

Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Packs Garden

New York, N.Y.—The National Day of Solidarity with Puerto Rico was a great success. The main rally, held at Madison Square Garden drew close to 20,000 people and showed the important role that the struggle of nations for their liberation plays in the world today.

The Garden crowd included several hundred people from Puerto Rico who joined with thousands of U.S. citizens in demanding that the U.S. relinquish its colonial domination of that country. Marches and rallies in solidarity with the New York affair drew thousands of people in cities across the country.

The Madison Square Garden rally heard a program of militant speeches and cultural performances. Entertainers included Ray Baretto and Mabel Hillary. Among the speakers were Russell Means of the American Indian Movement; Owusu Sadaukai of the African Liberation Support Committee; Le Anh Thu, a Vietnamese woman; Irwin Silber of the Guardian; Corky Gonzalez from the Crusade for Justice; and Angela Davis from the CPUSA.

THIRD WORLD SUPPORT

Messages of support were received from several delegations to the United Nations, including the Republic of the Congo, Venezuela, and the Organization of African Unity. The Cuban ambassador R. Alarcon, who spoke out for Puerto Rico in last year's struggle at the U.N. over the status of the island country, was present at the Garden and received a warm ovation from the crowd.

The militancy and spirit of unity that filled the Garden could not be broken even by the disruptive actions of the Garden owners who tried for weeks to cancel the event. Nor could it be stopped by the imperialist-controlled press which was used to intimidate and frighten people from coming. On Saturday preceding the event, five bombings occurred at several banks in Manhattan. The group claiming responsibility was reported to be a Puerto Rican nationalist group. The press went wild over the story, seeking to divide the Puerto Rican forces and also to scare away those who had already bought tickets. The giant turn-out on Sunday showed the bankruptcy of such tactics.

One of the main political lessons of the Day was that the independence of Puerto Rico is an integral part of the world-wide struggle against imperialism. This struggle pits the people of the world against both imperialist superpowers in their fight for independence, liberation and revolution.

Irwin Silber's speech went directly to this issue when he said, "The struggle for national liberation in the world is the struggle against all imperialism."

Another lesson was that iron unity is needed between the national liberation movements around the world and the working class struggle within the U.S. itself. This was the theme of Owusu Sadaukai's speech. He said: "The People's Republic of China states that 'Countries want independence; nations want liberation and people want revolution.' This sums up why we are here today. Those of us who work daily against national and class oppression see the need for revolutionary initiative. Today is a concrete expression of the will to break down barriers that have been used to divide us.

"SEALED IN BLOOD"

"Our solidarity for the Puerto Rican struggle is sealed with our blood. We place the slain Attica brothers and the brothers and sisters slain at Kent State alongside the five nationalist prisoners. We support the demand for the unconditional independence of Puerto Rico and its people."

The main speaker of the afternoon was Juan Mari Bras, Sec. Gen. of Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP). He summed up both the world-wide importance of the Puerto Rican struggle and also the importance of the U.S. left and progressive forces taking a clear stand towards the independence question. He said: "The Puerto Rican people are in these very moments, rapidly organizing to return our inalienable right to national independence, which has been recognized by the international community. We view ourselves as an integral part of the people's struggle for the total elimination of imperialism throughout the world. Placed by both geography and history in the situation of being the frontier between the center of the imperialist world and the Third World, these Puerto Ricans will fully meet their responsibility on the agenda of today's world.

"The progressive and anti-imperialist forces in the U.S. are fundamental factors in this struggle for independence just as the conquest of the independence of Puerto Rico will be a decisive factor for the advancement of the struggle for revolutionary change in this country. Therein lies a dialectical relationship between both struggles."

The National Day of Solidarity with Puerto Rico was a great step forward for the Puerto Rican independence movement and for the American working class as well. Our task however has only begun and the Day of Solidarity should be viewed as a first step in a struggle that will surely win.

**INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO!
WORKERS AND OPPRESSED NATIONS UNITE!
DOWN WITH THE TWO SUPERPOWERS!**



A SOLIDARITY DAY MARCH in Los Angeles drew support from more than 600 people. (Call Photo)