Grand theft of workers’ taxes

Budget talks target Social Security, Medicare

Wall Street, the rich get what they want

By Fred Goldstein

Even the most rabid budget cutters on Wall Street are now pushing for an increase in the debt ceiling. The bankers and bosses were happy to see the Republican extreme right wing play chicken with default in order to get cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. They have already gotten President Barack Obama to agree to put cutting Social Security and other entitlements on the bargaining table.

But as the Aug. 2 deadline for default comes closer, the bankers and financiers want the game of chicken to come to an end. They want the borrowing power of the capitalist government to be expanded beyond the $14.3 trillion it is now.

Why? Because, in the first place, the Treasury has to borrow $400 billion on Aug. 2 to refinance debts to bondholders. Two days later, $87 billion in Treasury bills have to be paid off. (Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, CNBC Squawk Box, July 18) That is the bread and butter of the billionaire Wall Street super loan sharks. They thrive and grow even richer from collecting interest on the government debt.

Default would threaten payments to the merchants of death in the military-industrial complex who get hundreds of billions of dollars to supply wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya, as well as the occupation in Iraq. They also equip reactionary regimes all over the world, from the death squad government in Colombia and the feudal monarchy in Saudi Arabia to the south Korean puppet government.

Second, a default would trigger payments by banks, insurance companies and behind-the-scenes financiers, who would be obligated to pay out huge sums because they insured the government bonds that would not be paid off. This could precipitate a major financial crisis. No one knows what would happen in the global financial markets.

Third, the bankers fear a social revolt of the population if millions of government checks for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability, unemployment insurance, food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, 2011 2011

Los Angeles: July 13 gathering in front of the Ronald Reagan State Building in downtown Los Angeles. Actions are being held throughout the weekend.

Philadelphia: July 18 rally at City Hall.

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CUBA SI!
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STOP REPRESSION
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Unions should act like unions 10
U.S. National meeting targets government repression

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

An important national meeting on stopping repression, human rights abuses and the curtailing of civil freedoms in the U.S. took place July 10 at the Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore in Detroit. The well-attended event featured an overview of specific cases along with panels on how the federal government is carrying out “preemptive prosecution and prosecutorial persecution.”

Sponsored by the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms, with a wide array of cosponsoring organizations, the three-hour meeting was moderated by Debbie Johnson of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice based in Detroit.

Statistics across the U.S. described some of the many repressive actions the federal government has taken against individuals and organizations and the effects on the civil liberties and human rights of Arab, Muslim, South Asian, Latino/a and all immigrants, as well as on the broader social justice movement in the U.S.

Many speakers remarked on how the curtailing of civil liberties has increased dramatically during President Barack Obama’s tenure. Instead of easing the repressive measures associated with the Patriot Act, which was signed by George W. Bush in the aftermath of 9/11, the Obama administration and the repressive state apparatus have stepped up their wiretapping, harassment, arrests and illegal detentions in U.S. federal prisons.

Speakers talked about the “war on terror” political climate in the U.S. and the use of preemptive prosecution and other measures by the state. Preemptive prosecution is the investigation, prosecution and imprisonment of a person or group of persons by U.S. law enforcement agencies based on a person’s religion, country of origin, political beliefs and alleged intent to act and not on material actions.

Tom Burke spoke from the National Committee to Stop FBI Repression. A member of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and a Colombia and Palestine solidarity organizer, Burke is one of 23 progressive activists who last fall received subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury in Chicago. The FBI also raided many homes and contacted the branch forums.

“The government is trying to recreate that period of intimidation like in the 1950s during McCarthyism, going after Muslims, solidarity activists and people who believe in socialism,” said Burke. He talked about the support movement that immediately followed the initial raids and subpoenas and reiterated his and the other defendants’ resolve not to cooperate with the government’s witch hunt and grand jury. “We will not back down,” he asserted.

“War of terror” against the people

Speakers gave heart wrenching accounts of the “war of terror” being waged by U.S. government agencies at home and abroad against their family and community members.

Dr. Tamer Mehanna spoke about the FBI’s harassment and frame-up of his brother, Dr. Tarek Mehanna, his false arrest and upcoming trial in Boston in October. “He hasn’t done anything, he’s just been charged with conspiring to provide material support to a terrorist organization. He’s been suffered in solitary confinement since October 2009.”

Dr. Tamer Mehanna said his brother was targeted for be

At podium, Efra Nwagusa of U.S. Human Rights Network, with Abayomi Azikiwe (left) and Dawud Wald.
In November 2010, Suzanne Ross, representing International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, addressed the Interna
tional Liaison Committee, a 
broad grouping of political and 
trade union organiza
tions at the Open World 
Conference Against 
War and Exploitation in 
Algiers, Algeria. Follow
ing are excerpts from Ross’s 
interview published in the 
ILC’s May 2011 newsletter. Go to http:// 
tinyurl.com/63qucj9 to read the entire 
conference would like to know about the 
important recent developments in 
Mumia’s case
SR: We are very concerned about the 
possible execution of Mumia. 
The prosecutor and the State of Pennsylvania 
is aggressively demanding more serious 
consideration of execution. This has not 
happened since 2003 when a federal judge 
ruled that Mumia should be sentenced to 
life in prison without parole rather than 
face execution because of faulty instruc
tions to the jury in the original trial.
We were very concerned given the move 
toward the right in the U.S., especially 
in Pennsylvania. We were very seriou
sly and spent months fighting this process, 
both in the courts and in the streets.
We had something like a legal victory 
in the Third Circuit court recently. 
They had admitted there was no new basis for 
reinstating the death penalty, affirming 
the 2001 decision for life in prison without parole. 
However, even if this decision is not overturned on appeal, it’s not a deci
sion we wanted — the final decision has 
to be made by the full court. 
For that reason, we won’t try again. 
We will never stop until Mumia is free.
In another new development Mumia’s 
legal case is now under the leadership of the 
NAACP Legal Defense Fund. 
This is the organization that won the landmark 
decision of Brown v. Board of Education 
that officially desegregated the schools in the 
1950s. They specialize in legal strug
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The debt crisis and the working class

By David Sole

The most remarkable thing about the debt crisis is how it is not what will result if the U.S. government defaults. Commentators from a wide spectrum of well-meaning, economic opinion cannot agree on what might take place on Aug. 2 if the debt ceiling isn’t raised.

The starting thing is that here, in the heart of world capitalism, with a ruling class of unparalleled wealth and power, the political representatives of this system are stumbling along unable to fashion a solution.

Nothing more clearly shows how out of control the capitalist system is than this fact.

One would think that with capitalism still mired in economic recession, with more than 30 million counted as unemployed or underemployed in the U.S., with the foreclosure crisis dragging on for years, that all sections of the ruling class would unite in an economic plan of action to avoid default. But they can’t. It is the class character of the United States that is making a solution so difficult to achieve in this bourgeois democracy.

The Republican Party represents the highest ranks of the Wall Street bank- ers and corporations. But because this is a “democracy,” this billionaire class has had to cultivate a mass base in the middle class and even working class. For decades they have appealed to racism, anti-unions and anti-immigrant prejudices to bring under their wing groups that had previously been the base of the social democratic or communist fundamentalist elements. Thus Congress is filled with a host of new, ignorant and ably right-wing politicians.

Many of these representatives are so unscrupulous they don’t even realize who their constituents are for God’s sakes. In 2010, they had a fire of default on the debt in order to press for massive cuts to all social programs won by the working class over three-decades of a century. Republicans with more sense and more connection to Wall Street understand this, but they have difficulty resolving this conflict between their mas- ters’ economic stability and the need to maintain a mass electoral base.

**Mass action needed to counter cuts**

The Democratic Party leadership, with President Barack Obama leading the way, is willing to begin dismantling Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. All they are asking of the Republicans is that they agree to some paltry tax loophole closings. The Democrats could then tell their mass electoral base — of poor people, people of color and the unions — that the rich gave up in their fight for a continuation of a sec- tion of the Democratic Congress to any cuts to Social Security and other critical social programs only shows their fear of losing their constituency’s support.

What is missing in all this drama is a real mass reaction in the streets. The unemployment and the specter of further layoffs are still clinging to the Democratic Party as their only salvation. With all the attacks on Social Security at a rate of trillion after trillion, they are still mobilizing more for Obama’s re- election than for real mass struggle.

For example, the Service Employees International Union has put up hundreds of paid staff into the streets to organize “Good Jobs Now” rallies in Detroit and other cities over the past few months. But their own supporters have ex- pressed worry that workers won’t come out. They plan a mass service shutdown. They hope that by getting people into motion through rallies and picket lines for jobs that they can then direct them into the polling booth next year.

The Democratic Party dares not unleash a real mass movement for fear it could not be controlled. Polls show that the major- ity in the U.S. want big tax increases on the rich. But this is totally unacceptable to the capitalist ruling class, which wants to keep the workers’ entire effort directed to the backs of poor and working people.

While the majority of the people op- pose the wars abroad, no serious proposal has been put forward to end the wars and redirect the trillion-dollar military budget to solve the problem. Neither the politi- cians nor the capitalist-controlled mass media allow these logical solutions to get a hearing.

The working class doesn’t have the or- ganization or the influence as yet to in- tense decisively in this debate over the debt ceiling. It lacks consciousness to put forward a real class program that puts the blame and the solution entirely onto the backs of the banking and corporate bosses. Without these the working class cannot move forward. The crisis of the capi- talists becomes the crisis of the workers.

**Democracy fragile**

The inability of the capitalist “democ- racy” to resolve this issue, so important to the stability of finance capital, points to the need to make sure the people should be made aware of — the fragility of our “democracy” itself. Capitalism is an economic system that can exist under many different governing forms. It has existed under monarchies, military dicta- torships, fascist regimes and representa- tive governments. Capitalists often prefer operating under representative govern- ment (bourgeois democracy) as the best way to hide their real dictatorship and keep the masses deluded. But in times of crisis when the “democratic” system isn’t able to protect them or serve them, the capitalist class wastes no time in shifting its support to a naked dictatorship.

This can be seen in microcosm in the recent debate in Spain, where the law permitting the government to ap- point an Emergency Financial Manager over any town or city that might be in deep financial difficulty. This has been done in Benton Harbor and Highland Park, as well as with the entire Detroit Public School system. All elected officials are pushed to the side. All union con- tracts are liable to be cancelled. A dicta- torship is imposed.

It is impossible to imagine that a se- vere financial crisis could propel this country further away from democratic forms of rule. Only the intervention of the vast working class and its allies can re- verse the trend and forever end the hidden or open dictatorship of the capitalist ruling class.

Grand theft of workers’ taxes
Budget talks target Social Security, Medicare

Continued from page 1

Families, the Women, Infants and Chil- dren nutrition program and other pro- grams don’t go out on time. So four messages to messages to Republi- can Senate leader Mitch McConnell and to Republican House Speaker John Boeh- ner and House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and the Democratic Party leadership, to find a way out of the deadlock. McConnell has offered a complicated way out that would ultimately allow Obama to borrow $2.5 trillion more. McConnell is negotiating the terms with Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid.

What the outcome will be remains to be seen. But workers should remember the power exerted by Wall Street when right- wing Republicans voted against the $700 billion bank bailout in 2008. The legisla- tors were forced to humiliate themselves and change their vote the next day. Wall Street outcry got its way.

**Capitalism cannot rid itself of this crisis**

Whatever happens in the struggle over the debt crisis and the working class cannot rid the system of growing and un- sustainable debt. Unsustainable debt is the precursor to financial crisis, bankruptcy and recession.

The debt-ceiling crisis and the Europe- an debt crisis grow out of the general cri- sis of capitalism. The working class will be meeting on July 21 to once again take up the Greek crisis. The European bankers forced the Greek government to pass austerity measures attacking the Greek working class by promising a bail- out of $150 billion. Yet the bankers can- not agree on the bailout. They have been struggling with this problem since Febru- ary of 2010.

They were supposed to meet about bail- outing Greece. But now the economies of Spain and Italy are descending deeper into economic and financial crisis. Italy and Spain are the third- and fourth-largest economies in the euro zone. Together they represent 28 percent of the zone’s economy. Add in Portugal and Greece and one-third of the European economy is now in state of financial crisis.

**What does this show?**

During the finan- cial and economic crisis of 2007 to 2009, the U.S. government, through its Treasury and Federal Reserve, plus the European banks handed over more than $14 trillion to the banks and corporations. That was 91 percent of the government’s gross debt. But now the Greek bailout and before Ben Bernanke, head of the U.S. Federal Res-erve, bought $600 billion worth of Trea- sury bills to shore up the U.S. economy. Still, the system cannot rid itself of crises.

**Overproduction and the debt crisis**

One of the root causes of the crisis is the crisis of capitalist overproduction. The capital- ist governments are broke because their revenues have crashed during the crisis. And the bosses claim they need tax breaks to keep the bosses claim they need tax breaks to keep their banks and corporations in business. They say that they can lay off workers. In addition they have slashed wages, speeded up the workers, put in new tech- nology to eliminate jobs and outsourced the work to low-wage countries.

But the bosses have not created jobs with all the money they have gotten from the government. And they will not create jobs.

They have not invented to create jobs because they know that the workers are either just getting by or are flat broke and cannot buy the commodities that would be created by increased production. The capi- talists are destroying their own market.

In fact, according to economics journal- istic David Leonhardt, the auto industry in the U.S. is on pace to sell 28 percent fewer cars than it did 10 years ago — when there was a recession. Furthermore, although the population has increased since then, sales of cars and trucks are also declin- ing and home sales have plunged to their lowest point since the crisis began. (New York Times, July 19, 2011)

**Services, including restaurant meals, entertainment, education and even in- surance have declined by 7 percent, more than any previous downturn.** Car sales are down. Bourgeois economists are lowering their projections for economic growth once again.

This is why the non-financial capitalists in the U.S. are sitting on $2 trillion in cash — a record amount. The top 1,000 non- financial companies in the world are sit- ting on $3.1 trillion.

**What are they doing with this cash?**

According to federal Flow of Funds re- ports, these companies are paying off their delinquent in foreign currency. (Josh Dwyer, Common Dreams web site, July 18) Yet the bosses claim they need tax breaks to create jobs. The truth is that they will not create jobs. This is the profit system. Jobs will only be created by private enterprise if goods or services can be sold at a profit. Not only are the bosses not creating jobs, but they are stuffing their bank accounts.

Another use of their profits is to give to their employees higher pay. In fact the 500 company CEOs paid themselves an average of $11.4 million each — a 23 percent increase over the prior year. Meanwhile, workers’ wages are declin- ing. Unemployment is rising. Hunger and homelessness are increasing.

The capitalist crisis in Europe and the U.S. are all at an impasse. The system can- not move forward. The crisis of the capi- talists becomes the crisis of the workers. It is the bosses who will not create new jobs. It is the bosses who will not do any more. It is the bosses who will not stop working. It is beginning to drag all of society backwards into an abyss.

That is money that could and should be used to create a massive jobs program to put the millions of unemployed back to work.

Half a million government workers...
Exposing union busting
Wisconsin ‘Truth Tour’ kicks off
By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO’s “Truth Tour,” which kicked off July 16 at the Teamster’s Hall in Green Bay, is traveling throughout the state until at least Aug. 2. The tour will make stops in Baraboo, Hudson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Rhinelander. The tour’s goal is to be a forum for poor and working people to meet and work together, give testimony on how Wall Street’s attacks are affecting them, and discuss fightback strategies, including mobilizing for recall campaigns.

“What we have seen in Madison is disastrous,” said Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Wisconsin State Professional Fire Fighters. “We have seen child labor laws weakened, voter suppression bills enacted, earned income tax credits increased on the poor, cuts to BadgerCare and Medicare. This is no longer Wisconsin. This is the United Corporations of America.”

On June 29, a group of Democratic candidates endorsed by the Wisconsin AFL-CIO won recall primaries; they will now run in the general election Aug. 9. Those engaging in the recall campaigns are enraged by the union-busting bill that went into effect June 29 as well as the draconian 2011-2013 state budget.

“It is clear that [Gov.] Scott Walker and GOP legislators are putting big corporations and wealthy campaign donors above what is best for me, my family and the people of Wisconsin,” said Jason Alberts at the Truth Tour kick-off. Alberts, a paraprofessional educator from Green Bay, works with special education students at Webster Elementary School.

Besides the recall campaigns, the people of Wisconsin are engaging in numerous acts of resistance, including confronting Gov. Walker and his allies wherever they go in the state.


ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

Wisconsin AFL-CIO

Walmart workers take demands to HQ

Nearly 100 Walmart workers from around the country traveled to company headquarters in Bentonville, Ark., to present a workplace declaration of rights to C-level execs on June 16. The workers want the company, which is the world’s biggest billion-dollar retailer, to respect their right to raise protest on the job, improve wages and working conditions, and treat all employees with respect. A new worker-led group, the Organization United for Respect at Walmart, organized the protest, according to Walmart Watch, which has dogged the anti-union, anti-worker corporation since 2005. To sign a petition supporting the OUR Walmart initiative, organized by the Food and Commercial Workers Union, visit www.ufcw.org/makingschange.

Study shows jobsless recovery is also ‘wageless’

Economists at Northeastern University issued a study in late June showing that workers’ wages have not improved since the so-called recovery started in June 2009. In fact, reports “The Jobless and Wages’ Recovery from the Great Recession of 2007-2009,” the workers actually lost money. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average real hourly earnings of all employees declined by 1.2 percent from June 2009 to May 2011. While the total non-agriculture civilian labor force increased by 3.2 million workers, earnings increased by only 3.5 percent, when accounting for inflation.

“Noting that the share of income growth going to employees was far lower than in the four other recoveries over the last three decades, the study called the $27 billion loss in workers’ income during the seven quarters since the recovery began “the largest on record since the end of World War II.” Not only is slow growth in hourly weekly hours a factor, but researchers pointed out that growth of worker productivity of just under 6 percent has contributed to keep employment plateauing above pre-crisis levels. Workers have felt in their bones and their pocketbooks that they were being gouged by the capitalist ruling class, and now there are statistics to prove it. (New York Times, June 30)
NATO escalated bombing operations on Libya

By Catherine Donahy

NORTHAMPTON, Mass.

Former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney spoke to an overflow crowd at the historic Friends Meeting House in Northampton, Mass., on July 14. She delivered an impassioned plea for an end to the U.S./NATO war against Libya. Her speaking engagement there is part of a multi-city national tour called “NATO Crusaders” to organize and mobilize people to call for an end to the U.S./NATO slaughter of innocent civilians in Libya. McKinney urged activists to educate, organize and mobilize people to call for an end to the U.S./NATO slaughter of Libyan civilians under the pretext of a so-called humanitarian intervention and their attempt to prevent African nations from exercising their right to self-defense.

McKinney noted the mainstream media’s grossly distorted picture on a wide variety of issues on the military intervention. In Libya, she said that in spite of this, the majority of people in the U.S. do not support this war.

McKinney is an activist to educate, organize and mobilize people to call for an end to the U.S./NATO slaughter of Libyan civilians under the flimsy pretext of a so-called humanitarian intervention and their attempt to prevent African nations from exercising their right to self-defense. She noted that all the research done by her body received, and meeting participants, gathered her standing ovation after she spoke.

The local NBC TV affiliate interviewed McKinney before the event. The Western Mass. IAC and the Northampton Committee to Stop the Wars sponsored the meeting. It was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Peace and Justice, Pioneer Valley Code Pink and the Pioneer Valley Green/Rainbow Local Party.

U.S. & other imperialist states recognize rebels amid mounting defeats on the ground

Cynthia McKinney gives eyewitness Libya report

By Abayomi Azikiwe

NATO planes bombed Libya’s capital city of Tripoli on July 17 for more than two hours. From 60 to 75 ordinances hit targets in the Tajura and Seraj suburbs. From 60 to 75 ordinance “busting bomb” was utilized. Libyan television’s secretary-general, “NATO crusader forces” had struck civilian and military sites in the eastern suburb of Tajura. The NATO attacks come from Tripoli, published by the Center for Research on Globalization in Tripoli on July 17, “In the vicinity of the bombing, it was like an earthquake. Large buildings as far away as Al-Fateh Street on the Mediterranean coast were shaking. Dogs began howling in alarm and panic all over the city. … Other animals, in turn entitled “Eyewitness Libya report,” make noises in panic as the bombings took place. Usually after the bombings deals, the cats litter some of the streets.” (July 17)

Raising further suspicions about the weapons used against the Libyan people in the ongoing war, the report said, “The smell of burning and a strange smoldering filled the air. The smell lingered in the air. It even remained on the skin in the wake of the bombings.”

These bombings appeared to further escalate the imperialist war against this oil-producing North African state, which has been under siege by Western-backed rebels since Feb. 17 and U.S./NATO fighter jets and warships since March 19. The NATO attacks on July 14 were different. The smoke plumes were different. In previous bombings, the smoke would usually go up vertically like a fire, but tonight the smoke plumes were horizontal and hovering above Tripoli with a white cloud in the horizon. People who were not directly affected by the bombs, within a radius of 15 kilometers, experienced burning eyes, lower back pain, and headaches.

Just three days prior to these bombings in Tripoli, NATO Secretary General Anders Gogh Rasmussen called upon NATO allies to proceed directly into Libya. He notes that NATO countries reevaluate their contributions to the war in Libya. Rasmussen stressed the need for more air-ground to ground attacks. At The Hague on July 14, he said, “I encourage all allies that have aircraft at their disposal to take part in that operation as well. I hope the Dutch government will make its decision to continue its involvement and to continuously consider adaptations of the strategy.” (Reuters, July 14)

Rasmussen has recently renewed its support for this war, its air force stated that it would no longer take part in bombing operations. This withdrawal from direct involvement in the bombing represents the differences within the imperialist military alliance on the Libyan war.

Norway is also winding down its participation. As of Aug. 1, its air force will no longer be involved. This growing reluctance by several NATO member states is prompting British Defense Secretary Liam Fox on July 13 to accuse these governments of not providing enough air power in the overall campaign.

The escalation in the bombing of Libya came after a meeting of the so-called “Contact Group” in Istanbul, Turkey, on July 14. There the United States and 30 other imperialist countries and their allies recognized the Western-backed rebel Transitional National Council as Libya’s supposed legitimate government. The Libyan government dismissed this move as merely a “little more on the concrete conditions prevailing on the ground in the country.”

Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi addressed a demonstration outside the government in Zawiya on July 16: “They are asking me to leave. That’s a laugh. I will never leave the land of my ancestors or the people who have sacrificed themselves for me. … After we gave our children as martyrs, we can’t backtrack, or kidnap or give or give an inch.” (preston, July 17)

Critics condemn U.S.-led recognition of ‘rebels’

There has been international condemnation of the TNC’s recognition by imperialist states and their allies. Many view this latest U.S./NATO maneuver as proof of their desperation in a more-than-four month air campaign, which has failed to dislodge the government in Tripoli.

The London Morning Star said, “The decision of the U.S-led Contact Group to recognize the National Transitional Council as Libya’s legitimate government is a provocative self-serving development. It short-circuits the necessary process of bringing all the international forces in Libya together to negotiate a lasting solution in favor of imposing its own nominees.” (July 17)

The article observed, “U.S. banks alone hold $450 billion in assets invested in Libya, which will be made available to pay for arms and other supplies for the Benghazi-based TNC opposition. Those assets belong to the Libyan people as a whole, not a body that is not so much self-appointed as appointed by Washington.”

Russia’s Foreign Secretary Sergei Lavrov said that Moscow would not recognize the TNC as the legitimate force in Libya. Lavrov told Interfax, “If it comes to recognition of the TNC and other opposition groups as a side in the talks, then unconditionally the TNC is such a side. However, if it refers to recognition of the TNC as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people, as the so-called Contact Group stated in Istanbul, we don’t share that position.” (preston, July 17)

Lavrov stated that the Contact Group’s latest declaration is designed to isolate the Libyan government. He repudiated this approach and stressed, “Russia traditionally rejects isolation as a way to resolve any problem in any conflict.”

Scott Taylor questioned Ottawa’s involvement in NATO’s war in a July 18 article in the Canada-based Chronicle Herald. That report noted that fighter jets, tanks, aircraft and more weaponry, and Canadian pilots are bombing Libya. Their Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, NATO war commander, has attempted to justify this imperial military campaign.

Taylor pointed out that the Canadian and other Western media are using disinformation to justify their actions. He noted the July 1 and 8 rallies were held where millions of Libyans turned out to defend their government and Gadhafi’s leadership.

“Almost no media coverage was given to these events in Canada,” he said. “It seems we are quite content with our air force bombing Libya, with no independent, an attempt to demonstrate his continued popularity.”

However, Taylor said this is absurd. “This is propaganda of course, flies in the face of all common knowledge. If the vast majority of Libyans in Tripoli were willingness for hatred for Gadhafi, the last thing security forces would do head to the masses within a central square. One of the first rights removed when martial law is imposed is that of assembly for the obvious reason that mob mentality can quickly degenerate into senseless violence.”

Capitalist crisis breeds war

The imperialist states’ intensified efforts reflect the growing crisis within the world capitalist system. European governments are facing panic with the possible default of Greece and other governments for failing to meet financial obligations to the International Monetary Fund and other economic institutions.

The U.S. government is split over the severity of the attacks it will impose on the working class and oppressed. Debate within Congress and between the White House and conservative Republicans are designed to mask the differences over how much more austerity they can dump on the masses without a political response erupting from broad sectors of the population.

The imperialist wars of aggression and occupation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Palestine and Libya only further aggravate the existing contradictions within capitalist economies. Workers are forced to take pay cuts and layoffs, and health care and pension plans are dissolved, while the financial gap widens between the ruling class and the working class.

The imperialists’ increasing failures in these wars will only bring greater misery to the majority of people in the U.S. and worldwide. This is why there needs to be a global effort to end imperial militarism in order to seriously address the worsening class and the working class.

Hear former U.S. Congressperson CYNTHIA MCKINNEY, who recently returned from leading a delegation to Libya in opposition to the U.S./NATO imperialist war on Libya, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, former u.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Akbar Muhammad & other leading opponents to the U.S./NATO war on Libya.

New VIDE0 FOOTAGE of U.S. bombing on Libya.

The national 11-city educational & fundraising Report from Libya tour with Cynthia McKinney is organized by the International Action Center and in coordination with many antiwar and community organizations from July 7 to August 9, 2011. For more information and a complete list of cities or to help donate for the tour expenses see www.IACenter.org or call 212-633-6646.

STOP U.S./NATO WAr ON LibyA!
Demonization and self-determination

By Sara Flounders
Co-Director, International Action Center

If you went to a shopping center, a street corner or a graduate school of a top university in the U.S. and conducted a pop quiz asking if you belong to the royal families of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain; the emir of Kuwait, Qatar or Dubai; the deposed Libyan leader; most people would not be able to name any of them. These dictators and feudal monarchs hold absolute control in corrupt and brutal regimes. They rule from behind the scenes, with their armies of foreign mercenaries, and most people would not be able to name any of them.

This is because they are not the people you hear about. They are anonymous to the U.S. population and to most of the world’s people.

But if you went anywhere in the U.S. today and asked who lives in Libya, there is only one name that a large part of the population could tell you: Gadhafi. Many people, even if they do not know that Lib- ya is in Africa, might tell you that Gadhafi is an evil man who “must go.”

The corporate media can demonize the leader of a country targeted by the Pentagon to the point that the consequences of using the most deadly weapons against a target is that the whole population is hidden and dismissed.

No other country in history has had the capa- bility of the U.S. government to launch war, using cruise missiles, bunker busters, drones, depleted uranium and dense inert metal explosive bombs, anti-personnelrazor shreds hombles, and anti-personal mines.

What should be the response to this terror?

Unfortunately, a minority of groups or individuals who present themselves as opponents of war spend more time cataloging Gadhafi’s past real or alleged short-comings than rallying people to respond to this criminal, all-out U.S. attack. Their influence would be small, except that it coincides with the opinions of the U.S. ruling class. Thus it is important to thoroughly answer their arguments.

Whatever mistakes were made by the leaders of a small, underdeveloped country facing U.S. imperialism, an attack on the Libya presentation attempts, they are not the reason the U.S. is hell-bent on destroying Libya today.

What is at stake?

U.S., French, British and Italian im- perialists are determined to lay hold of Libya’s now well-developed infrastruc- ture of oil refineries, pumping stations, gas lines, ports and pipelines directly into European markets. Billions of dollars in gold reserves, oil reserves—the largest in Africa—and Libya’s other rich assets. All of this has been made possible in the last four de- cades since U.S. and British imperialists were kicked out of the country.

The response to this colonial war of aggression should be the same as the re- sponse to a racist mobilization, a racist lynching mob or a police attack on an op- pressed community: Mobilize all possible forces to stand up to the crime and say “no!” to the official version of the orchestra- ted campaign of vilification.

This may not be an easy position to take. But it is essential to reject the racist political outlook that accompanies the military onslaught.

Demonization is meant to disarm and put the massive, criminal destruction not only of the U.S., but of the entire world, beyond debate. Enormous pressure is placed on every level of the U.S. population to accept the premise that the targeted country and its leadership are to blame. The attacks are presented as if only one person lives in Libya, and not 6.5 million people.

For example: “Gadhafi has yet to fall”—a war of conquest, the role of the corporate media is to end- lessly repeat every charge and statement made by the institutions of U.S. power. An almost frenzied level of lies, wild fabrica- tions, racist stereotyping and ugly carica- tures saturates all political discussion.

The corporate media spread the de- mands that the Pentagon death machine must act in the name of “humanity” in or- der to “save lives.” The war itself is cloaked in neutral terms. In the case of Libya, more than 16,000 bombing sorties against peo- ple are described as implementing a “no- fly zone.” The White House has assured the population that this bombing is not an act of war. The administration won’t even discuss it with Congress.

The response to this criminal war mobilization in the midst of a war mobilization must be to focus on the outra- geous crimes against Libya, to mobilize and refuse to accept or give weight to any justification for it.

Despite an ocean of propaganda, poll after poll shows Gadhafi has the support of 60 percent to 65 percent of the U.S. popula- tion against the U.S. war on Libya. This should give all opponents of this imperial- istic war that hope exists in the U.S. and the whole world.

But the demonization and racist war propaganda have seeped down into a layer of the progressive and anti-war movement.

In every imperialist war for decades, a whole series of writers, commentators and political organizations considered to be progressive have bracketed up enor- mous social pressure. While claiming to be against U.S. wars, they allocate their efforts to “save lives.” The war itself is cloaked to utilize their considerable research skills in making propaganda. Progressives should look to build the broadest possible unity in order to speak with one voice against the war.

Of course, such moral isolation is a minority in the progressive movement.

But there are political organiza- tions which six months ago had not bothered to mention Libya, that now sud- denly seek out respectable venues to add their own reasons that the dictator Gad- hafi “must go” — an echo of the imperial- istic media.

Working people need to know the real reason behind the attack. Thus every effort must be made to expose the movement propaganda. Progressives should look to build the broadest possible unity in order to speak with one voice against the war.

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Despite threats Progressive Egyptians press revolution forward

By Gene Clancy

Thousands of Egyptians, intent on de-
fining the gains of their revolution and
wishing to achieve still more, rallied on
July 15 in the nation’s two largest cities — Cairo and Alexandria. They encircled a security building, chanting “Oh police, you are criminals.” They demanded trials for the police officers suspected of killing hundreds of activists during the winter uprising that brought down U.S.-backed President Hosni Mubarak.

The protests in the capital of Cairo and the port city of Alexandria were billed as the “Festival of Last Warning” to the mil-
tary council that took over from Mubarak and is supposed to lead Egypt to democ-
acy. (Associated Press, July 15)

Hundreds of militant activists camped out at Tahrir Square, following the larg-
est demonstrations since the 18-day popular uprising began on Jan. 25. This location was the birthplace of the Egyp-
tian uprising.

“We want to cleanse the country’s in-
sstitutions,” said a demonstrator who was standing on a stage in the square. He told a news conference that he saw the govern-
ment officials “talking to protesters” in Tahrir, we will not leave this place.” He led a chant of “Bread, freedom and social justice.” (AP, July 15)

The protesters’ frustration was reflect-
ited in new graffiti on the wall of Cairo’s biggest government building, which faces the square. “The revolution has protec-
tors,” read one slogan, referring to the protesters’ determination to keep mobili-
zation of their demands is not.

In Alexandria, thousands rallied out-
side the local security headquarters. Some burned a high fence, which sur-
rounds the building housing the Interior Ministry’s local branch. They tore down the police flag and replaced it with the Egyptian national banner. They sprayed anti-police graffiti on the walls and cov-
ered the ministry’s golden emblem with the words “The Ministry of Torture.”

“Assuming power by the use of a con-
tinuation of military rule,” ran by the military which has strong ties to the U.S. — issued threats and warnings to the demonstra-
tors against “harming public integrity.”

Maj. Gen. Mohsen el-Feki, read the military’s statement on state television.

“It was the strongest public warning to protesters issued by its ruling generals since they took over from Mubarak when he stepped down on Feb. 11,” reported the AP. (July 12)

A protestor spoke in a threatening tone that suggested the generals are closely watching the flurry of protests, sit-ins and strikes that have engulfed the nation for days. The protesters kicked off the week by calling for the return to the old regime’s repression. Hu-
man rights and political activists in Egypt and abroad maintain that military tribunals have tried “at least 10,000 peo-
lodged for alleged security offenses since the

Gaza: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediac

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and choices. The government of Hamas, how Gaza’s courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid, and the role of the interna-
tional community, and how a growing people’s media is breaking the mainstream media’s information blockade on Gaza.

Order at Amazon.com or bookstores around the country http://gazaresistancebook.com/
‘Mobilize the people to resist exploitation and oppression’

International League of Peoples’ Struggle meets in Philippines

By Bill Cecil

We live in a global economy dominated today by U.S. and West European banks and corporations. Decisions made on Wall Street devastate the lives not only of workers in the United States but of hundreds of millions of people around the globe. It will take a worldwide movement to break their power.

That is why more than 60 people from the United States were among 430 activists from 43 countries who went to the Fourth International Assembly of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle, held July 7-9 in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

Activists came from Senegal and South Korea, from Egypt and Indonesia, from Greece and Guatemala, from Venezuela and Malaysia. They were trade unionists and migrant workers, peasants and farm workers, Indigenous peoples, youth and students, health workers, teachers, lawyers, human rights defenders, researchers, scientists and technologists, artists and journalists, environmentalists and fighters for the rights of women, lesbian-gay-bisexual trans, people, children and the elderly.

They faced many obstacles. Some were denied entry by the U.S.-backed governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mozambique and Tanzania, participants broke down into the FIA by Skype from exile in the Netherlands and prohibited from returning to their homeland, a delegate to conferences called by the International Migrant Alliance and the International League of Peoples’ Struggle held in the Philippines this July. Later she traveled around the Philippines. In an interview with Workers World, she shared her experiences and perceptions.

“When I arrived in the Philippines,” said Pagoada, “I was astonished at the huge number of families greeting visiting relatives. I realized immediately that forced migration keeps Filipino families apart. In Honduras there is forced migration too, but people cannot return home for most of the migrants from my country are undocumented.

The Philippine government actually sets up programs with the International Monetary Fund to effectively “export” millions of Filipinos all over the world as labor. This heavy concentration in the health professions. These people may come back for a visit, but must return to a distant land to make money so they can send remittances to their families, who depend on them to stay alive.

“When I drove through Manila, I saw so many children naked, with protruding bellies, indicating hunger and sickness. Manila has the biggest shopping mall in all Asia, where wealthy people can shop without seeing the poverty that dominates the city. This was my introduction to the International Migrants Alliance held at the University of the Philippines.

“At the university I was greeted by some of the most advanced students I have ever met. We share a history of colonialism. Spain invaded the Philippines and Latin America in the 16th century, grabbed the land, and murdered and expelled our people.

“I met people from around the world at the IMA. I learned about organizing against widespread human trafficking, especially from Asia, which includes the selling of brides from developing countries to men in the advanced imperialist countries.”

“Militancy, courage of Filipino workers, peasants is inspiring”

Pagoada continued, “So many Filipinos are forced to migrate – 3 million out of a population of 99 million. So while the emotional cost to the families in the 7,107 islands of the Philippines is great, the economic crisis and the viciousness of all the U.S.-supported governments — including the present government of Noynoy Aquino — have produced the greatest mortality. Filipinos organize everywhere in the world.

“Jose Maria Sison was present via Skype throughout the conferences I attended. He is the leader of the Philippine struggle, though he is in forced exile in The Netherlands and prohibited from returning to his homeland. I became increasingly interested in this philosopher-intellectual-revolutionary who was so beloved by the people at the conference. His comments were amazing! With his leadership and faith in the organizers, they had three international conferences this July in Manila – IMA, ILPS and the International Women’s Alliance.

“Filipinos defy the neoliberal regulations their government enforces, which restrict the organizing of labor unions. The courage of Filipino workers and peasants who organize strikes and resistance is really inspiring.”

“The U.S. supports this repression as part of its ‘war on terrorism.’ Human rights organizations charge that the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been responsible for more than 1,000 murders and abductions of activists. The military received $15 million in U.S. aid in 2010, but an additional $434 million of "nonmilitary" U.S. support came from the Millennium Challenge Corp., which was set up by the George W. Bush administration and is closely tied to "counterinsurgency" programs. Washington is now also promising even more military aid and an increasing U.S. troop presence.

“This year at the IMA and ILPS conferences,” continued Pagoada, “there were many representatives from Latin American, environmental destruction, arts and culture, and the rights of workers, farmers and farm workers, women, youth, children, Indigenous people, prisoners, homeless and displaced people, elders and LGBT people.

All the resolutions, action plans and the general declaration of the assembly agreed that mass struggle is the only answer to the global capitalist crisis of overproduction, which is ravaging people’s lives in both exploited and exploiting countries and is driving imperialist wars, like the one against Libya.

The assembly documents may be found at www.ilps.info.

Bill Cecil attended the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS as a delegate from the International Action Center in the United States.

Honduran-U.S. delegate praises Filipino anti-imperialist conferences

By Heather Cottin

Lucy Pagoada, a Honduran who lives in New York and who has been elected to the Honduran National Resistance Front in her homeland, was a delegate to conferences called by the International Migrant Alliance and the International League of Peoples’ Struggle held in the Philippines this July. Later she traveled around the Philippines. In an interview with Workers World, she shared her experiences and perceptions.

“When I arrived in the Philippines,” said Pagoada, “I was astonished at the huge number of families greeting visiting relatives. I realized immediately that forced migration keeps Filipino families apart. In Honduras there is forced migration too, but people cannot return home for most of the migrants from my country are undocumented.

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“This year at the IMA and ILPS conferences,” continued Pagoada, “there were many representatives from Latin
The prisoners' demands are clear and fair; see prisonerhungerstrike.wordpress.com. They add up to ending the physical and psychological torture at these SHUs and Ad. Seg. units, and Workers World stands in solidarity with the prisoners' demands and their struggle. WWP members in New York, Philadelphia, Durham, N.C. in Ohio and throughout California have helped organize or taken part in public solidarity actions with the prisoners, actions that attract the attention of the people.

The prisoners need the solidarity of those on the outside; those outside need the example of the prisoners' courage and solidarity. Like the prisoners in Attica, N.Y., 40 years ago next Sept. 9, they are showing what workers and oppressed people can do under the most difficult circumstances, and setting an example for more working-class struggles looming in the near future.

Unions must act like unions

State employees in New York and Connecticut, as in so many other states, are being told they have to make painful concessions in order to prevent mass layoffs. But it's not just the politicians who are telling them this. It's their own union leaders.

How many times have workers in the private sector been told by their bosses that there was no money for health care, for raises, for pensions? But the workers knew there was a lie, and they went on to make better contracts. Sometimes they had to walk the picket line for weeks, or even months. But if they held out, they had a chance of winning many of their demands. That's how millions of workers in unions were able to move out of poverty.

Unions in the public sector are often more restricted by reactionary laws barring strikes, but they are still supposed to fight for the workers, not do the work of the bosses and their politicians. When the states or cities say, “Jump,” public workers don't want their unions to answer, “How high?”

In Connecticut a month ago, a rotten, giveback contract negotiated by union leaders was rejected by workers in the state employees’ unions. They told their union leaders to fight for something better. Gov. Dannel Malloy, a Democrat, then increased the pressure, saying the state had to move more immediately to institute huge cuts on economic development programs, highway rest stops, bus subsidies and bridge inspections and close courthouses, welfare offices and motor vehicle branches. Layoff notices were sent out to 6,500 workers.

This declaration of war against the workers should have been answered with a plan of struggle to force the politicians to back down. Instead, the union leaders decided to change the rules on how many votes it takes to ratify a giveback contract. In order to protect the gains made in previous contracts, these rules had required an 80 percent acceptance vote. Only 57 percent had voted in June to accept the giveback contract, even after en masse call-outs for them to do so from the governor and the Democrat-controlled General Assembly. Now the union leaders have decided to make ratification possible with a simple majority.

Will this make the governor reverse the layoffs? Or will it only whet the appetites of those who are trying to set back the workers’ standard of living and destroy their unions?

Now the two largest unions of New York state employees — the Civil Service Employees Association and the Public Employees Federation — are following suit, trying to convince their members to accept a three-year freeze on wages, new furloughs and benefit cuts, supposedly as protection against layoffs.

There wouldn't be any unions in this country if that hadn't been the mindset in the last big capitalist crisis of the 1930s. The bosses and their politicians always say there's no money to do the work, so the workers’ struggle forces them to cough it up. Workers who don't have a union need to fight to get one, and workers in unions need to fight to make their unions fight!

Strike in Dominican Republic

More than 80 people, most from the Black community in Durham, N.C., attended a July 12 community educational event, potluck and fundraiser for the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravans to the Shepherd's House United Methodist Church. Hosted by Fight Imperialism, Stand Together and Black Workers for Justice, the event opened with discussion about how the U.S. blockade of Cuba causes shortages of food, medicine and health care for the country's 11 million people.

The blockade is an imperialist policy that uses hunger and disease as political weapons, yet the Cuban government, run by the working class, has been able to provide universal health care and education to all the people. Meanwhile, in the U.S. our communities and rights are under attack by budget cuts and economic crisis. Dr. Bill Sales, a veteran of the Civil Rights and Student Power Movements, was the keynote speaker on behalf of Pastors for Peace, in one of the caravan's 11 stops on that same day. Dante Strobini, a delegate of the FISP and Salud Sin Muham- mad of BWJFE presented talks about how local issues connect and are relevant to the Cuban revolution. Rev. John Gumbo, whose church hosted the event, spoke to the crowd about how U.S. imperialism also impacts his home country, Zimbabwe.

This year's caravan is especially important because it is the first one since the death of the Rev. Lucius Walker, the founder of Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace. Many paid tribute to the Rev. Walker's steadfast fight to defend the Cuban revolution.

— Special to Workers World

Low-Wage Capitalism

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

Fred Goldstein's book provides an easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

The author is available for lectures and interviews. www.LowWageCapitalism.com

Available at Amazon & bookstores across the country

Support prisoners’ hunger strike!

The U.S. prisons at Abu Ghraiib in Iraq, Baghram in Afghanistan and Guantánamo in U.S.-occupied Cuba gave evidence to the world of the ruthless and criminal behavior U.S. imperialism perpetrates toward those it considers its foreign enemies. This behavior is no aberration. It’s as “American” as apple pie.

The heroism of now more than 6,600 California prisoners has put home-grown prison torture, clear evidence of U.S. crudely and depravity, before the world.

Only struggle can bring out this truth. The prisoners at the Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit began on July 1 just about the only action available to those locked up and isolated: the hunger strike. They have kept up this action for more than two weeks.

It has spread to SHUs and Administrative Segregation facilities all over California. It has spread to the general prison population, inspiring the more than 2.3 million prisoners all over the country. Their courage has sparked solidarity actions in dozens of cities among those outside of the bars in this locked-up country.

The U.S. laws are cruel: One in every 131 people is behind bars, many for long sentences. They are racially divided: One of every 18 white men is locked up. That’s bad enough. But more than one of every 21 Black men is locked up.

At the pinnacle of racism and cruelty in direct competition with Guantánamo are the SHUs and Ad. Seg. units, which add to the physical beatings and disinfect the especially cruel tortures of isolation and sensory deprivation. As in Abu Ghraiib, the purpose of torture in these units is to break the prisoners and force them to give evidence against other prisoners. Those who break are even more isolated.

It is astounding and inspiring that the prisoners have taken this bold action. But it is no easy road. They have lost an average of 25 to 35 pounds. Their health and lives are in danger.

We remember all too well what happened to the Turkish prisoners on hunger strike against isolation just a few years ago, and the Irish freedom fighters in the 1970s. Many lost their lives rather than submit. The Peridy and intransigence of the U.S. prison officialdom puts these current hunger strikers at risk.

The prisoners’ demands are clear and fair; see prisonerhungerstrike.wordpress.com. They add up to ending the physical and psychological torture at these SHUs and Ad. Seg. units, and Workers World stands in solidarity with the prisoners’ demands and their struggle. WWP members in New York, Philadelphia, Durham, N.C. and throughout California have helped organize or taken part in public solidarity actions with the prisoners, actions that attract the attention of the people.

The prisoners need the solidarity of those on the outside; those outside need the example of the prisoners’ courage and solidarity. Like the prisoners in Attica, N.Y., 40 years ago next Sept. 9, they are showing what workers and oppressed people can do under the most difficult circumstances, and setting an example for more working-class struggles looming in the near future.

Durham events discusses imperialist attack on Cuba

A 24-hour work stoppage paralyzed commerce and traffic in the Dominican Republic on July 11. The action was called by the Alternative Social Forum, a group of about 300 Caravans for the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and the so-called, “counterproductive means for being taken by the Dominican govern-
Environmental Impact of Microalgae Biorefinery in Brazil

By Teresa Gutierrez

On June 2 hotel housekeepers who are members of UNITE HERE launched a coordinated eight-city speak-out to break the silence on the dangers of their jobs. The workers stated that they were “inspired by the courageous stand taken by the housekeepers in New York against some of the most powerful men in the world.” (www.unitehere.org, June 2)

They were referring to the case of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who is accused of holding captive and sexually assaulting a housekeeper at New York’s Sofitel Hotel on May 14. DSK was the head of the International Monetary Fund at the time.

The union’s website says, “Nearly all hotel housekeepers are women. The majority are of color and immigrants.” The workers point out in their union’s Hotel Workers Rising campaign that sexual harassment is a pervasive pattern in their work. Many workers have been subjected to indecent exposure and other types of assaults by hotel guests. (www.HotelWorkersRising.org)

As in all capitalist industries today, hotel workers are facing dangerous speed-ups, which lead to difficult working conditions and serious injuries. In most hotels, housekeepers must clean 15 or more rooms per day, often having to work off the clock and skip meals in order to finish. Chains such as Hyatt and Hilton are leading these speed-ups. Some of these hotels are being boycotted by longshoremen in Boston and Seattle.

The union explains: “Most hotels have introduced new room amenities without reducing the number of rooms assigned to housekeepers each day. Luxury beds with heavier mattresses and linens, triple-sheeting, and extra pillows are increasing common. Other add-ons like coffee pots, spa robes and large hard-to-clean mirrors make room cleaning more difficult and time-consuming.”

These conditions lead to an injury rate that is 40 percent higher for hotel workers than for other service sector workers, with sprains and strains being the most common injuries.

David vs. Goliath

Imagine the courage it took after hours of cleaning toilets for a housekeeper to accuse one of the world’s most powerful men — a potential president of France, a major European power, a man who could afford to pay $35,000 a night for the hotel room, a man whose sense of class privilege is so great that he believed he owned the world and everyone in it.

One woman hotel worker, a housekeeper, woman of color, an immigrant — in the midst of one of the most vicious anti-immigrant climates ever in this country — dared to stand up to the head of a global multinational-dougherty agency. She may have known nothing of his role as head of the IMF at the time, but her instincts must have told her he was on the other side of the class barrier.

It may not be known for decades — or it may never be known — if it was the overwhelming amount of incriminating evidence against Strauss-Kahn that forced law officials to debar DSK from his plane on his way home to France immediately after the housekeeper’s charges. Or whether it was interdepartmental rivalry between the United States and France that led to his arrest. Or whether it was his enemies at home, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whom DSK planned to challenge in next year’s presidential election.

But the evidence that DSK is a misogynist who believed he could do and say anything he wanted to criminals is beyond doubt. It does not matter if his spouse or his daughters stand behind him. The evidence is overwhelming that he views women as objects and commodities, to be used for his pleasure, at his will.

Blaming the victim

When DSK was arrested, many members of the public thought the case against him was strong. But suddenly the tables were turned. One woman, the victim of sexual harassment and rape was put on trial in a classic turn against female victims. Now it looks as if the charges could be dropped. The National Organization for Women writes, “The mainstream media is trash talking the ‘credibility’ of the housekeeper. They’re saying she lied on her immigration papers and has a boyfriend in jail — as if that means the rape charges should be dropped. Every year more than 350,000 women in this country are victims of rape or sexual assault. Routine victim-blaming and victim-shaming, like we see in the case of these allegations against DSK, help facilitate this epidemic of sexual violence against women, and make it harder for women to report their crimes.”

If DSK is set loose, it will be an insult not only to the housekeeper but to all the people of Africa. It will send a message to women that women and immigrants who stand up to demand justice for the hotel worker. No U.S. press, came, but the French press showed up.

Who will win this case? A powerful European man of extreme privilege or a West African hotel housekeeper?

Justine demanded

Some say that DSK was a more progressive thinker than some in the IMF and to the left of many. However, the IMF like any capitalist entity remains committed to the free flow of money and commodities. It remains committed to structural adjustment policies that force workers to pay for their mistakes. It makes the workers pay for any financial losses. It offers and restrict the free flow of humans as well as force an unprecedented wave of human migration.

The IMF has robbed and plundered Africa for decades. It owes the people of Guinea reparations. If it paid reparations, perhaps this housekeeper would not have been forced to migrate.

But rape is rape. Rape is forced sexual violence, and what happened in that hotel room on May 14 should not be removed from the realm of the reality of sexual violence. If DSK is guilty, he should pay for his crime.

Who will win this case? A powerful European man of extreme privilege or a West African hotel housekeeper?

Justice demanded
A pesar del bombardeo de EEUU/OTAN sobre Libia, la guerra imperialista se estanca

Por Abayomy Azikive
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Tras cuatro meses de intensos bombardeos, las fuerzas de EEUU/OTAN no han logrado desplazar al gobierno de Libia en Tripoli. Las fuerzas counter-revolucionarias del Consejo Nacional de Transición, respaldadas por Occidente, permanecen limitadas en áreas del este y el oeste de este país petrolero de 6,5 millones de habitantes.

No hay evidencia concreta de que el CNT y sus patrocinadores imperialistas estén a punto de llevar a la capital, a pesar de sus constantes de clamaciones al respecto. Cientos de miles de personas en Tripoli continúan manifiestando públicamente su oposición a la guerra de EEUU/OTAN. El ejército libanés continúa golpeando a los rebeldes en los alrededores de la ciudad portuaria de Misurata y en las montañas Nafusa cerca de la frontera con Túnez.

Con la escalada de los combates en Misurata, que está siendo utilizada como área de transporte para las fuerzas rebeldes y las organizaciones humanitarias occidentales, las condiciones de la población civil han empeorado en las últimas semanas.

En su esfuerzo por ayudar a que el CNT logre una presencia más fuerte en el oeste de Libia, los aviones de la OTAN han intensificado su campaña de bombardeos contra el pueblo. El 9 de julio las fuerzas de la OTAN atacaron las unidades del ejército apostadas en las afueras de Misurata. Sin embargo, Prensa Asociada admitió el 9 de julio que: “La guerra civil ha caído en un estancamiento con los rebeldes sin poder avanzar significativamente, aún con las fuerzas de la OTAN bombardeando las fuerzas de Gadafi para hacer cumplir una resolución de la ONU de proteger a los civiles”.

En realidad la guerra nunca ha sido para proteger a los civiles. Las acciones del CNT y sus protectores de EEUU/OTAN han creado condiciones nefastas para la población en Libia y para quienes han huido del país por tierra y por mar.

La OTAN y el CNT causan crisis humanitaria

El comienzo de la guerra civil en Libia el 17 de febrero llevó a la poca crisis humanitaria en el norte de Libia y en el sur de Libia en tiempos modernos. Inmediatamente, las bandas rebeldes basadas en Bengasi se disponían a dejar a aquellos/as que eran perseguidos/as o simpatizantes y alidianos/as del gobierno central en Tripoli. Los/as libios/as de piel oscura y los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes de los estados africanos vecinos fueron hostigados/as, golpeados/as e incluso asesinado/as.

 Videos y fotografías de estas ejecuciones se han distribuido ampliamente a través del Internet. Se asemejan a las turcas racistas de linchamientos realizadas en el sur de EEUU, contra los/as afroamericanos/as al final del siglo XIX y comienzos del siglo 20.

 Las vastas reservas de petróleo en Libia, con la República de ser las más grandes en el continente africano, permitieron al país alcanzar el mayor nivel de vida y ingreso per cápita de la región. La prosperidad fue a 2 a 3 mil millones de litros de combustible por año y sus audiencias para privatizarlo. Pero incluso las bases republicanas querían mantener los beneficios para sus padres y para ellas mismas.

 Ahora, uniónándose a los republicanos de extremo derecha, el presidente Barack Obama ha ofrecido poner el Seguro Social en la mesa de “compromisos” con los republicanos, junto al Medicare y al Medicaid. La idea que ha estado dando al Seguro Social desde que la hucha de los/as trabajadores/as lo logró hace 76 años durante la Gran Depresión y el Nuevo Trato. Es un programa más amplio y popular de beneficios sociales en los Estados Unidos, junto al Medicare. Fuerza de algunos/as trabajadores/as del gobierno federal y del ferrocarril es la encarnación de la economía de los EE.UU. terminar cabizando beneficios de Seguro Social.

 En la actualidad, 15 millones de personas reciben pagos mensuales. La mayoría de estas personas dependen de ese cheque como parte o como la totalidad de sus ingresos por jubilación, discapacidad, en el caso de los/as trabajadores/as en la economía de los EE.UU. terminan recibiendo beneficios de Seguro Social.

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 En el Congreso de los EE.UU tanto republicanos como los defensores de la campaña fueron en-

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