Gov’t says ‘Things are getting better’ as Record job losses follow mortgage debacle

By Jerry Goldberg

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published a report on July 2 confirming the growing economic disaster facing the working class. In June 14.7 million people were unemployed and the unemployment rate was 9.5 percent. Since the start of the recession in December 2007, the number of unemployed workers has increased by 7.2 million and the unemployment rate has risen by 4.6 percentage points. (bls.gov)

African Americans have a 14.7 percent unemployment rate, 2.2 percent for Latino/as. The unemployment rate for teenagers is 24 percent. The number of long-term unemployed, those jobless for 27 weeks or more, increased by 435,000 to 4.4 million people, or three in 10 unemployed workers.

The number of people working part-time for “economic reasons,” meaning involuntary part-time workers, was 9 million, up 4.4 million since the start of the recession. Another 2.2 million unemployed workers were not counted in the official statistics because they had not searched for work in the previous four weeks, including 793,000 “discouraged” workers. The average workweek for production and nonsupervisory workers fell to 33 hours, the lowest level on record for the Bureau, which began keeping records in 1964.

In Michigan, the jobless rate has surpassed 15 percent, the first time in 25 years that any state has had an unemployment rate so high. Fourteen other states and the District of Columbia have official unemployment rates surpassing 10 percent: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Tennessee.

The Federal Reserve projects that the national unemployment rate may surpass 10 percent by year’s end and warned that the economy may not return to full health for at least five years. (Washington Post, July 16)

Despite these devastating statistics and projections, President Barack Obama’s top economic adviser, Lawrence Summers, seems to see a rosy picture. In a speech on July 17, Summers pronounced that the federal economic stimulus plan was working and had averted an economic collapse. (New York Times, July 18)

Roots of the economic crisis

The current recession with its growing unemployment is rooted in the lowering of wages and elimination of decent-pay-union jobs. In “Low-Wage Capitalism,” author Fred Goldstein cited studies which confirm this trend. The State of Working America 2006/2007 study reflected that from 1973 until 2005 there was a drop of close to $40 or 7 percent in the weekly earnings of 80 percent of the working class. A Bureau of Labor Statistics chart noted a drop of $55 a week in earnings from 1973 to 2004, calculated in 1982 dollars. (page 106)

When wages decline, workers become increasingly unable to buy back the goods and services they produce, leading to capitalist overproduction, recession and unemployment.

What staved off the current crisis for a number of years were the trillions of dollars that were poured into the capitalist economy through credit schemes. First the banks extended easy credit through credit cards for a number of years. When the cards maxed out, the capitalists turned people’s homes into sources of credit and cash by illegally and artificially pushing up home values and luring people to put their homes up for collateral in home refinancing schemes. The banks made tremendous profits by charging huge fees as well as high interest rates in the subprime

Continued on page 4

No jobs on moon

EDITORIAL 10

UTILITY CUTOFF
Detroit’s death penalty 3

AFGHAN ESCALATION
Now it’s ‘Democrats’ war’ 8

Honduras coup
Voices of resistance 9

THEY MADE IT!
Viva Palestina delivers aid to Gaza

By John Parker

The largest U.S. humanitarian aid convoy to Palestine in history went over the Rafah border crossing into Gaza in the late evening of July 15. The 218-person contingent of activists brought more than $1 million in wheelchairs, walkers and medical supplies to the people of Gaza.

A genocidal attack on Gaza in December and January, on top of a two-year Israeli siege and blockade of the area, makes this aid essential for the people there. Israeli bombs and rockets destroyed more than 47,000 homes, and many thousands of Gaza Palestinians now live in tents.

That the Viva Palestina caravan came from the U.S. is especially important, as Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. government aid in the world. Israel uses U.S. weapons and missiles against the Palestinian people on a daily basis.

Overcoming obstacles imposed by the U.S., Egyptian and Israeli regimes to lead the Viva Palestina group across the border were New York City Councilperson and

Continued on page 6
Struggle continues in Benton Harbor, Mich.

Rev. Pinkney wins sentencing reversal

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Benton Harbor community leader Rev. Edward Pinkney has emerged victorious in his revocation of probation sentence which was handed down in June 2008. Pinkney, the leader of the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizations (BANCO), was ordered to prison for three to 10 years after a Berrien County judge ruled that he had threatened the very fabric of some of his organization’s activities by quoting scriptures in an article published in December 2007. The Michigan Court of Appeals handed down the ruling on July 14. However, the court rendered a mixed decision when it upheld Rev. Pinkney’s original conviction by an all-white jury in May 2007. He was charged and convicted of vote fraud and sentenced to one year in jail and five-year probation.

Rev. Pinkney was placed on a tether in May 2007 and confined to his home for six months. After the publication of an article in the People’s Tribune newspaper based in Chicago, he was taken from his home and placed in the Berrien County Jail in St. Joseph, Mich. At a later hearing held on July 14, Rev. Pinkney was placed on a tether in June 9 Court of Appeals hearing held in Grand Rapids.

A July 23 statement issued by the ACLU said in part: “In its ruling today, the Court of Appeals said that the trial court’s probabilities that some of the actions of the Michigan courts are located, is a predominantly white city that is a center of commerce and tourism. Benton Harbor is mostly African American and is afflicted by high unemployment, home foreclosures and poverty.

Schmidt calls for a boycott of St. Joseph in response to the usurpation of public land located in Jean Klock Park, which is the center of the so-called Harbor Shore development project that will construct the golf course as well as expensive housing. The Whirlpool Corporation, which is connected with the Upton family, is criticized in the letter for its support of the ongoing exploitation and impoverishment of the majority African-American population in Benton Harbor.

The promises made by the original Upton family, the founders of Whirlpool, have become a distant echo. Their fraternity heir, [Congressperson] Fred Upton, continues available on the Web at www.workers.org.

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Family, community blame DTE as Four family members die after utility shut-off

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

The greed of DTE Energy Co. led to the July 16 deaths of four members of an African-American family in Detroit. The Reed-Owens family had their electricity cut off on July 15 by DTE for nonpayment.

The family was desperate when their power was cut off because several family members suffered from serious medical conditions—including asthma, neurofibromatosis and bronchitis—and required the use of electric breathing machines.

The Reed-Owens went to their church to borrow a gas-powered generator which they placed in their basement, unaware of the danger of doing so. Only hours later, all five family members died due to suspected carbon monoxide poisoning. The mother, Marquetta Reed, was the only survivor. Her partner, the Reeds' two children, Mar'Keisha Reed, 17, DeMarco Owens, 12, and DeMonte Owens, 6, perished in their home. (Detroit News, July 17).

Like millions of other families in the United States, the Reed-Owens family, through no fault of their own, had fallen victim to unemployment. Mr. Reed was laid off from an auto parts supplier in January, which created many financial hardships for the family, including the foreclosure of their home.

The Reed-Owens tragedy is particularly heart-wrenching and outrageous as the family had filed for bankruptcy protection, making it illegal for DTE to shut off their utilities. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court on June 25 sent DTE an electronic notification of the Reed-Owens' bankruptcy filing. But DTE didn’t stop the shutoff. Instead the corporation claims the shutoff notice was sent to the wrong address—not to the home where the Reed-Owenses resided.

Although Reed telephoned DTE on July 15 and told the company he had filed for bankruptcy, power wasn’t re-restored immediately. DTE claimed it was going to turn the power back on the next day, but by then it was too late.

Neighbors and family members of the Reed-Owenses are outraged and aghast over DTE's criminal actions. "At these times of crisis, what is the problem?" asked Pamela Jackson, Owen’s cousin, who said DTE never should have turned off the power.

People before profits! Utilities are a right!

DTE Energy is a monopoly corporation whose 2008 operating revenues were $9.3 billion. The company claims over $14 billion in assets and $8.546 million in net income, according to its 2008 financial filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

DTE’s two primary utilities are Detroit Edison, an electric utility with 2.2 million customers, and the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company (MichCon), its natural gas utility with 1.3 million customers.

DTE’s board of directors is crawling toward people of color, you shouldn’t be surprised. It is the site of the good guys.” The site bills itself as “the voice of the good guys.”

Speaking of Web site supporters, Bilal said, “If you're a police officer, a sworn officer of the law, and you think that way toward people of color, you shouldn't be here.”

Mildenberg charged that responsibility for the Web site’s content goes beyond its administrator and falls on the police department, which has recently made aware of the problem but failed to act. Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey acknowledged that he knew of the Web site. The police department does control who gets Internet access on the job.

Mildenberg said that police policy should also prohibit officers from posting racist material on their own time. The lawsuit notes that regulations require officers "to avoid engaging in racially offensive speech or conduct in public.”

Mildenberg noted that there is no First Amendment protection on an employer’s computer. “The employer owns your e-mail, your computer.”

This is not the first time that the Guardian Civic League and the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers have challenged racist Philadelphia police officers and the Fraternal Order of Police. Both Black organizations have also taken the police department to court.

Support Stella D’Oro workers!

The Stella D’Oro Support Committee is asking its labor movement friends and other supporters to sign on to a petition asking for an injunction to stop the sale of the Stella D’Oro company.

After the National Labor Relations Board ordered Brynwood Partners, private owners of Stella D’Oro, to rehire 360 bakery workers with the same pay and benefits they had before their 11-month strike, the company announced plans to shut down the Bronx, N.Y., facility within 90 days. Brynwood Partners is reportedly interested in taking over the entire 11-month strike, not one worker crossed the picket line to return to work. The Stella D’Oro workers have received the support of many labor unions as well as the support of the neighboring Bronx community.

The support committee requests messages and petitions supporting the workers’ request for an injunction be e-mailed to BCTGMLocal60@oil.com, rscannell@bctg.org, stevekindsred@verizon.net, and rscannell@bctg.org.

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A sample message states: “To Celeste Mattina, NLRB Regional Director, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 3614, New York, NY 10278-0104. We, the undersigned, understand that BCTGM Local 608 has sought an injunction in the Stella D’Oro case under Article 10-J of the National Labor Relations Act. We support their request. We urge you to support it and take speedy action to act on it.”

—Leilani Dowell
Democrats cave in to big business as Card check provision provision dropped from EFCA

By Scott Williams

Six Democrats in the Senate announced July 16 that they will drop the card check provision in the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill designed to force bosses to acknowledge a union if a majority of workers sign cards to join the union. EFCA, which originally passed the House of Representatives in 2008, is a desperately-needed reform for workers.

The economic crisis has caused an increase in union-busting by bosses, including mass layoffs of workers and union organizers, outsourcing and off-shoring of union jobs, and the weakening of major union contract such as the recently-brokered contracts between the United Auto Workers and General Motors and Chrysler.

EFCA would support workers’ rights to organize a union and win contracts with their bosses. The legislation proposes to stop bosses from delaying union contracting for 20 to 40 years. Outright union-busting tactics must have a nerve with lots of people because mid-July EFCA was back at the bargaining table.

Local 1776 President Wendell Young IV had also told management that the workers would strike if the bosses tried to impose the company’s take-back contract.

With a 98-to-19 vote on July 16, the unionized workers overwhelmingly approved a new contract that includes the equivalent of a 2-percent raise, preserves health and pension benefits, and protects union jobs.

Provisions of the new four-year agreement include preventing EFCA from covering companies with wages or health insurance contributions; and giving raises in four lump-sum payments over the life of the contract. EFCA will be allowed to outsource certain departments, but core departments will remain staffed by union members.

Workers credited union solidarity for their victory. Walt O’Connor, 60, a produce clerk at the Woodhaven Acme in Northeast Philadelphia, told the Phila delphia Inquirer, “Our union membership come together more closely than they ever had in the past.”

Workers win showdown at Acme Markets

By Betsey Piette

Philadelphia

When 4,000 unionized workers at 40 Acme supermarkets, who had been working under a contract extension since February 2008, received notice in late June that the company planned to terminate existing benefits and impose draconian cuts, the workers made their struggle public.

The United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1776 took out full-page ads in local newspapers exposing the company threats and asking for shoppers and the community to pressure the company to resume negotiations. Local 1776 had been bargaining for the workers.

Acme management threatened to freeze wages, cut pensions and benefits, and outsource jobs, despite the fact that many of the workers had been with the company for 20 to 40 years. These outright union-busting tactics must have a nerve with lots of people because mid-July Acme was back at the bargaining table.

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Gov’t says ‘Things are getting better’ as Record job losses follow mortgage debacle

Continued from page 1 and predatory lending boom.

“Sources and Use of Equity Extracted from Homes,” a study published by Alan S. Belsky and Amy H. N. Khorasani, in March 2007, points out just how much cash was artificially infused into the capitalist economy because of this. They estimate the amount of this “free cash,” which they defined as the value of home sales, refinancing or home equity loans, minus mortgage debt paid off at the time of closing and closing costs.

The figures are enormous. The amount of “free cash” generated was $776.8 billion in 2002, $1,003 trillion in 2003, $1.170 trillion in 2004, and $1.428 trillion in 2009 and 2010, is about one-half of the $2.863 trillion in 2007, which was the still-growing and record-breaking amount of this “free cash,” which the Federal Reserve has estimated was $757.8 billion.

The artificial bubble bursts

The over $1 trillion a year that fueled consumer spending through the housing-loan process has been eliminated from the economy. The housing bubble has burst and home values are on a free fall. As a result, home refinancing and equity loans have wavered. Home values are not selling.

Homeowners are paying overvalued mortgages, often with high, upward adjusted interest rates, resulting in the still-growing and record-breaking foreclosure crisis. RealtyTrac reported on July 15 that the numbers of homes on the verge of foreclosure rose 15 percent in the first half of 2009 (realtytrac.com).

To help out, Obama announced the stimulus plan, which plans to pump $787 billion into the capitalist economy during the recession. The $1.43 trillion that was injected into the economy in 2009 alone through overvalu ing homes and then extending credit on them and purchasing the homes as assets, rather than having to write off the decline in the real value of the homes. The only answer to the growing unemployment and deepening crisis for the working class is by workers getting in the streets and fighting back.

What can workers do?

Workers need a simple resolution on foreclosures and evictions. While some homeowners have been able to utilize the program to get their interest rates reduced, by calculating pay ment schedules based on 33 percent of income, the principal on their loans remains high, though these homeowners do end up paying an EFCA forgivable note on their pre priced mortgage. This allows the banks to keep the mortgages on their books as assets, rather than having to write off the decline in the real value of the homes.

The lenders are also receiving billions of dollars to participate in the Home Affordable Program, such as $3.5 billion for Chase, $2.83 billion for Wells Fargo, $2.6 billion for Bank of America—which includes its subsidiary Countrywide—and $2 billion for Citi Mortgage (financia lista bility.gov) This is on top of the $790 billion in bailout funds they have already received.

For their part, the banks have been so slow to implement the Treasury plan that Secretary Timothy Geithner is actually holding a meeting with them on July 29 to beg the banks to do more.

The structural basis for the current unemployment crisis hitting the working class—the lowering of wages and elimination of decent-paying union jobs in this era of globalization and low-wage capi talism—has not changed. Unemployment and lower wages continue to manifest in the growing crisis now that the capitalists have exhausted artificial means of pumping cash into the economy.

The only answer to the growing unemployment and deepening crisis for the workers and the poor is for the working class to fight back with an independent program for jobs or income now and for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. Workers also need to demand a real stimulus plan with trillions of dollars allocated to rebuild our cities and keep the factories open and producing for human need and not profit.

Workers must demand enforcement of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, a law on the books which says that maintaining full employment is the top priority of the government and Federal Reserve. The demonstrations in response to the $2.863 trillion in mortgage losses are the next step in building such a movement.

Goldberg is a leader of the Federation of Independent Workers, a coalition that fights foreclosures and evictions and a Detroit attorney who represents homeowners and renters in their struggle against the banks and lenders.
Goldman Sachs reported quarterly earnings of $3.4 billion on July 14. Morgan Chase reported $2.7 billion in profits on July 16. The next day Bank of America reported a quarterly profit of $3.2 billion and Citigroup $4.3 billion. Goldman Sachs told the New York Times July 15 that “it had earmarked $11.4 billion so far this year to compensate its workers,” which average $770,000 per worker. The Wall Street Journal, executive, is quoted saying, “We pay for performance.”

While Goldman Sachs received Troubled Asset Relief Program bailout money, which it has repaid, it and other banks have substantially benefited by being able to issue, sell, and utilize the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation back at it.

Goldman Sachs has also gotten tens of billions of dollars from AIG (the American International Group), when it was paid hundreds of dollars on the dollar for its billions in securities that turned sour. Estimates of the total payout Goldman got from AIG range from $13 billion to $80 billion. AIG is now essentially controlled by the U.S. government. While Blankfein didn’t address the billions in bailout money, it is certainly a performance-enhancer.

While JP Morgan Chase has repaid its TARP funds, Bank of America and Citigroup have not, and their financial positioning is a lot shakier. They are more susceptible to credit card and home-equity defaults.

Workers are still losing their jobs, even with the “stimulus” package, which indicates the production of goods and services is declining, a sign of a deeper recession. It also means that workers can’t pay their bills or their mortgages.

According to a report released June 16 from the Government Accountability Office, which is part of Congress, the government has spent $830 billion on TARP, out of the $700 billion allocated, and has promised $810 billion more. That leaves $250 billion in the fund, plus $70 billion that the banks have repaid.

Bailout vs. “Chaos in the streets!”

An interchange between former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson and the House committee investigating the formation of the TARP explains why the Bush administration so quietly devoted over $700 billion to the TARP bailout.

Paulson said: “If you have a situation where a banking system is frozen and money can’t move between financial institutions, what ultimately happens is that every business, even businesses that seem to be solvent and small businesses across America, will not be able to fund their inventory. They won’t be able to meet their payroll.

You will have a — when a financial system breaks down, the kinds of numbers that we were looking at in terms of unemployment was much greater than the numbers we’re looking at now. People in the streets ... but if we had a meltdown of the system, this could even lead to chaos or people even questioning the basic system.” (Wall Street Journal, July 16)

Paulson knows in his bones that the health of banks, which concentrate and disburse money—the livelihood of the capitalist process—is key to the health of capitalism. What is surprising is that he feared a rapid rise in joblessness in the midst of a financial crisis would lead to people in the streets taking and demanding actions that would challenge the current capitalist system.

The current banking system is still fragile, and could collapse under the weight of the recession, but parts of it are doing well. Foreclosures and defaulted real estate loans are still a big problem, both for the capitalists who see their system crumbling and workers who lose their jobs, then their homes, and see themselves and their loved ones suffering.

It’s not surprising that the Obama administration came up with a $75 billion program to reduce foreclosures and released details on it in early March. However, this program has created only 190,000 mortgage modifications with lower monthly payments, according to the Treasury Department. Many homeowners who complained that unanswered phone calls and inaccurate information from lenders (USA Today, June 18)

During the time Pres. Barack Obama’s plan has been in effect, lenders either have started or advanced foreclosures against more than 1 million homes, according to RealtyTrac. About 20 percent of these actions were completed resulting in homes repossessed by the banks. The Center for Responsible Lending says 2.4 million US residents are at risk of foreclosure in 2009, and 8.1 million could face foreclosure over the next four years.

Figures on the effect that foreclosures have on government revenues are hit-or-miss by the banks are hard to come by, but tens of millions of people are at risk.

In New York City, where 1 million apartments are government-regulated, lower-than-market rents, many hedge and equity funds have been speculating by buying billions of dollars of rental apartments in the hope of being able to drive out regulated tenants by means of fair or foul. (New York Times, July 12)

While bankers have poured vast sums of money on fancy schemes to dice, slice, automate and disguise their transactions, creating derivatives over derivatives in deliberate mishmashes of such complexity that it is hard to tell who owns what, workers living in their mortgaged homes know they have to pay every month.

But one thing is very clear. Without workers surpassing value for the capitalists who see their system crumbling or income for all at livable wages, there would be a job out of a job. And when they are, when the whole intricate system they are so integral in maintaining and directing is replaced, then the allocation of resources will be far simpler and far fairer for working people.

Detroiters tell President: We need jobs!

Advocates for a moratorium on foreclosures and utility shut-offs joined environmentalists and supporters of single-payer health care on July 14 when President Barack Obama visited metro Detroit. Obama gave a speech at Macomb Community College in Warren, where he announced an initiative to increase federal aid and funding for community colleges. Salaried auto workers were also there with a message for the president to save their pensions. In his speech, Obama praised Michi- gan Gov. Jennifer Granholm and her “No Worker Left Behind” program that provides funds for unemployed workers to further their education. Organizers with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions and the People’s Summit Coalition point out that Michigan’s official 15.2 percent unemployment rate belies any optimism that workers are getting back to work.

More than 310,000 jobs have been lost since the state so far in 2009. According to the Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics Michigan Forecast, published July 2 by the University of Michigan, “the 10-year downturn between mid-2000 and the summer of 2005 is forecast to cost the state 95,000 jobs, 20 percent of its work-force.” (www.rse.econ.lsa.umich.edu)

The People’s Summit Coalition distributed a “People’s Bill of Rights for Economic and Social Justice” to the crowd entering to hear Obama’s speech. This draft document states: “The economic crisis has drastically impacted the working class and the poor, increasing the official ranks of unemployed workers to over 12 million, almost one in ten, not counting those who can only find part-time jobs or who have given up looking for a job altogether because there are none.

“The unemployment crisis along with record home foreclosures, 50 million people with no health care insurance, and severe joblessness and low living standards is a matter of life and death for millions of people. We are in a state of emergency! The federal government must take responsibility and declare a State of Economic Emergency and implement immediate steps to relieve the mass suffering.

The People’s Bill of Rights calls for a massive federal program to provide jobs or income for all at livable wages; an immediate moratorium on all layoffs, plant closings, pension thefts and union busting; and the reopening of closed plants and putting workers back to work. For more information, visit www.peoples-summit.org.

Gov. Rendell: Guess who’s coming to dinner?

Pennsylvania state employees facing “payless paydays” took their message that their loved ones suffering.

“If we had a meltdown of the system, this could even lead to chaos or people even questioning the basic system.” (Wall Street Journal, July 16)
**Convoy participants speak**

‘The Gaza in all of us revives our hearts’

The following were written prior to Viva Palestina’s entry into Gaza. The first is by Turkish-Australian Abdurrahman, a young Syrian man who took part in the delegation.

Freedom lies not on a land, nor on a country’s borders that separate people. Freedom lies in the hearts of individuals. Sometimes, the hearts of these individuals are filled with so much love that it spreads to others all across the globe. That was what we experienced in the last eight days—the love spread to us by the people in Gaza. Their solidarity has united the masses that many have tried to divide.

With the 100-degree weather all day and night, consistent surprises of a bureaucratic system that seems strange to many, and the gathering of over 200 people from different races and cultures in one confined place—something developed, beautifully unique in the world we live in, outside of the Viva Palestina project: the bond of people of all races and religions coming together as sisters and brothers, proving to each other I have personally added 218 family members in the last week. They consist of Christians, rabbis, priests and atheists. A family of black, white, yellow and brown. Gaza has united people that would have never thought to be eating together under the hot sun of Egypt, and soon Gaza.

Maybe it’s Gaza, maybe it’s the eyes of the children in Gaza, and maybe it’s the Gaza in all of us that revives our hearts. We must acknowledge that Gaza has given us back our hearts, our souls and our minds. The love for Gaza has spread to all the free hearts of this world; I do admire the free souls of Gaza. The tactic used to show us might physically drain us, but as for our goal, these tactics only make us stronger and more determined to cross that border. To unite with our other half of freedom.

As we prepare to face more obstacles on this convoy, one thing remains certain, our convoy and our members will enter Gaza. We will enter with our hearts. We will enter with the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.”

Below are excerpts written by a young Egyptian health care worker who took part in the convoy to Gaza.

It was half past midnight at the Grand Gaza Hotel, the busly and bustling city of Gaza. The general restlessness of those, en route to Gaza after making it through the Egyptian-enforced Israeli blockade. The convoy was broken by a report that after days of negotiations with Egyptian authorities, we were informed our convoy was to be placed east toward the blocked city of Gaza. Suddenly the hotel came alive with convoy members hurrying back and forth to prepare the trucks loaded with medical relief supplies.

All of us were operating so that we would be able to hit the road by 3 a.m. However, it was pushed forward first to 5 a.m., then finally at 9 a.m. before the convoy was on the move.

In the front were the trucks with medical aid, followed by the buses. The first few hours were spent sleeping to recover from the previous night’s work. But our spirits began to soar as we approached and the buses broke out in singing and Palestinian music.

At last we arrived, after many doubts about whether the Egyptian authorities would use bureaucracy as a weapon of attrition or outright prevent us from entering Gaza altogether.

This is not to say they have been anywhere near flexible in the logistical aspects of the mission. So tight is the blockade on Gaza that we were only allowed entry for a 24-hour period. Beyond that, we were warned, we would be trapped within Gaza until the next border opening several months later.

As a public health professional, I respectfully ask if 24 hours is nearly enough to cover even one public health aspect in a city that has been blockaded by more than three years and ravaged by Israel’s most recent military offensive, “Operation Cast Lead.”

Would I be able to explore the toxic effects of Israel’s use of white phosphorus, an agent deemed by the U.N. as forbidden for use against civilians? Would I have time to study the impact of malnourishment on children and mothers given the scarcity of nutritious food, or the rise of infectious disease in hospitals and scarcity city following destruction of the civil infrastructure, including sewer, water and other sanitation systems?

Would I have time to explore the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological trauma borne from air raids, artillery, deaths of entire families, overnight execution and evacuation-styled killings of civilians by Israeli troops in border regions of the city?

There is a more personal meaning to this convoy. My grandfather was a medic in the Egyptian military during the six-day war in June 1967. He and others were taken as POWs at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza. To return to the place where my grandfather first served, also for the cause of medical relief, brings me closer to him in his absence.

But, as we drive through these checkpoints, I am thinking of only one aspect of the convoy, the humanitarian effort to break the siege on this oppressed people. Representing the U.S. in this mission as an ambassador of peace will also hopefully establish ties between these two freedom-loving peoples.

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They Made It! Viva Palestina delivers aid to Gaza

Continued from page 3

lead negotiator for Viva Palestina-USA, Charles Barron; former Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, just out of an Israeli prison for attempting to deliver aid by sea to Gaza with the Free Gaza Movement; and British MP George Galloway, who organized a caravan from Britain under the same name in March.

In spite of intense negotiations, arbitary enforcement and ever-changing requirements for travel through Egypt to Gaza on the part of the U.S. and Egyptian authorities, Viva Palestina was able to enter Gaza after making it through the Egyptian-enforced Israeli blockade. The challenge was on July 10 when the convoy arrived in Cairo.

Militant, united protest actions met the long back-and-fourth sessions endured by the Israelis.

One such hurdle, however, could not be overcome. The new vehicles purchased for medical agencies remain impounded only by the Israelis.

At a Viva Palestina meeting led by Barron stated the desires of the inhabitants of Gaza, whose homes the Israelis destroyed and who have lost most of the hospitals with little access to basic necessities. They wanted the delegation’s help in this order: first, convoy participants enter, then medical aid and finally the much-needed vehicles.

Why were the people in the contingent the most important for this effort in the eyes of the besieged people of Gaza? The mission had two goals. One was to provide medical supplies. The other was to expose the genocidal nature of this blockade and help create a political atmosphere that, if repeated enough, would chip away at the international silence and complicity in tolerating Israeli genocide.

All the aid in the world would be useless if Israel were allowed to stop its delivery. Pushing pressure on people like President Barack Obama, who represents the country that holds the purse strings for Israel, is part of that political struggle.

The Viva Palestina-USA delegation, from the country Obama represents, entered Gaza and not only with the medical aid, but with the determination to continue to increase exposure and visibility of this crisis and put one more nail in the coffin of Israeli occupation and genocide against the people of Palestine.

Also participating in Viva Palestina-USA were representatives of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Middle East Children’s Alliance, Cuba Coalition, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MECHA), International Action Center, Answer Coalition, International Socialistic Organization and Workers World Party.

For news of more Viva Palestina efforts, visit www.vivapalestina-us.org.

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Byelor was responsible for much of the media contact on the Viva Palestina convoy.

Petition struggle generates a quarter-million messages

A petition circulated by the International Action Center states: “It is a violation of international law to deny [the Viva Palestina convoy] passage or to detain them in any way.” The petition demands safe passage for the convoy as well as an end to the siege of Gaza. See www.iactcenter.org under the Action Alerts heading.

In the first week this petition was posted, there were 1,775 responses, generating a total of over 250,000 e-mail messages to public officials, governments and media representatives worldwide.

Each response sent messages to Egyptian President Mubarak and other Egyptian officials, President Barack Obama and other U.S. officials, over 40 Senate and Congressional leaders, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, and via the entire Israeli cabinet, the United Nations secreay general, the members of the U.N. Security Council, and many of the U.N. ambassadors, plus the Associated Press, AFP, Reuters, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the Guardian, the Independent, the Christian Times, North Africa Journal, Jakarta Post and Sudan Mail.

---Frank Neisser
Anti-war gathering discusses Iran

By Sara Flounders

The following is based on a presenta-
tion by Flounders, a coordinator of the International Action Center, during a discussion of the latest events in Iran at the National Anti-war Conference held in Pittsburgh July 10-12.

If the U.S. government was interested in building democracy or in building respect for the will of the people in a democratic election, it should have started by respecting the result of the 2009 Palestinian election. The Palestin-
ian people voted in large numbers, elect-
ing Hamas candidates to parliament with 240 votes to form the Palestinian government. In Gaza, Hamas had a total sweep.

The U.S./Israeli response was a starva-
tion blackout of Gaza and then a brutal all-out war on the entire popula-
tion. When the Israelis attacked Gaza last December and January, they killed more than 1,400 Palestinians, using U.S.-sup-
plied weapons including white phospho-
rus and cluster bombs. More than half of the elected members of the Palestinian Parliament are in Israeli prisons. Why is the corpo-
rate media not telling us day after day about this crime against democracy?

Don’t jump on capitalist bandwagon

We in the anti-war movement need to support Hamas. We must support the demand for freedom of speech and respect for the will of the People. Why are the corporate media and the government silent? Why is mainstream corporate media not telling us about this crime against democracy?

We cannot forget the millions of work-
ners who are losing their jobs, homes, health care and their future. They have no vote, no say and no control over who receives trillions of dollars in bail-
out money and who receives hot air. We cannot forget the police state that greatly every bankers’ or international gathering, putting whole areas of cities in lock-down. There is a certain imperialist arrogance which hides the lack of democracy here in U.S., sud-
denly champions democracy in Iran with wall-to-wall and sympathetic coverage of demonstrations there.

We do not want our movement to be an echo of that hypocrisy! Don’t you wonder if there is another agenda? When has a dem-
onstration in the U.S. against war or cut-
backs, or for housing or human rights, ever received the kind of sympathetic coverage that we’ve seen in the last month of Iran? Do we expect that the thousands of ac-
tivists coming to Pittsburgh for the G20 summit protests will receive even 1 per-
cent of the coverage that’s been given to demonstrations in Iran?

No women’s rights in U.S. client states

The whole world knows the name and face of the young Iranian woman Neda. But do we know the name of even one Iraqi woman killed by the invading U.S. Army?

Can you tell me the name of one Palestin-
ian woman killed by Israeli forces? Do we know the names of any Afghan or Paki-
istani women killed in a drone attack?

Do we know the name of the young La-
tina killed on the same day as Neda died in Iran, who was shot by border militia in Arizona? Why not?

Have U.S. wars and occupations brought democracy to countries they own and control through feudal monarchies and dictatorial regimes?

There are no rights for women, or for anyone today, in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan.

Nowhere in the world is U.S. imperi-
alism a force for democracy or women’s rights. U.S. interventions bring millions of deaths, millions of orphans, millions of displaced people, a whole world of xenophobia, a whole world of poverty, a whole world of death, a whole world of despair.

Of course everyone here already knows this. We know of three decades of wars, sanctions, encirclement, sabotage and coup attempts.

Don’t echo imperialist designs

A number of so-called human-rights groups that are funded by U.S.-government-NED programs have called for demonstrations on July 25 in the name of “democracy in Iran.” Unfortunately, some anti-war groups have endorsed this U.S.-government-funded demonstration. We want to use all our energy to persuade our movement not to be carried by imperial-

ist destabilization efforts and propaganda and to withdraw their participation.

There is a class war going on today. Yes, there is. But there is also a massive U.S.-government-sponsored destabiliza-
tion effort. We cannot allow ourselves to become an echo of imperialist destabiliza-
tion and interference in Iran. The group Stop War On Iran has called a meeting in New York for an extended discussion of this question on August 1 at 55 West 17 Street at 3 p.m. See stopwaroniran.org for more details.
Democrats change pretexts for war on Afghanistan

By John Catalinotto

Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl’s capture in Afgha-

istan has brought that war into liv-
ing memory across the United States. The heavy media coverage should lead to the U.S. population rethinking Washington’s arguments for invading and occupying Afghanistan and now escalating the war there.

The first thing is to reject the Penta-
gon’s condemnation of Pfc. Bergdahl’s capture. The U.S. military has never concealed its practices against innocent civilians. During the Gulf War, in which all the combatants used weapons that had been tested on civilians in the name of “search operations,” U.S. troops were accused of attacking civilians around the Talibain government against the U.S. invasion in 2001-2002.

The second is to consider that Talibain commander Mufti Sangeen has threat-
ed to kill Bergdahl “if foreign troops continue targeting civilians in the name of search operations in Ghaini and Pak-
tika provinces.” (CNN, July 20)

The Pentagon claims it is not target-
ing civilians, but the Pentagon is noto-
rious for lying about its operations. In May it tried to cover up civilian deaths in Farah province by blaming them on the Talibain, but the Talibain said that U.S. military strikes caused them. The Penta-
gon expressed concern that the civilian deaths were strengthening the resistance to the U.S.-led occupation. (Los Angeles Times, May 19)

The third is to think of what this all means. United States troop strength in Afgha-
nistan is scheduled to expand from its current 57,000 to 68,000 by the end of 2009. U.S. Commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal has implied he may ask for more troops, and Defense Secretary Rob-

ert Gates has not ruled out an increase. Already the costs are high, with the U.S. spending $400 million a day on military intervention and a meager $7 million a day on civilian material aid.

This all takes place while 4,000 U.S. Marines are carrying out a major offen-

dive in Helmand province. The Talibain and other Afghan resistance forces have avoided merits and clashes with the heavily-

armed Marines. But both the battles are having heavy civilian casualties and some casual-
ties among the occupation troops. Fifteen British troops were killed in the first two weeks of July, and there have been two suspicious “civilian” helicopter crashes.

A pattern similar to the Iraqi one is de-

veloping regarding the escalation of the U.S.-led NATO occupation of Afghani-

stan. More troops mean more overall casualties and usually mean increased resistance, along with greatly increased suffering of the population. In Iraq, after more than six years with over 150,000 U.S. troops still there along with a number of “civilian contractors”—that is, mercenaries carrying out tasks earlier assigned to the military—the U.S.-occupa-
tion has been stalled if not defeated.

Democrat war

In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, at-
tacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the George W. Bush adminis-
tration blamed Al-Qaeda for the casual-
ties, and attacked Afghanistan allegedly to punish that group and its leaders. Be-
cause the ruling Talibain had sheltered Al-Qaeda, according to Bush’s story, the U.S. had to drive them from power. Unable or unwilling to aggressively pursue Al-Qaeda’s leaders, the Bush ad-
ministration turned its attention to seiz-
ing Iraq and its fabulous oil wealth. Af-

ghistan remained occupied, but Iraq got the attention. Washington pushed other NATO countries to supply addi-
tional troops to Afghanistan as the price for sitting at the table of imperialist plan-
der—to be invited to the G8 meetings, for example.

President candidate Barack Obama had promised to shift troops from Iraq to Afghanistan, ostensibly to finish the job of breaking up Al-Qaeda. He kept the promise of escalating, and now many are calling Afghanistan “Obama’s war.” (Time, July 5) But lately little has been heard about crushing Al-Qaeda and Oa-

sma bin Laden has virtually disappeared from the news.

Women in Afghanistan: setting the record straight

With the Democrats now directing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and expand-

ing the Afghan war into Pakistan, they’ve begun to change the pretexts. By mid-Ju-


By Martha Grevatt

SsangYong Motor is not exactly a household name, even among autowork-

ers here. Smaller than Hyundai, Kia and GM-Daewoo, this Korean auto firm only produces vehicles for the domestic mar-
et. Members of the United Auto Work-

ers, however, need to pay close atten-
tion to a fierce battle taking place at a SsangYong plant in Pyeongtaek, South Korea.

In February SsangYong—in which the privately owned Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation holds a 71 percent stake—declared bankruptcy. The courts approved a restructuring plan that put up the Pyeongtaek plant as collateral so SsangYong could obtain new financing and come out of bankruptcy quickly.

The backing of the court was contingent, however, on SsangYong imposing layoffs and involuntary retirements on 1,700 out of 7,000 employees and immediately dis-

ching 300 “casual” workers. This is on top of the 400 who were laid off since the SAIC takeover three years ago.

At first the situation bore a remarkable similarity to GM and Chrysler’s restruct-

uring by bankruptcy, but on May 27 the Korean Metal Workers Union took the struggle in a very different direction. The KMWU members did not choose the path of capitulation.

At the end of May, 50 Korean workers began setting up shop. On June 16 the company held an anti-

strike demonstration of about 1,500 people, all but a few hundred of whom were workers. Despite the workers’ occupation, the sales had been inside maintaining machinery but had been un-
bearably hot. The savings from not paying workers from nearby plants, including the Kia works, came out for a pro-strike counterdemonstration called by mass text messaging by KMWU.

Knowing that eventually the company and the state would try to evict them, the

occupiers began stockpiling pipes, crow bars and Molotov cocktails. On June 26 the anticipated attack came as riot police, scabs and hired thugs entered the plant. In accordance with a prearranged plan, workers retreated to the paint shop. They knew the company would not risk the property damage that would ensue if the highly flammable chemicals were ignited in that area.

The next day the invaders retreated, the reason being that enough vac-

cence had occurred.

In an effort to gain public sympathy, SsangYong management sent aerial pho-
tos to the news media taken July 11 as leaf-

lets were distributed urging the strikers to


The Korean autoworkers are fight-

Korean workers show the way

Auto plant occupation enters third month

Striking workers occupy auto plant

The Korean autoworkers are fighting a hard fight and need the support of workers all over the world. Messages of solidarity can be emailed to the KMWU at inter@metal.nodong.org

Korean workers show the way

Auto plant occupation enters third month

Thousands of workers, members of the Korean Federation of Trade Unions, rally in Seoul July 4 in support of 5,000 striking workers

By Martha Grevatt

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Honduran resistance leaders vow to continue struggle against coup

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

July 20—The publicized side of Hon- 
duras events is the so-called “peace me-
diation” in Costa Rica, which is supposed to be seeking a violence-free resolution of the conflict and violent coup d’état that deposed constitutional President Zel-
aya on June 28.

The other side, whispered in world-
wide corporate media—is the power of the growing and vibrant movement of the Honduran people, the workers and farmers who are carrying out heroic re-
sistance to the coup. Resistance leaders tell that side to Workers World.

It has been amazing to see the popu-
lar surge, coalescence and coordination during the first 23 days since the coup. Unions, youth and students, peasants, popular movements and opposi-
dants—all have joined in the Popular National Front of Resistance against the coup, with demands including:

As the investigative arm of the U.S. Con-
gress, the GAO denounced the alleged growing penetration of drug trafficking in Venezuela, which it classifies as a “narcor state,” and claims that Venezuela is one of the “major trans-shipment hubs for co-
caïne en route to countries such as Spain and the United States, with Honduras frequently being used as an air-bridge.”

In addition there is this new danger threatening the whole region: the U.S. announced the establishment of five more U.S. military bases in Colombia.

Honduras can be a turning point. At the Costa Rica talks, Arias presented sev-
en points to the two sides. The first was the return of Zelaya to the presidency. The remaining six points were concess-
sions to the coup leaders: the constitution of a “plenum of reconciliation” that would include Micheletti’s allies; a genera-
amnesty; that Zelaya withdraw his call for a constitutional amendment; a hold on the general elections earlier; the transfer of the armed forces from the Executive’s control to that of the Electoral Tribunal; and the establishment of a commission to watch over the implementation of these accords.

Nevertheless, Zelaya publicly accepted the sessions: he thanked the Micheletti rejecters. From Washington’s viewpoint, the long-er it takes for Zelaya to return home, the easier it will be for the de-facto govern-
ment of Roberto Micheletti to hold onto its illegal administration. Washington counts on the eventual fatigue of the re-
sistance movement after weeks of mobi-
izations.

Voice of the Honduran Resistance: Berta Cáceres

But imperialist arrogance typically un-
derestimates the power of the peoples. Honduras, which for decades has been a U.S. military outpost in Central America, its oligarchy very closely linked to the im-
perialists, had little opportunity before now to display its peoples movement.

This time is different. WW spoke at length with Berta Cáceres from the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Or-
ganizations of Honduras (COPINH) on July 20. Her organization was founded in 1993 to struggle for the rights of Black people and of the Indigenous, particular-
ly of the Lenca nation in the southwest of the country.

WW: How did the COPINH join the current struggle?

BC: The COPINH has long time has demanded full and informed participa-
tion and consultation regarding Indig-
enous and Black peoples. We have a clear anti-imperialist and anti-neoliberal political position and have struggled for the construction of a space for direct participatory democracy.

It is within this sense that we support the initiatives of President Zelaya. Even months before the coup we denounced the threat that the sectors of power represented and the possibility of a coup against President Zelaya.

We also know that what has happened goes beyond special interests and has national and even international interest. At this point this coup is a factor precedent for our continent’s history and its processes of freedom and emancipation. This could also be the initiation of an onslaught of 21st century-style repressive coups by the continent’s right-wing oligarchy against all the processes that are liberating our peoples and seeking to build a more just and humane world.

COPINH, as a combat organization of struggle, has joined fully the resistance. [For that] our Indigenous radio has been shut down, we have been persecuted, watched over, our communications inter-
rupted and there have been massive violations. We have faced two main points: more than ready to participate along with the rest of the diverse Honduran people in this heroic struggle.

WW: What is the role of women?

BC: It has been fundamental, decisive.

From taking bridges to mass marches, I would say that the majority were women and boys. We are also in the leader-
ship of the FNPRG, making decisions; it has been fundamental, decisive.

What do you think will happen over the next few days? Where are you in relation to the coup?

BC: For us, that is already a failure. We think the last 72-hour time limit [proposed by Arias for the continuation of talks] is a desperate way of finding a solution. … We have said that we accept point number one, which is the reinstate-
ment of Zelaya to the presidency but re-
ject the other six points because they do not coincide with the FNPRG’s position and that of the Honduran people.

We think that the point about impu-
rity for the coup plotters who have mur-
dered and repressed the people, and have turned the clock back 30 years on our accomplishments. We have demanded an investigation of the armed forces, their function and their role in the coup.

We also demand that there be a point including about human rights, because there have been extensive violations. … Then, in that sense, we call on the OAS and the U.N. to act and put pressure on the govern-
ments and sanctions of Honduras and for all the governments to increase the economic sanctions against the de-facto government.

WW: What are the plans for this July 20–26?

BC: There are many activities.

The Workers Federations are calling an immediate right now to call actions and strikes in govern-
mental and private institutions, including taking over roads, days of art and culture, days of resistance against the coup, departmental, regional and community actions that will increase on Thursday and Friday [July 24] when we wait for the return of compañero President Zelaya.

WW: I heard today that after

continued on page 10

During the 1980s against the Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution, and will now be promoting the mediation in Costa Rica to free the country had just met in Tegucigalpa on June 28.

The other side, whispered in world-
wide corporate media—is the power of the growing and vibrant movement of the Honduran people, the workers and farmers who are carrying out heroic re-
sistance to the coup. Resistance leaders tell that side to Workers World.

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lar surge, coalescence and coordination during the first 23 days since the coup. Unions, youth and students, peasants, popular movements and opposi-
dants—all have joined in the Popular National Front of Resistance against the coup, with demands including:

Among the six teachers’ federations, one of the coup leaders is financier in Honduras and one of the coup plotters is Miguel Facusé, one of the coup plotters’ financiers in Honduras and one of the richest men in Central America.

WW: What do you think will happen with the ALBA?

BC: The ALBA is for us an alternative popular project constructed not only by Mel Zelaya but by the Honduran people. It benefits the poorest sectors in the country, for example, the Indigenous and the Black people. That is why we strug-
gled before and demanded that Hon-
duras join the ALBA. The whole movement has participated in the construction of Honduran ALBA, and we are determined to defend it and will not allow our victo-
ries to be reversed.

WW: How else can we help from the United States?

BC: The petition that the IAC’s Ramsey Clark wrote is good. It should continue because the U.S. ambassa-
dor knew and approved the coup. The involvement of the Pentagon and the hawks from the USA, of the far right and the Cuban counterrevolutionaries is a fact. Even Micheletti’s USA’s advisors are still here.

Being closed since the beginning of the strike, 50 percent of the schools will open.

BC: Yes. That has been an agreement among the six teachers’ federations, which are very strong at the national level. They did it in order to have days of average attendance. They campaigned and demonstrated, since there exists a huge campaign of disinformation and manipulation by the de-facto government against the orga-
nized teachers. In this way, the teachers will regroup and will join all the actions of Thursday and Friday.

WW: How is other way to inform the people since there is a curfew, a state of siege, violation of freedom of expres-
sion, and we cannot use the media to tell the people the truth. There is only one national TV channel and a local radio station. What the people are using is clearly the alternative media.

WW: It has been three weeks of con-
ant mobilizations. How has the move-
ment survived?

BC: There have been relocations (pauses), concentrations in some regions, and increasing the mobilizations when it is more crucial. The youth’s creativity has appeared, very powerfully, more than with speeches, through theater and mu-
ic. There have been different actions in each region.

There have been very important actions outside of Tegucigalpa. For example, in Colon there have been constant road clo-
sures that have prevented the transport of the oil products of the Cuban Palm oil products, which is owned by Miguel Facusé, one of the coup plotters’ financiers in Honduras and one of the richest men in Central America.

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Continued on page 10

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WW: How else can we help from the United States?

BC: The petition that the IAC’s Ramsey Clark wrote is good. It should continue because the U.S. ambassa-
dor knew and approved the coup. The involvement of the Pentagon and the hawks from the USA, of the far right and the Cuban counterrevolutionaries is a fact. Even Micheletti’s USA’s advisors are still here.

Continued on page 10

I have been there in the sky since long before our species walked the earth. As our ability to wonder and imagine grew, so did our curiosity about this great luminous ball that was beyond our reach. Today, while we struggle under the weight of this searching for ever-cheaper labor, we feel insecure when our bosses roam the world, but they don’t bring us much joy. While we see the wondrous new devices everyday, and workers are worse off than ever. Yes, the Apollo moonwalk may have prolonged the United States military was involved in space but how to overthrow the parasitic imperialist bourgeoisie right here on earth. This is 2009, the sagging prestige of the U.S. at a time when rejection of imperialist war and the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love from the colonial and imperial era. The articles are part of the Lavender & Red series from assorted media outlets. Driven by the lust for profit, the story will go on and on until nothing is left to eat. Order Mumia’s latest book, “Jailhouse Lawyers,” at www.Leftbooks.com.
Gathering in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

Non-Aligned Movement calls for ‘new economic order’

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The 15th Non-Aligned Movement summit was held July 15-16 in proximate El-Sheikh, Egypt, with the theme of “International Solidarity for Peace and Development.” The NAM, founded in 1961, has a membership of 118 nations throughout the developing world.

The meeting emphasized the role of the Western industrialized states in creating the economic crisis that has rendered tens of millions of people unemployed and impoverished throughout the world. Cuban President Raul Castro, outgoing chair of the NAM, delivered the keynote address to nearly 60 heads of state and 8,000 delegates from various countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Other leaders, such as President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, also spoke to the NAM summit and stressed the necessity that the organization provide an effective alternative to the international financial institutions as well as the United Nations.

Mugabe, whose southern African nation has been subjected to intense sanctions and vilification by the imperialist states over the last decade, has recently overseen the implementation of an inclusive coalition government encompassing the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front and the two main opposition parties of the Movement for Democratic Change. Yet the country is still subjected to sanctions by the U.S., Britain and the European Union.

In his address, Mugabe said: “The Movement cannot afford a business-as-usual approach. ... Our clear and present challenge is ... delivering a just, peaceful and equitable world order. The Non-Aligned Movement faces renewed attempts by some Western countries to interfere in the internal affairs of NAM member countries. This ‘big brother’ is watching state of affairs is a grave danger to peace and security. ... The severity of the machinations by the Western world has often manifested itself in a number of ways, including the use of surreptitious and illegal attempts by some Western countries to abuse the U.N. Security Council to unjustly punish developing countries through the imposition of illegal and unilateral sanctions.” (Zimbabwe Herald, July 16)

Zimbabwe “was a target of these abhorrent machinations,” continued Mugabe. “We need to recognize that as long as the U.N. retains its present form, it will continue to be abused by the mighty, haughty and militarily powerful (who) victimize the smaller and weaker nations. The international financial system ... is similarly in dire need of reform.”

Mugabe also noted that although the present global economic meltdown started in the Western imperialist states, the impact of the crisis is having a devastating impact on the developing countries where there is less demand for their products, the closure of plants and businesses, and deepening poverty.

The Zimbabwe leader expressed his support for the G192 summit held by the General Assembly in June at the U.N. headquarters in New York. He endorsed the recommendations of the G192 to place the International Monetary Fund and World Bank under the control of the General Assembly. Mugabe also called for greater South-South collaboration, although he did not rule out cooperation between all states. He emphasized that although the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the NAM have provided tremendous support to Zimbabwe, the existing sanctions imposed by the imperialist states continue to hamper the country’s progress.

“They [the West] are still bent on their goal of effecting regime change in my country. We count on your continued solidarity and support in our endeavor to improve the quality of life of our people,” Mugabe said.

“New world economic order” needed

In his keynote address, Cuban President Raul Castro renewed the call for a new economic division of labor and financial power. “We demand the establishment of a new international financial and economic structure that relies on the participation of all countries,” said Castro. (Granma, International, July 16)

“There must be a new framework that doesn’t depend solely on the economic stability and the political decision of only one country,” stated Castro in apparent reference to the United States. “This crisis ... emanated from the advanced industrial economies, but the developing economies, the members of our movement, have been the hardest hit.”

Castro reported on the work of the NAM over the last three years since Cuba began serving as chair. “The common challenges for the non-aligned countries are serious and numerous. Never before has the world been so unequal and its inequities so profound. But, along with the challenges, our Movement’s capacity for resistance and its strength have also grown.”

“We have faced threats and aggression, condemned unjust treaties in international trade and finance, and demanded our full participation in the highest authorities of world governance,” continued the Cuban leader. “A decisive part of Cuba’s presidency coincided with one of the most aggressive and hegemonic governments, one of the greatest violators of international law, that has ever existed in the United States.”

International solidarity

Castro stated that the NAM has continued to express solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian and Arab peoples: “We have not hesitated to condemn the aggression and crimes of Israel, the occupying power. We will not rest until we see the implementation of the demands of the Palestinians, and Arab brothers and sisters.”

“There is no path other than dialogue and negotiation for the solution of the last crisis and lasting peace in the entire Middle East region, which inevitably involves the founding of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Castro also condemned the June 28 military coup in Honduras and demanded that President Jose Manuel Zelaya be restored to office. The coup has been denounced by governments and mass organizations throughout Latin America and the World.

The outgoing NAM chair stressed that despite the economic blockade against Cuba, the country has continued to engage in international solidarity efforts, especially in providing medical care. “Even in these difficult circumstances, our people have modestly demonstrated how much can be done, when political will exists, in terms of international solidarity and cooperation, particularly in the area of health.”

Almost 15,000 Cuban medical collaborators are working in 98 countries to save lives and prevent disease. More than 32,000 young people from 118 states, principally in the Third World, are studying free of charge at our educational centers, 78 percent of them in the specialties of medicine.”

From Bandung to Sharm El-Sheikh

The Non-Aligned Movement originated in the Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in April 1955, with 29 countries from Asia and Africa attending. Socialist states such as China and Vietnam have been involved with the movement since its inception, even though the Bandung Conference and NAM have been described as an effort to chart a course independent of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

In 1961, the formal organization of the Non-Aligned Movement took place with its founding in Yugoslavia. Some of the leading figures in the formation of the NAM were Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Josep Broz Tito of Yugoslavia.

At the 1979 NAM Summit in Havana, Cuba, a declaration stated that the purpose of the organization was to “ensure the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries” in their “struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, intervention or hegemony as they are being strengthened by great power and bloc politics.”

NAM represents two-thirds of the United Nations’ membership and approximately 65 percent of the world’s population. The chair of the organization has now been handed over to Egypt.

“Capitalism has not solved the most urgent problems related to the need for global food security, climate change, solidarity with the Palestinian people, and a resolution honoring the 91st birthday of former African National Congress leader and South African president Nelson Mandela.”

“160 years after the publication of the Communist Manifesto, Fred Goldstein takes on the challenge of applying Marxist political economy to the burgeoning crisis of capitalist globalization in the 21st century. Not only does he provide a concise analysis of the recent period, but the author is bold enough to advance what could very well be the outlines of a fight back program for workers and the oppressed that will guarantee a socialist future.”

Low-Wage Capitalism

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

A timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-election period. Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval, the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

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www.workers.org July 30, 2009 Page 11
El movimiento antiguerra discute sobre Irán, el Medio Oriente y las guerras Estados Unidos

Por John Catalinotto

El conflicto en Irán que comenzó con las elecciones presidenciales en junio ha tenido un impacto sobre el movimiento progresista y antiamerikanista mundialmente, incluyendo en los Estados Unidos. La falta de un claro entendimiento sobre los eventos ha creado algunas confusiones en las filas antiguerra. Esto es especialmente peligroso luego de que el Vicepresidente Joe Biden el 9 de julio implícitamente dijera permiso a un ataque israelita contra Irán. El movimiento antiguerra debe estar alerta para protestar contra cualquier movida en esa dirección.

Cuando gran cantidad de personas tomó las calles en Teláner el 9 de junio para protestar la elección del Presidente Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, parecía que era un auténtico movimiento popular, aunque cuando la base más fuerte estaba en las partes más opulentas de la ciudad. Aparentemente los/as jóvenes y las mujeres jugaron un papel muy importante en las protestas. Algunas de las demandas eran por los derechos de las mujeres y otros derechos democráticos que estaban limitados por el liderazgo religioso políticamente involucrado en Irán. Fue muy fácil para los/as progresistas seculares del occidente identificarse con las protestas.

Pero algunas interrogantes aún quedan. Si las protestas eran progresistas, ¿por qué todos los políticos imperialistas en Europa y Estados Unidos y sus notorios capitalistas tomaron el lado de la oposición? Esto es muy extraño ya que los participantes más importantes de la oposición, el candidato Mir Hossein Mousavi y el ex Presidente Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, estaban identificándose con el régimen pasado. Tal fue el caso de la Base Falcón de Operaciones de Avanzada del Ejército de los EEUU, que se encuentra dentro de Bagdad. Ahora, con el establecimiento de un nuevo límite, las 3,500 tropas de los EEUU están “fuera” de los límites de la ciudad.

Las tropas de los EEUU y mercenarios bien pagados están expandiendo y mejorando sus bases en las zonas rurales e incluso construyendo otras nuevas. Aun la administración de Obama mantenga firme el itinerario anunciado, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses se van a quedar en Irak hasta por nuevos de 2011. Un proyecto de ley sobre gastos de guerra que el Congreso aumentado el reclutamiento por las fuerzas de EEUU e Irak simulan reformar de los límites de la ciudad, dejando a las tropas donde se encuentran. Tal fue el caso de la Base Falcón de Operaciones de avanzada de la Guerra en el Medio Oriente y la necesidad de los efectivos y la actividad militar en Afganistán, con el consiguiente aumento de víctimas civiles, está ayudando al rechazo de parte de las tropas de los EEUU en Afganistán, dijo el 13 de julio, en las protestas en Terán, el motivo de los/as manifestantes de Irán, al llamar tal ataque ‘el derecho imperialistas es eliminar la soberanía de los Estados Unidos no impediría un ataque a Palestina, Washington intensifica la guerra en Afganistán

La política estadounidense en Palestina

La política de Washington hacia Pales- tina ha sido la continuación de su apoyo al estado israeli, a pesar de la negación de Israel de impedir nuevas colonias en territorio ocupada Roca de Alárce y del brutal bloqueo de la Franja de Gaza. Está basada en los intereses estratégicos estadounidenses en la región, los cuales dependen del estado israeli como un arma contra cualquier movimiento de liberación o gobierno soberano en la región. Las tropas de los EEUU y mercenarios bien pagados están expandiendo y mejorando sus bases en las zonas rurales e incluso construyendo otras nuevas. Aun la administración de Obama mantenga firme el itinerario anunciado, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses se van a quedar en Irak hasta por nuevos de 2011. Un proyecto de ley sobre gastos de guerra que el Congreso controlado por el Partido Demócrata controla, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses se van a quedar en Irak hasta por nuevos de 2011. Un proyecto de ley sobre gastos de guerra que el Congreso controlado por el Partido Demócrata central, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses en Irak y en Afganistán. ¿Cómo la privatización y la cooperación con Estados Unidos podrían aumentar los derechos democráticos en el este iraquí? La política de Washington hacia Palestina ha sido la continuación de su apoyo al estado israeli, a pesar de la negación de Israel de impedir nuevas colonias en territorio ocupada Roca de Alárce y del brutal bloqueo de la Franja de Gaza. Está basada en los intereses estratégicos estadounidenses en la región, los cuales dependen del estado israeli como un arma contra cualquier movimiento de liberación o gobierno soberano en la región. Las tropas de los EEUU y mercenarios bien pagados están expandiendo y mejorando sus bases en las zonas rurales e incluso construyendo otras nuevas. Aun la administración de Obama mantenga firme el itinerario anunciado, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses en Irak y en Afganistán. ¿Cómo la privatización y la cooperación con Estados Unidos podrían aumentar los derechos democráticos en el este iraquí? La política de Washington hacia Palestina ha sido la continuación de su apoyo al estado israeli, a pesar de la negación de Israel de impedir nuevas colonias en territorio ocupada Roca de Alárce y del brutal bloqueo de la Franja de Gaza. Está basada en los intereses estratégicos estadounidenses en la región, los cuales dependen del estado israeli como un arma contra cualquier movimiento de liberación o gobierno soberano en la región. Las tropas de los EEUU y mercenarios bien pagados están expandiendo y mejorando sus bases en las zonas rurales e incluso construyendo otras nuevas. Aun la administración de Obama mantenga firme el itinerario anunciado, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses en Irak y en Afganistán. ¿Cómo la privatización y la cooperación con Estados Unidos podrían aumentar los derechos democráticos en el este iraquí? La política de Washington hacia Palestina ha sido la continuación de su apoyo al estado israeli, a pesar de la negación de Israel de impedir nuevas colonias en territorio ocupada Roca de Alárce y del brutal bloqueo de la Franja de Gaza. Está basada en los intereses estratégicos estadounidenses en la región, los cuales dependen del estado israeli como un arma contra cualquier movimiento de liberación o gobierno soberano en la región. Las tropas de los EEUU y mercenarios bien pagados están expandiendo y mejorando sus bases en las zonas rurales e incluso construyendo otras nuevas. Aun la administración de Obama mantenga firme el itinerario anunciado, al menos 50,000 tropas estadounidenses en Irak y en Afganistán. ¿Cómo la privatización y la cooperación con Estados Unidos podrían aumentar los derechos democráticos en el este iraquí?