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Sanctions, diplomacy, missiles U.S. takes aim at Iran's sovereignty

By Sara Flounders

What is the significance of the widely publicized announcement that the Bush administration has finally agreed to talk to Iran?

Have U.S. aircraft carriers, nuclear-armed and powered submarines, destroyers or missiles been pulled back from Iran's coast? Has Washington renounced its years of sabotage, assassinations and other covert actions inside Iran? Will any of the many sanctions imposed to constrict Iran's development be lifted or even eased?

On July 19 Undersecretary of State William Burns sat in on a six-nation gathering in Geneva and "observed" nuclear negotiations between Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili and Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China. The talks are scheduled to resume in August, but Burns will not return for them. The one-time presence of this third-ranking diplomat is supposedly enough to show that Washington has made an effort at a diplomatic solution.

U.S. participation in the meeting came after increasingly frantic appeals from European powers and from the feudal and military regimes in the Persian Gulf region for diplomacy rather than war. They fear the destabilizing consequences of another U.S. attack. Even in top circles of the U.S. ruling class and military command, concern has been expressed about the risks and dangers of a new war.

Following his appearance at the Geneva meeting, Burns and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met in Abu Dhabi with foreign ministers and senior officials of the six Gulf states, along with Egypt, Iraq and Jordan. At the meeting Rice warned that Iran had two weeks to halt its development of nuclear energy or face further "punitive measures."

MOBILIZE TO STOP WAR AUG. 2



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Iran will also be the main topic at a meeting of European Union foreign ministers the following day.

Washington says its possible next step is to push for an intense level of international sanctions in the U.N. Security Council. If council members don't go along with its demands, the U.S. is threatening military action.

To reinforce the threat, Rice's statement was immediately followed by an announcement from Israeli military adviser Amos Gilad that Israel was preparing to attack Iran if diplomacy failed—and that the U.S. would not veto such action.

Although Burns sat in on the Geneva meeting, the U.S. did not give its agreement to a European proposal that, in exchange for an Iranian "freeze" on its enrichment of uranium, a six-week "freeze" be put on more restrictive sanctions against Iran. Lifting the existing sanctions was not even proposed.

U.S. sanctions have been imposed on Iran since the 1978 Iranian Revolution. Soon after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.N. Security Council imposed three new rounds of sanctions on Iran. Now Washington is demanding new and far harsher sanctions—despite International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) reports that Iran does not have a nuclear weapons program and a similar conclusion in the National Intelligence Estimate report of December 2007, endorsed

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WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Rubie Curl-Pinkins and friends fight eviction. See page 3.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

At Houston prisons hearing, July 18. Left front, Wilma Johnson, mother and Teresa Turner, cousin of Lonnie Johnson, executed last summer. Behind them is Njeri Shakur from the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement. See page 3.

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A tribute to Dr. John Henrik Clarke

This week ...



By Dolores Cox
Harlem, N.Y.



Dr. John Henrik Clarke

This past July 13 the African Education at the Crossroads: 10th Annual Tribute to Dr. John Henrik Clarke program was presented before a packed auditorium at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The program was sponsored by the Board for the Education of People of African Ancestry, which is comprised of educators, historians, activists and clergy.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Adelaide Sanford, retired New York State Board of Regents vice-chancellor and long-time community activist. Gil Noble—producer and host of the ABC-TV program “Like It Is” (and a Harlemit)—served as one of the presenters.

Others who gave tribute to Dr. Clarke included his widow, Sybil Clarke and such former colleagues and activists in the struggle as Yosef ben-Jochannan, aka “Dr. Ben,” former Jamaican Ambassador to Nigeria Dudley Thompson and Brooklyn attorney Alton Maddox. A cultural presentation was performed by 12-year-old spoken-word artist/activist Autumn Ashante.

Speakers provided a lively commentary on the implications of Dr. Clarke’s work in the present-day education of Black children, the school-to-jail phenomenon of Black youth, U.S. racism, the continuing role of the European powers throughout Africa, the current U.S. political and election scene, and the need to save renowned Harlem from encroaching gentrification.

Dr. Clarke was born in Alabama in 1915 and died in 1998. Raised as a youth in Georgia, he was the son of a sharecropper family. He came to New York in search of the true history of Africa and African Americans, saying that he could not stomach the lies of world history he had been taught.

In Harlem, Dr. Clarke became a researcher, writer and educator. He also edited books on Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois. He was known worldwide as a cultural intellect.

One of his mentors was Arturo Schomburg, the Black Puerto Rican historian for whom the Schomburg Center is named. Paul Robeson was another.

Dr. Clarke was a mentor to the late Ghanaian Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah, while he was in the United States as a student. While Dr. Clarke was traveling in post-independent Ghana, he met up with Nkrumah.

Professor Clarke taught Africana and Puerto Rican Studies at Cornell University and Hunter College and traveled extensively to give lectures. He also held many

informal teach-ins at his Harlem home. Dr. Clarke was quoted as saying, “We cannot separate folklore and myth from truth. Folklore is both beautiful and essential. And myth is essential to the ego of all people. But myth is not truth. Myth is based on folklore.”

He observed that it is essential that people tell stories that make them feel good about themselves. But in doing this there is the danger of telling someone else’s story.

A life dedicated to national liberation

In the telling of European history, imperialists and colonizers deliberately deny, distort and omit the history of Indigenous first-world peoples. As such, Dr. Clarke stressed the importance of knowing and telling one’s own history and story. He emphasized the power of knowledge, knowledge of self as well as of one’s oppressor. Knowledge has the power to control individuals, social consciousness and identity, he stated. Knowledge of oneself influences how we think of ourselves as well as how we think of others. And the images we have of ourselves (forced upon us or by self-enlightenment) form the concepts by which we see ourselves.

Dr. Clarke consistently stressed the importance of uncovering the truth, speaking truth to power and living his philosophy of “telling it like it is.” He emphasized the need to include African history in the study of world history; to incorporate information about the Black Holocaust and the Middle Passage, beginning with the European slave trade up to the U.S. Civil War, during which time millions of Africans were killed; to acknowledge the deliberate destruction of the enslaved Africans’ culture, language, religion, family structure and one’s own name; and also to include the history and contributions of Blacks in the study of U.S. history. He was seen as a true revolutionary, a warrior who loved his people and their heritage.

Dr. Clarke was admired for being a griot, a teller of great factual stories of ancient Africa and its accomplishments and contributions in the fields of science, math, philosophy, economics and medicine. This was all prior to the arrival of Europeans from Rome and Greece who borrowed, and even claimed as their own, much of the knowledge they took from the Africans.

Dr. Clarke was an activist in his Harlem community and elsewhere, taking a personal interest in political prisoners from the Black Liberation Movement of the civil rights era. He involved himself in South Africa’s struggle against apartheid and saw apartheid as mainly about European or white control of the precious metals on the African continent. He was a strong proponent of African unity and Pan-African nationalism throughout the entire African Diaspora and of the right to self-determination and sovereignty.

Dr. Clarke stated: “History is a clock that tells a people their historical time of day. It is the compass that people use to locate themselves on the map of human geography. A people’s history tells a people where they are and what they are. More importantly, a proper understanding of history tells a people what they still must be and where they still must go.” □

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

The following sections of the book are an outline of its contents: • Black liberation & the working-class struggle • The material basis for reparations in the U.S. • Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance • What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world • Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty • Justice for the Caribbean • A salute to women revolutionaries • Why fight-back is inevitable • Black labor and class solidarity
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Moratorium struggle builds, activists plan to stop eviction

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Organizers with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions have been on the go in Michigan. Activists have been fanning out and spreading the message that a ray of hope exists in the midst of the economic depression and home foreclosure epidemic devastating families in cities, rural areas and communities throughout the state. They have been publicizing SB 1306, a law recently introduced in the Michigan legislature that would put a two-year moratorium or halt on foreclosures and evictions.

Organizers have been garnering support for the moratorium and getting people on board for the Sept. 17 march on Lansing, where homeowners, community activists and others will descend on the state Capitol to demand passage of SB 1306. The law has also been gaining many endorsers, including Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett.

Activists have been taking direct action to stop foreclosures and evictions by the bankers. The Coalition issued a call for a demonstration to stop the eviction of Rubie Curl-Pinkins from her home on Holden Street on Detroit's near west side. This disabled senior has lived in her home for 45 years, had it paid off, but was lured into a predatory loan when her medical bills piled up. Her adult daughter, who suffers from congestive heart failure and is on oxygen to help her breathe, lives in the home as well.

Countrywide Bank and its law firm Trott & Trott initiated foreclosure hear-

ing against Pinkins. She has been able to obtain a reverse mortgage and get the funds to pay off the subprime mortgage in full, but Countrywide refuses to accept her payment and is going full steam ahead with the foreclosure. The Pinkins family is scheduled to be evicted on July 25.

On July 18, some 100 people gathered at the Pinkins home to express outrage and show solidarity. The militant demonstration involved family and community members, Coalition activists, and Black, white and Latin@ people of all ages from many organizations. The protesters chanted "Justice for Rubie Curl-Pinkins!" and "Power to the people!" Activists took the microphone to

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July 18. Can solidarity stop Detroit eviction?

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

California meetings to fight foreclosures, evictions

By John Parker
Los Angeles

Neighborhood block associations are teaming up with one of the largest union locals representing service employees in Southern California to fight back against the area's record-setting crisis of foreclosures and evictions.

The Harvard Boulevard Block Association, located in South Central Los Angeles, and Service Employees International Union Local 721 are organizing a Labor-Community Fightback Forum on July 26 with community groups, anti-war and housing advocates.

California, to date, has the largest number of foreclosures of any state: 405,000

in 2007. That number is due to increase in 2008. California is also setting national records for gas prices, which drive up the cost of food and make getting to work costly. All this has become a state emergency.

The forum will push for a resolution designed to create a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. That resolution and strategy are patterned after efforts by the Michigan Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions.

Attorney Jerry Goldberg, a member of the Michigan coalition who was instrumental in designing that group's resolution, has been invited by the union to speak at the forum in Los Angeles. The resolution is now a bill before the

Michigan State Senate.

Goldberg will speak in San Francisco on July 27 at 3 p.m. at 2940 16th St., Room 207, at a Workers World Party forum on the same issues. Call 415-738-4739 for more information.

Part of the Los Angeles forum will deal with organizing marches and intense political pressure on politicians, all the way up to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, demanding a moratorium. Already two California State Assembly members have responded to forum organizers and will be speaking at the event, which is being held at SEIU Local 721 headquarters. To find out about these forums, call the International Action Center at 310-677-6407. □

Inquiry hears horror tales of injustice

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

"I've been stunned. I've been shocked. I've been deeply moved by what I have heard today," said U.S. Congressperson John Conyers after hundreds of people crammed into Houston's City Hall on July 18 to give testimony at an Inquiry of Crime, Justice and Race in Harris County. Conyers is chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

The inquiry was hosted by Texas Congressperson Sheila Jackson-Lee and organized by her staff, along with the Coalition for Justice. Preparations for the hearing began last winter after revelations of shocking racist and sexist e-mails sent by the Harris County District Attorney.

The hearing attracted community leaders, grassroots activists, and dozens and dozens of victims of the criminal justice system. When the City Council chambers could no longer hold the crowd, an overflow room was set up with television monitors for those who kept arriving.

Joining Conyers and Jackson-Lee on the panel were Texas state legislators and Houston City Council members.

Speaker after speaker condemned the criminal justice system for being systemically racist and uninterested in true justice. Applause broke out many times and signs were hoisted that read, "Houston, we have a problem!" and "Time to clean house!"

Jose Saavedra cried as he told the panel how his mother died in the county jail after being arrested for a minor traffic ticket. She was diabetic and was refused the insulin she needed, he said. She had also injured her knee in the jail and was denied treatment for that. "There is a problem at



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

At hearing in Houston July 18, immigrant workers who had been arrested in ICE raid.

the jail," he stressed. "We could not get any medical care for my mother. She told us they were not caring for her, but we couldn't get the jail to do anything. We are young and we have lost our mother. And over a ticket?"

Long-time immigrant rights advocate Maria Jimenez spoke about a raid in June by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at a local rag factory. Over a dozen people who had been arrested in the raid stood up with her in the chambers. The workers, mostly women, attended the hearing with their children.

Brothers Sean Ibarra and Erik Ibarra told how Harris County deputies stormed into their home six years ago as Sean was taking photos of deputies' misconduct toward his neighbors. "They beat my brother and almost beat my mother,

pulled guns on my mother and brother, stole evidence, stole my film, and filed false charges on us and arrested us. We tried to have the sheriff investigate these deputies and he did nothing. Six years later, they still work for the sheriff. They have not even been investigated or disciplined," said Sean Ibarra.

The brothers recently won a \$1.7 million lawsuit against Harris County.

Stephanie Storey was engaged to Hernando Torres, one of two men shot and killed by vigilante Joe Horn in November of 2007. "I want justice for these men. They shouldn't have been burglarizing the house, but they never got to face a jury. Joe Horn was their judge, jury and executioner. Horn took the law into his own hands. This is not right. I want this case to be presented to another grand jury so they can

investigate the case," she told the panel.

Invited speakers included Dallas District Attorney Craig Watkins, the first African American D.A. in the state of Texas. "We run our office in Dallas with the goal of seeking justice, not convictions," he told the inquiry panel.

Over 20 innocent people have been released from prison since Watkins took office in January of 2007. Many had served 15 to 25 years and were exonerated after DNA evidence was examined. Watkins has told prisoners convicted in Dallas County that, if they claim innocence, his office will investigate. He has allowed the Innocence Project of Texas to have space in the D.A.'s office and its volunteers work with assistant district attorneys to look into cases of innocence.

Many people left the three-hour hearing frustrated because they had not been called to testify. Dozens turned in written reports of abuse because time expired before they could speak. Relatives of those locked in prison or executed submitted information on behalf of their loved ones.

The mothers of Lonnie Johnson, executed on July 24, 2007, and Joseph Nichols, executed on March 7, 2007, submitted information of prosecutorial misconduct in the cases of their sons, who they both said were innocent. Regina Schmahl Guidry submitted documentation on the wrongful conviction of her husband, Howard Guidry, who is a prisoners' rights activist on Texas death row.

The Judiciary Committee staff will review statements and submitted documents to determine if a full congressional hearing by the committee should be held, Conyers said after the hearing. □

After slashing jobs and wages

Why is GM still crying poverty?

By Martha Grevatt

Last week, Flint, Mich.—home of General Motors and site of the heroic 1937 sit-down strike—was subjected to eight days of events celebrating GM's 100th birthday. For \$15, someone could tour the mansions of former executives. The festivities culminated in a parade of vehicles made during each year of GM's existence.

Yet around the world front-page news articles about GM were not so celebratory. They focused instead on the people affected by GM's latest restructuring: the ones who in the past have done the company's dirty work. For years supervisors imposed discipline—"up to and including discharge"—for a wide range of infractions. Now the tables are turned, and these same loyal servants are among GM's 32,000 U.S. salaried employees facing job cuts. Equally or perhaps more uncertain are the economic futures of thousands of non-unionized clerical, financial and engineering staff.

Salaried retirees, meanwhile, are furious over losing their health insurance. "I've had about 15 phone calls today, and everyone feels as though they've been betrayed," said Jimmy Yawn, a retired supervisor and president of a retiree club. (Detroit Free Press, July 17)

Retiree Dan Young said, "Retirees are going to fight this." (Detroit News, July 16) They may follow the example of the National Chrysler Retirement Organization, which had its first meeting of 400 last week and vowed to fight cuts they are facing, including the elimination of term life insurance.

Short-term solution to structural crisis?

GM CEO Rick Wagoner rushed to dis-

pel rumors of a GM bankruptcy, and stock prices rose from a 54-year low with the announcement of the company's latest rescue strategy. With the goal of improving GM's liquidity by raising \$15 billion, the plan also calls for selling off unnamed "assets" and using other assets as collateral to secure credit.

Whose jobs are being put on the line in exchange for a quick fix of cold cash?

The question remains whether there will be even more concessions from the Auto Workers union. UAW President Ron Gettelfinger has, very belatedly, said: "We have done a lot. No, there's nothing more we can do," meaning the workers can't make more concessions. (Detroit News, July 17) Yet the UAW leadership has allowed GM to delay making its initial lump-sum payment to fund the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association that was established in last year's contract to fund UAW retirees' health insurance.

Will these take-away measures reverse the fortunes of a company reportedly hemorrhaging \$1 billion or more a month? GM lost \$3.3 billion in the first quarter of 2008 and expects little change in the second quarter. Merrill-Lynch analyst John Murphy said some "refer to the confluence of negative factors as the perfect storm or the 100-year flood." (Detroit News July 17)

Last fall UAW members at GM, Ford and Chrysler ratified four-year contracts granting historic concessions to the automakers. GM anticipated a 50 percent savings in labor costs—which even at that time comprised less than one-tenth the cost of a vehicle—over four years.

On top of that, the workforce has been slashed dramatically since the contracts went into effect. Some 17,000 UAW members at GM resigned or retired this month

after taking buyouts.

While U.S. car sales have plunged for every automaker except Honda, GM has broken sales records in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

How can it be that GM is now the victim of a "confluence of negative factors"? It's true that the steep drop in sales of trucks and sport utility vehicles has hit GM hard. Hooked on the \$10,000 in profits they were reeling in with each SUV, the bosses resisted shifting their lineup away from big gas-guzzlers. In addition, GM's financial arm, General Motors Acceptance Corporation, strayed into the crisis-ridden mortgage market.

Still, with so many other factors working in the company's favor, how could this 100-year-old company be facing the economic equivalent of a 100-year flood?

These analogies with natural catastrophes are not accidental. The implication is that everyone affected—bosses, workers and retirees alike—should all pull together for the common good, for the survival of the corporation during a disaster beyond its control.

For decades U.S. labor leaders have operated under the assumption that only a profitable company can maintain job security. Demands for higher wage increases, more vacations and better benefits have become dependent on the fiscal well-being of the employer. This thinking only leads to further concessions and the acceptance of unilaterally imposed wage-and-benefit cuts in the vulnerable unorganized sector.

The way out of this dead-end strategy begins with understanding the relationship between labor and capital. Capitalism is based on one class exploiting another. Workers sell their labor power—their capacity to work—to the capitalists.

Workers are paid only for certain hours of labor so they receive what they need to subsist and reproduce new workers. But the workers put in additional hours of unpaid labor that amount to surplus value—profits—for the capitalist. Only by the theft of workers' labor does the capitalist realize a profit. The leaders of the 1937 Flint sit-down strike understood this.

Capitalism is driven to maximize profits by constantly modernizing equipment. This decreases the number of workers—or the hours of labor—needed to make a product. At first, each improvement yields enormous profits. Later, the changed relationship between fixed capital (machinery, raw materials) and variable capital (labor power) leaves the capitalist with fewer workers to exploit. In addition, the boss is saddled with huge debts to pay for the restructuring. This causes profits to fall, which in turn leads the boss to impose wage cuts—which the union needs to resist.

It is in this general context of overproduction that all of these take-backs or concessions need to be understood—and rejected.

The owning class has developed the productive forces to such a vast extent that they have outgrown the limitations of private ownership. Suddenly there is too much technology, and the boss is now, as Karl Marx described 160 years ago, "like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells."

It is time for labor to stop cooperating with capitalist wizards and change the recipe of the spells. Only a fighting workers' movement that rejects capitalist exploitation can restore jobs and ensure security in retirement years.

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Building global solidarity

ILWU leader travels to Brazil

By Clarence Thomas

Following are excerpts from an eye-witness report written by Clarence Thomas, executive board member of International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 10 and co-chair of the Port Workers May Day Organizing Committee, which organized a shut-down of the docks on the west coast this past May Day to protest the Iraq War.

I was privileged to be invited to observe the First National Coordination of Struggles (Conlutas) Congress July 3-6 in the city of Betim, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Conlutas' purpose is the coordination of struggles of the working class involving unions, Brazilians of African descent, popular movements and youth organizations, including the struggles of peasants, women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

Conlutas is an emerging political movement that is committed to putting forward a rank-and-file, democratic, working-class agenda. More than 4,000 delegates throughout Brazil and international observers from 22 countries attended the Congress. Those of us who were international observers were all brought to the stage and introduced to the thousands of delegates attending this historic Congress.

The Conlutas movement is centered in



PHOTO: PHOTO: DELORES THOMAS

First National Coordination of Struggles (Conlutas) Congress in Brazil.

the working class. It is also a rank-and-file, democratic organization comprised of Brazilians who oppose the government of President Lula implementing the policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. They are also opposed to Brazil sending troops to occupy Haiti, the most economically exploited country in the Western Hemisphere.

Following the Conlutas Congress, there was a Latin American and Caribbean Workers conference July 7-8. There were more than 500 delegates representing over 20 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Also present were par-

ticipants from Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United States.

The aim of this meeting was to develop Latin America and Caribbean solidarity actions to meet the challenge of global capital looting their wealth and material resources at the expense of the poor and working class. Discussions focused on privatization, outsourcing, the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and opposing the use of casual labor to supplant union workers.

I participated in a transportation workers workshop where we discussed issues of longshore workers. One of the important topics was how employers attempt to criminalize trade union activ-

ists by framing and then imprisoning them in order to marginalize the trade union movement. Another topic was building working-class rank-and-file democracy.

I was given an opportunity to address all 500 delegates in the general meeting. I spoke not only on the May Day action but the seven decades of militant and democratic trade union activism of the ILWU. The delegates were thrilled that there was a U.S. trade unionist representing an organization that has a history of struggle in the fight for social justice. I emphasized that rank and file, independent democratic solidarity action is critical in being able to develop and carry out a working-class agenda.

One of the cornerstones of the ILWU is the importance to understand the labor movement on a global scale and that means rank and filers visiting workers in other countries. This is fundamental to building international solidarity. This is also the way we learn more about our mutual interests as a class, and in some instances, our mutual employers. The ILWU has routinely shared information about collective bargaining and working conditions with foreign unions and labor federations.

The ILWU has been guided by the principle that solidarity with workers of all lands is sound union policy. For this reason, my visits and speaking engagements exemplify the importance of ILWU continuing to build international solidarity. □

Research study shows growing U.S. inequalities

By Jaimeson Champion

U.S. imperialism's proponents are fond of characterizing the U.S. as a land of "freedom and opportunity." This myth is shattered by the findings in a recently published study that uses U.N. research methodology to analyze socioeconomic conditions in the U.S.

The study, published July 16, is titled, "The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009." In it, researchers analyze the comparative ability of U.S. residents to access healthcare, education, employment and housing.

Of the 30 richest countries comprising the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.S. has the greatest proportion of children living in poverty. Despite spending more money per capita on health care than any other country on the planet, the U.S. ranks 42nd globally in life expectancy.

U.S. infant mortality ranks 34th globally, according to the OECD report. If the U.S. were able to achieve an infant mortality rate as low as top-ranked Sweden, 20,000 more babies would survive here each year.

The Measure of America study also breaks down the analysis by state and congressional districts and, in so doing, paints a stark portrait of vast wealth and opulence amassed in close geographic proximity to deep poverty and suffering.

For example, the 14th Congressional District on Manhattan's Upper East Side ranks as the richest of the 436 U.S. congressional districts. Nearby, the 16th Congressional District in the Bronx ranks number 431.

California's 20th Congressional District, which covers parts of Fresno,

Kings and Kerns Counties, is ranked the 436th district, making it the worst off. Median household income there is \$16,765, which is below the federal poverty line. California as a whole is home to 10 of the top 20 ranked congressional districts, many of them in the suburbs of Los Angeles near the 20th.

The study's findings provide further evidence of institutionalized racism in the country's health and education systems. African Americans in the U.S. today have a life expectancy as low as that of the average U.S. resident in 1970. The results show that access to health care, education and housing is markedly lower in congressional districts that are predominately African American and Latin@.

From Bad to Worse

The findings in this study are bleak indeed, but perhaps most troubling is the fact that the report is based on statistics from 2005. All the dismal statistics are drawn from the time before the mortgage crisis struck and the ensuing economic meltdown began.

The subprime mortgage crisis has resulted in foreclosure and eviction rates soaring to levels not experienced since the Great Depression. A disproportionate number of foreclosure and eviction victims are African American and Latin@, as institutionalized racism in the lending industry resulted in the most predatory loans being given to the most oppressed segments of the population.

As Amaad Rivera, co-author of "Foreclosed: State of the Dream 2008," a recent study conducted by the group United for a Fair Economy, concludes that "the subprime lending debacle has

caused the greatest loss of wealth to people of color in modern U.S. history."

The data in the Measure of America study also show how deep was the oppression suffered by the predominately Black communities in the Gulf Region prior to Hurricane Katrina.

Raymond C. Offenheiser, president of Oxfam, one of the funders of the study, said in a July 16 statement, "The American Human Development Index is unique because it reveals the interlocking factors that create or deny opportunity and determine life chances. The analysis is particularly revealing in places like the Gulf Coast region.... The report clearly illustrates the conditions residents were struggling with even prior to the hurricanes of 2005—limited access to education, lower incomes, and shorter lives—and argues for a comprehensive solution for recovery."

The deepening economic crisis in the U.S. has resulted in drastic budget cuts in exactly the same areas that the Measure of America study analyzed using 2005 data. To say that the ability of the working class to access healthcare, education, housing and employment has decreased drastically since 2005 is an understatement.

In impoverished neighborhoods across the country, public schools are deteriorating, school programs are being cut, healthcare clinics are being shuttered, affordable housing is disappearing, and social services for the most vulnerable segments of society are being slashed with greater intensity. The capitalist class and its state are systematically transferring the pain and suffering wrought by the crisis of

capital onto the backs of the workers and oppressed people.

The Measure of America highlights a trend that most workers in the U.S. are already painfully well aware of: the standard of living of U.S. working class is deteriorating rapidly. It is statistical confirmation of the fact that the large multinational working class is continually falling deeper into poverty, debt and despair, while a small group of super rich individuals amass unimaginable wealth.

Capitalism as a system has failed miserably for the workers and oppressed in the U.S., while U.S. imperialism has caused unimaginable suffering for billions of people around the globe. The so-called "American Dream" is becoming a nightmare for workers. The picturesque house with the white picket fence has a giant foreclosed sign in the front yard.

What is needed is a way out. More people will be looking for the possibility of a struggle to bring about a socialist solution. □

WWP leadership endorses McKinney

The National Committee of Workers World Party has unanimously endorsed the 2008 campaign of Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente for president and vice-president of the U.S., respectively. The vote was taken at a WWP national leadership meeting in New York on July 13.

McKinney speaks in NYC



Monica Moorehead and Cynthia McKinney, July 18.

PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Cynthia McKinney, a U.S. presidential candidate, spoke of her goal of establishing a Department of Peace to oppose war at a July 18 press conference at the offices of Manhattan Neighborhood Network, a public-access cable television facility. She spoke in front of a number of political activists, supporters and independent media at the beginning of a three-day New York tour.

McKinney, a six-term former congresswoman from Georgia, won the presidential nomination at the national convention of the Green Party in Chicago on July 12. Her running mate is Rosa Clemente.

Karen Young, a local Green Party member, formally announced a statewide petitioning campaign to get McKinney and Clemente on the ballot. So far, their names will appear on 20 state ballots.

McKinney also spoke on single-payer health care reform, cutting military spending to meet people's needs, her reasons for severing ties with the Democratic Party and much more. Evergreen Chou, a New York Green Party candidate for Congress, remarked on why a war on Iran must be opposed. Go to runcynthiarun.org/node to read more on the McKinney campaign, including efforts to obtain ballot access.

—Monica Moorehead

McKinney campaign needs help

I was heartened to read the Workers World Party endorsement of Cynthia McKinney for president and Rosa Clemente for vice president. As a delegate to the Green Party convention where they were nominated, I was fortunate to see and hear them speak. They truly are two strong voices for justice and political change in this country.

Now they need your help and that of your readers so their voices can be heard by a broader audience. Since they are not going to get funding from the wealthy and corporate elites, they must rely on small contributions from ordinary folk like you and me. They are attempting to qualify

Letter

for FEC matching funds. To do this they must raise \$5,000 in 20 states in \$250 or less individual contributions. Ten states have already reached the \$5,000 mark. Help is needed in 10 more states.

If readers in the following states could send contributions we could do it: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana and Virginia. Simply go to runcynthiarun.org and make an online contribution or print out the form to make a contribution by mail. For a better world,

Richard T. Kuszmar
Green Party member and Citizen of the World

Momentum grows for Aug. 2 protests to 'Stop War on Iran'

Special to Workers World

Workers World spoke with representatives of Stop War on Iran, a coalition of groups mobilizing for nationwide demonstrations on Aug. 2 against the Bush administration's increasing war threats against Iran.

WW: How is the mobilization for Aug. 2 progressing?

SWOI: Momentum is growing for actions in now (July 22) 65 U.S. cities in response to the Emergency Call for Action by StopWarOnIran (www.stopwaroniran.org). The slogan of "No War on Iran" is being raised by hundreds of groups that do weekly anti-war/peace vigils. In the heat of the summer and in the midst of a national election campaign, when in-the-street activism is hardest, the response shows that the Bush administration will not be able to launch another war without the voice of the people being heard.

WW: Can you give some examples of where organizing is going on?

SWOI: In addition to major cities from coast to coast, organizing work is going on in smaller towns and cities like Westbrook, Maine; Melbourne and Ocala, Fla.; Charlotte, N.C.; Bozeman, Mont.; Salt Lake City; and Tucson, Ariz. Organizers as far away as Hawaii are mobilizing to protest as an attack against Iran is threatened daily. In Washington, D.C., our organizers report that they have gotten a very positive response as they handed out the leaflet and asked people to sign the petition. The people do not want another war.

One of the most gratifying things about this mobilization is the fact that new, young folks are getting involved. For example,



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Sara Flounders and Joyce Chediak of Stop War on Iran with Debra Sweet of World Can't Wait at July 19 organizing meeting in New York.

high school students from Hicksville, Long Island, N.Y., have organized a 9:30 a.m. protest at the local train station. Then they plan to take a "Peace Train" to the larger regional demonstration at Times Square in New York City. An "Art-in for Peace" is also planned for Aug. 2 in Long Beach, Calif., coinciding with and supporting the regional protest at Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles.

On July 10, the World Can't Wait organization held a "freeze-in" of about 175 people at Grand Central Station and another July 21 at Penn Station, both in New York. Groups also responded to a call by United for Peace and Justice for actions July 19-21 in various locations.

WW: Are people making the connections between the war abroad and the deepening economic crisis at home?

SWOI: Yes, in fact we got an "open letter" from activists in Highland, Ind., which read in part: "An attack on Iran will be devastating to our economy and the world economy. One-third of the world's oil is shipped through the Straits of Hormuz and an attack on Iran will surely disrupt that, in addition to setting the entire Mideast aflame. Economists estimate the price of oil will double and a worldwide depression will follow." In cities like Detroit, "Foreclose the war, not our homes" will be made real as people from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to

Stop Foreclosures and Evictions will be speaking at their StopWarOnIran emergency demonstration.

On July 19 in New York we held an organizing meeting of 90 people at Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village, where some of the speakers connected the need to defend workers' standard of living with the struggle to prevent a new war and to end the occupations.

WW: Has there been any international response to the call for the Aug. 2 protests?

SWOI: Definitely. We are hearing from activists around the world who are taking up the cry to "Stop War on Iran." Anti-globalization forces in Moscow raised that slogan as they picketed the park where U.S. citizens were celebrating July 4th. On July 11, protesters organized by the Anti-Imperialist Camp and other groups demonstrated in Vienna. Their statement read in part: "The U.S. policy of aggression serves only to reinforce the strength of the imperialist world power which now wants to make Iran the next victim."

We have heard from activists in Australia, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and a number of countries in the Middle East, who are mobilizing to support the Emergency Call. In fact, we got word that there will be a procession in the streets of Dhaka, Bangladesh, demanding no war on Iran, organized by We the People United. There will also be actions in cities across Canada.

The Aug. 2 Emergency Call to Action has a growing list of Organizing Centers across the U.S. and Canada, and other organizing tools are available from www.stopwaroniran.org. As an activist from Cleveland told us, "Don't Iraq Iran." □

Political aspects of the economic crisis

The Iranian crisis: the core of the problem

Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. We reprint this article from the Nov. 16, 1979, issue of the paper as part of our special archival series.

By Sam Marcy

Nov. 14, 1979—The involvement of Secretary-Treasurer Miller into the top councils of the Carter administration has far wider significance than the fact that his authority as the Secretary-Treasurer was necessary to freeze Iran's assets and issue the so-called national emergency proclamation. It signifies a merging of two divergent factions of the Carter administration based on military "solutions."

In our previous installments we pointed out how the two principal factions in the governing group of the Carter administration were

slowly moving toward merging their conflicting and contradictory approaches on fundamental questions regarding U.S. world economic and foreign policy.

We stated that the Volcker-Miller-Carter financial and economic measures which they effectuated last Oct. 6 and which were supposed to stabilize the U.S. financial and monetary position and begin slowing down the galloping rate of inflation were proving to be bankrupt.

Economic crisis not yielding to financial jugglery

We cited the sharp drop in auto sales by the three principal auto makers GM, Ford and Chrysler and the lay-off of almost 100,000 auto workers, which was reinforced this week by even sharper drops in this key industry. There were other smaller but significant indications that the developing economic crisis was not yielding to the financial economic jugglery by this trio in charge of reshaping the crumbling structure of U.S. finance capital.

We called attention to the fact that the Carter-Brzezinski-Vance trio, which is shaping U.S. foreign policy at the behest of the Pentagon, was moving closer to the Volcker-Miller-Carter grouping, which is handling the economic and financial

problems. In both of these groups Carter as the middle man vacillates and is pushed further to the right along with all the others toward finding the common ground between the groupings to solve the economic crisis.

Now that the Brzezinski conspiratorial mission to Algiers where he met the former prime minister of Iran, Bazargan, in secret proved to be a disaster for the U.S. because the Khomeini leadership promptly ousted

Bazargan and denounced him for conspiring against the Iranian government with Brzezinski. Those groupings have proven most eager to convert the diplomatic and economic crisis into a political one, into the channel of another military venture against the Iranian people.

Bani-Sadr's indictment of U.S. goes to core of problem

In his letter to the United Nations Security Council requesting a meeting of that body, the new foreign affairs director of Iran, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, made a

scathing indictment of U.S. policy toward Iran and pointedly attacked the U.S. government for attempting to create a war psychosis against Iran and pushing the world to the brink of war.

The imperialists tried to picture the complaint against U.S. war preparations as a mere diversionary tactic from domestic problems in Iran. While few if any of the capitalist press published the entire text of this important letter, which details all the criminal activities not only of the Shah but of the U.S. itself in relation to the Iranian people, none referred to what is truly the core of the broad problem facing American finance capital, which Bani-Sadr pointedly made reference to.

"Mr. Secretary General," said Mr. Bani-Sadr, "I am well equipped because of my scientific knowledge to know that the weakness of the American economy (at the present) and the weak position of the dollar has forced on America a grave economic and political crisis.

"Is America trying to reestablish the position of its money by putting world peace in peril?"

U.S. diverts economic crisis into military channels

The way the imperialist press would like to interpret this statement is to present it as a distortion of the current U.S. economic and political situation to suit Islamic economic doctrine. This, howev-



PHOTO: RESISTANCE

A demonstrator murdered by U.S.-armed shah's troops on Sept. 8, 1978



1978 Anti-shah rally in Iran.

Continued on page 7

Sanctions, diplomacy, missiles

U.S. takes aim at Iran's sovereignty

Continued from page 1

by the 17 top U.S. spy agencies.

Iran has every right under international law and treaties to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes. Its nuclear power plants are all under the inspection and safeguards of the IAEA. The IAEA has continually said that there has been no illicit diversion of declared nuclear material.

It is now clear that the State Department's one-day venture into talks with Iran was merely positioning by Washington to get its allies to agree on far harsher economic sanctions and other efforts to sabotage Iran's national development.

Iran's real crime

Iran has a severe energy shortage. Although it is the world's fourth-largest oil producer, its ability to refine crude oil into gasoline and diesel fuel is limited. As a country with a history of underdevelopment, Iran must import more than half its refined petroleum products to fuel its new industries and a modern transportation system. Iran is now the second-largest importer of gasoline and diesel fuel in the world. (Toronto Globe and Mail, July 22)

A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives prohibiting the export to Iran of all refined petroleum products and imposing "stringent inspection requirements on all persons, vehicles, ships, planes, trains, and cargo entering or departing Iran." This would amount to

a blockade—an act of war—and a threat to Iran's sovereignty. It is also an example of how U.S. policy is aimed at keeping resource-rich countries underdeveloped and under its control.

At the same time that the U.S. is trying to cripple Iran's economy, supposedly over its nuclear program, it is pursuing a deal with India to provide it nuclear fuel and technology. India is not yet a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or a member of the IAEA. Iran is both.

Iran's real crime, in the eyes of the Pentagon and the corporate oil giants who determine U.S. policy, is that it is determined to use its resources for the further development of its own economy. The other oil-producing states in the region are corrupt semi-feudal regimes, each with a compliant and dependent ruling class. These regimes are under the total control of U.S. corporations and banks. The largest portion of their vast revenue from oil sales is wasted in purchases of U.S. weapons systems or invested in U.S. banks.

Millions of Iranian people participated in the 1978 revolution that overthrew the corrupt U.S.-backed shah. Since then, great social advances have transformed Iran. Once the people liberated their oil resources from the control of giant U.S. and British corporations, billions of dollars were available to develop Iranian industries and social services.

In less than two decades, Iran moved from 90 percent illiteracy for rural wom-

en to full literacy; more than half the university graduates are now women. Stunning improvements in totally free as well as subsidized health care meant record-breaking improvements in life expectancy, birth control and infant mortality. Even according to World Bank figures, Iran has exceeded the social gains of any other country in the region.

This is what U.S. policy makers are determined to reverse. They want control of the vast wealth that comes from every aspect of exploration, pumping, transport and refining of the planet's most valuable and needed resource. They are willing to destroy millions of lives and spend hundreds of billions of dollars on war in this struggle.

Past history of U.S. talks

It is important to recall the many rounds of talks between U.S. and Iraqi delegations before the war. The U.S. repeatedly demanded the authority to carry out inspections in Iraq any time, any place, to search for non-existent "weapons of mass destruction." Just before the Pentagon attack, there was the heaviest round of diplomatic talks involving Iraq, members of the U.N. Security Council and Washington's European allies. The talks were aimed at imposing still stricter sanctions, supposedly to gain Iraq's total disarmament. This was years after U.N. inspectors had declared Iraq fully disarmed.

It is also important to remember

the U.S./NATO "peace talks" with the Yugoslav government in Rambouillet, France. U.S. negotiators gave Yugoslavia an ultimatum: accept total U.S./NATO military occupation and dismemberment or face massive bombardment. When the Parliament of the Yugoslav Federation voted overwhelmingly to refuse the NATO "peace" demand of occupation of their sovereign territory, the Pentagon began 72 days of massive bombardment followed by the NATO seizure of Kosovo.

The U.S. conducted five years of "peace negotiations" with the Vietnamese while escalating its bombardment, including carpet bombing.

Secretary of State Rice has announced the U.S. is considering the establishment of an "interests section" in Tehran and compared it to the interests section that the U.S. has maintained for decades in Cuba. "We have an interests section in Cuba, so I wouldn't read thawing of relations into anything," she said. Throughout the decades that Washington has maintained an interests section in Havana, the blockade of Cuba, sabotage and attempted assassinations of Cuban leaders have continued.

U.S. "talks" are too often preparation for the next stage of war. It is important for the movement on a global scale to remain on the alert and to understand that U.S. imperialism's aims and plans have not changed. □



Anti-war forces confront McCain

The largest, angriest anti-war crowd to turn out in Buffalo, N.Y., in several years jammed the Art Gallery entrance where Republican presidential candidate John McCain was holding a \$10,000-a-plate fundraising dinner. Shouting "We are the people of Buffalo!" "Bring the troops home!" "End the war in Iraq, no attack on Iran!" "This is a rich man's war!" "Criminals!" demonstrators waved "No war, no McSame" signs as McCain's SUV squeezed by. A broad coalition of peace, justice and antiwar groups sponsored the action, which was organized by Buffalo Forum, Code Pink Buffalo, International Action Center- Buffalo/WNY, UB Progressive Alliance, WNY Peace Center and Workers World Party.

—Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

er, is a clear attempt at a cover-up of the deepening economic crisis.

Bani-Sadr is a competent, experienced economist with many years of practical experience in his profession behind him. Regardless of how one may view his economic methodology, he—like other economists who have to deal with the situation in a practical way—knows the facts of the contemporary economic world situation. He sees an attempt by the U.S., which as he says is faced with a "grave economic and political crisis," to divert this crisis into military channels and bring about an imperialist war.

This is precisely the point we have been attempting to make in our previous installments. It signifies the merging of the two policies respectively held by Volcker and Miller and Brzezinski and Vance in which Carter plays the middle role of finding common ground in diverting their bankrupt economic and political policies into imperialist war channels.

This is not a new departure of recent contemporary U.S. history. The 1949 economic crisis was "solved" by the U.S. plunge into the Korean war of aggression. The 1957-58 economic crisis was also solved in the same manner. It took a little more time, but the U.S. war machine was

already cranking up and the Pentagon was gearing itself toward Southeast Asia. The economic upswing came in reality almost simultaneously with the beginning of U.S. aggression against Viet Nam.

Lenin's conception of imperialist war validated

Not even the ten years of military aggression against Viet Nam that followed, with more than half a million U.S. men and women under arms and hundreds of billions of dollars in military equipment, was adequate enough to fully divert another impending economic crisis. The collapse of the Penn Central Railroad and the Lockheed Corporation, the latter a principal U.S. war contractor, clearly demonstrated that the capitalist malaise could be driven underground for a while, but it could not in reality be solved.

The economic crisis which began again in 1974 and so sharply deepened for almost the next two years has not in reality been very much ameliorated. The upswing which followed has been of such an unstable and erratic character that almost none of the bourgeois economists have any hope that another economic crisis is not under way or has not already been in progress for some time.

From all this one can only deduce that the Leninist conception of the inevitability of imperialist war remains in full force, notwithstanding the existence of the most horrendous weapons. Only the broad intervention of the masses on a truly great historical scale can prevent it—and prevent it they will—by taking, in the course of the struggle, a revolutionary socialist road in the struggle against monopoly capitalism. □

An Emergency Call to Action

STOP WAR ON IRAN

Aug. 2-Action in 65 cities

To endorse, list your local action, or to find out how to get involved: go to www.StopWarOnIran.org

- call 212.633.6646
- or drop by the Solidarity Center
- 55 West 17th St. 5th Fl. NY, NY 10011
- **Volunteers are urgently needed**

An attack could be imminent
We can't afford to wait

Take it to the streets this Aug. 2

**U.S. Out of Iraq & Afghanistan,
Money for Human Needs, Not War**

Actions in Times Square in New York City • Los Angeles • San Francisco • Boston & other cities in New England, N. Carolina • Colorado • Ohio • Oklahoma • Montana • Michigan • Louisiana • Arizona • Indiana • Florida and many other states. To list your action or learn more go to www.StopWarOnIran.org

Bush aims attacks on women, cutting birth control

By Kathy Durkin

The Bush administration is at it once again. Determined to further undermine women's reproductive rights and health care, it is once again colluding with the religious right. This time their attack is not only on the right to abortion but on the right to birth control, too.

If implemented, the entire health-care system would be affected.

In mid-July, a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) draft memorandum came to public view that proposed ominous new regulations to undercut contraceptive services and reproductive health care. All hospitals, clinics and medical schools that receive HHS grants and provide family planning services would have to hire employees even if these individuals oppose abortion or birth control. The health-care providers would have to swear in writing to comply with this policy to obtain HHS funding.

This affects almost every U.S. hospital, as nearly all receive public funding. States could lose federal grants if they required health-care entities or individuals to provide abortion and birth control services.

The regulations include another dangerous provision: Abortion is redefined in such an overly broad way as to include many popular and effective forms of prescription birth control, including pills, patches, intrauterine devices and even emergency contraception. The document deliberately misnames them "abortifacients" (abortion-causing) when, in fact, they are birth control methods.

By proposing these rules, the administration is clearly aiding virulent anti-choice institutions and individuals in the health-care industry, whose sinister goals are to deny women their fundamental right to birth control and comprehensive

reproductive health services.

If the regulations go through, the HHS would be legally protecting anti-choice health corporations and staff members who oppose prescription birth control. HHS would also punish, by withdrawing federal funds, any health-care provider who doesn't go along. (Anti-choice providers can already refuse to provide abortions or referrals, even in rape cases.)

Thus federal funds meant for family planning programs and reproductive health care could be used by health-care providers who oppose these very services! This could have a very deleterious effect on tens of millions of women—if government-funded health institutions, HMOs or health insurance plans refuse to provide birth-control services, information or referrals.

These regulations represent a particularly serious attack on the health and well-being of millions of low-income women who utilize Title X family planning programs or who are covered by Medicaid; both are under the aegis of HHS. Medical centers contracted by Medicaid or their employees could deny contraceptives to women covered by this program—who total 12 percent of women of reproductive age.

Title X is the only federal program solely devoted to funding family planning and related reproductive health care services. Its 4,400 health centers annually assist five million young, low-income and uninsured women, including many from oppressed communities. Services are usually free or subsidized. (www.plannedparenthood.org)

Family planning program providers would lose federal funds if they didn't strictly adhere to HHS rules, leaving millions of low-income women in the lurch, at a time of increasing economic crisis. With

growing unemployment, no health insurance or loss of existing coverage, soaring food and fuel prices, more women than ever will need government-funded health care, including family planning services.

In its remaining days in office, the Bush gang is trying to push back women's reproductive rights as far as it can. The HHS proposals are intended to undercut laws and access to birth control and abortion that have been guaranteed. This access was won by decades of struggle by women's and health care groups and advocates.

The rules as proposed by HHS also threaten state laws requiring drugstores to fill contraceptive prescriptions. And they endanger state requirements that hospitals provide emergency contraceptives to sexual-assault survivors, which the ultra-right has been furiously trying to undo.

The Bush administration explains this reactionary document as a "freedom of conscience proposal." This is similar to the so-called "religious freedom" claim by right-wing pharmacists who refuse to fill birth-control requests, including for emergency contraception. At the core, these practices blatantly discriminate against millions of women whose own beliefs, reproductive rights and health

care would be further denied.

No wonder women's and reproductive rights' organizations and health advocacy groups are up in arms about the proposed HHS rules.

Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, stresses, "At a time when more and more families are uninsured and under economic assault, we find our healthcare system is in crisis and our president taking steps to deny access to basic care.

"Th[ese] proposed rule[s] will put women's access to birth control and the information they need to make health-care decisions at risk. ...women's ability to manage their own healthcare is at risk of being compromised by politics and ideology." (www.plannedparenthood.org)

Mass pressure is needed now to stop the Bush administration from implementing these anti-woman proposals. Women's, reproductive justice and health care advocacy organizations are calling for strong opposition to these attacks. They urge messages be sent to the White House, President Bush, HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt and Congress demanding that the regulations be stopped.

To send emails, go to www.plannedparenthood.org and www.naral.org. □

SAN DIEGO PRIDE

Event unites LGBT and hotel workers' struggles

By Bob McCubbin

The highlight of the San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgender Pride weekend is usually the Saturday parade, which for at least a decade has been the largest yearly civic event. In recent years it has drawn a crowd estimated at 150,000. From a political point of view, though, this year's weekend kickoff event on Friday afternoon, July 18, was a new high point for the LGBT community.

Organized by a coalition called Californians Against Hate, a large crowd of LGBT activists and representatives from many area unions gathered in front of the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel to send a two-pronged message to the hotel's CEO: attacks on the newly won right to marry in California will not be tolerated, and the right of all workers to a fair wage and good working conditions is the concern of all.

Doug Manchester, CEO of the Manchester Financial Group of San Diego, contributed \$125,000 to help fund the reactionary California state initiative



that seeks to overturn the recent court ruling granting equal marriage rights to all Californians. CAH's goal is to expose Manchester and other fat-cat bigots to the public nationwide. The coalition is also calling for a boycott of Manchester's three San Diego hotels.

In addition to the LGBT activists who spoke at the rally in support of the boycott, a number of union activists spoke, condemning Manchester's anti-worker policies. Brigette Browning, president of Local 30 of UNITE HERE, which represents the hotel workers, said that the Grand Hyatt workers have no job security and are forced to clean significantly more rooms per day than workers at other hotels. Charles Yip, a server at another of Manchester's hotels, expressed solidarity with the struggle to keep equal marriage rights.

Labor organizations present at the rally included Local 30, Service Employees Local 221, Food and Commercial Workers Local 135, Teamsters Local 36, Hotel Workers Rising, Equality for All and Pride at Work. Representatives of local schools included San Diego State University, Palomar College and Southwestern College.

For more information on the campaign to protect marriage rights for all in California, visit CaliforniansAgainstHate.com.



Hyatt worker Charles Yip, July 18, San Diego, supports LGBT rights.

Military resister's father calls him 'a hero'

By Dee Knight

When James Burmeister was court martialed last week, he was sentenced to six months in the stockade and a Bad Conduct Discharge. "I feel like the case was used as an example to other soldiers," his father told Workers World. "Not only will you get punished, but your loved ones will be too."

"They attacked James as more of a sociopath than a patriot," said Erich Burmeister. "They hammered on the point of his going AWOL and leaving his unit in great danger. They painted him as a coward."

"I think my son is a hero," Erich continued. "There are many Iraqis who were not killed because of what he did, and many GIs whose lives were saved because of it. He made a tremendous service to his country by standing up and bearing witness to the 'bait-and-kill' war crimes."

After James went AWOL he exposed this program, in which U.S. sniper teams leave "bait" to lure Iraqis and then kill them. When he denounced the program, it turned into a media scandal. (See "U.S. aims to lure insurgents with 'bait,'" Washington Post, Sept. 24, 2007.)

Being on a military base "unnerved me and my wife," Erich said. "In hindsight it was the perfect 'good cop-bad cop' thing, played to perfection." Between the JAG lawyer the Army assigned, and the prosecution, Erich said, "They really had me convinced that the best strategy



James Burmeister

PHOTO: BURMEISTER FAMILY

for [James] was to plead guilty. We took the bait and got our butts kicked." He said their JAG attorney "was rotten. Had we been able to afford good civilian legal defense, we could have pursued more options. I wish we had done it."

Speaking of James, Erich said, "The amazing thing is he is taking it better than those of us who love him so much. He's very strong. He told us, 'Understand this, anything the Army can do to me can't be as bad as being in Baghdad doing what they wanted me to do.' He's relieved not to have a gun in his hand anymore. That's what he cares about."

"Once he had achieved his goal, making the public aware of 'bait and kill,' he was prepared to turn himself back in. He's strong, and I'm sure he'll do okay. He didn't seem to be as troubled by it as we were. We're hoping he'll stay that way and will be with us soon."

Supporters can write to James Burmeister at Box A, Fort Knox, KY 40121.

WW PHOTOS: BOB MCCUBBIN

A victory for the resistance

Lebanese joyful as released prisoners return

By Joyce Chediak

Cheering, dancing, throwing rice and rose petals, hundreds of thousands of jubilant Lebanese gave a heroes' welcome to five people from their country released on July 16 in a prisoner swap with Israel. Among them was Samir Kuntar, the longest-held Lebanese prisoner, who, on his return after 30 years in an Israeli jail, called for armed struggle.

The other four were Hezbollah fighters captured in the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon. The remains of 199 Arabs who over the years had fought the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and Palestine were also turned over. Now all the Lebanese who were held prisoner by Israel are free.

The government called the release "a victory for all Lebanese" and declared a national day of celebration. However, it was Hezbollah, not the Lebanese government, that brokered this historic release. The hard-won release was a triumph for this armed national liberation movement and underscored that Hezbollah is the only force able to guard Lebanese sovereignty and wring concessions from the Israeli-U.S. colossus.

Most of all, it was a victory for the people of Lebanon and their iron will to fight occupation and oppression. Feeling their own strength, the Lebanese and Palestinians in Lebanon used the return of the fighters' remains as an opportunity to praise and honor the heroes from all Arab countries who have given their lives for

the Lebanese and Palestinian cause, reaffirming the worthiness of armed struggle.

Humiliation for Israel

In return for the released Lebanese, Israel received the coffins of two of its soldiers seized by Lebanese fighters at the border in July 2006 and a box containing the remains of Israeli soldiers killed in the war that followed.

Hezbollah seized the two Israeli soldiers as a bargaining chip to restart long-stalled talks with Israel for a prisoner release. But Israel refused to negotiate. Instead, with a green light from Washington, Tel Aviv invaded Lebanon, ostensibly to recover its soldiers but really to try to break the back of Hezbollah.

The 34-day invasion left 1,000 dead Lebanese—many of them civilians and about one-third children—and 160 dead Israelis, mostly soldiers. But the fierce resistance forced Israel to withdraw.

Today, "Hezbollah has grown into a force more powerful than the state itself, militarily, politically and socially." (New York Times, July 17) Israel has been forced to participate in a prisoner exchange after all, but now it is for the remains of Israelis who would still be alive today had Tel Aviv not invaded Lebanon. In marked contrast to the response in Lebanon, in Israel the exchange was seen as a reminder of its humiliating defeat in 2006.

'We will come back to Palestine'

Thousands of cheering, confetti-throw-

ing Lebanese greeted the five released prisoners as, dressed in military fatigues, they crossed from Israel onto Lebanese soil and a red carpet, flanked by a Hezbollah honor guard. Two Lebanese Army helicopters then flew them to the Beirut, where crowds throwing rice mobbed their cars and carried the men to a rally.

As fireworks lit the night sky, tens of thousands of smiling, flag-waving, joyous people gathered for the huge homecoming under the banner "God's achievement through our hands." The victory rally was held in Beirut's impoverished and mostly Shia southern suburb of Dahiya, which two years ago had been flattened by Israeli bombs. All arteries in the district were gridlocked for hours as cars streamed in from southern Lebanon to join the celebration.

Samir Kuntar, who was captured when he entered Israel with a group from the Palestine Liberation Front, was 16 at the time. He spent 30 years in an Israeli jail, yet he strode up to the podium and told the whistling, cheering and roaring crowd, "I return from Palestine, only to go back to Palestine. I promise families in Palestine that we are coming back, me and my brothers in resistance." Kuntar is from Lebanon's Druze community.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, referring to how Israel's 10-year occupation of Lebanon was ended by popular resistance in 2000, explained, "As we have said in the year 2000, the time of defeat is long gone. And today is the time of victory."

Of the released prisoners, he said, "These people have proved to the world, to their friends and their enemies, that they cannot be defeated. ... This people, this nation and this country, which gave a clear image today, cannot be defeated." He called on all to "rally round the resistance."

Indeed, the resistance was celebrated everywhere. When Kuntar entered his hometown of Aabey in a triumphal convoy the next day, the road was lined with joyous people under the banner, "From Palestine to Iraq to Lebanon, the resistance is victorious."

'Rare national unity' greets fighters' remains

A convoy of eight trucks carried the coffins of the 199 Arab freedom fighters killed in decades of fighting Israel to Beirut the next day from southern Lebanon. With the coffins draped in Lebanese and Hezbollah flags and decorated with ornate flower wreaths and victory banners, the trucks resembled celebratory floats.

A Beirut newspaper reported, "In a rare spectacle of national unity, Lebanese and Palestinians from all political and religious affiliations lined the roads to greet the procession, forcing the trucks to make repeated stops as onlookers spilled out onto the road to throw rose petals and rice." (Daily Star, July 18)

Mosque and church bells rang as the

Continued on page 11



FIST discusses LGBT oppression, Africa



Fight Imperialism, Stand Together youth group held two discussion groups in New York—one on lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression July 14 and the other on Africa July 11. Readings for the July 14 discussion included Workers World articles and passages from the groundbreaking book "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression."

Questions raised during the discussion included: Who was Sylvia Rivera? How, under capitalist production, did gay and lesbians become distinct political identities? How does class factor into the oppression of LGBT peoples? What is the update on the Jersey 4? Why was it originally seven? Is the Stonewall rebellion

LeiLani Dowell, Abayomi Azikiwe and Monica Moorehead.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

really not over? What caused England, Germany and the U.S. to not exclude LGBT acts from their list of offenses?

Are there current examples of matrilineal lineage?

Readings for the July 11 discussion on Africa included sections from "How Africa Developed Before the Coming of Europeans up to the 15th Century" by Walter Rodney, "Women's Struggle in South Africa," "Introduction to Neo-Colonialism" by Kwame Nkrumah and "Africa Liberation Day and the legacy of global anti-imperialist struggle," from WW. For a complete list of reading urls, write to fist@workers.org.

Pan African News Wire editor and Workers World contributing writer Abayomi Azikiwe provided answers to some of the following questions: Can China play a similar role in Africa as the USSR did? What role do news services like PANW and WW newspaper play? Why doesn't Workers World polemicize against developing countries struggling against imperialism? What is the latest on AFRICOM?

Other discussion topics included: What's the situation with immigrants in South Africa? How is the current capitalist economic crisis affecting Africa? What is the land question in Zimbabwe and South Africa? How do backward views within sectors of the U.S. progressive movement toward Africa contribute to disunity? What are some political motivations for women? What is the potential for a resurgence of a revolutionary movement on the continent?

Upcoming FIST discussion groups will focus on Iran on July 21 and Latin America on July 28. Classes begin at 6 p.m. Call 212-627-2294 for more information, including any schedule changes.

—Monica Moorehead

Youth group protests Dalai Lama

The New York branch of the revolutionary youth organization FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) first held a Marxist discussion on the role of the Dalai Lama and his entanglements with the CIA and then turned the talk into action. On July 17, as the anti-communist religious figure was speaking to a well-heeled crowd at Radio City Music Hall, some of whom paid \$1,000 a ticket, FIST was outside protesting his role in fomenting propaganda against the People's Republic of China. It also demanded U.S. hands off Tibet. Another group—a dissident sect emanating from Tibetan Buddhism—was also there calling the Dalai Lama a "liar" and "dictator" for repressing its believers and expelling its monks.

—Report and photo by John Catalinotto





ICC, indict Bush, not Sudan

Presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney caught the right spirit when she called for impeaching President George Bush. The real war criminals are at home. And if the International Criminal Court were really independent of the imperialists, it would put Bush on trial—and first.

Starting in the 1990s, U.S. imperialism and its allies used the Security Council of the United Nations to create special tribunals to hold trials for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. The most publicized concerned civil wars in Cambodia, Rwanda and especially the former Yugoslavia, whose president, Slobodan Milosevic was indicted as U.S.-NATO bombs were dropping on his country.

Each of these cases shared more or less the same characteristics. Imperialist countries had either instigated or intervened in civil wars. No imperialist politicians or soldiers were indicted. Those convicted were mainly from the side of the civil war that was most independent of the imperialists. The courts were specially created to impose a political judgment against whatever forms of resistance existed.

The International Criminal Court was supposed to change this pattern. It was supposed to judge all possible criminals equally. But the ICC held true to the old form by targeting the head of state of Sudan in Africa regarding on-going civil conflict in the Darfur region where the imperialists hope to grab Sudan's oil reserves.

We have a suggestion for the ICC.

If you want to punish war criminals, start at the top. That would be George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and their whole entourage.

By now the whole world knows this criminal gang plotted a war of aggression against Iraq, occupied Afghanistan and committed a series of war crimes.

Even retired Major General Anthony Taguba, who led the U.S. Army's investigation into the Abu Ghraib abuses, has accused the Bush administration of "a systematic regime of torture" and war crimes.

Celebrity lawyer-author Vincent Bugliosi wrote the new book "The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder," which quickly became a best-seller though the corporate media ignored it. Bugliosi's point is Bush misled the country into the war in Iraq. Thus Bush should be tried in the U.S. for the deaths of the 4,000-plus U.S. troops killed there.

Lawrence Velvel, the dean and founder of the Massachusetts School of Law, would like the administration tried for an even greater crime: the murder of 1.3 million Iraqis. "For George Bush, Richard Cheney, Don Rumsfeld and Henry Kissinger to swing, or even for them to spend years in jail, would be a powerful lesson to future [U.S.] American leaders," said Velvel, whose school is located in Andover, Mass., near Bush's old prep school.

If Taguba, Bugliosi and Velvel can raise this issue, it's an idea whose time has come. Let the Africans resolve the problems of the Sudan. ICC, it's time to indict Bush and Cheney. □

SOUTH AFRICA UNIONISTS

COSATU strike against global economic crisis

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

While former South African President Nelson Mandela celebrated his 90th birthday on July 18, the struggle for economic justice among the working class and its organizations continued. The largest labor federation known as the Congress of South African Trade Unions held numerous work stoppages and mass demonstrations on July 16 to protest the rising costs of fuel, food and energy services.

Mandela, who is the past president of the governing African National Congress, was elected as the first head of state during the first non-racial, democratic elections inside the country in 1994. Though this democratic advance was historic, it left the ownership of the South African economy in the hands of the old settler ruling class and the imperialists.

Mandela, who served one five-year term between 1994 and 1999, is still hailed throughout the world as a freedom fighter. He spent over 27 years in prison for his political beliefs while Western imperialists benefited from the superexploitation of the majority African population who worked and created the wealth in the mining, manufacturing and agriculture industries in South Africa.

Because South Africa has been well integrated into the world capitalist system since the late 19th century, when the mining of gold and other resources began, the current economic crisis engendered by the failures within the financial markets worldwide have been felt sharply in this country and throughout the region.

Thousands march in COSATU protests

Workers seized the streets in the Free State, Northern Cape and Mpumalanga on July 16 protesting the escalating prices for fuel, electricity services and food.

Demonstrators in the Free State's major city of Bloemfontein demanded that the government stop allowing working people to pay for the failure to invest in the power industry during the early days of democratic rule during the 1990s.

COSATU's deputy general-secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali said, "We cannot afford the 27.5 percent increase in electricity." The labor official pointed out that any further price hikes would mean that workers would suffer even more, particularly if the current downturn creates even more unemployment. (Mail & Guardian of South Africa)

Marchers also went to the Free State Premier Beatrice Marshoff's office on July 16 to deliver a memorandum demanding that the electrification program to poor households not be compromised in light of the recent price increases.

The one-day strike disrupted all operations at the Beatrix mine of Gold Fields. Nearly 80 percent of the clothing and textile workers in the Free State and Northern Cape participated in the demonstrations, according to the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union. However, the diamond producers DeBeers reported negligible impact on their operations in three of four mines in the Northern Cape and Free State.

In Mpumalanga, COSATU spokesperson Raymond Mnguni stated that 60 percent of businesses were closed as well as many shops, factories and companies. "Many production industries operated on skeleton staff."

According to COSATU's July 16 statement, "The economy of Mpumalanga ground to a complete halt as thousands of COSATU members supported by the South

African National Civics Organization, the South African Communist Party, the Young Communist League, the African National Congress Youth League and organizations of Civil Society took to the streets in support of COSATU's call for protected action against the electricity crisis."

The Mpumalanga COSATU statement concludes by giving a breakdown of demonstrations that took place on July 16 where "estimated numbers of the different marches in the province are as follows: Witbank 18,000 people, Nkomazi 15,000 people, Nelspruit 15,000 people, KwaMhlanga 10,000 people, Secunda 12,000 people, Ermelo 7,000 people and Bushbuckridge 5,000 people."

"These actions are but a warm up to the National strike planned for Aug. 6, 2008," the statement continued. "We are delighted by the support we received, which is beyond the traditional support base of COSATU. To us this is an indication that COSATU is campaigning on issues that affects the poor majority of this country."

Additional actions were also planned for July 23, including provincial strikes and demonstrations against the electricity crisis in South Africa and mass protests in the provinces of Gauteng, Eastern Cape, North West and Limpopo.

Recent power cuts and shortages have been described by COSATU as a "national crisis," which is impacting all South Africans.

Global crisis underlines rising costs in South Africa

This current upsurge in labor actions in South Africa reflects the worsening capitalist economic downturn that has swept through Western Europe and the United States. The decline and failure of major financial institutions following the U.S. housing-market collapse, coupled with runaway military spending to carry on the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the maintenance of hundreds of military bases throughout the world, have also confronted workers and oppressed people inside the Western industrialized states with rising unemployment and a significant decline in living standards.

With the present situation of workers and the oppressed worsening all over the world, the current crisis provides new opportunities for international solidarity. For example, we have recently seen a greater interest among American workers in the situation of labor unions in Colombia.

Also with respect to the revolutionary processes unfolding in Venezuela and other countries in Latin America, workers and oppressed people in the U.S. have begun to see the connection between struggles for self-determination and socialism in this region and the plight of labor in the United States.

In Africa, many countries are facing food deficits and energy crises. There have been food rebellions in various parts of the continent over the last few months. In Somalia, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Egypt, working people, women and youth have struck back through mass actions against the failure of world capitalism to meet the elementary needs of the people.

The widespread labor actions in South Africa provide a glimpse into how powerful organized workers can be in a global recession heading toward the potential of a complete financial meltdown. Joint endeavors by workers and the oppressed throughout the world will strengthen class-consciousness and provide a mechanism to effectively challenge the agenda of imperialism, which seeks to enhance its control over the labor and resources of the globe. □

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Stop killer Coca-Cola

People's Tribunal prepares verdict in Colombia

By LeiLani Dowell
Bogotá, Colombia

July 21—U.S. activists, on a delegation organized by the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and the International Action Center, joined 1,700 others here today for the opening of the Permanent People's Tribunal in Colombia.

This third and final session of the tribunal, which meets from July 21-23, is examining the role of multinational corporations, with the assistance of the Colombian government and paramilitary organizations, in the extreme repression of Colombian social movements, including trade unions, students, Indigenous and peasants.

Participants from around the globe will hear testimony from survivors, lawyers and researchers over the next three days.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, an Argentinean and 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner, is presiding over the panel of judges who will examine the evidence brought before the tribunal.

Prior hearings have examined how foreign-owned agribusinesses have affected farmers and Indigenous peoples; the mining oil companies' role; the impact of transnational corporate-controlled development on biodiversity and the environment; and oil companies and human rights violations.

In addition to the repression—including massacres, kidnappings, disappearances and death threats—other abuses to the Colombian people have been noted, such as the elimination of whole Indigenous communities, destruction of the country's biodiversity and the control of prices through speculation.

Testimony was presented today by

Sinaltrainal, the National Union of Food Industry Workers, on the persecution of trade unionists by the Coca-Cola and Nestlé corporations. Other speakers represented the Miners Federation of the Bolivarian South, the National Union of Public Service Workers, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, the "Jose Alvear Restrepo" Lawyers' Collective and more.

On July 22, tribunal participants will participate in a march and then hear presentations from representatives of Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador—showing that the phenomenon of exploitation by the multinational corporations extends throughout Latin America.

In a show of solidarity with the tribunal, simultaneous actions will be held the same day throughout the U.S. Amy Velez, an organizer of Comuner@s, a grassroots organization of Colombians living in the U.S., says her group is working throughout New York City to organize for an event on July 22.

Velez told the International Action Center, "For at least a few hours on Tuesday, we will be showing our utmost solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Colombia. We will be assembling in front of the offices of Coca-Cola because of the documented role that Coca-Cola is playing with the death squads in Colombia. These death squads not only kill our brothers and sisters but they work with Coke to break up unions."

The delegation of U.S. activists will remain in Colombia after July 23 to conduct interviews with workers and members of various social movements, with the goal of returning to the U.S. to help build the movement in solidarity with Colombia. □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

In New York July 22, one of many solidarity actions with People's Tribunal in Colombia.

Lebanese joyful as released prisoners return

Continued from page 9

entourage passed. People lining the roads carried flags and photographs of martyred relatives. "It's like he's coming back to me alive," said Hajj Hassas Wazwazz, whose son Ali had been killed in 2006 after 13 days of fighting.

"Ahmad Khalaf, a Palestinian who was expecting a relative's body to be returned, said, 'I wish the Palestinian revolution would regain its lost fire,' clearly impressed with Hezbollah's success." (Star)

Five thousand people attended a memorial service the next day in Beirut for the eight Hezbollah fighters killed in 2006. Hezbollah leader Hashem Safiedine explained at the service, "The brothers of these martyrs will confront the enemy if it ever thinks of making the mistake of attacking Lebanon." Uniformed Hezbollah fighters carried the coffins through the southern suburbs as thousands of people followed. "Israel has fallen," read the sign of one onlooker.

Palestinian heroine honored

Among the remains returned were

those of Dalal Mughrabi, a Palestinian woman guerrilla who, in 1978 when she was 19 years old, led a raid on Israel. She is a heroine of the Palestinian resistance. The Star reported that "Her sister wept as her coffin, draped in the Lebanese flag, arrived in Naqoura to a military salute by some 100 Hezbollah fighters, with a team of horses galloping down the green carpet." The respect given her remains by the Lebanese resistance stands in marked contrast to the way the Lebanese government confines Palestinians to their camps, under an apartheid-like system.

Bodies of members of secular Lebanese and Palestinian political parties, among them the Lebanese Communist Party, the Amal Movement and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, were also returned. There were also the remains of fighters from other Arab countries who had died for Lebanon and Palestine.

The mood in the Arab world toward this release was best explained by a blogger on the angryarab.com site: "Make no mistake about it: the supply of Arabs willing to fight Israeli occupation will never deplete. Never." □

MICHIGAN FORECLOSURES

Moratorium struggle builds, activists plan to stop eviction

Continued from page 3

denounce the lenders and speak out for people's rights. They demanded a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions and vowed that the Pinkins family would not face their plight alone. Another demonstration is scheduled for Bank of America, owner of Countrywide, in downtown Detroit on July 22, to demand they accept the redemption payment from Pinkins.

The protest was the top story on the 11 p.m. newscast of WXYZ-TV 7, an ABC affiliate. Fox News TV 2 and WWJ news radio also ran stories. The Michigan Citizen newspaper ran the Coalition's entire press release on its editorial page.

The Coalition leaflet stated: "Countrywide and Trott & Trott's actions epitomize the ruthlessness and illogic of the finance industry, which would rather assert its power to throw people in the streets than accept payment for the homes. The banks and finance companies are destroying our communities, creating thousands of abandoned and vandalized homes, and reducing property values for everyone. Just this week, the federal government bailed out the banks and finance industry by guaranteeing \$300 billion in taxpayer money to back up their bad loans. What about bailing out the people, the real victims of the foreclosure crisis?"

Earlier in the week, foreclosure moratorium activists responded to an eviction

occurring in Oakland County, just north of Detroit. After a woman's belongings were taken to the curb by the bailiff, a team worked steadily to move her possessions back into the home.

Coalition organizers have met with students and activists in Ypsilanti who are taking on the moratorium campaign. They were also invited to speak at the Wyandotte Democratic Club's monthly meeting. This downriver working-class suburb is also the site of rampant foreclosures. A lively discussion generated strong support for SB 1306. The club endorsed the Sept. 17 march on Lansing and passed a hat for donations to help Coalition efforts.

Organizers blanketed the crowd at a recent fireworks display in Monroe, south of Detroit, urging people in that city to pressure their state senator, Randy Richardville, chair of the banking and financial services committee, to drop his pro-banker stance against the moratorium bill. On July 19 Coalition members traveled to Cheboygan in northern Michigan to help activists there build for the Sept. 17 march. On July 21, organizers headed to Battle Creek in western Michigan.

Volunteers and donations are desperately needed. Please visit the Moratorium NOW! Coalition Web site at moratorium-mi.org for information on how to assist this struggle. □

JAPAN

Fishery workers strike

By G. Dunkel

Some 200,000 boats were out of service July 15 as 400,000 fishery workers held a one-day strike in Japan to protest the high price of fuel. Thousands—some reports gave the figure as more than 10,000—marched around the fishery ministry in central Tokyo, their banners, placards and bodies clogging the street.

While the business press, like the Financial Times Information Service, downplayed the impact of the strike, television reports showed empty fish bins and fish-processing centers with no workers because they had no fish to process.

Fish is a staple of the Japanese diet.

Strikes and protests are rare in Japan, but fishery workers have been pushed to the wall.

Shigeru Honma came to protest in Tokyo from northern Japan. On July 1, according to the Washington Post, he delivered a letter to the prime minister that read: "Soaring fuel prices are killing Japan's fishing industry. Give us money, or oil."

Since there was no response from the prime minister's office, he came back July 15 and told the Post, "We are very gentle, but it's time to say something now." □

M★NDO OBRERO

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

¿Está EEUU preparando otra guerra—contra Irán?

Por Deirdre Griswold

El 2 de junio Israel llevó a cabo maniobras militares sobre la parte este del Mar Mediterráneo. Hasta 100 aviones F-16 y F-15 proporcionados a Israel por el Pentágono estuvieron involucrados junto a helicópteros israelíes con tanques de combustible para largas distancias. El avión de caza F-16 también está equipado para cargar una amplia variedad de cohetes aire-a-tierra, misiles o bombas.

El blanco del ejercicio quedaba a 900 millas de Israel, aproximadamente la misma distancia que la facilidad iraní para el enriquecimiento de combustible nuclear en Natanz. Varios reportes periodísticos dijeron que las maniobras fueron una práctica para un ataque militar israelita contra las facilidades nucleares de Irán.

¿Y cuál fue la reacción de Washington a la obvia amenaza de Israel para cometer una agresión y violar el derecho internacional con armas proporcionadas por los EEUU?

Dos días después de la acción belicosa, el Presidente George W. Bush celebró una conferencia de prensa en Washington con el Primer Ministro de Israel, Ehud Olmert. Bush intentó desviar las críticas de las acciones de las FFAA israelitas diciendo insólitamente, “Irán es una amenaza existencial a la paz”. Pudo haber dicho lo mismo que “¡Adelante!”.

¿Otra guerra más?

El imperialismo de los EEUU ya está metido en guerras muy impopulares en Irak y Afganistán, donde está presionando y sobornando a otros países para que desplieguen las tropas que EEUU ya no puede proveer sin restablecer el reclutamiento obligatorio y provocar una rebelión entre la juventud de este país.

Cada bombardeo por las fuerzas militares de los EEUU, con las inevitables muertes y la destrucción que causan las armas poderosas, simplemente fortalece la determinación de millones de personas en estos países y en la región entera a resistir a los invasores.

El pueblo de los EEUU decisivamente

se ha vuelto en contra de estas guerras. Se acuerda de las mentiras sobre las “armas de destrucción masiva” que Bush utilizó para intimidar al Congreso y a los medios informativos y que prepararon la vía para la invasión.

Recientemente EEUU bombardeó Pakistán en nombre de la ficticia guerra contra el “terrorismo”. También ha auspiciado una invasión con el apoyo de Etiopía contra Somalia y reforzada por la CIA y los barcos de la Quinta Flota de los EEUU, incluyendo el gigantesco portaaviones USS Eisenhower.

A pesar de todo eso, los guerristas de Washington ahora están abiertamente organizando una campaña de intimidación contra Irán, preparando las bases para un posible ataque aéreo contra otro país más. Mientras que el gobierno de Irán está recibiendo todas estas amenazas calmadamente, el potencial para que las amenazas se conviertan en agresión verdadera es una realidad.

El 23 de junio, y sin duda después de mucha presión por Washington, la Unión Europea anunció que iba a imponer sanciones contra Irán, incluyendo la congelación de los bienes del Banco Melli, el más grande del país.

Irán no ha hecho nada malo

El pretexto para toda esta actividad bélica contra el país con la cuarta reserva de petróleo conocidas más grande del mundo es que Washington “sospecha” que Irán tiene un programa de armas nucleares. Esto es una mentira tan grande que el jefe de la Agencia Internacional de Energía Atómica, Mohammad El-Baradei, ha advertido que va a renunciar a su cargo si atacan a Irán.

Aquí están los hechos:

En el 2003, el gobierno de Irán firmó el Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear. Bajo el tratado, tiene el derecho de desarrollar energía nuclear con propósitos pacíficos.

Según la AIEA, que ha conducido muchas inspecciones de las facilidades nucleares de Irán, no hay absolutamente ninguna evidencia de que Irán esté con-

struyendo armas. Irán ha dicho muchas veces públicamente que no tiene programas de armas nucleares y que necesita desarrollar las plantas eléctricas nucleares para el día cuando se acabe el petróleo.

Con la demanda mundial para el petróleo subiendo diariamente, esta una posibilidad real que enfrentan todos los países productores de petróleo. Sin embargo, Irán no es un pequeño reino como Kuwait (2,5 millones de habitantes) o un reino en el desierto como Arabia Saudita (27 millones), sino un país de 65 millones de habitantes con una economía en desarrollo que necesita energía. Sus reservas de petróleo son cerca de un 83 por ciento de las que tiene Irak pero su población es casi dos veces y media más grande.

No es sorprendente o siniestro que quiera invertir en una diversificación de sus recursos energéticos ahora, mientras las ventas de su petróleo todavía son grandes y tienen un precio alto.

Por otro lado, todo el mundo sabe que Israel tiene armas nucleares. La revista Jane's Defense Review, considerada la fuente con más credibilidad del mundo sobre este tema, dice que Israel tiene hasta 200 armas nucleares y que su programa nuclear comenzó en los años 1960. Mordechai Vanunu, un ex técnico nuclear israelí, fue secuestrado por agentes israelitas en 1986 por haber revelado detalles de este programa a los medios comunicativos del mundo. Israel, a diferencia de Irán, no ha firmado nunca el Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear o se ha afiliado a la AIEA.

Entonces ¿porqué no dice Bush que Israel es una “amenaza existencial a la paz mundial”?

Israel es la cola, no el perro

Algunos rábidos antisemitas en los EEUU dicen que esto es porque Israel impone la política extranjera de los EEUU. Esto sería decir que es la cola la que menea al perro. La verdad es que la clase no judía dominante de los EEUU y de algunos países europeos, Bretaña en particular, hace mucho ha considerado que un estado sionista colonizador en el Medio Oriente es un aliado potente en su lucha para negar a los pueblos árabes y pérsicos el control sobre sus tierras y sus bienes económicos más valiosos —el petróleo.

Esto es porque los EEUU ha patrocinado al estado de Israel con \$102 mil millones desde 1948. Por los estándares del Pentágono, ha sido una manera barata para proyectar el poder imperialista de los EEUU en esa parte del mundo. Por contraste, la guerra en Irak ha costado más de \$531 mil millones en cinco años —y esto no está contando las cos-

tas futuras de veteran@s deshabilitad@s y otros gastos “indirectos”.

Empresas petroleras, los enormes bancos transnacionales asociados con ellas y los “think tanks” (los grupos pagados para inventar justificaciones políticas) como el grupo patrocinado por los intereses Rockefeller, el Consejo sobre Relaciones Extranjeras (Council on Foreign Relations) y la Comisión Trilateral —han sido participantes dominantes en el establecimiento de la política extranjera de los EEUU. Ellos han producido muchas figuras políticas que han persuadidas al gobierno comenzar guerras sobre este producto tan lucrativo.

Hoy, trabajadores en los EEUU están sufriendo los altos precios de petróleo. Las políticas bélicas e imperialistas de la administración de Bush han contribuido mucho a esto —por crear caos en Irak, por el consumo de parte del Pentágono de cantidades enormes de combustible, y por crear un ambiente parecido a un pánico en los mercados especulativos de los precios de recursos naturales.

Pero ¿dónde ha sido la oposición política a todo esto? No en el Congreso. Nadie está poniéndose de pie para condenar a Bush por utilizar a Israel en contra de Irán. Nadie está haciendo la conexión entre las ganancias record en un momento de recesión económica, con las guerras de agresión en el Medio Oriente. Nadie está diciendo a los trabajadores aquí que su enemigo no es Irán o Irak, sino ExxonMobil y BP.

En la contienda presidencial, Barack Obama dice que el favorece negociaciones con los líderes de Irán mientras que repite su apoyo incondicional para Israel. John McCain va más allá y rechaza la diplomacia. Pero la diplomacia, uno debe reconocer, es solo otra táctica en la estrategia general del imperialismo por la dominación mundial. Si las pláticas no producen el resultado deseado por los imperialistas —en este caso la capitulación de Irán— ¿qué viene después? Ningún de los dos partidos imperialistas rechaza la posibilidad de acción militar contra Irán.

Todo esto deja la esperanza por una lucha verdadera en contra de los que están impulsando a la guerra solo en las espaldas de las mismas masas. Volver la oposición pasiva en resistencia activa es lo que se precisa ahora más que nunca.

Para más información sobre una movilización contra una nueva guerra contra Irán, ve al <http://StopWarOnIran.org>.

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¡Detengamos la guerra EN IRÁN!

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Acciones de protesta en 65 ciudades en los EEUU el 2 de agosto.

En Nueva York, en la calle 43 y B'way al mediodía (12)

Para más información, 212-633-6646 o StopWarOnIran.org

