won’t end this damn war—action, protest, civil disobedience will! The Troops Out Now Coalition is part of that struggle!

Ona Move! Mumia Abu-Jamal

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National Popular Party of Haiti, noted that the United States has 700 military bases around the world. Maria Magallanes of the Mexico Solidarity Network called for U.S. troops to get out of Iraq now, and for no U.S. wars in Latin America.

Chuck Kaufman of the Nicaragua Network said, “If Bush were not busy now in Iraq, he would probably be invading Venezuela now.” He urged the crowd, “Go from protest to resistance.” Eric LeCompte of the School of the Americas Watch testified to the protests at Fort Benning, Ga., to shut down the international U.S. training school for torture there.

Leah Obias of the Alliance for Justice and Peace in the Philippines connected U.S. imperialism to “anti-terror” legislation against dissent and the detention and murders of activists in her country.

Mounzer Sleiman, vice-chair of the National Council of Arab-Americans, spoke of the increased detentions and discrimination Muslims and Arabs face within the United States. Esam Omesh, president of the Muslim-American Society, decried the billions of dollars going to illegal war in Iraq and Palestine.

Imam Mahdi Bray, director of the Muslim American Society, said: “End the war today. Politicians won’t end it. The people will end it. We need to fight a war against poverty; this war left people on rooftops in Katrina. There are millions without health care. Don’t say, ‘We are fighting for democracy.’ There is no democracy here.”

Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban 5 called on marchers to join the worldwide movement to free these revolutionary Cuban patriots.

Efia Nwangaza of Not in Our Name and Debra Sweet of the World Can’t Wait stressed that U.S. troops must withdraw from Iraq immediately, and called for all to move “from protest to resistance.”

K. Durkin contributed to this article.

‘Troops out now!’



March 18—Thousands of people from Northern California took to the streets today to loudly demand “U.S. troops out of Iraq now.”

The ANSWER-called protest, which followed yesterday’s national protest in Washington, D.C., demonstrated a fierce determination on the part of young and old alike not to depend on the politicians

in power to end the war.

Speaker after speaker at rallies before and after the march called upon everyone to redouble their efforts to end the war.

Hundreds of students from the Bay Area marched defiantly against all occupation, racism and war. Representatives from the May 1 Coalition and Latin@ organizations linked the struggle against the war with

the fight for the legalization of and human rights for all undocumented workers.

Several groups are planning civil disobedience this week on the anniversary of the Iraq War. One direct action group plans to hold a die-in outside of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi’s office to demand the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq.

— Report and photo by Judy Greenspan

WESTERN MASS.

TONC organizers battled all odds, prevailed

By Catherine Donaghy

Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) organizers in Western Massachusetts fought to overcome a variety of obstacles to get to the March 17 anti-war protest and march on the Pentagon.

TONC organizers had chartered and

filled two buses. But because of the winter storm, some people from Springfield, Holyoke and Northampton phoned in to cancel their reservations. Bus company officials informed organizers they were canceling all charters slated for March 16-17.

With only a few hours left before scheduled departure, the WMass TONC organizing committee searched for another bus company. They finally found one in New Britain, Conn., willing to provide transportation to D.C. To meet this company's "payment up front," organizers had to drain their personal savings.

Although the blizzard delayed the departure, one bus, containing nearly half of the original passenger list, left the area for D.C.

The UMass Anti-War Coalition also sent a bus to the protest.

Nick Camerota of the Western Massachusetts branch of the International Action Center and the Troops Out Now Coalition, explained, "Giving up would have been the easiest option, but it would be the worst one. Many of those who traveled to D.C. with us that night had never participated in a national protest before.

They returned home happy to have gone, ready to take the next steps in moving local organizing forward."

The following day, TONC organizers and passengers on the TONC bus were interviewed by the local ABC television affiliate. New England Cable TV News also aired the local angle of the March 17 protest.

"The lesson is clear," Camerota concluded. "Don't succumb to setbacks. Explore every available option and exhaust every possibility. You cannot prevail if you are unwilling to struggle." □

Phila. teachers say 'No give-backs!'

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of the faculty federation. "We don't want to go backwards."

Full-time faculty members at CCP earn about \$5,000 less a year than the average Philadelphia School District teacher, according to the Pennsylvania Board of Education web site.

College administrators point to "expected budget shortfalls" as their reason for failing to meet workers' demands. Yet they found money to give themselves big raises and to spend on expensive advertising campaigns. Now the workers and the 36,000 students who will pay higher tuition are being told to make up the difference. It appears that most students are supporting the teachers.

As striking workers chant, "No contract, no work!" at picket lines set up along Spring Garden Street, which borders the campus, passing motorists have shown their support by honking the car horns and raising their fists. A St. Patrick's Day rally in support of the striking teachers was held on March 16 despite a snowstorm. □

Stop the War encampment

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dor was sent out to receive petitions the women had collected, denying the women entrance inside.

The next day, activists woke up early to protest a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee. Although the November 2006 vote that gave the Democrats the upper hand in Congress was largely seen as an anti-war referendum, it has become abundantly clear that Congress intends to continue funding the war.

Three encampment participants—Gael Murphy of Code Pink, Ralph Loeffler and Mel Stevens of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) NY—were arrested after being denied entrance to the meeting and sitting down on the floor of the hallway. Six more—Lorie Blanding, Bob Nash and TONC organizers Sharon Black,

Sara Flounders, Dustin Langley and Larry Holmes—were arrested for blocking the front doors of the Rayburn Building, where the meeting was being held. The nine were released at 7 p.m. that night after being held for several hours.

Later that afternoon, a press conference was held by the National May 1st Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights to announce the next round of massive protests on May Day 2007. Speakers included representatives from the Food and Commercial Workers Union, which has been supporting workers who were raided in Smithfield hog processing plants in December 2006; day laborers from Freeport, Long Island, and Freehold, N.J.; a representative from the Troops Out Now Coalition, who stressed the links and unity between the anti-war and immigrant rights movements; a member of Queers for Economic Justice, who discussed the impact of anti-immigrant policies on the lesbian, gay, bi, and trans communities; and representatives of the Los Angeles-based March 25 Coalition for Immigrant Rights and the New York-based May 1 Coalition for Immigrant Rights.

On March 16, youth and students organized by FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—took their turn protesting at the Rayburn Building. Twenty youth surreptitiously passed through the security checkpoints and entered the building, then unraveled banners that spanned the width of the hallways. They marched through all three floors of the building, loudly disrupting the meetings going on inside. Demonstrators on the plaza outside could hear the FIST contingent well before they marched out of the building, as their chants echoed down the marble halls.

Alyssa Haight, a University

of North Carolina-Chapel Hill student and member of Students for a Democratic Society, summarized the action at the Rayburn Building: "The only way to change is for people to come together—that's what we just did. The police asked for the name of our leader and we wouldn't give one, because we are representatives of all the people."

Ricardo Prada, a Colombian student at the City University of New York, said, "Congress has the power to cut funds and stop the war—but Congress is part of the people—so the FIST action is a way of remembering who has the power in the nation."

Haight noted that the response from many observers inside the building was positive, including an African-American staffer who gave the youth high fives as they chanted, "Money for jobs and education, not for war and occupation!" Workers smiled, nodded approval, gave the peace sign and thumbs-up.

Others were not so friendly. Two of the protesters were pushed by police, and military staffers in uniform cursed the contingent before slamming their office door. The youth narrowly avoided arrest as the police confusedly chased them through the building and out the door.

Caleb Maupin with the Baldwin-Wallace College FIST chapter in Cleveland said, "The spirit of rebellion is flowing through students."

The next day at the March on the Pentagon, the encampment joined a vibrant "Stop the War at Home" contingent organized by the Jericho Movement, Troops Out Now Coalition, National May 1st Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights, Katrina/Rita Survivors Network, BAYAN and the Million Worker March Movement.

Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this report.

E-mail: ldowell@workers.org



LOS ANGELES

An estimated 50,000 people protested against the Iraq war March 17 in Los Angeles called by ANSWERLA.

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA
WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN



May 1 actions for immigrant rights

Continued from page 5

grant parents and children are in jail.

The National May 1st Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights, whose formation was announced at a Feb. 4 press conference in Los Angeles, has mounted a counterattack against this racist policy, focusing on the May 1 mobilization.

Those who participated in the massive marches in the spring of 2006—which were victorious in defeating HR 4437, the Sensenbrenner bill—are gearing up for another nationwide strike to stop the vicious attacks against immigrants.

At the March 15 news conference, Boston school-bus driver union leader Steve

Gillis said all workers are hurt by government policies that divide U.S. and foreign-born workers. "The government is working with capital to break unions and lower wages."

Representatives from the Food and Commercial Workers, which represents the workers at the Smithfield, N.C., hog processing plant hit with anti-immigrant raids in December, expressed full support for the boycott.

Debanuj Dasgupta of Queers for Economic Justice spoke of the devastating impact of anti-immigrant attacks on over 1 million lesbian/gay/bi/trans people without documents.

John Parker, an African-American leader in the March 25th Movement in Los Angeles, called for "Black and Brown unity," and spoke about how centuries of exploitation and oppression unite Black people and immigrants of color.

Troops Out Now Coalition leader LeiLani Dowell spoke of the war abroad and the war at home, calling on anti-war activists to support the May 1 action.

Day laborers from Freehold, N.J., and Freeport, Long Island, N.Y., spoke of their right to work unmolested, saying, "We are not criminals."

Javier Rodriguez, member of the National May 1 Coordinating Committee,

said that "Mass demonstrations are scheduled for May 1 in cities across the country including: Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, New York City, San Antonio, Houston, Seattle, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Providence, R.I., Elizabeth, N.J., Hempstead, N.Y., and many other locations. This broad participation is an indication of the growing unity among U.S.- and foreign-born workers." This unity is against a common enemy: the U.S. government and the bosses.

May 1 events in solidarity with immigrants in the United States have also been called by the workers' movements in Venezuela, Mexico and the Philippines. □

Iraqi resistance alters world situation

By John Catalinotto

In a March 20 statement on the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, President George W. Bush defended this illegal and criminal invasion and said that the United States would stay. The Iraqi resistance is replying with continued struggle to liberate the country from its occupiers.

This resistance has kept up a determined struggle since the first days of the U.S. occupation in spring 2003. The struggle continues to make its impact on Iraq, on the Middle East, on the United States and on the world.

The resistance's greatest success has been to tie down the most powerful imperialist military and, up to this time, to prevent Washington from taking the further aggressive steps it had planned before the Pentagon got mired in the deserts and cities of Iraq.

Unfortunately this success has come at a great cost to the Iraqis, based on the crimes of the occupation. A survey of 2,205 Iraqis conducted from Feb. 25 to March 5 organized by ABC News, USA Today, the BBC and ARD German TV found an enormous gain in what can be best described as an index of fear and misery even over similar surveys 16 months earlier.

Even this survey, with which the news agencies want to reflect changes in the situation in Iraq, could seriously understate the misery of the Iraqis and their hostility to the occupation. But it is an index of change nevertheless. For example, the Associated Press report on the poll describes Iraqi attitudes as having "dissolved into widespread fear, anger and distress amid unrelenting violence." (March 19)

In November 2005, some 71 percent of Iraqis said their own life was going well. Now only 39 percent say so. Some 75 percent of Iraqis say they have feelings of anger and depression and difficulty concentrating. More than 50 percent say they have cut down on leaving their homes, going to markets or other crowded places and traveling through police checkpoints.

In an amazingly frank response, considering the power of the occupation force and the likelihood that the Iraqis would be suspicious of the survey takers, only 18 percent of Iraqis said they had confidence in U.S. and coalition troops. Some 51 percent were now willing to tell the interviewers that they believed that violence against U.S. forces is acceptable. That number was only 17 percent in early 2004, according to the AP report. This hostility to the occupation was especially strong in that part of the population who identified as Sunni.

Change for Mahdi Army?

While the United States has only been able to put a stable client government in the Kurdish areas of Iraq, Washington has depended on its relationship with the religious and political leaders of the Shiite community to form the puppet national government. Participation in this government has included not only groups that cooperated with the occupation since its beginning, but also the Mahdi Army, which was in armed conflict with the occupation in 2004 but whose leaders joined later puppet governments. This cooperation has been complicated by the U.S. government's growing hostility toward Iran, which has close ties with some of the Shiite groups in Iraq. Regarding Washington's attempt to use more Pentagon troops—the "surge"—to occupy the large Shiite-based Sadr City in Baghdad, the recent news has been that Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Mahdi Army, had asked his forces not to combat the U.S. operations.

All this has now been thrown into doubt by al-Sadr's latest statements, made March 16: "The occupiers want to harm this beloved [Sadr City] and tarnish its name by spreading false rumors and allegations that negotiations and cooperation are ongoing between you and them. I am confident that you will not make concessions to them and will remain above them. Raise your voices in love and brotherhood and unity against your enemy and shout, 'No, no America!'"

After this statement was read at a Sadr City mosque, thousands of people took to the streets to protest the U.S. military presence there, which had then lasted for two weeks. According to U.S. military officials, al-Sadr has been in Iran since February.

Should the Shiite population in the South and in Baghdad resist the occupation with the same determination as the resistance fighters in the center of the country, there is no way the U.S. troops could stay in Iraq. Already, according to the AP, 3,208 U.S. troops have been killed since the invasion of Iraq, almost 2,600 of them in military operations. Another 20,000 have been gravely wounded.

Disintegration of U.S. military

These losses are numerically small compared to the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed, and compared to U.S. losses in the wars against Korea or Vietnam. Yet the political impact has been great. Combined with the loss of support for the Bush administration, the casualties have broken U.S. popular support for the war. Youths are less likely to join the U.S. Armed Forces, which are now voluntary.

Generals and other high Pentagon offi-

cial have been testifying before Congress and seriously complaining of the threat of disintegration of the U.S. military, especially the land forces, because of the stresses of the Iraq occupation. Of course, these brass are doing so in the context of trying to appeal to Congress to increase military funding. Their specific goal is to increase the number of land troops by 92,000 in the coming years.

In the past, however, the generals, even when demanding more resources, usually claimed that the U.S. military could handle all its assigned tasks. Now the tone has changed.

U.S. Army Chief Gen. Peter Schoomaker's second-in-command, Gen. Richard Cody, said that the loss of materiel in Iraq makes it difficult to find the weapons for another conflict or even to arm the 30,000 additional troops being sent to Iraq as part of the so-called surge. And the conclusion from general evidence is that the United States won't be able to "react in a new crisis"—meaning it won't be able to launch

another aggression—until the materiel and human resources are replaced and increased.

While these generals are talking about resources for buying weapons and training troops as well as attracting them, they omit what has become obvious to many in the U.S. population. The growing disillusionment with the war and occupation has stretched the land forces to the breaking point. Soldiers and marines who volunteered either with a patriotic spirit or to get access to education and something besides low-paid work at McDonald's are now considering what steps they are willing to take to keep themselves out of Iraq. Veterans and active-duty GIs are participating in anti-war demonstrations.

All this is the result first of the Bush gang's decision to invade and occupy Iraq, and second of the Iraqi people's determination to resist.

The Iraqi resistance has changed the world situation. □

Pakistani group on Supreme Court crisis

The Pakistanis United Freedom Forum (PUFF) issued the following statement on March 16 before heading to the anti-war demonstration at the Pentagon when the news arrived that Pakistani officials had attacked journalists from the private TV station Geo and beat the lawyers who were demanding the release of Pakistani Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry:

1. General Musharraf must resign.
2. All Western powers—especially USA—stay away from this crisis. It is a Pakistani internal matter.
3. All political parties announce that they will not accept any army general or Western-imposed person except through the Pakistani constitutional process.
4. All political parties who are aligned with army junta must immediately resign and join those forces who are fighting for

the constitution—journalists, lawyers, political workers, human rights workers and students. If they do not, PUFF and Pakistanis abroad demand that the political parties and the people of Pakistan remember their vulture character.

5. PUFF demands an end to all military exercises with American and Western forces because in present situation it will effect good relations with our brother country Iran.

6. PUFF demands that in this situation when the country is at a turning point, the self-exiled politicians (in Dubai, London, USA) announce their unconditional return to the country and announce that they will not run for any high office, but rather they will support the people who have been fighting on the street for years against the Musharraf regime and the U.S. imposed policies. □

Tokyo anti-war protest



PHOTO: ANTI-WAR JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

Young workers and students held a protest demonstration on March 18 in the Ginza section of Tokyo in solidarity with the demonstrations all over the world opposing the occupation of Iraq. Besides denouncing the war, they opposed the revision of the Japanese Constitution that will allow more military intervention. The demonstrators called out, "Down with

Bush and Abe [prime minister of Japan]" and "Now we have to stand up for a revolution led by labor."

Right-wing elements attempted to disrupt the rally and demonstration by driving their cars into it, but the protest continued despite this provocation.

—Secretary Kikuchi Takao of the Anti-war Joint Action Committee



On March 20, a broad coalition of organizations in Chicago, after three months of planning and battling the city for a permit, staged an evening demonstration of over 5,000 people, marching for a mile and a half down Michigan Ave. and concluding with a rally at Daley Plaza against the Iraq war.

—Report and photo by Lou Paulsen

The price of a kidney

The ability of the medical industry to replace the diseased or injured vital organs of individuals with those from another person is undoubtedly seen as a near miracle by those who receive the donated organ. From another point of view, donating an organ is also a sign of the greatest human solidarity. Even donating the organ of someone accidentally dying is an act of human consciousness. That of someone close, probably a relative to allow a better genetic match, is a great sacrifice for another human being.

In a society built on solidarity it could be expected that organs would become available because enough people would voluntarily offer theirs—at least upon their death—to aid other human beings.

In the U.S. today, there are over 95,000 people waiting for organs. About 6,700 of these people die for the lack of them each year. Under these conditions, and in a world ruled by capital, the worst can be expected—organs at market prices. There is a national law that no benefits can be given to organ donors. But of course there is an underground market that makes everything available for a price.

On the global market, what is the price of a kidney? This question might raise a feeling of nausea and disgust among people who have a sense of humanity, who are appalled by the command of the capitalist market in every sphere of life. You would think that no one could go lower than taking an act of immense human solidarity—donating a vital organ—and having it ruled by the market.

You would think so, until you learned what was being considered in South

Carolina in the United States in 2007. What could be worse than putting human organs on the cash market? Worse than raw, ruthless capitalism? Well, a throw-back to slavery would be worse. And that's precisely what some South Carolina legislators are considering. Not only that, they think that what they are doing is a contribution.

A state Senate panel in South Carolina is proposing to offer to the mostly African-American prison population of that state a deal that many of them can't refuse: one hundred eighty days cut off their jail time for the donation of a kidney. It is a slave owner's solution to a human problem. It is a reminder of the medical experiments done on African Americans who contracted syphilis in the 1930s—known as the Tuskegee project—which used Black men as laboratory specimens and abandoned them as human beings, using them as guinea pigs and then cutting off their medical care once the experiment was finished.

So there are two grotesque possibilities under the globalized capitalist market: a poor worker or farmer in a developing country giving up a kidney to support his or her family or a nationally oppressed person in the United States, imprisoned most likely as part of that oppression, giving up a kidney to gain a half-year of relative freedom.

It is the unique contribution of U.S. capitalism, born in part from the slave system, to take what should be an exercise in human solidarity and turn it into a sordid addendum to oppression. It is one more reason to fight that much harder to replace the capitalist system with socialism. □

NEWS BRIEFS FROM FIVE CONTINENTS

CANADA:

Fiasco over Afghanistan

Like its counterpart in the United States, the right-wing Canadian government is in trouble over a war—in this case the role of 2,500 Canadian troops in the occupation of Afghanistan.

The Canadian military has been charged with turning over captured alleged Taliban members to Afghan authorities on at least 18 occasions. These prisoners were reportedly tortured and abused by the Afghan puppet government.

Canadian Defense Minister Gordon O'Connor testified earlier in March that the International Committee of the Red Cross would inform Canada if any detainees were being mistreated.

On March 19, O'Connor stated he had misled Parliament about the matter. In reality, as O'Connor admitted, the Red Cross was only obliged to report its findings on the treatment of detainees to Afghan authorities.

Several opposition legislators have demanded O'Connor resign for misleading the Canadian parliament.

An additional four investigations are under way into whether Canadian troops mistreated three Afghan men captured in April 2006.

Canadian troops are based in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar, where there has been a great deal of resistance from Afghan forces fighting to liberate their country from the Western occupation. Canadians have taken relatively heavy casualties among the U.S./NATO coalition forces.

There have been frequent mass protests in Canada, and especially in Quebec, against the Canadian role in the occupation.

ZIMBABWE:

Imperialist diplomats warned

Following continued imperialist intervention aimed at subverting the independence of Zimbabwe, the government in Harare warned Western diplomats March 19 that it would not hesitate to expel them if they gave support to the opposition.

Envoys in Zimbabwe reported anonymously that U.S. Ambassador Christopher Dell walked out of the meeting. The United States and Britain, the former colonial power, have been particularly hostile to the Robert Mugabe government over the past decade. This hostile pressure has increased since Mugabe has pressed to take land from European landholders and distribute it to the African population, especially to liberation fighters.

Foreign Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi told the diplomats that Western embassies had gone too far by offering material resources to opposition activists who were recently jailed. Mumbengegwi, who had summoned the envoys to a meeting, read a statement that said the Vienna Convention governing diplomatic behavior prohibited foreign ambassadors from involvement in the internal affairs of the host nation, and added that Zimbabwe would not hesitate to use that provision to expel them.

President Mugabe, who has led Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980 and has withstood the recent attacks so far, accused the opposition party of resorting to violence sponsored by former colonial power Britain and other Western allies to oust his government: "We have given too much room to mischief-makers and shameless stooges

The Pentagon goes to Fantasy Island

By Paul Wilcox

Just got back from seeing the highly promoted movie "300," and my only thought is how Pentagon generals must love it to death.

Playing in 2,700 theaters and grossing \$70 million the first weekend, the movie is being pushed hard, in the hope that many will see it as a "chill-out" movie after a hard day's work. The movie is a Pentagon fantasy.

"300" is about the battle at Thermopylae in 480 B.C., where 300 outnumbered Spartan soldiers delayed the Persian army for some time before being wiped out. But this movie has little to do with history and everything to do with war propaganda.

The movie uses all the racist myths that glorify Greek (Spartan) society as defend-

ers of "Western Civilization" and denigrate Persia (current-day Iran) as Eastern and barbaric. In scenes reminiscent of the racism of Joseph Goebbels, the old Nazi propaganda minister, there are countless references to "endless Asian hordes," "Persian beasts" and a "new age of freedom." The Spartans are said to descend from Hercules himself. The severely racist theme of this movie makes it almost unbearable to watch, and has prompted the Iranian government to issue a protest. (See related box.)

I can picture the Pentagon warmakers salivating all over themselves watching this movie. They must so love an army where all the "good guy" Spartan soldiers say, "Yes, my Lord," to everything the generals order, and whose only ambition is to die in battle. Meanwhile, the bad guys wear monkey-like masks (yes they do in this movie), and generally appear even worse looking than the rhinos, elephants and monsters they use in battle.

Following an old and worn-out U.S. war movie formula that flies in the face of reality, many thousands of the "bad guys" are killed en masse (even in slow motion), then one Spartan is killed and the "good guys" get really mad and swear revenge. To the director, one of them is worth more than many thousands of the "enemy."

Another offensive stereotype taken out of the garbage can of Hollywood formulas

and dusted off is presenting an "evil" person as disabled. The one traitor among the Spartans just happens to be a man with a severely disfigured back and face—who happens to look just like the Persian bad guys.

Pentagon fantasy vs. reality

In 1968 the song "Ballad of the Green Berets," glorifying Pentagon death squads in Viet Nam, hit the top of the charts. But

1968 was the year the anti-war movement really blossomed among the population and resistance to the war grew—among the soldiers especially.

It was the year when "credibility gap" became the capitalist media's byword for the difference between what the government said about the war and what the population

thought was true.

Within a few years after that, "fragging" became a well-known term for soldiers tossing fragmentation grenades into their officers' tents because they were sick of dying in a colonial war.

Does some of this sound familiar?

Bad news for the Pentagon in Iraq? They make up some good news. No weapons of mass destruction? They pretend there are some. Losing a terrible colonial war in Iraq that is becoming ever more unpopular? They make a movie that shows the opposite.

For the Pentagon in 2007, fantasy is so much better than reality.

As the war in Iraq loses popular support, more and more U.S. soldiers are realizing that while they are busy in training pumping iron, the Pentagon is busy on Wall Street pumping oil. U.S. oil companies are making record profits. Soldiers see that they are hated by nearly everyone in Iraq, whatever the Iraqis' religion or political orientation. The veterans have learned that they won't get decent medical attention or benefits when they return home, just as with the Vietnam war.

The film "300" will not change the current mood any more than the "Ballad of the Green Berets" did in 1968.

In the end, reality always trumps fantasy, as the Pentagon will find out to its dismay. □



Iran condemns Hollywood war epic

Javad Shamaqdare, a cultural advisor to the Iranian government, denounced the movie "300" as "psychological warfare" against Iran and its people. He accused the movie makers of "plundering Iran's historic past and insulting its civilization." The daily newspaper Ayandeh-No stated that the movie "... seeks to tell people that Iran, which is in the Axis of Evil now, has long been the source of evil and modern Iranians' ancestors are the ugly, dumb, murderous savages you see in '300.'" □

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of the West. Let them and their masters know that we shall brook none of their lawless behavior.” (Zimbabwe Sunday Mail, March 18)

ARGENTINA:

Remember the disappeared

March 24 is the 31st anniversary of the 1976 military coup that brought in a brutal dictatorship to run the second-biggest and most industrially developed South American country. During the dictatorship, some 30,000 Argentine people, mostly leftists and union organizers, were murdered by the regime without any record of their executions. They became known as “the disappeared.”

In Buenos Aires and in many other provincial capitals, demonstrations on March 24 will mark the anniversary—and protest the more recent disappearance of Julio López, a witness who testified against Miguel Etchecolatz, one of the key members of the repressive state. López has been missing for the past six months. The main demand will be that López reappear alive.

The demonstration has been called by the Grandmothers and Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and other major human-rights organizations. It is supported by 120 community organizations, unions and left parties.

ITALY:

Int'l conference on resistance

An international conference called “With the resistance, for just peace in the Middle East” will take place on March 24 and 25 in Chianciano Terme, Italy.

Speakers from the Middle East will include Waleed al Modallal, professor of political science at the Islamic university of Gaza; Ali Fayyad, university professor and director of the Consultative Centre for Studies and Documentation, Lebanon; Mufid Qutaysh, Communist Party of Lebanon; Ayatollah al Sayyed Ahmed al Baghdadi, religious patriotic leader against occupation and imperialism; Abdul Jabbar al Kubaysi, secretary general of the Iraq Patriotic Alliance, spokesperson of the Patriotic National Islamic Front.

Some of the speakers from Italy will include Moreno Pasquinelli and Aldo Bernardini. Speakers from the worldwide anti-imperialist movement will include the Egyptian anti-globalization leader Samir Amin, and Larry Holmes, co-director of the International Action Center.

PHILIPPINES:

Gov't crimes to be raised at Netherlands Tribunal

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal will hear testimony against the government of Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the government of U.S. President George W. Bush and their accomplices on March 21-25 in The Hague, The Netherlands.

The Bush and Macapagal-Arroyo governments are accused of gross violations of human rights, economic plunder and ecological destruction, and transgression of the Filipino people's sovereignty.

Representatives of the plaintiff—Filipino organizations which initiated the case before the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal—will hold a press briefing and photo/video session with the media before the presentation of charges against the accused.

—John Catalinotto

Henri Nereaux 1928-2007

On land and sea, he fought for workers' rights

By Deirdre Griswold

Henri Nereaux, 79, a member of Workers World Party and a regular staff volunteer with the International Action Center, died on March 8.

Nereaux had been a merchant seaman, a union official, and in his retirement a relentless opponent of U.S. imperialist aggressions around the world. He took part in solidarity delegations to Cuba, Iraq, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Nereaux came from Louisiana and his ancestors were Cajun—a French-speaking culture descended from farmers who had been brutally expelled from eastern Canada by the British in the 18th century. He had a deep hatred of colonial domination and was proud of his French heritage, refusing to answer when called “Henry.”

Nereaux began a lifetime career as a merchant seaman during World War II, when he was only 15. There was such a shortage of mariners in those dangerous days that the tall youngster was accepted with no questions asked.

As a deckhand, he joined the National Maritime Union, which had been built by communists and offered classes in labor history and international workers' solidarity. He never forgot what he learned in the NMU, even after the McCarthyite purge of leftists from the unions they had founded.

Nereaux traveled all over the world as a seaman, but his most frequent destinations were Havana, Cuba, and the working-class ports of Liverpool and Manchester in Britain. He happily recalled those care-free days when the seamen would collect their pay and head for the bars as soon as their ships docked to spend a few rollicking days ashore before returning to work and another voyage.

He also remembered the times when jobs were few. Once he spent a week living in the New York subway system, sleeping on benches, washing in public restrooms and buying hotdogs inside the stations.

Even though he was still at sea most of the time, Nereaux took part in the turbulent struggles of the 1960s. He climbed a tree to better see and hear Fidel Castro when the Cuban revolutionary leader came to New York in 1960. He was among the audience at the Audubon Ballroom when the Black Muslim leader Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965.

Around that time he let his hair grow long—a no-no for a uniformed ship's mate. But his reputation was so fierce that the captain gave up trying to make him get a haircut.

After many years at sea, Nereaux began moving “up the hawsepipe,” as seafarers put it, studying and obtaining licenses to become second mate, first mate and eventually master, or captain. These ships' officers are considered “nonstatutory employees” and are in a separate union—the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots.

Nereaux became active in the MM&P and was elected a patrolman—a union official who met the ships as they arrived in port and found out if the mariners had any grievances.

Sometimes he would hold a ship in port



Henri Nereaux (left) at Montreal dock where supplies were being loaded for Cuba.

until the grievances were resolved.

His militant defense of the workers and his meticulous knowledge of the union contract led to his election as a vice president of the MM&P. His support came mainly from mariners who, like himself, had worked their way up.

Nereaux never succumbed to “business unionism.” He had scorn for union officials like Lane Kirkland, who went directly from the King's Point Merchant Marine Academy to a mate's position, then studied international relations at Georgetown University in Washington where he was groomed to become a conservative labor leader in a time of cold war reaction. Kirkland went to work for George “I never walked a picket line” Meany and became his hand-picked successor as president of the AFL-CIO.

A thorough internationalist

After retirement, he entered a new phase of his life, one of more intense political activity.

In the early 1990s, Nereaux attended a large mobilization in Washington called by the AFL-CIO. As he was leaving, he saw a leaflet on the ground explaining why givebacks and takebacks were a problem for all workers, not just those having their contracts torn up, and that it required a broad response from labor—a one-day work stoppage. He called the number on the leaflet and thus began his relationship with the Center for United Labor Action and eventually with Workers World Party.

In the party Nereaux found a blend of internationalism and struggle around workers' issues. He had experienced the strength of international workers' solidarity in his maritime work. He especially admired the Longshore Workers union on the West Coast, which not only fought for its members but also took a strong stand against South African apartheid and the blockade of Cuba.

Nereaux had been to Cuba often during the days of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. He had seen the poverty and repression firsthand. When the revo-

lution came, he supported it wholeheartedly. He went to Cuba on several solidarity delegations and helped organize party participation in the Pastors for Peace Friendship caravans, taking material aid to the socialist island in defiance of the U.S.-imposed blockade.

On one memorable trip in 1994, he drove a van filled with medicines and computers from Buffalo, N.Y., to Canada. The vehicles were given a sendoff by supporters but then were stopped on the Peace Bridge by U.S. authorities, who demanded their surrender. Nereaux instead locked the doors and windows from the inside while the supporters chanted outside. With traffic backing up between the two countries, the caravan was finally allowed to pass after several hours' standoff.

It was with a strong sense of victory that they finally arrived in Montreal, where all the donated supplies were loaded onto a Cuban freighter.

Nereaux also was a co-founder of the U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange, which brought together unionists from both countries. Ignacio Meneses of the Labor Exchange describes him as “a strong supporter and defender of the Cuban Revolution and what it represented to the Latin American people.”

In December 1998 Nereaux took part in the Iraq Sanctions Challenge, which brought \$250,000 worth of life-saving medicines to that beleaguered country where hundreds of thousands were dying because of U.S.-U.N. imposed economic sanctions.

Kadouri Al Kaysi, one of the organizers of the trip, says, “When Henri came into the office, I would ask him how he was and he always answered ‘Fantastic!’ But in Iraq he felt the agony of the Iraqi people like no one I ever saw. He felt depressed for what was happening to them. He said to me, ‘Kadouri, one day Iraqis will win.’ I miss him. He was a good friend.”

Despite worsening health problems, Nereaux remained politically active until his final hospitalization. He often reminisced about how being a union member had done so much for him, providing him good health benefits and a generous pension. He was for socialism so that all workers could enjoy such security.

One of his favorite sayings, usually as he savored a glass of wine, was: “Nothing's too good for the workers.”

E-mail: dgriswold@workers.org



Nereaux in his office when vice president of the MM&P.

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

La Guerra contra Irak: ¿Qué tiene que ver con Marx?

Por Fred Goldstein

¿Qué tiene que ver Karl Marx con la resistencia contra la guerra en Irak?

No hay que ser marxista para oponerse a la guerra contra Irak. Hay suficientes razones para indignarse como los bombardeos “Choque y Espanto”, las torturas en Abu Ghraib, los asesinatos de más de medio millón de iraquíes, las muertes de más de 3.000 soldados estadounidenses y miles de heridos más que son tratados por el Pentágono como mercancía desechada en el Hospital Walter Reed.

Y no hay que ser marxista para entender que la motivación detrás del “progreso” de la administración Bush para su cliente Maliki en Irak, son las ganancias, es decir la ley del petróleo que abre la segunda reserva más grande en el mundo para las compañías Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Shell y British Petroleum. Por cierto, adivinen quién acaba de establecer su cuartel general para toda Asia en Dubai. Por supuesto, la Halliburton de Cheney.

No es necesario entender a Lenin, quien actualizó el marxismo en el siglo 20 con su análisis del imperialismo como un sistema social con necesidad de expansión, para oponerse a la guerra de la OTAN-EEUU en Afganistán; o la campaña de Washington por un “cambio de régimen” del gobierno independiente de Irán; o su apoyo para el régimen de Israel y su continua guerra de represión contra el pueblo palestino; o el uso de Tel Aviv para librar una guerra contra Hizbolá con el objetivo de asegurar un régimen afín a los Estados Unidos en el Líbano; o sus intentos de destruir los gobiernos socialistas de Corea del Norte y Cuba; o la campaña en contra del gobierno pro socialista y antiimperialista de Hugo Chávez en Venezuela.

Ya nos adhiramos o no a la teoría leninista del imperialismo, hay que oponerse a la más reciente “estrategia africana” de Washington que ayuda a las corporaciones petroleras al situarse en el Golfo de Guinea con sus reservas; la intervención militar en África para colocar un “caudillo” afín a los EEUU en Somalia y recolonizar Etiopía; y la campaña de Estados Unidos y Bretaña para derrocar al gobierno de Robert Mugabe en Zimbabwe porque éste trató de retomar la tierra más fecunda en el país de manos de los colonos blancos que quedaban del viejo régimen.

De la esclavitud a Katrina

L@s marxistas decimos que el sistema de ganancias es el responsable del racismo y la opresión nacional. Pero no se tiene que estar de acuerdo con esto para poder ver claramente que cientos de miles de african@s-american@s han sido abandonad@s para que permanentemente sufran el trauma extraordinario de un desplazamiento y una separación evocadora de la esclavitud mientras que los corredores inmobiliarios y otros parásitos del re-aburguesamiento urbano, como

aves de rapiña se han movilizad@ a Nueva Orleans para hacer de la crisis del pobre una oportunidad de ganancias para el rico.

El estado, según Marx, es una herramienta de la clase dominante para ejercer la opresión sobre la clase trabajadora y oprimida, que es la explotada. Y ya esté usted de acuerdo o no con que este análisis se aplica a los Estados Unidos, hay que preguntarse cómo es que el Departamento de Seguridad para la Patria lleva a cabo redadas de terror en contra de trabajador@s indocumentad@s indefens@s, redadas que dejan a l@s niñ@s sin padres ni madres y criminaliza a l@s trabajador@s peor pagad@s que lo único que intentan es tratar de sobrevivir.

Es indiscutible que la policía es parte esencial de ese estado, ya se considere usted marxista o no. Considere el asesinato por parte de la policía de Amadou Diallo, de Sean Bell, y del número sin reportar de víctimas de identificaciones racistas estereotipadas y de brutalidad policial en las comunidades oprimidas. Parte de ese estado es el complejo prisión-industrial, que mantiene a 2 millones de personas pobres—desproporcionadamente africana-americanas y latinas—que, antes de que se convirtieran en prisioneras del estado, eran presas de la pobreza y de la desesperación en una economía de \$11 trillones dirigida por empresarios multimillonarios.

El precio del dominio corporativo

Parte de ese estado dirigido por las corporaciones son los jueces que permiten que las corporaciones echen en la basura los contratos sindicales y las pensiones de l@s trabajador@s usando la maniobra legal de la bancarrota. Los jueces que ordenan prohibiciones contra huelguistas, la policía que rompe las líneas de piquete y las agencias gubernamentales que nulifican las elecciones sindicales son parte también del aparato de ese estado.

No es necesario tener un análisis sofisticado del capitalismo para saber que las compañías súper-ricas de los HMOs y las aseguradoras están acumulando ganancias producto del sistema del cuidado médico mientras que 47 millones de personas no tienen ningún seguro de salud; que las compañías farmacéuticas obtienen súper-ganancias mientras que

la gente sigue enfermándose y much@s mueren porque no pueden pagar los altísimos precios establecidos por el sistema monopolista de la industria farmacéutica; que los propietarios y los inversionistas en bienes raíces han destruido los alquileres razonables de las viviendas; que la gente que sobrevive de cheque a cheque tiene que pedir préstamos para poder seguir adelante; y que los bancos y las compañías de tarjetas de crédito, los prestamistas de hipotecas y otros usureros corporativos están pillando a la gente mientras los intereses de las deudas personales suben aceleradamente.

Pero mientras más extensamente examinamos la naturaleza de la sociedad contemporánea en EEUU, Europa y Japón, más se vuelve claro que lo que está pasando actualmente no es nada nuevo, sino una continuación en una escala mayor, de lo que ha existido a través de la historia del capitalismo y el imperialismo.

Poner en peligro al planeta y a su gente

Uno de los sucesos recientes más dramáticos y peligrosos bajo el sistema de ganancias es la amenaza al planeta. Para mantener sus márgenes de ganancias, las corporaciones están envenenando el suelo, el agua, el aire y están erosionando la atmósfera. Si algo revela la locura y la avaricia inherente al afán y el sistema de ganancias, es el riesgo corporativo al planeta.

El capitalismo amenaza también a la gente que vive en el planeta. Sólo recientemente ha sido que las mujeres en este país ganaron el derecho legal de tomar decisiones fundamentales sobre sus propios cuerpos. Y ese derecho se ha ido recortado gradualmente.

Las mujeres son maltratadas todos los días en este país y las cortes y la policía no hacen nada. Hay refugios para mujeres maltratadas a través de todo el país.

Personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y transexuales son atacadas, y golpeadas por la policía y estos crímenes quedan impunes y mayormente sin reportar.

Hasta hoy día, la gente lesbiana, gay, bisexual y transexual todavía lucha por los derechos más fundamentales, como el derecho a casarse y a amar a la persona que quiera.

El racismo, el sexismo y la opresión por el género se arraiga en la necesidad de la minoría súper rica que gobierna dividiendo a la clase trabajadora, lanzando prejuicios y odio en sus ojos de modo que no puedan considerar cómo cada faceta del sistema de ganancias funciona en su contra —para así prevenir que se unan y luchen en contra de su enemigo natural: la clase capitalista.

El marxismo muestra el camino

Si usted se opone a todos estos males y quiere acabar con ellos de una vez y por todas, entonces Marx y

Lenin son indispensables.

L@s marxistas luchamos por la justicia política, social y económica en la sociedad capitalista en todos los niveles todos los días. No hay forma de opresión o explotación que deba ser permitida pasar sin oposición. No estamos esperando que el socialismo caiga del cielo y lo arregle todo.

Pero para acabar con todos estos productos del capitalismo, l@s trabajador@s sindicalizad@s y l@s oprimid@s deben quitarle el poder que tienen las corporaciones para despedir a l@s trabajador@s, recortarle los sueldos y eliminarle el cuidado de salud. Este movimiento debe quitarle a los propietarios el poder de hacer que la vivienda sea inasequible; quitarle al estado su poder de fomentar una guerra contra l@s inmigrantes; al Pentágono su poder de hacer guerras de agresión e intervención en el exterior; y debe destruir el sistema y la cultura dominante de racismo, opresión nacional, degradación de mujeres y opresión de género.

El poder para cumplirlo se basa en el control de la economía, de los medios de difusión, de educación, del sistema de cuidado de la salud, etc. L@s marxistas queremos eliminar de la sociedad a los dos partidos capitalistas, Republicano y Demócrata, los cuales están pagados por las multimillonarias corporaciones y engañan al pueblo—generación tras generación—mientras continúa la guerra, la pobreza, el racismo y el sufrimiento.

Los partidos políticos de l@s trabajador@s y l@s oprimid@s se deben movilizar para reorganizar la sociedad en base revolucionaria.

El pueblo trabajador tiene que tomar el control de la riqueza enorme que ha creado. Y las naciones y nacionalidades oprimidas—africana-americana, latina, asiática, indígena y tod@s aquell@s que han sido golpead@s por el racismo y la opresión nacional en esta “cárcel de naciones”—deben tener el derecho a la auto-determinación—i.e. la libertad de decidir su propio destino político, social y económico.

Tenemos que apoderarnos de los medios de difusión para que las vidas de las comunidades oprimidas y de la clase trabajadora se vean por todo el país y alrededor del mundo en las primeras páginas de los periódicos, en las revistas y en las redes de televisión popular. La industria médica debe ser usada en la manera como es usada en la Cuba socialista—donde todo el servicio de cuidado de salud tanto como la educación, es gratuito—para el bienestar de las masas, no para las ganancias de la “industria de salud” capitalista.

En otras palabras, la clase capitalista —la clase que se aprovecha de la explotación y las ganancias—su sistema y su estado represivo ha de ser destruido de raíz a través de la lucha revolucionaria de las masas de trabajador@s y el pueblo oprimido. Entonces y sólo entonces terminarán las guerras imperialistas como la de Irak.

Eso es lo que Marx tiene que ver con la oposición a la guerra. □

