

MUNDO OBRERO

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EDITORIAL

Wanna stop war, racism? MOBILIZE

Workers World newspaper applauds all the forces who are mobilizing here in the U.S. and around the world. Three years after “shock and awe” — the bombing campaign at the start of the Pentagon-led invasion of Iraq — it’s clear that the overwhelming majority of people worldwide oppose the war, particularly in this country. This sentiment has been fueled by loved ones coming home in body bags or seriously physically and psychologically wounded and by the carnage of the occupation that has claimed tens of thousands of Iraqi lives and devastated the

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Is the U.S. preparing an attack?

Bush stokes crisis with Iran

By Fred Goldstein

On the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, where U.S. forces have become bogged down in a hated occupation, the world is watching with alarm as the Bush administration relentlessly pursues a new crisis with Iran.

In a televised speech on March 13 to defend his conduct of the Iraq war, President George W. Bush injected an attack denouncing the Iranian government for allegedly sending explosives to the resistance in Iraq. He declared, “Such actions, along with Iran’s support for terrorism and its pursuit of nuclear weapons, are increasingly isolating Iran, and America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats.”

Supporting “terrorism” is how Bush characterizes Iran’s support for the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation and aggression. The Bush administration has declared, without an ounce of proof and in spite of all denials, that any attempt by Iran to develop peaceful nuclear power is a step toward building nuclear weapons.

Bush’s attack on Iran was no isolated rhetorical flourish. The Washington Post reported, “As the dispute over its nuclear program arrives at the Security Council today, Iran has vaulted to the front of the U.S. national security agenda amid Bush administration plans for a sustained campaign against the ayatollahs of Teheran.” (March 13)

“They do not use the term ‘regime change’ in public,” said the Post, but that is the policy. The newspaper quotes Richard Haass, Bush’s former State Department policy planning director who now heads the Council on Foreign Relations, the powerful think-tank in New York, as saying that “the upper hand is with those who are pushing regime change rather than those who are pushing for more diplomacy.”

A chorus of threats

This explains the recent chorus of threats coming from high Bush officials. On March 7, Vice President Dick Cheney gave a speech to the deep-pocketed Zionist lobbying group, the

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What is the role of revolutionaries, their organizations, and the multinational working class in the U.S. in helping to open up the next phase of the global struggle for socialism?

Mississippi civil rights era struggle 'Queer' activists, Black and white, led the way

By Leslie Feinberg

State repression flowing from the gay-bashing, anti-communist Cold War witch hunt of the 1950s didn't really gear up in Mississippi until the 1960s, says John Howard, a white researcher of U.S. Southern "queer" history. When Howard uses the term "queer," he is including the whole population of those who experience homosexual desire and or engage in male-male sex, but do not necessarily identify as "gay."

Howard focused on non-heterosexuality between males in rural Mississippi, the poorest state in the country, in his groundbreaking book, "Men Like That—A Southern Queer History."

He concluded, "Queer sex in Mississippi was not rare. Men-desiring-men were neither wholly isolated nor invisible. From the most secluded farms in Smith County to the densest neighborhoods of the capital, Jackson, homosexuality flourished between close friends and distant relatives; casual sex between strangers was clandestine but commonplace. Androgyny, though doubly suspect, also thrived."

Although broad media coverage of the 1955 gay-bashing murder of John Murrett, a white Jackson, Miss., interior decorator, had created fear, the greatest

terror was unleashed by the police in an era thought of nationally as the "free love sixties," not the "conformist fifties."

But the mid-sixties police crackdown, Howard noted, demonstrated the prevalence of homosexuality "within the ranks of upper-, middle-, and working-class Mississippi."

These police raids, carried out against white gay men in public gathering spaces, coincided with efforts by the white business class to resist the impact of the passage of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the ongoing demands to dismantle the rest of Jim Crow apartheid.

What was the relationship between the Black-led struggle for national liberation and the police entrapment and imprisonment of white men having same-sex relations?

Howard explained, "By 1965 homosexuality was linked to the specter of racial justice—what white authorities understood as the most serious threat to the status quo. Queer Mississippians black and white found themselves in increasingly politicized positions. With the bravery earned in lives of local struggle and everyday resistance, they moved onto the public stage, determined to win a legitimacy and equity so long denied them." ...

To read the rest of this article go online to www.workers.org

Next: National liberation struggles—in U.S. and around the world—also inspired militant demand for sexual and gender liberation.



Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at www.workers.org. Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

A new book from leslie feinberg, transgender author and activist

Leslie Feinberg, one of today's most prominent transgender rights activists, and an organizer in national and international progressive movements for over 25 years, will be on a book-signing tour in San Francisco, March 24 and 25. She'll be in Los Angeles, March 23 and 28 with her new novel,

DRAG KING DREAMS.

Leslie's 1993 novel, **Stone Butch Blues**, translated internationally, won the American Library Association Award for Gay and Lesbian Literature and the LAMBDA Small Press Literary Award. Her non-fiction work, **Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman**, is the first analysis of the historical roots of transgender oppression.

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"Drag King Dreams" takes readers on an unforgettable new gender journey. Max Rabinowitz, a bouncer in an East Village drag club, is sleep-walking through life. But as war, racist profiling and trans-bashing explode, an amazing circle of co-workers and friends who defy gender and sex labels helps Max awaken from dreams to action.

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Sat., March 25
The Fight for Justice!: Benefit Concert for the Somerville 5. Hibernian Hall, 184 Dudley Street, Roxbury, MA 7-10 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. \$3 for youth and \$20 for adults. No one turned away for lack of funds (617) 522-6626 or iacoboston@iacoboston.org

NEW YORK

Fri., March 24
Workers World Party Forum. Fred Goldstein on "Is the U.S. preparing an attack on Iran?" 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30 p.m.) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info phone (212) 627-2994.

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Katrina report to UN

U.S. violated international laws



WW PHOTO: MNIE BRUCE PRATT

William Perry, a Vietnam veteran (on car) and Terry Perry in Mobile, Ala., on March 14, first day of "Marching to New Orleans" for the right of return of Katrina survivors and to bring the troops home now.

Following are excerpts from a *Hurricane Katrina Human Rights Violations Summary of Concerns, to be brought to the United Nations Human Rights Committee Meetings March 13, 2006 in New York, prepared by Rev. Daniel A. Buford and retired Judge Claudia Morcom. To read more of this summary, go to workers.org*

The U.S. government's response to Hurricane Katrina failed to comply with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention on Torture. Widespread human rights violations against displaced African American residents in New Orleans and against displaced poor people of all races in the Gulf Coast region continue to be systemic and pervasive. The continued displacement of African Americans from states like Louisiana and Mississippi (covered by the enforcement provisions of the

1965 Voting Rights Act) undermines years of civil rights legislation and court decisions (Chisom v. Roemer, 111 S. Ct. 2354, June 20, 1991).

The U.S. government has shown depraved indifference to the human and civil rights of displaced African Americans in New Orleans and has neglected its responsibilities for all poor people living in the region. The U.S. government delayed decisions and cut critical funding from the federal government's responsibility to maintain a safe levee system around the Greater New Orleans metropolis.

The U.S. government ignored its treaty obligations to protect the inherent right to life and to take action to preserve the lives of its own citizens. The Congress of the U.S. Government has ratified three treaties with the United Nations that protect poor people from human rights violations. The United Nations guiding principles on internally displaced persons apply to all persons in the Gulf Coast region who

were forced from their homes as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina structural racism could be seen in the U.S. government's public policies toward internally displaced poor people from the African-American community. Institutional practices and cultural representations that negatively stereotype have created a permissive climate of discrimination. Many lives have been lost; all races and classes have suffered. The U.S. government has failed to eliminate actions or policies that have historically had a discriminatory impact. The lives of poor people were not considered worth saving by the U.S. government as no evacuation plan was envisioned with them in mind. Race and poverty continue to be intertwined in that displaced persons do not have equal protection of law and continue to be discriminated against in post-Katrina funding in the areas of housing, education, employment, insurance, and health care access. □

Black activist defies criminal in-justice system

By Larry Hales
Denver

After four hours of deliberation, the jury in the trial of Black community activist Shareef Aleem told Adams County District judge Katherine Delgado on March 2 that they could not reach a unanimous decision, resulting in a hung jury.

Shareef Aleem was being tried for third-degree assault on a cop, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 16 years.

The charge comes from an incident that took place on Feb. 3, 2005, when Aleem went to a public meeting called by the Colorado University Board of Regents. The fate of Prof. Ward Churchill was being discussed, yet students were denied the right to speak and a few people in the crowd began demanding to be heard. Shareef was singled out and brutally attacked by cops. At one point, a dozen cops were on top of Aleem while cops in SWAT gear waited outside.

Aleem has been an outspoken anti-racist activist and has challenged officials in the Greater Denver Metropolitan Area over the rampant police attacks, especially against people of color.

His trial, which began on Feb. 27, was an attempt to silence and punish this important activist for challenging the repressive state in the form of cops, jails and prisons.

The prosecutor thought that the defense attorney's main piece of evidence would be ignored by the all-white jury. There are numerous examples when video footage of police brutality, with other overwhelming evidence, has been ignored. The Rodney King case is one. That brutal beating and the acquittal of the racist cops involved led to a massive rebellion, mainly in the South Central area of Los Angeles in 1992. The jury in the Aleem case could not be swayed by the prosecutor's weak case. A few jurors were noticeably shaken and at least one person was in tears.

The hung jury is not the end. Shareef Aleem has also been charged with contempt of court. There was almost no evidence, other than testimony from someone who had cut a deal with the D.A. Aleem wore a shirt with the picture of political prisoner, Stanley Tookie Williams with the caption, "Should have been saved." Williams was legally lynched on Dec. 13 by lethal injection in California. Worldwide clamor demanded his freedom because of his work to steer youth from gangs, for which he received a Nobel Peace Prize nomination. The prosecution wanted Shareef to take the shirt off. The judge ordered him to do so but Aleem refused, was handcuffed and placed in a cell. The judge then brought Aleem back to the courtroom, ordered him to take the shirt off again, to which Shareef replied, "My conscience won't let me take this shirt off."

The judge told Shareef that he could stay in the courtroom, but that he was still being detained, to which Shareef replied,



Shareef Aleem

"...Then you might as well take me back to jail. If I'm in the courtroom, I expect to walk free." The judge then had the handcuffs removed.

Aleem's contempt-of-court hearing is set for March 13. He vows to wear the same shirt. The retrial for the assault case is expected to take place in May. Already, activists are planning rallies to support him, including a community barbecue that will raise funds for his defense, as well as deepening the discussion on state repression and imperialism. Email denniveriac@action-mail.org for more information on the Aleem case.

The writer is a FIST organizer. E-mail FIST@workers.org for more information.

Statewide meeting and march

Support grows for Rev. Pinkney

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The following are excerpts.

Benton Harbor, March 11, 2006 (PANW)—With his trial scheduled to begin on March 15, Rev. Edward Pinkney, leader of the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers (BANCO) in Benton Harbor, remained firm in his commitment to fight the four felony charges leveled against him by the Berrien County Prosecutor's Office in the southwest region of Michigan.

These charges stemmed from a successful recall campaign during 2005 when BANCO mobilized voters in Benton Harbor to remove City Commissioner Glenn Yarbrough. The vote was eventually overturned by Judge Paul Maloney, who also reinstated Yarbrough as Commissioner and Pinkney was later charged with paying \$5 to individual citizens to cast their

ballots for the recall. These charges could result in sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

Joined by over 100 supporters at the Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Pinkney declared, "We are fighting a real war here. We have to stand tall. If you don't want to do it for yourself, do it for your children and grandchildren."

Rev. Pinkney continued: "This is not just black and white. It is the haves vs. the have-nots, the rich vs. the poor. They are using our money, tax money, to convict us."

This meeting was attended by residents of Benton Harbor as well as people from various cities around the state including Detroit, Flint, Highland Park and Battle Creek. In addition, people attended from Chicago, some 90 miles away, and also a special guest from Washington, D.C. All of the speakers at the meeting pledged their support for Rev. Pinkney, maintaining

that his prosecution by local officials is a direct result of his militant activism in Benton Harbor and Berrien County.

David Sole, president of UAW Local 2334 in Detroit and a representative of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI), opened his speech by saying, "We are here today along with the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (MWRO) to fight this racist frame-up in this city."

Sole said, "There are so many issues we could discuss at this gathering, including the war in Iraq, the money that is being used by the Pentagon that should go to support the cities, but all of this means nothing if they can frame fighters like Rev.



WW PHOTOS: DAVE SOLE

Benton Harbor protest, March 11

Edward Pinkney."

"People here are not scared," Sole continued. "They rose up in response to the murder of a young African-American brother in 2003. The fear is grounded. We are here like the freedom riders in the South. We must give the people the courage they need to fight to free Rev. Pinkney," Sole concluded.

Go to workers.org to read more on this development.

An empire running on empty

By Milt Neidenberg

The empire has run out of money. Right now, the Bush administration can't borrow to pay the bills. The national debt hit \$8,291,957,000,000-plus on March 13 and growing daily by \$2,170,000,000, according to the National Debt Clock, already exceeds the legal borrowing limit of \$8,018,000,000,000 (\$8 trillion, 18 billion).

Treasury Secretary John Snow has urged lawmakers to pass a new debt ceiling immediately to avoid the nation's first-ever default. "I know that you share the president's and my commitment to maintaining the full faith and credit of the U.S. government," Snow wrote. (Wall Street Journal, March 7) Defaulting on trillions in debt is not an option for Congress and the Pentagon.

This year's \$560 billion military budget includes \$67.6 billion in emergency spending to feed preemptive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—up 70 percent from the \$334.8 billion the previous fiscal year. (Wall Street Journal, March 10).

Testifying before the Armed Services Committee, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned Congress, "No nation, no matter how powerful, has the resources or capability to defend everywhere, at every time, against every conceivable type of attack. ... The only way to protect the American people, therefore, is to provide our military with a wide range of capabilities rather than preparing to confront any

one particular threat."

Translation: global war and a Pentagon demand for a blank check.

The insatiable appetite of the Pentagon demands that funds be diverted from entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare, or from discretionary programs that only make up one-sixth of the national budget. Bush plans the total elimination of 141 such programs. Proposed cuts in fiscal 2007 will seriously impact Medicare, Medicaid, support for poor children's, and a host of programs involving the working poor: food stamps, housing, health care and other desperately needed plans that are already inadequately funded. Estimates are that the current budget deficit will exceed \$423 billion in a proposed \$2.77 trillion budget for fiscal 2007.

To cover the immediate shortfall, the Bush administration has been raiding government funds that have surpluses. One target is a government workers' pension fund—the G-Fund. Another is the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund. The American Federation of Government Employees and other government-worker unions were not consulted. Treasury Secretary Snow has promised to replace the funds, but the government will replace them with IOUs just as it does with Social Security.

U.S. imperialism is running an IOU economy with a Pentagon global military overload. In a March 10 Wall Street Journal article headlined, "Fed Official

Warns of Rising Danger of Budget Deficit," Timothy Geithner, president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, explained: "Foreign buying of U.S. securities [IOUs] may, by masking the danger of budget deficits, encourage investors to take on too much debt and require tighter monetary policy than otherwise."

Increasing interest rates raises the cost of borrowing and tends to increase price structure and inflation. At the same time it discourages investment, slows down economic growth and sets stagnation in motion. Overproduction aggravates this development. This combination is called stagflation and is a pre-condition to financial collapse, although a capitalist state can temporarily stave off economic crisis by accelerating military-industrial contracts.

Geithner heads the most powerful Federal Reserve district and is influential on the board determining the discount rate. Since June 2004, the Fed has raised short-term rates 14 times to 4.5 percent. Wall Street is betting on another increase in late March.

Militarism and global debt

In his remarks, Geithner singled out China among countries accumulating huge dollar-denominated securities from large trading surpluses. The current monthly U.S. global trade gap is running at a record \$68.51 billion. Countries accepting these securities indirectly finance the Pentagon's pursuit of its worldwide military activities. Any shocks to the U.S. economy could lead their central banks to cash in those holdings in favor of other currencies and investments. The fallout for Pentagon spending and the economy would be incalculable.

The merger of the military-industrial complex that President Dwight Eisenhower (formerly General Eisenhower)

warned about in 1961 has accelerated the developing crisis. The concentration of military/industrial empires—Halliburton, Bechtel, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and the oil monopolies, which have rigged prices charged to the government—has grown and profited enormously over the years. The Pentagon keeps separate books for the regular defense budget and for emergency war expenses. That's called cooking the books.

The military's insatiable demand for more sophisticated military hardware and increased funding for Homeland Security will result in more debt and more borrowing. The constant expansion of U.S. military procurements confirms that Washington is determined that it will not be deterred from global domination, especially over the Middle East, with its vast oil and other resources.

As the U.S. threatens Iran, Syria and Palestine, its share of the world's gross product is shrinking. In the early 1950s the U.S. controlled more than 50 percent of the world's gross production. The 1960s saw this share diminish to around 35 percent, and between the 1970s and 1980s to 25-27 percent. Since 2002, the UN reported evidence of global stagnation, but no figures are available for the U.S. share of gross production.

On one hand, the domestic and world economic base of U.S. imperialism is contracting. On the other, there is the continuing and relentless drive for military expansion and imperialist war. They are intertwined and incompatible and will lead to inevitable catastrophe.

An independent, class-wide, mass movement in concert with the nationally oppressed communities at home and abroad can take advantage of this acute contradiction of imperialism. □

AK Steel lockout enters 3rd week

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

The landscape of Middletown, in southern Ohio, is dominated by AK Steel. AK has five plants in Ohio, but its largest—as well as its corporate headquarters—is located there. AK is a major supplier to the automotive and appliance industry.

Formerly Armco, AK is notorious for its hostility toward unions. Even in its heyday the steelworkers' union was not able to organize the Middletown plant. AK would only recognize the "Armco Employees Independent Federation" (AEIF).

Now 2,700 AEIF members have been on the picket line since Feb. 28, locked out by AK the day their contract expired. Refusing to allow union members to continue working under the old contract, and training scabs alongside union members in the days leading up to the lockout, AK has shown its determination to break the union.

The three main issues of contention are health care, job security and pensions. AK wants workers and retirees to make a substantial contribution to health care costs. It wants the option of bringing in nonunion subcontractors to do the work normally done by AEIF members. And AK bosses want to trash the traditional pension plans and impose an inferior 401K plan.

Workers spirits are strong. "I think they underestimated us," Scott Francis, who has worked at Middletown Works for almost 29 years, told Cox News. "It's amazing how much the community has given us," remarked gate captain Don South, a 33-year AK/Armco veteran. Car horns, clenched fists of solidarity, and offers of snacks and coffee are routine.

Corporate analysts in the media are displaying surprise at AK's strong-arm tac-

tics. "In a world of embattled labor unions, with companies exerting their influence at the bargaining table and in the courts, AK Steel's lockout is a pure power move that calls to mind the bare-knuckled tactics of union-management battles in the early 20th century," wrote Cliff Peale in the Cincinnati Enquirer.

It is true that most companies prefer the "modern" method of union-busting: using the bankruptcy courts to tear up union contracts. Still, no one familiar with AK's history is shocked by management's actions. In 1999, AK locked out 620 members of the USWA at its plant in Mansfield, Ohio. AK's goons harassed the steelworkers on and off the picket line, even following their kids home from school. The workers' main complaint was hardly unreasonable: They wanted the right to refuse unlimited mandatory overtime in order to spend a little time with their families.

When the 39-month lockout finally ended, AK portrayed itself as a new company with a new attitude of cooperation with its workers. "The lockout is over, and we look forward to the process of welcoming our returning workforce to the operation of AK Steel's world class Mansfield Works," said Richard M. Wardrop, Jr., then chairperson, president and chief executive officer of AK Steel.

Its recent lockout of the union reveals AK's real agenda. It exposes the irreconcilable nature of class relations under capitalism, particularly during periods of overproduction.

All of the AK unions, including the UAW and the USWA, should get behind the locked-out AEIF members. The auto and appliance unions should demand "no scab steel" in their plants. The only key that can break this cruel lockout is class solidarity. □

Dellums captures labor endorsement

By Clarence Thomas
ILWU, Local 10 member
Co-chair, Million Worker March
Movement

March 8—The Alameda Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO) announced its endorsement of retired Congressman Ronald Dellums for mayor of the city of Oakland on Feb. 7.

The Council represents 100,000 members and 130 local unions, including the public and private sector in manufacturing, transportation, health care, government and construction.

"Working people in Oakland want opportunity and inclusion," said Sharon Cornu, executive secretary-treasurer of the Council on the steps of City Hall, where Dellums joined officers of local unions and rank-and-file members at a press conference. Cornu said, "Ron Dellums offers new hope and vision for our members, working families and communities."

On Jan. 30, more than 100 trade unionists attended a "meet-the-candidates forum for Oakland Mayor and City Council," where they heard the candidates speak on the important issues facing working people in the city of Oakland.

Dellums' reasons for running

When asked about his goals and priorities in elective office by the labor council, Dellums stated the following: "I entered



PHOTO: MELVIN DICKSON
Clarence Thomas (left) & Ron Dellums at Oakland City Hall, Feb. 7.

the mayoral race to tackle the serious and difficult problems facing Oakland, including poverty, violence and hopelessness. My hope is that in our efforts to solve these problems, Oakland can become the model for cities throughout the country... Oakland must work to create a vibrant and expanding economy and to stimulate development, but city leaders must ensure that development embraces the source of Oakland's strength: its diversity. I do not want to wake up one morning and find the working class has been driven from Oakland.

Read the rest of this article online at www.workers.org.

Capitalism is the enemy, not immigrants

By Ruth Vela

In the United States, immigration has become increasingly criminalized. It is not surprising. People tend to look for scapegoats as they become more insecure about their own economic livelihood and remain badly informed. The government takes advantage of the fears of the public and warns against dangers such as damage to the economy, increases in crime, abuse of public aid programs, the spreading of diseases, drug trafficking, and gang and/or terrorist activity. Then with the use of the media, they paint a racist, distorted picture of immigrants coming from poor countries with the goal of stealing jobs, and taking advantage of public services and higher wage levels.

Contrary to what the U.S. government would like the public to believe, most immigrants add more to the U.S. economy than they take out. In fact the average immigrant contributes \$1,800 more in taxes annually than he or she receives in benefits and services provided by the U.S. government. But U.S. policymakers hide this information and take advantage of the fears of the public, by attempting to pass racist bills such as HR 4437.

This particular bill would permit the government to prosecute almost anyone who has regular contact with an undocumented person by broadening the definition of "alien smuggling" to include family members, employers, and immigrant advocates. This bill only serves to increase the super-exploitation of undocumented

immigrants by driving them further underground.

However, the restriction of immigration to this country cannot really meet any of its alleged objectives. Most people do not want to leave their homes and migrate, but feel they have no other options because of the economic repression caused in their countries by the profit-hungry greed of foreign corporations. In the end, it is the international economic policies promoted by capitalism that inevitably lead to increased immigration, that imposes criminal penalties on workers in order to decrease wages by taking advantage of undocumented workers who cannot risk demanding higher wages or protesting abusive or illegal working conditions.

The only solution to the continued abuses of workers is working-class unity! For it is not just the same suffering along with the same needs such as food, water, housing, education, and medical care that we share. We also have a common enemy: Capitalism! But we must remember "The people united will never be defeated!" For this is more than just a chant, more than just a fuzzy sentiment of unity. It is a battle cry meant to remind us that we must fight as one mighty fist for the rights of all workers and oppressed peoples, in order to be victorious against imperialism once and for all.

The writer is an organizer of the FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—youth group in San Diego.

L.A. farmers win a round in eviction fight

By John Parker
Los Angeles

A temporary stay of an eviction of 350 family farmers in South Central Los Angeles was won March 9, due to mounting pressure by the farmers and the city-wide community—from South Central to East Los Angeles to Hollywood—and the inclusion of some prominent figures in the anti-war movement.

The terms of this stay hold as long as the negotiations for the farm are still in progress. Even with these limitations, given the city's previous intransigence against the farmers who were subject to daily threats of eviction by a ruthless developer, this retreat by the city was a life-saving breath of reprieve.

"We are now planning for the hearings with the city set for Monday, March 20, which will consider our filing for the right of possession of the land," said Rufina Juarez, one of the principal elected representatives of the farm. "We will continue our actions at the city council and elsewhere to keep up the pressure. This is just a step in a long journey. It's not over yet."

These families in South Central Los Angeles have been sustaining themselves with a 14-acre community farm. They have had the legal right to work on this land for 13 years, until now—due to an illegal eviction by the city in favor of real estate developer Ralph Horowitz. The city had allowed this South L.A. community to develop this land into a productive farm. About 10 years later, the city secretly sold it to Horowitz for a little more than \$5 million in a back-room deal that was not sanctioned by the required public hearing. Horowitz is now demanding \$25 million for the property—an amount far out of reach for the farmers.

Los Angeles County Sheriffs posted an eviction notice on the fence near the entrance to the farm on March 1. The notice only gave farmers until March 7 to vacate. Fortunately, a technical error was found in the notice and an extension until March 13 had to be granted.

During the time leading up to the eviction order, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa had consistently refused to meet with the farmers and, like the city council, said the city's hands were tied because the property belonged to Horowitz. One mayoral assistant met with some of the farmers outside of the mayor's office at city hall

just days before the first eviction deadline. The assistant told them the city was having trouble trying to find the \$25 million Horowitz was demanding—a sum that amounts to a 500 percent gross profit by turning around the sale of the now privately-owned property back to the city.

Insensitive to the desperation and stress felt by the farmers facing an impending deadline, the mayor's official mouthpiece refused to answer the question of why the city could not either look into the illegality of the sale of the property or, using the claim of eminent domain, put a hold on the evictions.

The city administration and mayor obviously needed a push from workers, progressive organizations and individual activists—and that's what they got.

Unity and struggle won stay

On March 5, with the eviction looming, farmers and their supporters held a planning meeting to discuss emergency actions to defend the farm. A week of activities was planned, which included protests at the city council, door-to-door leafleting, draping of banners across major highway overpasses and confronting the Mayor to demand that he use his power to stop the evictions.

A people's victory against gov't harassment

By WW Boston bureau

After two years of courtroom battle, a very significant people's victory was won in a Boston court on March 7 in cases regarding longtime anti-war activist and former political prisoner Richard Picariello.

Picariello was acquitted on all charges in the first of the two cases. And the defense motion was granted to dismiss "with prejudice" the second case arising out of Picariello's arrest at a protest at a 2004 Bush fundraiser in Boston because of prosecution failure to provide required discovery information. These cases were a clear attempt to criminalize political protest.

At the heart of the cases was a decades-long campaign of surveillance and harassment against Picariello. The dedicated defense team headed by people's lawyer



L.A. farmers protest, March 10. John Parker, left, speaks at rally. At right, Zack de la Rocha, formerly of Rage Against the Machine.

PHOTOS: JASPER YU

Rosa Romero of Axis of Justice in Los Angeles—an organization made up predominantly of youth that deals with hunger, homelessness and sweatshops—was one of the primary organizers arranging daily actions of protest against the evictions. She commented on how enthusiasm for the farmers grew as the eviction threats increased. "In the last three weeks, since we knew we had to raise awareness, more people were willing to come out to help strategize, our web hits were doubling and our mailing list grew by 1,000 last week alone. And our organizing meetings have grown with organizations bringing more representatives."

Part of the activities included a planned demonstration on March 9, to be held at the mayor's mansion by members of the support committee of the farmers and the Los Angeles International Action Center.

The IAC and Mindullae, a Korean youth organization led by Jamie Kim, initiated a letter—signed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; celebrities Ed Asner and Casey Kasem; Vietnam war veteran and author of "Born on the Fourth of July" Ron Kovic and prominent activist organizations in the city, all strongly supporting the right of the South Central Farmers to the farm they built and calling for a March 9 protest in front of the mayor's mansion.

When city officials learned of the possibly large demonstration, they began pleading with and pressuring farmers to call off the protest at the mayor's mansion in exchange for temporarily halting the eviction. An agency pledged \$30,000 on behalf of the city to Horowitz in order to stop the evictions until negotiations on the property were over. □

John Pavlos was unswerving in pursuing the evidence of this, following the trail from a memo unearthed early in the case revealing involvement in the case by the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), an arm of the FBI.

The ensuing struggle to learn about the police surveillance continued over 16 pre-trial hearings, sessions before federal judges, and the trial beginning March 6 and ending March 7.

In the course of that struggle, the U.S. attorney as well as the Boston Police Department's attorney appeared in court and asserted that the information on the surveillance activity on Picariello sought by the defense was privileged and would not be provided no matter how relevant it might be to his defense. John Reinstein, executive director of the American Civil

Liberties Union of Massachusetts, joined the team to argue the defense's right to this information, and to appeal it before a federal judge, but the state continued to stonewall.

In the end, the case was able to open a window on the workings of Bush's steady consolidation of secret police powers. Despite the denial of the appeal to federal court, the defense team succeeded in forcing the state to produce two police officers directly involved in the Boston Police Intelligence Unit and the JTTF to provide testimony and be cross-examined by the defense team. The officers admitted to the surveillance of Picariello going back many years and including folders of material from the 1970s. On Aug. 26, 2004, during the Republican National Convention

Continued on page 9

From Asia to Latin America, women decry imperialism

By Kathy Durkin

The reactionary policies of the U.S. government on globalization, family planning, war and the environment are repudiated by women worldwide. But that didn't stop President George W. Bush from proclaiming on International Women's Day, March 8, that his administration is advancing "the equality of women in the world's newest democracies."

The imperialists can lie about this day, but women the world over know its essence is fightback—and solidarity.

International Women's Day this year was celebrated especially in those parts of the world where political consciousness against imperialism is high.

In many demonstrations throughout the Philippines, the strength, courage and determination of women was evident. Defying President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's U.S.-backed regime, which had declared a "state of emergency," they organized over 30 nationally-coordinated protests.

Women simultaneously marched in Northern Luzon, Quezon, the Visayas islands, Mindanao and other areas, carrying colorful banners saying "Assert women's rights! Stop political repression, persecution and poverty," and "Never again to martial law."

They vehemently demanded the ouster

of the president. During her term, the conditions of women workers and peasants have deteriorated and the feminization of poverty has grown. Mass unemployment is forcing women to emigrate for jobs, where they are often mistreated. Arroyo hasn't supported reproductive rights and family planning programs nor has she sought justice for a Filipina woman gang-raped by U.S. Marines last year.

In a major, militant, political demonstration in Makati, Manila's financial district, 12,000 women from many organizations, leftists, working and poor people vehemently demanded, "Oust Gloria Arroyo." Riot police attacked this march, arresting key leaders.

Demonstrators also targeted the U.S. military presence in their country and the resultant sexual trafficking and abuse. Objecting to joint U.S.-Philippine war games, women marched to the U.S. Embassy in Manila, where they demanded that U.S. troops leave.

In Latin America, Venezuelan women led thousands in a militant anti-imperialist procession to the U.S. Embassy. A truckload of petitions with 2 million signatures called for the U.S. to leave Iraq now. Armed with Venezuelan flags, President Hugo Chávez's photograph, and posters decrying Bush, they demanded the imperialists leave Iraq and the U.S. close its base in Guantanamo, Cuba. "We

women want peace," they said.

Nicaraguan women marched to the U.S. Embassy in Managua with the same message, which was also seen on banners in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Also in Brazil, 500 women occupied the Roca de la Raposa ranch on IWD. Members of the Brazilian Landless Rural Workers' Movement, they demanded land reforms and property for women.

Women, Indigenous people's groups and farmers marched in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and elsewhere, demanding full rights.

The Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) protested the U.S. occupation of Iraq with a march through Havana to the Jose Marti Anti-Imperialist Tribunal near the U.S. Interests Section. The FMC also condemned U.S. aggression against Cuba and the unjust imprisonment of the Cuban Five. They cheered on socialist Cuba's economic advances and the large proportion of women—57 percent—who have participated in Cuba's internationalist missions, from Venezuela to Pakistan.

Another anti-war march, with over 2,000 women, took place in Cuba's Eastern province of Holguin.

The South African government commemorated International Women's Day in Cape Town by launching a campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the monumental 1956 women's march in Pretoria against the hated apartheid



IWD in Philippines

pass system. Tribute was paid to women leaders in the historic South African liberation movement.

In Bangladesh, thousands of garment workers and other women marched in Dhaka for the right to decent wages, safe working conditions, and an end to anti-woman violence. Of the country's 2 million garment workers, 85 percent are women. The industry brings in \$6 billion in exports annually. Safety is compromised in the rush to profits—a recent fire at the KTS garment factory in Chittagong caused 56 deaths.

Women in Seoul, South Korea, pushed for workers' rights and better working conditions at an anti-government demonstration. Pakistani women rallied in many cities for an end to discrimination and sexual violence. Indonesian women in Aceh protested state repression, while Nepalese women marched for equality, democracy and trade union rights.

When European women socialists proclaimed International Women's Day in 1910, they recognized the need for worldwide solidarity with working women's struggles. This is especially important today in those countries that are under U.S.-backed occupation: Iraq, Haiti, Palestine and Afghanistan.

Today the socialist legacy of IWD is vital as women deal with capitalist inequality, poverty and oppression. Socialism is needed to truly emancipate women. □

'Women's role decisive in Bolivarian process'

Following are excerpts from an article written by Dominican activist Vannia Lara, who traveled to the state of Lara in Venezuela for the first U.S./Venezuela exchange gathering on Jan. 13-22.

On my first day in the state of Lara and with all the emotion of a newcomer, I did not even notice that it was a co-operative that was in charge of the transportation of our delegation. I had not realized that the co-op president was this very energetic woman, whose better adornments were a baseball cap with the logo of "Lancer@s de Lara" and a contagious smile. I discovered this significant detail during a conversation I had with one of the persons who accompanied our delegation. Her name was Lilibeth.

Lilibeth, whom I remember with endless tenderness and affection, reported that she was the treasurer of the Co-op Lancer@s de Lara. She is a single mother of two sons who was officially unemployed for many years. Lilibeth told me that what is taking place in Venezuela has changed her and her family's life socially more than economically.

Lilibeth tells me that through "Misión Vuelvan Caras", which is responsible for culturally transforming the social relations of production in order to guarantee a better quality of life for all Venezuelans, she had the opportunity to complete the two-year study on socio-cultural and socio-economic development.

The students who graduate from this program receive help from the government to establish new indigenous units of production that are within the framework of the needs of the community.

As the conversation continued, I was feeling more eager to know about this woman's experience amidst such an impor-



WW PHOTO: ARTURO PEREZ-SAAD

From l-r: Berna Ellorin, BAYAN-USA; Monica Moorehead; Yoomi Jeong, Korea Truth Commission; Dora Carcaño, Internat'l Democratic Women's Federation; Vannia Lara; Martizel González, Cuban Women's Federation at March 10 Workers World IWD forum in NYC.

tant social process. Lilibeth says that the beginnings were difficult, that she sacrificed many hours of sharing with her two sons to keep up with her studies. Although her mother was complaining and saying to her that she was wasting her time and that she had neglected her children, Lilibeth stayed strong and told her mother that what she was thinking about was her children's future, and that sooner than later her efforts would pay off.

Thanks to the funds granted by the Hugo Chávez government and after an arduous struggle, the co-op to which Lilibeth belongs was able to open the doors of their restaurant in a modest local community where the menu is completely affordable for the locals. Also the co-operative was able to consolidate their project of "Tourist Transportation."

Lilibeth mentions to me with subtle pride that, when she showed her mother the two buses and the two jeeps the co-op

had been able to buy, she said to her: "Mother, I told you that our efforts would not be in vain. What other government would have believed in us? Who else would have helped us to obtain this that is now ours and our children's?" At the present the members of this co-op are working on a project on tourism with a cultural approach that attracts both foreigners and Venezuelans who live in other states.

A few days later Lilibeth was hit by a car and in less than 24 she showed up to work. The first thing I noticed when I saw her was a wound on her chin, a cast on her leg, and her particular smile. I was alarmed by this sight and asked her what in the world she is doing here in those conditions. I suggested to her to go back home. Lilibeth's answer was that she is not going away, that for her this is very important since these buses that they had worked so hard on were being used for the first time by this delegation. She said that she wanted to be able to participate until the end and that this was exactly what she

intended to do.

During the following days of the delegation our schedule was filled with activities. We visited a large number of different institutions, many of an autonomous character. We visited missions, co-operatives, community organizations, urban land committees, Casa de la Alimentación, Mercal, educational forums, cultural events, etc.

We had the opportunity to share with a group of students from Misión Ribas, of which a majority were women of different generations. We also visited many of the numerous co-operatives that cover a pyramid of productive needs like food, textiles, shoe manufacturing, Cuatro (National Instrument). We visited alternative media, Barrio Adentro clinics, among many other places.

The majority of these institutions, especially co-ops, were led by women. It is a fact that, Venezuelan women have a decisive role in this historical process.

This country where as late as in the 1980s, there still existed retrogressive laws which prohibited married women, as well as cohabiting women, to manage their own legal affairs; to make decisions with regard to their children and decisions about obtaining employment; the right of women to own property and to sign legal documents without the authorization of her spouse.

The participation of women and the recognition of their work by the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, often called the Non-Sexist Magna Carta, is more than a feminist victory; this is the integration of women and men in a struggle to promote the adoption of new life styles in which the stronghold is the equality, solidarity and cooperativism for all.

The struggle has yet begun; there is still a long way to go. Let's roll up our sleeves! □

International
WOMEN'S
DAY

VISIT TO
VENEZUELA

Women resist U.S. dictates

Philippines under de facto martial law

The following is from a talk by Berna Ellorin of Bayan USA to an International Women's Day forum sponsored by Workers World Party in New York on March 10.

I'd like to salute all the women who work for change in the number-one imperialist power in the world. Your contributions to the world anti-imperialist struggle are important.

International Women's Day is much celebrated in the Philippines. Within the Bayan alliance, the confederation of women's organizations called Gabriela led mass demonstrations on March 8.

Women have historically played a very important role in advancing the Filipino people's struggle, beginning with Spanish colonial times, when the first revolt was led by a woman named Gabriela.

During the 1970s when the U.S.-puppet regime of Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, a very dynamic women students' organization was formed called Makibaka. Like other legal, democratic organizations, it was forced to go underground.

Activists targeted by the Marcos regime made a huge exodus from urban centers to the countryside. Lorena Barros, founder of Makibaka, was one of the first martyrs of the martial law. She had joined

the New People's Army and was assassinated in an encounter.

Right now, a crisis in the Philippines is being perpetuated by U.S. imperialism and its puppet Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Filipino culture and society are historically very patriarchal, very Catholic. But the principal oppression being waged against the majority of women workers and peasants right now is class oppression, and Macapagal-Arroyo is the symbol of the bourgeois comprador class. She comes from one of the handful of families that carry out the dictates of U.S. imperialism.

Although the government denies it, there is a new martial law in the Philippines right now, since the regime declared a state of emergency. It has provided the pretext for human rights violations like warrantless arrests and the killing of mass leaders. Another Bayan leader was killed yesterday in central Luzon.

The major news organizations are being monitored by the military. The Philippines is now the most dangerous place in the world to practice journalism.

Another issue that has galvanized the Filipino people is the gang rape in November 2005 of a Filipina woman by U.S. Marines. She was raped and knocked unconscious. No action was taken against these six Marines.

Only in January did the Philippine gov-

ernment issue a request to transfer them from the jurisdiction of the U.S. Embassy. They have been protected by an immunity clause in the visiting forces agreement, which has allowed the reentry of U.S. troops in at least 20 ports all over the archipelago. Not a single U.S. troop has ever been arrested or convicted for any of their numerous sexual violations in the Philippines, which has historically been used by the Pentagon as a gateway to the Asian continent and a launching pad, refueling location and rest and recreation area for U.S. wars of aggression overseas. Caravans of women and children are sent to areas where there are U.S. troops to pleasure and service them.

That is one of the reasons we are with you in the call to bring the U.S. troops home

We also want the U.S. government and the puppet government of Macapagal-Arroyo to bring justice to all the victims of sexual violations by U.S. troops, to arrest and convict all those who have committed them.

The current regime is completely subservient to U.S. dictates. It has proposed certain changes to the Philippine consti-

tution, many of which were authored by the U.S. itself, that have to do with selling the country's patrimony, its natural resources, public utilities and mass media. All could be 100 percent foreign-owned.

On March 18 we'll call for the scrapping of these charter changes and will be marching with you in Times Square.

Currently, five congress members from

Bayan are being held inside the lower house of parliament. The military are waiting for them outside and they can't leave for threat of being arrested. One is Lisa Masa, a woman who has committed her whole life to advancing Filipina women.

Many U.S. puppets have come and gone. The people's democratic movement has ousted two of them; we

believe we can oust this one. No amount of state terror can stop what the people started a century ago.

As a member of Bayan in New York, it is an honor to be declared an enemy of this regime. No amount of labeling can suppress the voice of dissent that is growing in the streets.

Long live the anti-imperialist women's movement! Long live international solidarity! □



Million Worker March Movement holds IWD event

By LeiLani Dowell
Long Island City, N.Y.

A March 8 meeting celebrating International Working Women's Day, sponsored by the Million Worker March Movement, showed the strength of diverse women fighting oppression of all kinds.

Chryse Glackin of the MWMM chaired the meeting. She explained the need to celebrate IWD: "The MWM knows that working people are on the run, and we want to turn that around, and build a movement."

The all-woman panel included a member of the youth group FIST - Fight Imperialism, Stand Together; a member of the Transit Workers Union who works for the Metropolitan Transit Authority; members of the New York Solidarity Coalition for Gulf Coast Survivors, including a Katrina evacuee from New Orleans; unionists with the Industrial Workers of the World who have been trying to organize Starbucks Coffee; and a performance by a youth group.



The event, held at a Teamsters hall in Long Island City, began with a screening of "Harlan County USA," a documentary by Barbara Kopple on the 1973 coal miners' strike. The film highlights women's extraordinary participation in the struggle against the Brookside Mine of the Eastover Mining Company in Harlan County, Ky.

The audience celebrated the victory of the two IWW organizers in a labor struggle against Starbucks. One of the speakers had been fired from her job for union

activity, along with another employee. The National Labor Relations Board ruled against Starbucks, however, and the workers' jobs were reinstated the day before the IWD event. The Labor Board also ruled that Starbucks cannot deny workers the right to wear union buttons while at work.

Brenda Stokely from the New York Solidarity Coalition for Gulf Coast Survivors encouraged the audience, saying: "An upsurge is developing in this country. There is a coalescing of all broth-

ers and sisters [of] whatever nationality. This is what imperialism has always feared the most—us coming together and putting aside our differences, whether we speak a different language or were born someplace else—and this is what's developing. It's in its embryonic form, but you can feel the rush and development of it and everyone who's been doing that work should be honored and applauded."

The writer was one of the speakers representing FIST.



Brenda Stokely (holding baby) and other IWD panelists, March 8.

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WORKERS WORLD, Oct. 17, 2002:

Bush builds a war on lies

"President George W. Bush's speech in Cincinnati on Oct. 7 contained an almost uninterrupted stream of lies, vilification and appeals to fear and threats. Bush repeated his insinuation that the Iraqi government was somehow tied to the Sept. 11 attack—without one iota of evidence. Bush reiterated the charge that Baghdad was producing biological and chemical weapons—again without any evidence. He repeated the charge that Iraq was on the verge of developing a nuclear weapon with which to threaten the United States. No evidence supplied."

Oct. 24, 2002:

Bush plans colonial occupation of Iraq

"Millions of people opposed to the Bush administration's plan to go to war against Iraq watched with anger and dismay last week as the U.S. Congress

voted to authorize the president to do just that. A bloc has been formed in the ruling class between the moderates and the military adventurers over destroying the government of Saddam Hussein and conquering Iraq. However, the fierce resistance of the Iraqi people in the event of an invasion, combined with a popular explosion of mass anger in the Middle East, could completely wreck the plans of the Pentagon. Colonial occupation breeds anti-colonial resistance on a massive scale."

April 10, 2003:

Iraqi resistance & the Rumsfeld strategy

"The heroic resistance by the people of Iraq to Washington's relentless high-tech military onslaught has inspired the world, shocked the Pentagon high command and dealt a severe blow to the Bush administration's ambitions to vastly expand U.S. capitalism's world empire."

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Is the U.S. preparing an attack?

Bush stokes crisis with Iran

Continued from page 1

American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), threatening Iran with "meaningful consequences" if it continues to insist on its sovereign right to develop nuclear energy. "For our part, the United States is keeping all options on the table.... We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon," warned Cheney. (www.TomPaine.com)

On the same day as Cheney's speech, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld menaced Iran at a Pentagon news conference: "They are currently putting people in Iraq to do things that are harmful.... And it is something that they, I think, will look back on as having been an error in judgment." And during the same week, UN Ambassador John Bolton said Iran would face "tangible and painful consequences." (The Progressive, March 12)

Two days later, on March 9, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told a Senate committee that the U.S. "faces no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran" and declared that Iran was the "central banker for terrorism" in the Middle East. (www.TomPaine.com)

In a coordinated move with his senior imperialist master, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw made a major speech saying that "Iran is going in the wrong direction" and "Iran and the people deserve better than this," referring to the elected

Iranian government.

Right to self-determination and self-defense

Of course, Iran has the complete right to develop nuclear power, even under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, has repeatedly said inspectors found nothing to support U.S. and Israeli claims of nuclear weapons development. Iran has allowed UN weapons inspectors to go anywhere and everywhere.

Furthermore, from a political point of view of the right to self-determination, the Iranians have a right to develop any means of self-defense against their former oppressors. The British imperialists and British Petroleum ruled in Iran until they were thrown out by a nationalist revolution in 1951 led by Mohammed Mossadegh. Mossadegh was overthrown in a CIA-MI6 coup in 1953, and the Shah, one of the most brutal rulers of the 20th century, was placed in power by the U.S. government. U.S. oil companies then seized the oil riches. It took the revolution of 1979 and great sacrifice by the Iranian people to oust the U.S. puppet Shah and establish national sovereignty.

These former oppressors of the Iranian people in Washington and London have

an agenda that goes far beyond the nuclear issue. It is the same agenda they had in Iraq: reconquest and neocolonization to control the oil. They want to destroy the hard-won national independence of the Iranian people, by any means they can—by subversion if possible, by military attack if necessary.

They have bullied and maneuvered the French and German imperialists, the Putin regime in Russia and the Chinese government into taking part in the campaign to isolate Iran. They have used the so-called EU-3 negotiations, the IAEA, and now they are trying to use the UN Security Council to further their ends and set the diplomatic and legal stage for forcing Iran to capitulate or to face sanctions and eventual military action.

Of course, all the players in the imperialist game of attempted strangulation of Iran avow their love for the Iranian people, their desire to resolve the issue through peaceful means and negotiations. But this is just so much camouflage.

Whether or not the Pentagon will attack Iran if it refuses to surrender its sovereignty cannot be known with certainty. U.S. imperialism has a host of contradictions to deal with. But the anti-war movement must take this danger as seriously as the Iranian people are undoubtedly taking it.

Downing Street memos

In this regard, the present maneuvers with the IAEA and the Security Council must be viewed in the light of the infamous Downing Street memos of July 23, 2002—eight months before the U.S.-British invasion of Iraq.

Workers World last summer (July 29, 2005) carried an article entitled "Lenin's 'Imperialism' and the Downing Street memos." Downing Street is the residence of the British prime minister. Documents had just been leaked to the media about a secret cabinet meeting that had been held there on July 23, 2002, regarding the U.S. plans to attack Iraq.

One memo said: "C. [head of the British foreign intelligence] reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around policy."

This problem did not faze the Labor Party cabinet. In the memo, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw was quoted as saying, "We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow backing UN weapons inspectors. This would help with the legal justification for the use of force."

An earlier meeting of the Overseas Defense Secretariat Cabinet on March 8 had concluded that: "A legal justification for invasion would be needed ... none currently exists. This makes moving quickly to invade legally very difficult. We should therefore consider a staged approach establishing international support, building up pressure on Saddam and developing military plans. There is a lead time of about six months to a ground offensive."

Now fast-forward to the report by the Washington Post this March 13. It describes the shift to a new, aggressive "regime change" orientation in the Bush administration regarding Iran:

"Now that the nuclear issue is at the Security Council, the U.S. strategy is to escalate gradually rather than force an immediate climax. The first step would be a statement by the council president declaring Iran in violation of nuclear treaty obligations and demanding that it suspend

uranium enrichment. If that fails, the council could be asked to impose economic sanctions or pass a resolution allowing military force to enforce compliance. Russia and China, which have veto power, seem unlikely to support either move."

Military planning in progress

Consider also a report in the London Telegraph of Feb. 12 that said, "Strategists in the Pentagon are drawing up plans for devastating bombing raids backed by submarine-launched ballistic missile attacks against Iran's nuclear sites. ... Central Command and Strategic Command planners are identifying targets, assessing weapon-loads and working on logistics for an operation. ...

"They are reporting to the office of Donald Rumsfeld ... as America updates plans for action if the diplomatic offensive fails....

"This is more than just the standard military contingency assessment," said a senior Pentagon adviser. "This has taken on much greater urgency in recent months."

It must be remembered that Washington and London could not get Security Council authorization for the invasion of Iraq either, but it took place anyway.

World domination and military madness

Numerous observers point out the vast differences between Iraq and Iran. First of all the U.S. military is already bogged down in Iraq. Secondly, Iran has three times more people. It has not been weakened, as Iraq was, by a prior imperialist attack in 1991 and 12 years of sanctions and bombings. An attack on Iran could completely undermine the U.S. occupation in Iraq because of the large Shiite population in both countries. The hatred for Washington would be so great that there is a strong potential for a regional uprising and a general conflagration.

So the question remains, how could the Bush administration actually contemplate something that is seemingly contrary to its own imperialist interests?

In this regard it must be understood that the third anniversary of the Iraq war is also the third anniversary of crisis for the Bush administration. Its attempt to establish U.S. world domination, its proclaimed aim in the wake of Sept. 11, stalled almost immediately after the invasion and the outbreak of determined resistance.

The premise for world domination by Washington is that the Pentagon represents an unstoppable force. If the Iraq occupation has done anything, however, it has revealed the vulnerability of the U.S. military machine. The Pentagon superpower has been encircled and profoundly humbled by a poorly armed but dogged resistance for three years. Its situation shows no improvement, indeed a marked deterioration on display every day.

The goal of the Pentagon generals and the would-be architects of world domination is to restore the reputation of the U.S. military to its pre-Iraq war level. This is a long-range, strategic necessity for Washington. They may choose risking instability and social uprisings for the sake of reasserting their sole superpower dominance that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

This urge flows from the systemic needs of the U.S. oil companies, banks and transnational corporations to expand throughout the globe, to secure new markets, new resources, new workers to exploit, and to overcome the permanent crisis of imperialism and the profit system. These contradictions could lead to another insane military adventure. □

URGENT APPEAL—

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR PALESTINE

Following is a statement the International Action Center issued March 14 following the Israeli seizure of Palestinian political leaders from a prison compound in Jericho on the West Bank. After the seizures, 15,000 Palestinians demonstrated in Gaza against the United States, Britain and Israel.

The International Action Center has learned today, March 14, that the Israeli military has illegally and in violation of international treaties assaulted a prison compound in Jericho on the West Bank, opening fire on guards and prisoners.

This illegal act was done in connivance with the British and U.S. forces that were obligated by international agreement to guard the prison compound and are responsible for the well-being of the prisoners. U.S. and British forces left the area just before the Israeli attack.

There are injured prisoners who have not been evacuated. The prisoners are suffocating from the fires and the fumes. Three Palestinians were killed, including at least one guard, Ibrahim Abu al-Amin, and 35 have been injured in the attack. Eight hundred children are confined to their school all day.

Among the prominent Palestinian prisoners seized is Ahmed Saadat, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Early reports on Al-Jazeera were that Saadat, though without arms, had taken cover inside the prison and was determined to fight rather than surrendering. As of noon EST the report is that the heavily armed Israeli force succeeded in seizing him.

The IAC joins the demands of the Palestinian organizations that the Israeli forces release all the prisoners and leave the West Bank and Gaza.

The IAC also holds the U.S. and British authorities responsible for the crimes committed at the prison compound in Jericho and responsible also for the safety of the Palestinian prisoners seized by the Israeli forces.

Free Ahmed Saadat and all the Palestinian prisoners.

Free Palestine.

Call the White House 202-456-1111, 202-456-1414 or (+1-) 202 - 456 1111
The State Department 202-647-4000
Department of Defense 703-428-0711
Israeli Ministry of Defense:

Tele: +972 - (0)3 - 697 5540

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+972 - (0)3 - 697 5349

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American Consulate, Jerusalem

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Tele: +972 - (0)3 - 519 7575

State Department, Bureau of Near East Affairs, Office of Public Affairs

Tele: (+1-) 202 - 647 5150

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Tel Aviv, Tele: +972 - (0)3 - 725 1222

Fax: +972 - (0)3 - 527 8574

Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Human Rights Department

Tele: (+44) - (0)207 008 3000

Demand the safety and immediate release of these political prisoners—

prisoners that the U.S. is bound by international agreement to protect. □

Art show on Palestine

"Made in Palestine," an exhibition of the work of 23 Palestinian artists—both those living in Palestine and in exile—is a beautiful testament to the resilience, creativity and resistance of the Palestinian people and their culture.

The exhibition opened in New York City on March 14. It took two years of fundraising on Al Jisser's part in the Arab community and the broader progressive community in New York to obtain the money needed to bring "Made in Palestine" to the art scene in Chelsea.

The exhibition will run through April 22 at The Bridge, 521 W. 26th St., 3rd floor. The gallery is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

—G. Dunkel

Milosevic dies in NATO prison

Yugoslav leader exposed U.S. war crimes

By John Catalinotto

U.S. imperialism and its corporate media made a concerted effort to demonize Slobodan Milosevic while he was alive, charging him with crimes in a war of their making. Now they are using his death as another opportunity to slander the last independent leader of Yugoslavia, a multinational country that no longer exists; it has been dismembered by U.S. and European capitalist powers.

The imperialists have the advantage of owning the most powerful propaganda machine in world history. The only advantage Milosevic had, and which he referred to in his opening defense statement, was that truth and justice were on his side.

According to early statements from officials of Scheveningen prison in The Hague, Netherlands, the former Yugoslav president was found dead in his cell on the morning of March 11. Finally the early rumors of his death, broadcast first on Serb radio, were confirmed. The person who had led Yugoslavia as it faced open subversion and attack from 1990 to 2000 had died.

International human rights activist and attorney Ramsey Clark has often pointed out that there is nothing in the United Nations Charter allowing the Security Council to set up a body like the International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia. The ICTY is a political instrument established to punish anyone in the Balkans who resisted the imperialist takeover of the region. It brought charges against Milosevic right in the midst of the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in May of 1999, obviously to bring additional pressure on the Yugoslav leadership.

What much of the world doesn't know and won't learn from the corporate media is that President Milosevic's supporters have been entreating the Security Council to allow him to be examined by his own doctors and to receive treatment in a clinic in Moscow, Russia. The court continued to refuse these appeals and minimize the president's serious medical condition, of which it was fully aware, until his death at the age of 64.

The U.S. and NATO powers succeeded, with guns and money, in breaking up the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia. They succeeded in overthrowing the last independent government in Eastern Europe, the one in Belgrade. They succeeded even in confusing many progressives in the West—the imperialist countries—with a well-planned and executed offensive of lies that blamed every problem in the Balkans on Serbia and on Milosevic himself.

This propaganda offensive obscured the interference, subversion and "divide and conquer" tactics practiced by German and U.S. imperialism, most of all, in connivance with neo-fascist groupings in the republics of Croatia and Bosnia and in Serbia's Kosovo province.

But the ICTY failed miserably when it tried to prove to the world that Slobodan Milosevic was guilty of any of the crimes committed against the people of the Balkans in the 1990s.

It took Milosevic thousands of pages of text to answer the 500,000 pages of so-called evidence against him, yet the ICTY failed to prove its case. The best concise summary of his argument is given in Milosevic's own 2004 opening defense talk, published in "The Defense Speaks—For History and the Future," by the International Action Center (IAC). But there is

also the "short presentation," presented with this article, that should convince anyone capable of looking at the facts without extreme prejudice.

When the four-year-long trial started against Milosevic in February 2002, it was called the "trial of the century." The NATO powers planned it as a show trial against someone who dared to resist their takeover of his country. Everyone expected consistent coverage of the trial and occasional front-page and top-of-the-news treatment. And that might have happened—if the ICTY had come anywhere near making its case.

But it didn't. Despite an enormous advantage in staff, money, investigators and the state power of all the NATO governments behind it, the ICTY was unable to bring a credible case against Milosevic. The story then dropped from the imperialist media. This lack of coverage alone is an admission of Milosevic's innocence and U.S.-NATO guilt.

It is too soon after the events to evaluate President Milosevic's historical contribution as a leader of both Yugoslavia and the Socialist Party of Serbia. This judgment should first be left to the people and working class of the Balkans, certainly not to the imperialist criminals who demolished the Yugoslav Federation.

But one thing is clear. From the day he was kidnapped from a Belgrade prison to Scheveningen in The Hague and placed under NATO imprisonment, he carried out, under horribly unequal conditions, a heroic legal and political battle against the people who ordered him there. Like his fellow Balkans political prisoner of the 1930s, Bulgarian Communist Georgi Dimitrov, who successfully defended himself against bogus Nazi charges that he burned the Reichstag, Milosevic waged his own

legal defense in the bogus NATO court.

Milosevic turned the tables on the court and showed that Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Gerhard Schroeder, Gen. Wesley Clark and the rest of the NATO heads of state and government and their generals were the real "butchers of the Balkans" and the ones who deserved to be on trial for war crimes.

Sara Flounders of the IAC pointed out the ICTY had reason to desire Milosevic's death: "As the case was drawing to a close [Milosevic's effective defense] presented a terrible dilemma for the court." For this reason, the IAC has joined the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic (ICDSM) to help carry out "an international, independent inquiry into the circumstances and cause of his death" and to ensure that "his family, his party and his supporters be party to that inquiry."

Catalinotto is co-editor of "Hidden Agenda—the U.S./NATO takeover of the Balkans," published in 2002 by the IAC.

THE DEFENSE SPEAKS

It promised to be 'the trial of the century'. But as soon as the defendant began to expose U.S. and NATO's war crimes in the breakup and bombing of Yugoslavia the media coverage of The Hague Tribunal went silent. Read this book and understand WHY.

Milosevic's Defense Is Impossible To Dismiss...

'The US/NATO court trying Slobodan Milosevic was always totally illegitimate. It could never be taken seriously as a court of justice. Milosevic's defense is powerful, convincing, persuasive and impossible to dismiss.'

—Harold Pinter, author, and winner of 2005 Nobel Prize in Literature

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Victory against gov't harassment

Continued from page 5

protests, the New York Daily News published Picariello's picture on its front page implying he was a "terrorist" for engaging in anti-war activities. In the RNC protest against the News demonized and libeled Picariello for his protest activities.

At Picariello's trial, officers described the centralization and coordination of police agencies under the JTTF, and daily or weekly briefings. They also confirmed that among those being surveilled are the International Action Center, Workers World Party, ANSWER and many other progressive and revolutionary individuals and organizations in New England. The names of specific police officers involved and their role were also revealed.

"These charges were an attempt to chill political activism and were directed not just against me but at all progressives. The court struggle produced a victory in the battle against it by forcing a crack in the wall of secrecy around the growing secret police state apparatus of the Bush administration. This solidarity showed an understanding that we must stand as one in unity whenever the state attempts to crush our rights and stop the movement dead in its tracks. We need to continue the support shown in my case particularly in relation to Arabs and Muslims continuing to fall victim to the Bush administration's sweeps," Picariello told his supporters as he left the courthouse.

He acknowledged the crucial role of the continuous support he has received from dedicated political activists who turned out at each of the trials. □

Massive protests against new anti-youth labor laws

By LeiLani Dowell

March 14—Giant protests were held by unions, students and youth in France during March 9-11 in response to new employment legislation that will weaken labor laws protecting young workers.

The law, called the First Employment Contract (CPE in French), was proposed by French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and adopted March 9 by Parliament. CPE institutes a two-year contract for people under the age of 26 that employers can terminate at any time without explanation.

Supposedly an attempt to cut unemployment among youth by encouraging companies to hire young people, opponents point out that the law would actually make it easier for employers to fire youth, assuring less job security to an already struggling population. Nearly one in four young French people is unemployed.

Youth remember Villepin's response to the rebellions against racism and poverty that ignited throughout France in October and November, when he prioritized the arrests and trials of those protesting instead of equal opportunity legislation.

The British newspaper Guardian described the initial discussions of students at Paris' Sorbonne University: "Many spoke of sending out dozens, sometimes hundreds of CVs and hearing nothing from employers. Others said wearing a Muslim

headscarf or not being white considerably reduced job prospects. Those studying political science said they were assured a job for life in France's generous state sector. 'But for most people, being young in France is a hopeless nightmare,' said David Domine-Cohn, doing a masters in history."

These discussions turned into protest when on March 9, hundreds of thousands hit the streets nationwide after the law was passed, with police estimating the number of protesters at 400,000 and unions estimating 1 million. Police used teargas to break up demonstrations at the Sorbonne. Meanwhile, approximately 3,000 students, according to organizers, stopped traffic at the Arc de Triomphe on the Champs Elysees in Paris.

Marianne, a 23-year-old student, told the French Press Agency (AFP), "The aim of this hard-hitting action on the Champs Elysees is to make ourselves heard by the government which is not listening to us. We will be determined, until the CPE is withdrawn." Another demonstrator said, "Villepin said, 'It's not the street that rules'—but today it is!"

The next day, some 400 student activists occupied the Sorbonne until early March 11. Earlier, police with batons had beaten students at a roadblock next to the university. The students set up barricades at the main doors of the university and hurled "seemingly anything they could lay their hands on" from upper-story windows



of the building at the police, who were positioned in the square outside the university. At 4 a.m. the next day, French riot police stormed the building and again assaulted students with teargas and batons.

Student leaders said more than half of the country's 85 universities were in some way paralyzed by demonstrations. The AFP reported that eight were effectively closed down.

AFP called the police beatings "a scene reminiscent of those in the 1968 student riots that shook France and brought the government of the day to its knees." The Guardian recounted, "On that occasion, it was Vietnam, Algeria and the antiquated rules of their superiors that spurred students to action. These days, it is something far closer to home."

In Paris, unions and university and high school students have called for a national protest on March 18—the same day that protests around the world will condemn the third anniversary of the illegal war and occupation of Iraq.

The writer is a FIST organizer.

Wanna stop war, racism? MOBILIZE

continued from page 1

infrastructure of that country.

If administration fabrications about “weapons of mass destruction” awakened so many in this country to the lies on which the war was based, then the atrocities at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo have become symbols of the sheer cruelty and violence with which it is being carried out. This public anger against the war is more and more holding Bush and the Pentagon responsible.

But Bush and the generals have made it abundantly clear that they have no intention whatsoever of retreating one inch from their quest to subdue by massive military force the entire Middle East and to recolonize it on a scale even greater than what the British and the French did after the first and second world wars.

It is also clear that Iran is the next target. And on this fact there is no division within the entire ruling class, including the leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

At this very moment they are laying the basis for attacking Iran and extending the war.

This must be a clarion call to all who oppose the war and the senseless deaths and brutality it brings. Close to half a trillion dollars is being wasted on war that could have been used for health care, jobs, food and education. But in addition, there's a greater understanding that the causes behind this military madness are not “weapons of mass destruction” or even the extremism of one president—George Bush. The causes are systemic to imperialism, which is in deep crisis and, as a consequence, nurtures war, reaction and racism in a thousand and one ways, devastating and destroying the lives of people everywhere.

The working class and oppressed cannot rely on the capitalist parties, politicians and their elections—either the ones next fall, or the presidential elections two years later in 2008, to stop the war against Iraq, stop the threats against Iran and turn around the resources instead to come to the rescue of the people of this country who are experiencing more unemployment, lower real wages,

racism and the oppression of women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

The Katrina disaster, which forced yet another diaspora of African Americans from their New Orleans communities, must be seen in a broader global and historical context. How the U.S. government has dealt with the survivors, its ulterior motives of ethnic cleansing and displacement—mostly of impoverished African Americans—is not just a domestic issue, it is an outgrowth of imperialism as much as Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran are.

That's why on March 18 in New York City, after assembling at Times Square, thousands of marchers will take their demands to the United Nations building for the immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of troops from Iraq. They will also raise, loud enough for the Security Council to hear the cry, “hands off Iran” and they will go to the U.N. to condemn Bush and the U.S. for massive human rights violation right here, epitomized by Katrina. On May 20, protesters will demonstrate in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. threats leveled at Cuba and Venezuela.

There must be a revival of the mass, militant movement against the war like the anti-war demonstrations of millions of protesters around the globe on Feb. 15-16, 2003. It will take a united, independent mobilization of the people—moved first and foremost by the struggle to end the war, and incorporating all of the issues that confront society—to stop the war drive.

There is no other solution. There is no short cut. The protests in New York, California, throughout the U.S. and around the world on the third anniversary of the war can serve as engines to open a new phase of the global struggle against the war.

Ultimately, the struggle against war must be a struggle against capitalism. Capitalism and imperialism must expand or die in its quest for profit. That is the cause of war and intervention. And the struggle to get rid of capitalism can only take the form of the struggle for socialism and production for human need not for profit. □

China: A hopeful sign

The National Peoples Congress of China “is consumed with an ideological debate over socialism and capitalism that many had assumed had been buried by China's long streak of fast economic growth,” according to a lead story in the March 12 New York Times.

The debate forced the Chinese government to shelve a draft law to protect property rights that “had been expected to win pro-forma passage.” It also “highlighted the resurgent influence of a small but vocal group of socialist-leaning scholars and policy advisers,” said the Times. “These old-style leftist thinkers have used China's rising income gap and increasing social unrest to raise doubts about what they see as the country's headlong pursuit of private wealth and market-driven economic development.”

The debate, according to the Times, has its origin in a critique of the property law by a Beijing University professor, Gong Xiantian, who attacked the drafters of the law for “copying capitalist civil law like slaves” and offering equal

protection to “a rich man's car and a beggar's stick.”

“Most of all,” the writer protested that the law did not make clear that “socialist property is inviolable.”

President Hu Jintao has reportedly advised cadre to study Cuba and North Korea to learn how to achieve social stability. Furthermore, films about the 1991 Yeltsin-led counter-revolution in the Soviet Union are being shown to cadres to warn what happens when socialism is destroyed.

This debate takes place against a background of 200 rebellions a day in the year 2005 as workers and peasants revolt against capitalist “reforms.” A campaign has been launched by President Hu and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to close the income gap between the city and the countryside under the slogan of a “new socialist countryside.”

Land in China is leased by the farmer from the village and can't be sold legally. The imperialist media expressed disap-

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Global warming The world as a war zone

By Deirdre Griswold

War is associated with not only large loss of life but also the breakdown of all normal daily activities. When war comes to a region, large populations often must be on the move, trying to escape devastation that has made it impossible to find shelter, go to work or school, or even get food and water. Transportation and power systems break down, as does public health. The civilian casualties caused by disease, starvation and exposure can exceed those of actual combat.

Available resources are commandeered by the military, which has its own parallel mechanisms to ensure that even when civilian life is in chaos, the troops are fed and sheltered and can move freely.

Human misery is compounded by profiteering. In a capitalist society, everything is for sale and the hardships of war just drive up prices. They also shine a blinding light on the great social rifts that lead the rich to get even richer while the majority are going through sheer hell.

As we move into an era of more and more natural disasters caused by the unnatural phenomenon of global warming, the areas affected are coming to look more and more like war zones.

There has been no war on U.S. soil since the 1860s. But the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, followed by the collapse of the levees in New Orleans, exposed the weaknesses and contradictions of 21st century capitalism on a grand scale. Where Black people were once sold on the auction block to slave owners who needed field laborers, their descendants found out in the cruelest way that they had become expendable in this market-driven system. Local police and then National Guard rode shotgun, tasked with protecting stores and buildings that were being inundated anyway, while the rising floodwaters claimed the most vulnerable people.

The world experienced the warmest year on record in 2005. After a balmy period this month, cold air came roaring back into the Midwest with baseball-sized hailstones and twisters whose winds reached 206 miles an hour. Even the lovely islands of Hawaii, which enjoy a temperate climate year round, have had record-breaking rains that just caused a dam in Kauai to burst and wash away several houses and their sleeping people.

The ice is rapidly melting at both poles. Fresh water flowing into the north Atlantic has pushed the Gulf Stream farther away from the British Isles. This, paradoxically, may mean colder winters for Western Europe, which has already seen unusually severe storms for several decades.

Central America, the Caribbean and parts of South America are being repeatedly battered by powerful hurricanes generated in the warmer ocean off West Africa. High winds, flooding and landslides have done immense damage and caused extensive loss of life. In the Caribbean, only socialist Cuba has been able to keep deaths at a minimum with its comprehensive evacuation system that uses all available resources.

The question is no longer if or when global warming will seriously affect life on the planet. It is an established fact, and each new study shows more rapid change.

It is not just future generations but today's generation that will see rising sea levels that can inundate low-lying countries. Some predictions are apocalyptic.

The question is, what must be done?

There is no individual way to overcome this growing disaster. Riding a bike instead of driving or turning down the heat in your home may be good for you, but it's a drop in the bucket. This is a vast problem caused by the effect of human activity on the environment, and it can only be meaningfully addressed through profound social change.

Everyone knows that the U.S. government was the world's worst when it

came to denying climate change. Even a cautious public figure like James Hansen, head of NASA's Goddard Institute, recently charged the

Bush administration with trying to censor him for speaking out on global warming. For years, the U.S. has refused to join international pacts like the Kyoto Accords, meant to slow down climate change.

This has nothing to do with ignorance. This country has a massive scientific-technological establishment. This intransigence flows rather from the powerful political position of monopoly capitalism in the U.S., which refuses to allow anything to slow down its pursuit of superprofits on a world scale. Its determination to use the most ruthless methods to build an empire based on control of the world's oil shows how short-sighted this ruling group is.

Capitalist corporations are driven by the bottom line: profits. Long-term planning that would interfere with immediate profits falls by the wayside. When large social projects like dams, roads and railroads have been absolutely indispensable for the expansion of capitalist production but couldn't turn an immediate profit, they have been built with public funds.

Today, however, the publicly financed infrastructure is in terrible shape as the cost of empire balloons with each new military adventure. The Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates that the true cost of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars will be \$2 trillion.

With government debt rising sharply, what will be left for the kind of total reorganization of society needed to deal with global warming?

The mainstream environmental organizations in this country are in crisis. They have been focusing on how to persuade the corporations and capitalist politicians to think “green.” It is a hopeless task.

For a century and a half, militant movements based in the working class and, more recently, in countries oppressed by colonialism and imperialism, have been trying to break the grip of capital and establish socialist economies. Some have succeeded—often in the aftermath of devastating capitalist wars for markets. Now we are facing a new kind of war, which can strike anywhere as natural systems break down under global warming.

Only socialist planning on a global scale offers a way out. The struggle to take control of our economic life and create a sustainable environment is an integral part of the struggle of the workers and the oppressed peoples to end capitalism and build a socialist world. □

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Books to change the world—that's the point

China rebuffs U.S. 'human rights' study

By G. Dunkel

U.S. ruling circles use concern over human rights as a political and ideological weapon against anyone challenging them. The "human rights" gambit was honed during the Cold War and now is employed against a wide range of countries—from China and Russia to Belarus, Iran, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, North Korea and Cuba—to serve the needs of U.S. foreign policy.

One of the highpoints of Washington's use of this tactic is the annual State Department report on human rights, released this year with grand fanfare March 8.

The U.S. government tries to use alleged human rights violations to justify its interventions and threats to intervene. Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti are three recent examples. This alleged concern for democracy and other high ideals lets Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice say with a straight face: "Our promotion of human rights and democracy is in keeping with America's most cherished principles and it helps to lay the foundation for lasting peace in the world."

But Abu Ghraib prison, with many of its most horrifying photographs still under wraps; Guantanamo's atrocities; "secret" renditions of U.S. prisoners to be tortured by client police states; the CIA's boasts that the U.S. has developed "touchless torture", which relies on sensory overload or deprivation to destroy a prisoner's psyche; the death penalty, widely used by U.S.

courts; and the fiasco of Katrina have exposed U.S. hypocrisy to all the world.

Members of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which is China's top advisory body, held a panel on the U.S. report March 10, two days after it appeared, according to an English-language dispatch from the news agency Xinhua. For the past seven years, China has released a report on violations of human rights in the United States in response to the one the U.S. State Department releases.

"The United States, a self-proclaimed 'human rights judge,' has once again pointed its fingers at others while totally ignoring its own problems," said Zhao Qizheng who formerly was minister in charge of the Information Office of the State Council, the Chinese cabinet.

According to Yang Zhengquan, another CPPCC member, the U.S. criticism on China has nothing to do with human rights but aims at "undermining China's socialist system."

"It's nothing but dirty politics, which is totally ideology-oriented," he said. "The United States is attempting to achieve its political goals under the pretext of human rights."

Chinese reply strikes home

China's report on U.S. violation of human rights is divided into seven parts: on life and security of person; on infringements upon human rights by law enforcement and judicial organs; on political

rights and freedom; on economic, social and cultural rights; on racial discrimination; on rights of women and children; and on the United States' violation of human rights in other countries.

The report summarizes these issues from a perspective of a different society and a different political system. For someone living in the United States, it is painful to recall all the depravities and inequities listed, including racism, homelessness, high homicide rates, violence against women and the ever-rising level of incarceration in prison:

"As the prisons in the U.S. were packed, the situation of prisoners worsened. ...

"During Hurricane Katrina, between Aug. 29 and Sept. 1, 2005, correctional officers from the New Orleans Sheriff's Department abandoned 600 inmates in a prison, as many were immersed in chest-and-neck-level water and left without food, water, electricity, fresh air, or functioning facilities for four days and nights."

The report concludes, "The United States has always boasted it was the 'model of democracy' and hawked its mode of democracy to the rest of the world. In fact, American 'democracy' is always one for the wealthy and a 'game for the rich'."

The full Chinese report is available in English at news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/09/content_4279166.htm.

The U.S. media recently publicized the income disparity between rural and urban areas in China, which does exist, but ignore that the gap between richest and poorest in the United States is far greater.

Chang Cheng, another member of the CPPCC, said that Washington has long ignored the constant progress of human rights in China.

This year the Chinese government announced several major preferential policies to promote rural development, which will bring about substantial benefits for the country's 900 million farmers. "These policies will help better guarantee the farmers' right to subsistence and development, which we believe is the primary right for every human being," Chang said.

Perhaps the State Department didn't mention China's steps to achieve economic human rights for its citizens, because at the same time the Bush administration and a majority from both parties in Congress have enacted, along with sharp cuts in social services, tax cuts for the rich that will increase still further the disparity between rich and poor in the United States. □

Puerto Ricans protest U.S. gov't terrorism



The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) picketed the World Baseball Classic held in San Juan. The demonstration welcomed the Cuban team and other players from the international community while condemning the FBI and U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. The banner reads: "Cuba, An Example of Solidarity—End the Blockade," signed by the Puerto Rico Cuba Solidarity Committee. The demonstration lasted five hours.

—Story and photo by Tom Soto

Okinawans reject new U.S. bases

Both at the ballot box and in the streets, the people of Okinawa and the main Japanese islands have rejected U.S. attempts to construct new military bases in order to consolidate its forces still stationed there 61 years after World War II. Japan's government is a junior military partner in U.S. attempts to dominate East Asia militarily and economically.

In a March 12 referendum in Iwakuni City, in southwestern Japan, voters rejected—by 43,433 to just 5,369—construction of a new U.S. base in their region. The same day, some 2,600 demonstrators rallied to protest the planned transfer of Army headquarters to Camp Zama in mid-Japan, and an additional 300 U.S. troops. Currently there are 54,000 U.S. troops in Japan and an equal number of dependents and U.S. base employees.

Okinawa, a small island ruled by Japan since the early 1600s, except for the post-war U.S. occupation, hosts 25,000 U.S.

troops, of whom 13,000 are Marines. Okinawa's relation to Japan has similarities with that of Puerto Rico to the U.S. The heavy impact of the U.S. bases in Okinawa has aroused strong protests. The largest of recent demonstrations was the 35,000-strong rally in Ginowan on March 5, which protested the restructuring and construction of new U.S. bases on the island. Protesters demanded removal of all Pentagon bases.

According to the Anti-War Joint Action Committee, which provided information for this article, these actions and the vote are part of a broad sentiment of solidarity of people all over Japan who are opposed to U.S. bases. The Japanese anti-war movement will also demonstrate in Tokyo on March 19 against their country's participation in the occupation of Iraq and to help get U.S. troops out of Iraq.

—John Catalinotto

Haiti tribunal held in Miami



PHOTO: SONJA SWANSON/HAITI PROGRES

On March 11, the Bolivarian Youth hosted the 3rd International Tribunal on Haiti at Florida International University. The tribunal, which has held sessions in Washington, DC and Boston, will prepare testimony to be submitted to the International Criminal Court in The Hague on crimes against humanity carried out by the U.S., France, Canada and other U.N. countries against the Haitian people including the Feb. 29, 2004 coup-napping of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A Commission of Inquiry headed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark will present its findings. Left to right: Presiding Judge Benjamin Dupuy, Asst. Presiding Judge Lucy Tondreau, Asst. Presiding Judge Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Investigating Judge Brian Concannon heard the testimony of witnesses including former political prisoner Father Gerard Jean-Juste.

China: A hopeful sign

Continued from page 10

pointment that this new agrarian plan left in place the ban on private sales of land. However, Chinese leftists are also disappointed that the leadership has not firmly restated the social character of land ownership.

The reemergence of the left in China is a setback to the imperialist ruling class, which hoped socialism was on a one-way downward spiral and would be inevitably overcome by capitalist counter-revolution—by the irresistible, evolutionary progression of global capitalist penetration of China and the inevitable advance of the domestic bourgeoisie toward political power through the takeover of the party and government.

This ideological and policy debate is at bottom the emergence of a representation—in various forms, more or less consistent—of the class interests of hundreds of millions of workers and peasants in China who have been subjected to the terrible downside of capitalist "reforms" that has accompanied rapid economic growth and the abandonment of socialist guarantees.

The debate appears to be a first step in what must be a long and difficult struggle against entrenched capitalist class interests. But the emergence of significant leftist political currents who are trying to steer China farther from the capitalist road and closer to the socialist road is a hopeful sign for all partisans of the great Chinese socialist revolution of 1949. □

EDITORIAL

¡Luchemos contra la prohibición de los abortos!

El gobernador del estado de Dakota de Sur, Michael Rounds, firmó el 6 de marzo una prohibición contra los abortos. Esta acción es un asalto total contra el derecho a la vida de la mujer. La prohibición no permite ninguna excepción para las víctimas de violación o de incesto, ni siquiera para proteger la salud de una mujer. Los legisladores que están promulgando la ley están contando con que los dos nuevos jueces derechistas de la Corte Suprema, John Roberts y Samuel Alito, usen esta prohibición para derogar el aborto legal a nivel nacional.

Este intento deliberado de volver atrás el reloj afecta más duramente a las mujeres jóvenes, rurales y pobres, que son desproporcionadamente afro-americanas, latinas, asiáticas y—en el estado de Dakota de Sur especialmente—indígenas.

¿Por qué está pasando esta prohibición ahora? La clase dominante está tan desesperada por controlar su imperio en el exterior y tan despiadada en su demanda por aún mayores ganancias, que está aumentando la opresión del pueblo trabajador y pobre en este país. Pero la clase dominante necesita alguna especie de organización política de origen pseudo-popular para darle credibilidad. El ala derechista religiosa provee algo de la fuerza necesaria para mantener a estos políticos en sus puestos oficiales con bastante tiempo para llevar a cabo la agenda reaccionaria corporativa.

Pero ellos se han olvidado de una gran lección de la historia—si acaso la sabían. Tarde o temprano, los oprimidos siempre se alzan en rebelión.

Eso es lo que llevó a la legalización del aborto en 1973. En cantidades sin precedente, las mujeres llenaron las calles del país para demandar el derecho a controlar sus cuerpos y sus vidas.

¿Son las circunstancias diferentes hoy? Una encuesta publicada el 8 de marzo por ese conocido portavoz conservador, Fox News, mostró que aún por su propio cálculo, 59 por ciento de quienes respondieron, no apoyarían la prohibición del aborto en su estado.

El momento de la prohibición, dos días antes del Día Internacional de la Mujer, es especialmente exasperante. Desde 1910, el Día Internacional de la Mujer ha simbolizado la determinación de las mujeres en todas las partes del mundo, de acabar con la opresión de tantos siglos. Su hora más resplandeciente fue en 1917 cuando la huelga de trabajadoras textiles en San Petersburgo abrió el paso a la Revolución Rusa.

Revivamos el espíritu revolucionario del Día Internacional de la Mujer, y construyamos un movimiento amplio y unido contra todas las formas de opresión. ¡A las calles! □

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Progresistas forjan apoyo para Venezuela

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
Washington, D.C.

Entre las fechas del 3 y 6 de marzo representantes del movimiento progresista dentro de los Estados Unidos se reunieron en una Conferencia Nacional en Solidaridad con Venezuela. Su objetivo fue incrementar el apoyo para la Revolución Venezolana y prevenir más agresión por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos en contra aquella república Latinoamericana.

La conferencia se dio lugar en la universidad George Washington, a solo unas cuadras del Departamento de Estado estadounidense, donde se originan muchos proyectos contra Venezuela. Más de 400 personas estuvieron presente representando a docenas de organizaciones.

Los participantes discutieron y apoyaron la propuesta para una marcha el 20 de mayo en Washington para detener la intervención contra Venezuela y Cuba. Las personas interesadas pueden obtener más información sobre la marcha enviando un correo electrónico a la siguiente dirección: May20@yahoo.com.

Los participantes también leyeron y discutieron una resolución para el establecimiento de una Red Nacional de Apoyo a Venezuela y un calendario de actividades de solidaridad. Las acciones contra la guerra en los días 18-20 de marzo, en el tercer aniversario de la última guerra de los EEUU contra Irak, estaban incluidas en el calendario y se exhortó a las organizaciones presentes a que tuvieran comparsas sobre Venezuela en las marchas.

Una resolución especial también fue aprobada denunciando el Plan Colombia.

Los representantes de los gobiernos de Venezuela y Cuba quienes se dirigieron a los participantes de la conferencia hablaron sobre la gran conexión entre estos dos países. A través de sus ejemplos de generosidad y dignidad ellos son ahora la esperanza de millones, no de solo en América Latina sino en todo el mundo.

La presencia de muchos estudiantes y jóvenes, no solo de Washington sino desde lugares distantes como la Florida y hasta Canadá, mostraron el interés y la admiración prevaleciente hacia la Revolución Bolivariana. Activistas jóvenes se mezclaban con organizadores con años de experiencia que han estado en los movimientos anti guerra y de solidaridad con América Latina por décadas. Los organizadores también llegaron de grupos religiosos y sindicales. Las comunidades africanamericana y latina tuvieron una gran presencia en la conferencia.

Muchas organizaciones patrocinaron la conferencia, incluyendo la Alianza por una Justicia Global, El Partido Revolucionario de Todos los Pueblos Africanos, los Círculos Bolivarianos, La Red Nacional sobre Cuba, CISPES, FMLN-MD, la Coalición de Solidaridad con América Latina, la Red de Nicaragua, el Fondo Popular de Ayuda contra los Huracanes, la Ocean Press, el Comité Nacional de Abogados, el Intercambio Global, la Huelga Global de las Mujeres, la Asociación Cultural Iraní, el Centro de Acción Internacional y varios grupos estudiantiles. La lista completa de endosantes

puede verse en www.lasolidarity.org/venezuelaConf.html.

Debemos unirnos en solidaridad con Venezuela

Una noche de música y poesía el viernes 3 de marzo abrió los eventos. La mañana siguiente, Chuck Kaufman, uno de los principales organizadores de la conferencia del grupo Red de Nicaragua, recibió a los participantes haciendo hincapié en el hecho que el evento logró reunir a un grupo diverso en solidaridad con Venezuela.

Los asistentes participaron en tres paneles de discusión y 40 talleres durante el fin de semana. Los talleres entrelazaron la solidaridad hacia Venezuela con los eventos en los Estados Unidos. Temas como: “La ayuda ofrecida por Venezuela y Cuba para las Víctimas de Katrina”, y “Venezuela al Rescate del Público Norteamericano” ayudaron a poner esta visión en perspectiva.

El taller sobre el huracán Katrina incluyó a Kali Akuno, Coordinador Nacional para el Acercamiento del Fondo Popular de Socorro del Huracán y del Movimiento de Base de Malcolm X; Lourdes Madriz, Cónsul General de Venezuela en Nueva Orleans; y Joaquín Gutiérrez, Segundo Secretario de la Sección de Intereses Cubanos en Washington, D.C.; el moderador de la sesión fue Ignacio Meneses del Intercambio Laboral EEUU/Cuba.

Madriz describió la ayuda que Venezuela ofreció a los sobrevivientes de Katrina luego de la tormenta, incluyendo el combustible, intérpretes, ayuda financiera y otras ayudas más.

Gutiérrez habló sobre el contexto de la ayuda médica ofrecida por Cuba, la cual fue rechazada por la administración de Bush. Gutiérrez dijo que a pesar de que muy tempranamente Cuba había ofrecido enviar un equipo de médicos, el gobierno cubano postergó hacer un anuncio público o publicar una foto de los 150 doctores que esperaban con sus maletas listas para viajar, hasta que otros países le preguntaron el por qué no habían hecho una oferta de asistencia, si habían enviado médicos a todos los demás lugares.

Madriz apuntó que uno de los primeros médicos en graduarse de la escuela de medicina en la Habana era nativo de Nueva Orleans, y sí volvió para ayudar.

Akuno habló sobre la historia reciente de la lucha en Nueva Orleans, lo poco que ha hecho el gobierno estadounidense, cómo las malas condiciones siguen existiendo seis meses después de la tormenta, especialmente en Mississippi, Luisiana meridional y en las áreas rurales en las afueras de Nueva Orleans, donde las ciudades fueron literalmente borradas del mapa. La mayoría de estas áreas aún no ha recibido ayuda alguna. Las casas móviles reservadas para estas áreas todavía están ociosas en Arkansas y Texas.

Akuno explicó que en el área turística que rodea la sección francesa de Nueva Orleans, algunos hoteles están construidos encima de diques—esto para ilustrar la anchura de algunos de los diques. Pero en el Distrito Nueve y en algunas áreas con una población mayormente africana

americana, algunos de los diques tenían sólo dos pies de ancho. También reportó cómo la Agencia Federal de Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA por las siglas en inglés) y la Cruz Roja dividieron a la gente en los albergues en tres grupos—negros, blancos e inmigrantes. Si los inmigrantes no podían mostrar sus documentos, Inmigración (SIN) estaba listo para deportarlos.

Intento de subversión de los EEUU

Los participantes también hablaron sobre la Revolución Venezolana, sus avances y su constitución, sus relaciones regionales e internacionales, incluyendo la Alternativa Bolivariana de las Américas (ALBA). Varios talleres hablaron sobre la agresión de Washington contra Venezuela, particularmente por medio de la Dotación Nacional por la Democracia (National Endowment for Democracy, NED) y la USAID incluyendo el papel reaccionario de la AFL-CIO en el golpe de estado de abril del 2002 que intentó derrocar al Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías y en la campaña de desestabilización que siguió.

En algunos talleres se habló sobre las distintas formas de forjar solidaridad. En otros sobre Latinoamérica y el Caribe, incluyendo a Colombia, Cuba y Haití.

Entre los materiales que contenía el paquete de información para todos los participantes, había una resolución presentada por oficiales progresistas electos a la legislatura estatal de Michigan que expresaba su solidaridad con Venezuela y demandaba que el terrorista Posada Carriles, actualmente en los Estados Unidos, sea deportado hacia Venezuela.

Entre los muchos oradores estaban el Rev. Roy Bourgeois de los Vigilantes de la Escuela de las Américas (School of the Americas Watch) y Bill Fletcher, director del Foro Trans África.

Durante un evento cultural y político que se llevó a cabo el 4 de marzo en la Iglesia de Todas las Almas, el embajador venezolano Bernardo Álvarez habló elocuentemente sobre cómo la ayuda proviniendo de Cuba está jugando un papel imprescindible en erradicar el analfabetismo en Venezuela y en el éxito de sus programas de salud.

El Embajador cubano, Dagoberto Rodríguez, habló a su vez de cómo Venezuela ha hecho posible la cooperación económica a través del ALBA, la alternativa latinoamericana a los acuerdos de “libre comercio” auspiciados por los EEUU. Jorge Marín del Círculo Bolivariano Martin Luther King de Boston y Berta Joubert-Ceci del Centro de Acción Internacional moderaron el evento.

Esta exitosa conferencia le sigue a dos eventos previos en solidaridad con Venezuela: La Noche de Solidaridad con Venezuela Bolivariana que tuvo lugar el noviembre pasado en el Town Hall en la Ciudad de Nueva York y en Los Ángeles, y la conferencia organizadora del 17-19 de febrero en Nueva York de los Círculos Bolivarianos en los Estados Unidos.

Betsey Piette, Cheryl LaBash y Steven Ceci colaboraron en escribir este artículo.