

MUNDO OBRERO

Las elecciones en México 12

CAPITALISM & GLOBAL WARMING

The wolf gets through the door 2

GATES & BUFFETT

Do these billionaires really care? 3

Bigoted, Dangerous

Same-sex marriage ruling EDITORIAL 10

DEFYING OCCUPATION

Palestinians fight back 7

LGBT MOVEMENT AND IRAN

Beware pretexts for war 7

MEXICO IN STRUGGLE

For a recount and in the streets? 8, 9

Defending right of self-defense North Koreans resist U.S., Japan bullying

By Dustin Langley

In the week before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea tested seven missiles on July 4, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was in Washington to meet with President George W. Bush. The media made much of the prime minister's upcoming visit to Graceland, Elvis's Memphis mansion.

However, at a June 29 White House press conference, the real purpose of the visit was made clear. Bush warned North Korea that Japan "cannot afford to be held hostage to rockets" and said it would be "unacceptable" for the North to test a long-range missile. At the joint news conference, Koizumi said the two leaders had agreed to "apply various pressures" on North Korea should it proceed with a test launching.

Now, in the days following the DPRK's missile launch, Japan for the first time since its defeat in World War II is taking the lead in a confrontation on the Korean peninsula. Its draft resolution, submitted to the UN Security Council on July 7, calls the DPRK's missile tests a threat to international peace and mandates economic sanctions against North Korea. The draft invokes Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which would make the sanctions mandatory and pave the way for military action.

Prime Minister Koizumi, a close ally of the Bush administration, has been taking a more aggressive stance towards Japan's neighbors and has been pushing to revise the Japanese Constitution, which currently prohibits military action except for self-defense.

The hawkish head of Japan's defense agency, Fukushima Nukaga, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, widely viewed as Koizumi's likely successor, argue that Japan should prepare for "preemptive" strikes against the DPRK. Japan does not currently have the capability to strike North Korea, but Abe has suggested that they work to develop the necessary systems. The July

11 Washington Post says that experts "believe Japan could develop the technology relatively quickly or perhaps buy it from the United States."

Koizumi's willingness to take a belligerent stand may come at an opportune time for Washington, which is bogged down in the failed three-year campaign to conquer Iraq. Japan's threat of a first strike against North Korea allows Bush to cynically call for a "diplomatic solution" while pushing for economic sanctions as part of the agenda of "regime change."

Reaction in South Korea

However, Japan's threats have provoked anger in South Korea, where the government remains hostage to U.S. occupying troops but where the memory of Japanese colonial rule is still strong. On July 10, presidential spokesperson Jung Tae-ho said, "We can't help but watch intensely as Japan has exposed the nature of its aggressive policy."

The South Korean statement denounced Japan's call to consider military action against the DPRK, accusing the Koizumi administration of "arrogance and outrageous rhetoric that further intensifies the crisis on the Korean Peninsula with dangerous and provocative rhetoric such as 'preemptive strike.' In light of the painful historical records that Japan justified its invasion of Korea in the past ... we cannot but conclude that these grave and threatening statements are to endanger peace in Northeast Asia. They reveal the military nature of Japan, which warrants our intense vigilance."

All of Korea suffered under a brutal Japanese occupation that lasted from 1910 to 1945.

South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun said about the missile tests, "There's no reason to fuss over this from the break of dawn like Japan, but every reason to do the opposite. There is

Continued on page 6

LAPD defends fascist Minutemen, attacks immigrant rights march 5



PHOTOS: MINJOK TONGSIN

July 8 protest against Minutemen in Los Angeles.



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Big business & global warming

Corporate manipulation moves to Phase II

By Deirdre Griswold

The huge corporations that have spent the last two decades lobbying forcefully to get government and the media to deny the existence of global warming and climate change have embarked on a new tack.

In the first phase of their campaign, these capitalist enterprises used every trick in the book to deny or belittle global warming. Since before the Kyoto Accords—which went into effect in 1994 and which the U.S. refused to sign—the energy companies in particular were setting up front organizations to dispute the scientific evidence.

These groups have had innocuous-sounding names like The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition (TASSC), Americans for Balanced Energy Sources (ABEC), Center for Energy and Economic Development, Cooler Heads Coalition, Global Climate Coalition, Global Climate Information Project and the Greening Earth Society.

There are many more. From a long list available at sourcewatch.org, the sampling provided here goes only as far as the Gs.

The wolf in sheep's clothing

TASSC started as a front for Philip Morris. It morphed from disputing the danger of tobacco smoke to advancing "industry-friendly positions on a wide range of topics, including global warming, smoking, phthalates and pesticides." (sourcewatch.org)

The Cooler Heads Coalition, according to its website, globalwarming.org, was formed in 1997 to "dispel the myths of global warming by exposing flawed economic, scientific and risk analysis. ... The risks of global warming are speculative; the risks of global warming policies are all too real."

Before it disbanded in 2002, the Global Climate Coalition (GCC) "was one of the most outspoken and confrontational industry groups in the United States battling reductions in greenhouse gas emissions." It collaborated with groups such as Sovereignty International, which believes that global warming is a plot to enslave the world under a United Nations-led "world government."

The members of the GCC read like a Who's Who of the largest U.S. industrial corporations and their organizations, including the American Petroleum Institute, Chevron Oil, Chrysler, Dow Chemical, Duke Power, DuPont, ExxonMobil, Ford, General Motors, McDonnell-Douglas, Shell Oil, Texaco and Union Carbide.

According to the Los Angeles Times (Dec. 7, 1997) the GCC spent \$13 million on its 1997 anti-Kyoto ad campaign, an amount roughly equivalent to Greenpeace's entire annual budget.

Common Cause has documented more than \$63 million in contributions to politicians from members of the GCC from 1989 to 1999.

The Global Climate Information Project, sponsored by the GCC and the American Association of Automobile Manufacturers, among others, was created to sponsor an advertising campaign in the U.S. against the Kyoto agreement.

The Greening Earth Society, funded and controlled by the Western Fuels Association, an association of coal-burning utility companies, claims that greenhouse gas emissions are a good thing because they will lead to greater plant growth and a greener environment.

For a while, this full-court press by U.S. big business fed the media with false information that kept a large part of

the population confused. In this period, more than half the reporting by the U.S. corporate media echoed the well-funded industry lobbyists' claim that climate change and global warming were just an unproved "theory." They ridiculed the view that the combustion of fossil fuels—especially oil and coal—leads to an accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that then traps the earth's heat.

But then came the hurricanes, the drenching rains leading to disastrous floods and mud slides, the tornadoes, the grapefruit-sized hail, the droughts, the wildfires, the melting of glaciers, the death of coral reefs, the shrinking of the polar ice caps, and the biggest "natural" disaster to hit a major U.S. city since the San Francisco earthquake—the flooding of New Orleans.

Global warming is now virtually undisputed in the world's scientific community, which has moved on to creating models to predict the impact of climate change on low-lying coastal areas, deserts, tundra, ocean currents and so on.

So what are the big corporations that spent hundreds of millions on disinformation doing now?

The wolf gets through the door

They are moving into the area of ecology and conservation in order to make sure that whatever is done is profitable for them.

Take something like the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. It is a product of the Pew Charitable Trusts, set up by the descendants of Joseph Pew, founder of the Sun Oil Co.

For generations, this super-rich family has funded a panoply of right-wing organizations, from the American Liberty League in the 1930s to the Christian Freedom Foundation and the John Birch Society in the 1950s and, more recently, the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. This last organization was set up by William Casey, later to become Reagan's CIA director.

Unlike the earlier industry-sponsored organizations, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change does not dispute global warming. Rather, it seeks to set the agenda of the environmental movement and any related legislation so businesses can take advantage of it.

Its website talks about "the emerging greenhouse gas market." The center has set up a Business Environmental Leadership Council, which says that "companies taking early action on climate strategies and policy will gain sustained competitive advantage over their peers."

"The BELC," they go on, "is now the largest U.S. based association of corporations focused on addressing the challenges of climate change, with 40 members representing \$2 trillion in market capitalization and over 3 million employees.

"Many different sectors are represented, from high technology to diversified manufacturing; from oil and gas to transportation; from utilities to chemicals. We accept the views of most scientists that enough is known about the science and environmental impacts of climate change for us to take actions to address its consequences."

And what kinds of actions do they propose? "Businesses can and should take concrete steps now in the U.S. and abroad to assess opportunities for emission reductions, establish and meet emission reduction objectives, and invest in new, more efficient products, practices

Continued on page 4

This week ...



★ In the U.S.

Corporate manipulation moves to Phase II 2
 Buffett and Gates 3
 Pro-immigrant activists prevented from testifying 4
 On the picket line 4
 LAPD supports Minutemen by brutalizing protesters . . 5
 Countering imperialist propaganda 6

★ Around the world

North Koreans resist U.S., Japan bullying 1
 Palestinian resistance defies the occupiers 7
 Anti-Iran protest misdirects LGBT struggle 7
 Vote or no vote, Mexicans are fighting back 8
 New York campus staff shows solidarity with Oaxaca . 8
 Mexican presidential struggle mounts 9
 What's behind the Darfur campaign? 10
 Haitian killer arrested—but not for his real crimes . . 10
 In Congo, imperialists intervene in many ways 11

★ Editorials

Same-sex marriage 10

★ Noticias En Español

Los pobres de México votan con sus pies 12

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
 New York, N.Y. 10011
 Phone: (212) 627-2994
 Fax: (212) 675-7869
 E-mail: editor@workers.org
 Web: www.workers.org
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
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 Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt
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 Internet: Janet Mayes
 Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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National Office
 55 W. 17 St.,
 New York, NY 10011
 (212) 627-2994;
 Fax (212) 675-7869
 wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
 P.O. Box 424,
 Atlanta, GA 30301
 (404) 627-0185
 atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
 426 E. 31 St.,
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 (410) 235-7040
 baltimore@workers.org

Boston
 284 Armory St.,
 Boston, MA 02130
 (617) 983-3835
 Fax (617) 983-3836
 boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
 367 Delaware Ave.,
 Buffalo, NY 14202
 (716) 566-1115
 buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
 Chicago, IL 60606
 (773) 381-5839
 Fax (773) 761-9330
 chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
 P.O. Box 5963
 Cleveland, OH 44101
 phone (216) 531-4004
 cleveland@workers.org

Denver
 denver@workers.org

Detroit
 5920 Second Ave.,
 Detroit, MI 48202
 (313) 831-0750
 detroit@workers.org

Houston
 P.O. Box 130322,
 Houston, TX 77219
 (713) 861-5965
 houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
 5274 West Pico Blvd.,
 Suite 203
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
 (323) 936-1416
 la@workers.org

Philadelphia
 P.O. Box 9202,
 Philadelphia, PA 19139
 (610) 453-0490
 phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
 P.O. Box 14602,
 Richmond, VA 23221
 richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
 (585) 436-6458
 rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
 3930 Oregon St.,
 Suite 230
 San Diego, CA 92104
 (619) 692-4496

San Francisco
 2940 16th St., #207
 San Francisco,
 CA 94103
 (415) 561-9752
 sf@workers.org

State College, Pa.
 100 Grandview Rd.,
 State College,
 PA 16801
 (814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
 P.O. Box 57300,
 Washington, DC 20037,
 dc@workers.org



BUFFETT & GATES

They're giving it away—but not really

By Sara Flounders

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett has announced he is donating the great bulk of his fortune—\$31 billion in stock holdings—to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation's current assets are already \$30 billion.

We are told that this means that the world's two wealthiest individuals have given the largest share of their fabulous wealth to "charity."

The major corporate media was glowing in its descriptions of the impact that the largest philanthropic gift in history will have. According to these media, the selflessness, concern for humanity and forward-thinking global view of these multi-billionaires deserves praise and adulation.

Looking at their smiling, genial faces, who would suspect that one multi-billionaire is responsible for monopoly policies that will cost millions of lives in Africa? Or that the other is engaged, through aggressive acquisitions and mergers, in cutting the jobs of tens of thousands of workers here in the U.S. and shipping them to where slave-labor conditions predominate?

One billionaire favors the Republican Party, the other the Democrats. Both are magnanimously impartial and give a few millions to both parties.

Buffett is the founder of Berkshire Hathaway. Besides the major gift to the Gates Foundation—which is based on Bill Gates' Microsoft fortune—Buffett is dividing \$6 billion among four other charities started by his family members. Each of Buffett's three children is guaranteed their own fortune and their own personal foundation to direct.

Great philanthropic foundations, like all charities, are intended to keep collective initiative, mass action and therefore power out of the hands of the very people they are supposedly meant to serve. They increase dependency on handouts.

In placing the great majority of their personally held wealth into foundations and trusts, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett are taking the same steps that the super-rich of past eras took.

The wealthiest corporate owners of the past had the equivalent of today's billions of dollars earning dividends and daily interest for them. The problem was that even with manipulation of the books and all kinds of accounting tricks, some of these earnings were still taxable.

Andrew Carnegie, Paul Mellon and John D. Rockefeller—some of the first group of super-rich robber barons—all set up foundations. This legal maneuver allowed them to protect their enormous fortunes and avoid hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes while maintaining absolute control of their wealth. Today these foundations are run by the families' personally appointed boards and make thousands of grants, large and small, to shape public opinion, define political issues and maximize the power and influence of those who set them up.

Just the interest on \$1 billion—one thousand million—is far beyond what could ever be spent by themselves, their immediate families and even their most extravagant, spendthrift heirs, and that's without ever touching the principal. Even at a modest 5-percent return, \$1 billion earns \$137,000 in interest every day, or \$1 million in interest every week. The collective fortunes of Gates and Buffett's—\$70 thousand million—represent an obscene expropriation of resources on a global scale.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation states that it is guided by the belief that every life has equal value. The goal of the foundation is supposedly to reduce inequality, improve lives, improve health and reduce extreme poverty. It focuses on fighting infectious diseases and reforming education.

Warren Buffett said that he decided to give 85 percent of his wealth to the Gates Foundation because he was so deeply impressed by the work of the foundation on a global scale. The Gates Foundation claims to have saved hundreds of thousands of lives in Africa by providing vaccines and drugs. It claims it is spending millions working on treatments for malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS.

Defending property rights

What is the reality? According to researcher and journalist Greg Palast, the policies promoted through the Gates Foundation could kill far more African people than Gates's public relations agents claim it has saved.

Bill Gates, chair of Microsoft Corp., became the wealthiest person on the planet through his monopoly control of computer operating systems. Microsoft's status is safeguarded by the international treaty called TRIPS, short for Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. This monopoly-protecting agreement is enforced through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

As Palast explained: "TRIPS gives Gates a hammerlock on computer operating systems worldwide, legally granting him the kind of monopoly the robber barons of yore could only dream of. But TRIPS, the rule which helps Gates rule, also bars African governments from buying AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis medicine at cheap market prices." (The Observer, July 14, 2003)

The monopoly-protecting TRIPS agreements have been under attack by African countries that are desperate to get lower-priced drugs for the 23 million Africans who are sick with HIV-AIDS. Gates has been determined to protect this monopoly agreement at all cost.

The Gates Foundation invested \$200 million in the very drug companies that were stopping the shipment of low-cost drugs to African countries. Then, spending less than 2 percent of his net worth, Gates bought medicines to distribute to dying Africans—and a lot of publicity for his work.

The foundation trumpets its lofty goals of reaching 1 million people with medicine by the end of the decade. But Gates accomplishes this by locking in a trade system that will block delivery of medicine to over 20 million people who desperately need medicine now.

Putting property rights before human rights has the unanimous support of U.S. corporations, the corporate media, foundations established by corporate wealth and both the Republican and Democratic parties.

President Bill Clinton threatened trade sanctions against Argentina for daring to sell low-cost drugs in Africa.

President George W. Bush's grand plan to combat AIDS in Africa was to offer billions of dollars in loans at full interest to

African nations. But the loans could be used only to buy patented drugs from U.S. companies at prices several times higher than generic drugs.

Buying protection

Gates learned the hard way that staying out of national politics can be costly. The Clinton administration's anti-trust case against the Microsoft monopoly taught him the importance of spreading around millions to protect his billions.

Microsoft contributed more than \$6.1 million of "soft" money to the 2000 election that put Bush in office. It was the second-largest donor to the Republican Party, exceeded only by Philip Morris. Then, under Bush, the anti-trust case was settled favorably for Microsoft.

By the 2004 election Gates was covering all the bases, making large donations to both Bush and John Kerry. Microsoft rose to the number three corporate political donor in the U.S. At its present rate of donations it is expected to become number one.

Gates also makes generous donations to the think tanks that shape public opinion, such as Americans for Tax Reform, the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

One of Microsoft's top lobbyists, John Kelly, is a major fundraiser for Bush. Microsoft employed religious conservative Ralph Reed, formerly a leader of the Christian Coalition, as a political consultant at a \$20,000 monthly retainer. Reed was on retainer to Microsoft while helping run the Bush presidential campaigns of 2000 and 2004.

Microsoft also retained the now-indicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and gave indicted Tom DeLay a \$10,000 campaign contribution. His Gates Foundation also gave the DeLay Foundation for Kids a \$100,000 donation.

Both Gates and Buffett have taken full advantage of the elimination of almost all restrictions on personal wealth. They are the greatest beneficiaries of Bush's cuts in taxes to the super-rich.

Gates has been spending \$20 million a year on federal lobbying and campaign

donations. This was a tiny fraction on the return he received in lowered taxes. After Bush cut the 35-percent tax rate on dividends down to 15 percent, Microsoft issued a \$32 billion dividend to its shareholders.

Paper cuts

Warren Buffett certainly seems to hold liberal views on most social issues. For a multi-billionaire, he lives rather modestly in a home he bought decades ago. He is described as a very talented investor. His wealth is described as coming from a series of paper transactions—acquisitions and mergers.

But paper transactions in the capitalist system have a devastating impact on millions of working people. Buffett's talent is finding companies to buy, and then increasing profits at these companies through big layoffs and ruthless reorganization and restructuring. His talent is the ability to see where assets can be maximized.

Workers have no voice and no rights in this process. Companies where they have spent their lives are suddenly downsized. Whole industries are moved abroad. Homes in small towns and cities, where workers have spent 30 years paying off a mortgage, are suddenly worthless because the plants have closed. Entire towns and regions dry up without their industrial base.

Investment analyst Jonathan Davis described how Buffett organized his operation. Berkshire Hathaway, Buffett's holding company, owns outright a whole string of industrial, retail and insurance companies. The cash generated from the insurance companies, such as Geico, provides the capital that Buffett and his partner, Charlie Munger, use to invest.

The drive of the whole capitalist system is to maximize profit. Regardless of how good, bad, generous or stingy Buffett is personally, his investors must be satisfied. He has to increase the per-share value of Berkshire Hathaway. That can only be done by ruthlessly lowering labor costs—through technological improvements, new inventions or finding cheaper labor.

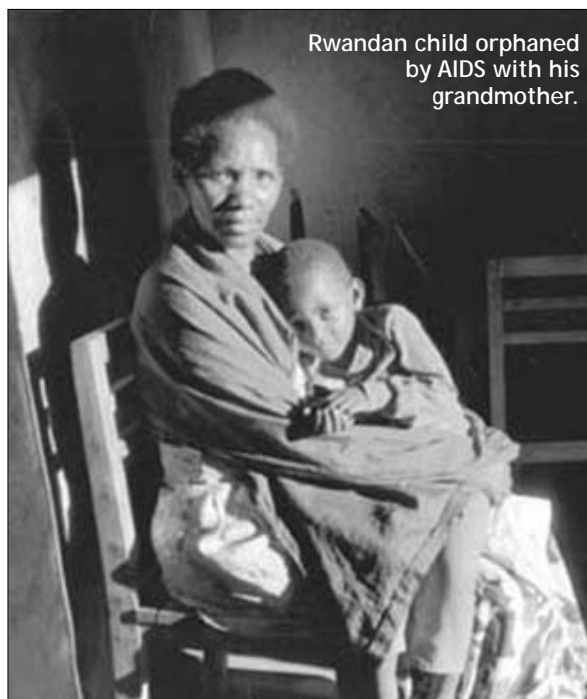
All these processes in the capitalist system can involve huge layoffs.

Investors are interested in putting their money into Berkshire Hathaway because they will earn more. As soon as the rate of return drops by even half a percentage point, they will withdraw their money and go elsewhere.

Berkshire Hathaway was originally a textile-manufacturing firm in New Bedford, Mass. Buffett bought it and eventually put its 425 workers out of work. He then used the shell of the company to acquire a fortune. He was on his way. He has repeated this hundreds of times.

When he purchased Fruit of the Loom in August 2004, the workers at the plant in Cameron County, Texas, reportedly cheered. They had all heard that Buffett was smart and super-rich. They didn't expect him to double profits by eliminating the jobs of the 800 workers. The reorganization of Fruit of the Loom also meant the closing of a yarn factory in Rabun County, Ga.

Buffett engineered the merger of Gillette, where he had become the largest shareholder, with Procter & Gamble. The consolidation meant a \$645 million profit to Buffett and an



Rwandan child orphaned by AIDS with his grandmother.

The Gates Foundation invested \$200 million in the very drug companies that stopped the shipment of low-cost drugs to African countries.

Continued to page 5



San Diego, July 5.

PHOTO: CLAUDIO ROBERTO S. ALMEIDA

At congressional hearing in San Diego

Pro-immigrant activists prevented from testifying

By Claudio Roberto S. Almeida and Mary Tamburro
Imperial Beach, Calif.

Early on the morning of July 5 a large group of pro-immigrant activists gathered at the entrance to the Border Patrol Station in Imperial Beach, the southernmost coastal community in California. They were outside because they were prohibited from participating in the Republican-sponsored congressional hearing going on inside, the first of many to be held across the country this summer.

These meetings, whose real purpose is to generate mass fear of and hostility toward immigrants, are sounding boards for the most racist politicians and their allies. At this event, no opposition voices of any sort were permitted, and the official list of speakers included the chief of the San Diego Border Patrol sector; the head of the Border Patrol union; the San Diego County and Los Angeles County sheriffs; Rep. Brian Bilbray, R-Carlsbad, a notorious local immigrant basher; and Andy Ramirez, leader of one of the paramilitary groups that has been threatening border crossers across the Southwest.



WWW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

The protesters outside included many faith leaders from all over southern California, who came to show their support for the immigrant community. Rev. Art Cribbs, the progressive pastor of the San Diego Christian Fellowship Congregational Church, was there along with leaders from various other Christian communities, and from the Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker, Indigenous, and Korean communities as well.

Representing the activist community were, among others, the Raza Rights Coalition and the International Action Center. The Border Angels group displayed hundreds and hundreds of wooden crosses to represent the estimated 4,000 border crossers who have died since the imposition of Operation Gatekeeper, a U.S. government escalation in border militarization that has, since 1994, forced border crossers eastward into hazardous mountain and desert regions.

Edgar Hopida from the Council on American Islamic Relations addressed the protesters, connecting the struggle of Muslims following 9/11 with that of immigrants. "Muslims and immigrants are not terrorists," he said to the cheering crowd.

Responding to the attacks of the racist capitalist system, the differences among the various religious denominations at this event seemed minor. The need for justice has united them. The spirits of the people gathered outside this station of imperialist aggression were high as they chanted and sang together, showing their solidarity and commitment to fight for full human rights for all immigrants. □

Big business & global warming

Continued from page 2
and technologies.

"The Kyoto agreement represents a first step in the international process, but more must be done both to implement the market-based mechanisms that were adopted in principle in Kyoto and to more fully involve the rest of the world in the solution."

These words may sound innocent enough—to someone unfamiliar with the crafty and devious nature of the class of robber barons who, in a relatively short period of time, have become fabulously wealthy by disregarding the health and well-being of millions of workers and their families.

On closer examination, however, it should be clear that this wing of the ruling class has decided that there is a lot of money to be made from new technologies that may, or may not, slow down global warming. They want to push "market-based mechanisms" because that's where the money is. And the targets of much of their "analysis" on global warming are developing countries like China, India and Brazil, which they want to "fully involve ... in the solution."

According to Environment News Service, these three countries emit only one-tenth the amount of greenhouse

gases per capita as North America. That hasn't stopped the U.S. government, which is bought and paid for by corporate lobbyists, from opposing the Kyoto Accord largely on the grounds that it doesn't demand enough of poorer countries. The corporate media, always ready to blame the Third World, is stoking the fires with dire speculation on what the world will be like when every Chinese family has a car, etc.

In fact, even though its opening of a market economy in many areas to spur development has brought grave problems to China—from the growth of bourgeois values to a widening income gap, unemployment and horrendous conditions in its older, privatized coal mines—there is a robust environmental movement in China that has a great deal of input into government planning. (We will discuss this in our next article.)

Challenge facing environmental movement

The biggest challenge facing the environmental movement here is to break free of the clutches of big capital, whose embrace is really the kiss of death. Too many of the "mature" environmental groups, like the Sierra Club, are tied in directly to the ruling class. Its library, for

example, is named after William E. Colby, the first secretary of the Sierra Club and a director for 49 years. Colby launched the Accelerated Pacification Campaign during the Vietnam War and was named director of Central Intelligence by Richard Nixon in 1973.

This dependence on the largess of the very rich makes such groups look for solutions amenable to big business. It promotes the idea that the interests of the mass of people and of the billionaire owners of capital can be conciliated.

That approach may work when the object is to preserve a beautiful piece of wilderness for fortunate hikers to enjoy, or to keep a pristine lake unpolluted.

But the predicted catastrophes that will follow global warming and climate change are far too big to yield to this class-collaborationist approach. Climate change has the potential of producing disasters on a scale that we have seen only during the all-too-frequent imperialist wars of the last hundred years or so.

To politically prepare for what lies ahead, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of the capitalist system and why even the most illogical, anti-scientific courses of action can become the norm under the pressure of the profit needs of big capital. □

ON THE PICKETLINE

By Sue Davis

VT nurses win improved contract

Nurses represented by the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, AFT Local 5221, have been bargaining since March to win a new contract that guarantees quality patient care and safe staffing and addresses the nursing shortage at the largest hospital in Vermont and two other facilities in Burlington and Colchester.

Maybe it was the threat of a strike by midnight on July 9 or maybe it was the determined vigil held by community supporters in Burlington on July 6, but after 39 hours of negotiation the union announced before midnight on July 8 that they had agreed to a three-year contract. It must still be ratified by the 1,500 members.

Though the hospital administration initially refused to consider the nurses' proposals to address the staffing crisis and improve patient care, the nurses won better language on scheduling and equitable pay scales. These will "help with retention and recruitment of new nurses," union president Jennifer Henry told the Burlington Free Press (July 10). Other improvements included more education days and better differential pay for night and weekend shifts.

City workers unionize in Jackson, Miss.

Organizing in the South received a big boost on June 20 when the Jackson, Miss., city council voted unanimously to recognize the Mississippi Alliance of State Employees, CWA Local 3570, as the bargaining representative of 1,200 city workers. (Excluded are police and firefighters who already have unions.) That vote ended a yearlong collective bargaining campaign.

After helping to elect a pro-labor mayor and city council, MASE-CWA presented cards signed by a majority of the city workers to the mayor's office in January 2006. CWA members and supporters wearing purple CWA organizing T-shirts packed the June 20 council meeting where they cheered their hard-fought victory.

The MASE-CWA 3570 website (www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/4017/) reads: "As a 'right-to-work' state, Mississippi is tough to organize; but the courage and determination of our rank and file, elected leadership and staff of organizers have delivered us some real successes in the twelve years of our existence." Local 3570 is the only public workers' union in Mississippi, representing over 3,000 state workers in such state agencies as the Department of Human Services, the Health Department, Head Start and all state universities.

NJ workers rally against wage cuts

Thousands of New Jersey state workers—members of the Communication Workers and the city and state employees unions, along with teachers—filled an entire city block outside the statehouse in Trenton on June 19 in a massive rally to protest projected wage cuts.

The workers were responding to a proposal by some state legislators to force a 15 percent wage cut on state workers to solve the state's \$4 billion budget shortfall. The state workers' message was loud and clear: "A deal is a deal."

The lawmakers got the message. After a six-day shutdown of the state government ending July 8, the budget crisis was resolved without touching the workers' wages. □



PHOTO: INDYMEDIA

LAPD supports Minutemen by brutalizing protesters

By Mary Tamburro
Los Angeles

As racist vigilantes known as Minutemen gathered in Hollywood on July 8 to celebrate hate and ignorance, they had the protection of the Los Angeles Police Department as a large group of protesters gathered to show that we will not target immigrants as a scapegoat for the United States' problems. The demonstration was called by the ANSWER coalition.

The protesters outnumbered the racists almost two to one, and as the Minutemen prepared to take to the streets and march, the LAPD surrounded the protesters as best they could and began a violent riot. A young woman in her twenties was dragged to the ground by several cops and beaten and arrested. A middle-aged Latina woman, getting off the bus after a day of work, was caught in the riot and eventually taken off in an ambulance because of the brutality inflicted by the racist cops. Several officers beat her with batons and pushed her down onto the sidewalk. Many other demonstrators were hit by batons, and some banners and flags were destroyed or confiscated by the police. All this happened to the sound of the Minutemen cheering on the LAPD.

Protesters were not even allowed to march on the sidewalk to show their opposition to the racists, who were escorted by the LAPD as they marched down Hollywood Blvd. When the protesters finally broke away from the police and circled



PHOTO: MINJOK TONGSIN

LAPD arrests woman, above. Face to face with the Minutemen, middle. Los Angeles, July 8.

around to meet the Minutemen at the corner of Wilcox and Hollywood Blvd, they were again brutally suppressed by the police. Many protesters were injured, including three International Action Center organizers.

This blatant attempt by the state to physically restrain and quiet opposition is not just an example of why we must continue our struggle against these racist killers and police, but also why we must continue to fight against a system that uses racism and poverty to divide the working class.

Minutemen organizations have been



PHOTO: INDYMEDIA



PHOTO: MINJOK TONGSIN

popping up all over the country as immigration reform has a prime spot on the evening news and as politicians are looking for new ways to win votes. These volunteer racists that say they are protecting the United States from terrorists and drug dealers are actually killing innocent people that, because of imperialism, are forced in a moment of desperation to flee to this country in hopes of finding a means to support their families. Instead they are met at the border by not only the border patrol, but by U.S. citizens that are misinformed, armed, and dangerous. If they

make it past the vigilantes safely, migrants are then forced to face a country that does not want to respect them, only exploit them further.

Yet, as the Minutemen marched through Hollywood trying to spread hate, it was obvious that they had little support from people walking the streets and driving in their cars. The protesters received cheers, thumbs up, and even revolutionary fists in the air from people in their cars. It was apparent that the police were the only ones happy to see the Minutemen. □

BUFFETT & GATES

They're giving it away—but not really

Continued from page 3

initial cut of 6,000 jobs. More layoffs are planned.

Buffett understands the global market. His wealth is bound up with the wholesale attack on workers' living standards in the U.S. that began during the Reagan administration. In 1983 Buffett was worth \$620 million. By 1989 this had grown to \$3.8 billion. Another 12 years and he was worth more than 10 times that amount.

Capitalism and poverty

But the larger question is can the capitalist rulers—even if they had the best of intentions—end poverty and inequality? Can the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation bring about a society where every life has equal value?

For the Microsoft Foundation to thrive, companies like Microsoft and Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway must answer to an interlocking corporate network of bankers, brokers, investment companies and shareholders who demand maximum profits. And profits can grow only by exploiting labor.

This means continuing to do what Buffett did in gathering his fortune. It means creating poverty, pain, layoffs and massive insecurity. The gap between the rich and the poor will continue to widen.

By every measure under capitalism, the rich really do get richer and the poor get poorer.

When productivity increases, what happens? The workers are paid a smaller part of what they produce. The capitalists, whose wealth comes from taking a larger share of what workers produce, will with each breakthrough in technology increase their portion of the value the workers produce. The more productive labor becomes, the wider the gulf grows.

Today the gap between rich and poor is greater in the U.S. than in any other industrialized country in the world. One percent of the population owns half the wealth of the country. Globally, 200 billionaires own more than the 2 billion poorest people. A third of these billionaires live in the U.S.—yet even here, 20 percent of the children live in poverty.

By every measure the gap is widening. Twenty-five years ago a typical CEO of a large corporation earned 40 times as much as the average worker. Today the CEO earns 400 times more than the average worker.

On a world scale, poverty is greater than at any time in human history. Some 1.1 billion people are desperately struggling to survive on less than \$1 a day. About half the world's people, some 3 billion, exist on

less than \$2 a day. Per-capita income has actually fallen in 50 countries in the past decade. Every year poverty on a global scale increases—as does extreme wealth.

The alternative

It doesn't have to be this way. There is one small country that has put into practice the lofty goals of the Gates Foundation to "reduce inequality, improve lives, improve health and reduce extreme poverty."

Socialist Cuba has a gross national product of only \$10 billion—less than 15 percent of the Gates Foundation's assets. Nevertheless, its health care system is world renowned and it has an infant mortality rate lower than many U.S. cities. Its educational level is the highest in Latin America. This is considered such a dangerous example that a U.S. blockade of Cuba has been in place for 46 years.

Incredible progress has been made in this relatively poor and once technologically backward country—especially in education, health care and culture—through the collective action of its whole population. The Cuban Revolution broke the hold of the few multi-millionaire owners. Cuba's workers and farmers don't rely on charity. They are the owners of the country's wealth.

Cuba sends more than 20,000 medical professionals a year to Third World countries, far more than the World Health Organization or any foundation. Its goal in Latin America and the Caribbean is to train a total of 100,000 doctors from the region, for the region.

Cuba's pharmaceutical industry is at the forefront of developing inexpensive drugs for diseases that are the most common scourges in much of the world.

The Cuban experience has demonstrated just how solvable the problems of world hunger and disease are. The real challenge is how to break the hold of a capitalist system that enriches a handful and brings ruin to millions. □

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Countering imperialist propaganda: North Korea, Zimbabwe, Yugoslavia

"Strange Liberators: Militarism, Mayhem and the Pursuit of Profit," by Gregory Elich, Llumina Press, 2006, 402 pages. Available through LeftBooks.com.

By John Catalinotto

Radical political scientist and historian Michael Parenti writes in his introduction to Greg Elich's new book, *Strange Liberators*: "The difference between what U.S. citizens think their rulers are doing in the world and what these rulers actually are doing is one of the great propaganda achievements of history."

With his ambitious attempt to combat that propaganda, Elich confronts the lies of the U.S. government and its servile media regarding what he calls the "hard cases." North Korea's nuclear program, the imperialist assault on Yugoslavia and the machinations against Zimbabwe are his major topics. Even for people who have been following these conflicts closely, Elich has found material that sheds new light on the events.

His work regarding the DPRK is especially on target now, following that country's tests of rockets and a new wave of threats against North Korea from the U.S. and Japan, the two colonial powers on the Korean peninsula in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Korea's nuclear program

Elich reviews about 15 years of U.S. relations with North Korea regarding that country's nuclear power program and its alleged construction of nuclear weapons. While Washington portrayed the Pyongyang leaders as intransigent and irrational, it was the U.S. that refused to make

an honest deal.

Elich quotes Selig Harrison, Director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy, to show that the Bush administration's "very rigid position" showed it was "not prepared to trade anything" and "risks a war. The point is, the administration's objective is really regime change in Pyongyang."

Harrison referred to Victor Cha of Georgetown University, whom he called a "kind of ideologue of the Bush administration" regarding Korean affairs. Cha's book on North Korea "lays it all out: the purpose of negotiations with North Korea, he says, is not to settle anything."

"You have these multilateral negotiations in Beijing simply to show the other parties in the region—China, South Korea, Russia and Japan—that it is not possible to make any deals with North Korea. He [Cha] says the purpose of the negotiations is to mobilize a 'coalition for punishment.'"

This analysis fits with the latest news, where U.S. pundits speculate what policy will help Washington line up China and Russia to support sanctions against North Korea in the United Nations Security Council. No one in the Bush administration has yet raised as a serious possibility negotiating a real end to the 1950-53 Korean War and normalizing relations with the DPRK.

Elich shows how during 2004 and 2005 it was only on the insistence of the South Korean government that the U.S. had to keep putting up a good front during the six-part talk, and that even then the U.S. bargaining position was intransigent—U.S. negotiators constantly raised the bar with extra demands on the DPRK for con-

cessions.

And the Democrats

This summer two prominent members of the Clinton administration, Assistant Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and Defense Secretary William Perry, have been writing position papers advocating a preemptive military strike against North Korea's rocket launch pads. Anyone reading Elich's book could follow the aggressive history of the Clinton administration and especially these two officials. Elich shows how in 1994 the U.S. came within hours of launching an all-out war against North Korea.

In writings following that period, Perry and Carter revealed that the Clinton administration "spent much of the first half of 1994 preparing for war on the Korean peninsula." The main target was the Yongbyon nuclear site, but targets included all of the DPRK's military installations.

According to Elich—and he provides sources—Clinton officials were meeting to launch the war when Jimmy Carter pulled the rug out from under them. The former president had visited the DPRK, succeeded in getting an agreement from the Pyongyang government and then held a news conference announcing the agreement. Only by going public did he force the Clinton officials to pull back on their war plans.

Aggression against Yugoslavia, attacks on Zimbabwe

The U.S. rulers were even more successful in selling the war on Yugoslavia, in the sense that even some progressive media outlets repeated the lies demonizing President Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav army and even the Serb population.

Milosevic had waged a heroic and quite successful self-defense in his trial before NATO's court in The Hague until his suspicious death in March. On July 10, this so-called tribunal opened another important case against six Yugoslav leaders for the same charges about Kosovo that Milosevic's defense had completely discredited.

Elich answers many questions about this war, and one point he reveals is that to force Yugoslavia to accept NATO's demands, the EU negotiator threatened to carpet bomb Belgrade.

Another major target of U.S. and British maneuverings is Zimbabwe and the leader of its independence struggle, Robert Mugabe, who has been the head of the Zimbabwean government since 1980. British and U.S. attitudes toward Mugabe soured when the African leader began to resist privatization and imperialist globalization in the form of "structural adjustment programs."

The conflict between Britain and the Mugabe government sharpened when the government in Harare started to seize the land from wealthy European farmers—land seized in the colonial period from the local people—and distribute it to Africans who had participated in the struggle for liberation. Elich demonstrates the hypocrisy of the imperialists in their demands for "democracy."

In each of these hard cases and some other topics Elich takes up, he shows the goal of U.S. foreign policy is never democracy or human rights, but "to create a world that exists only to serve the wealthy, where resources are freely exploited and the mass of humanity labors for shrinking wages and inadequate or nonexistent benefits." □

North Koreans resist U.S., Japan bullying

Continued from page 1

nothing good in heightening tensions on the Korean peninsula and worsening inter-Korean relations. This will not help at all to settle the nuclear issue or the missile issue. ... The possible launch of a Daepodong missile had been widely publicized in advance. It was aimed at nobody and did not lead to a state of emergency in either our country or other countries."

A top South Korean government official told the Korea Herald, "Unfortunately—and I believe our regional neighbors feel the same way—one of the worst side effects of the North Korean missiles was that it has paved the road for Japan to build its military."

China opposes sanctions resolution

The U.S.-Japanese resolution has drawn opposition from the People's Republic of China, whose people also suffered under Japanese occupation. On July 11, China's Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling the resolution an "overreaction," saying, "If approved, it will aggravate contradictions and increase tension. It will hurt efforts to resume six-party talks as well as lead to the UN Security Council splitting." This was an allusion to the fact that, if pressed, China might have to exercise its right, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to veto the resolution.

Chinese President Hu Jintao met with the vice president of the Presidium of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly that

same day. He said that China opposes any action that may increase tension on the Korean peninsula.

Wang Guangya, China's UN Ambassador, told Voice of America that China would categorically reject any resolution unless three things were removed: "The determination that this is a threat to international peace and security, because for China, we can't accept negative implications for regional peace and stability. Secondly, remove Chapter Seven. Thirdly, there are no mandatory sanctions."

Seeking to negotiate a diplomatic settlement to the crisis, a Chinese delegation, including Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, arrived in the North Korean capital Pyongyang, also on July 11. The UN Security Council has been forced to postpone a vote on the proposed sanctions against North Korea until the six-day visit is over.

DPRK's right to self-defense

Despite pressure and threats from the U.S. and Japan, the DPRK remains defiant, calling the U.S. the biggest threat to world peace. On the same day as the diplomatic moves mentioned above, the Korean Central News Agency said, "In crying over 'missile threat,' the U.S. seeks to conceal its sinister intention and, behind the curtain, create a favorable climate for implementing its strategy of world supremacy."

It's important to point out, amidst all the corporate media hype, that North Korea's missile tests did not break any

international law or violate any agreement. Even the New York Times, which is quick to demonize the DPRK, had to admit in a July 5 editorial: "Since the test poses no direct security threat, and violates no international treaty, there is no justification for any military response, by the United States or anyone else."

These sorts of missile tests are not unusual. Many countries test missiles and other weapon systems every day. In fact, on July 10, India tested a new Agni-3 long-range missile, capable of hitting targets deep within China. This test was followed by the launch of its INSAT-4C rocket. Bush issued no condemnation of India's launches.

The development of the Taepodong-2 missile, or of any other weapon system, is completely within the sovereign rights of the DPRK, particularly in light of its history of being invaded by Japan and the

U.S. and the hostility of the current Bush administration. In 2002, Bush labeled North Korea as one third of his "axis of evil," along with Iran and Iraq. Now that everyone has seen the murder, torture and rape that U.S. "regime change" has brought to Iraq, it should be clear that the people of the DPRK are fully justified in developing whatever weapons they need to defend themselves.

The July 5 Al Jazeera quotes a "Western diplomat familiar with the Iranian and North Korean programs" as saying, "If those countries didn't have much incentive before, they certainly did after the Axis of Evil statement."

The DPRK continues to defy the U.S. agenda, and the people of North Korea deserve the support and solidarity of anti-war activists everywhere. □

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Palestinian resistance defies the occupiers

By Michael Kramer

The Palestinian people continue to resist the more than 100-year-old Zionist colonization project that has made millions of them refugees and continues to seize and expropriate their land at gunpoint.

The week of July 3-9, according to www.arabicnews.com, Israeli forces seized approximately 250 acres from the village of Tubas located in the agriculturally rich Jordan River valley. First the Israelis denied Palestinian farmers access to the land because of "military training," then they seized the land using a so-called "absentee law."

Another 100 acres were seized from the village of Al-Awja located north of Jericho for use as a military outpost. In Beit Ula, a village northwest of Hebron, the Israeli authorities also confiscated five acres of grape vineyards from a farmer named Suleiman Mahmoud. Large swaths of

land have also been seized for the building of the "apartheid wall."

The armed wing of the Zionist movement is called the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The U.S. government sends the IDF billions of dollars every year in the form of the most advanced weapon systems in the world. In return it functions as an arm of the Pentagon in the oil-rich Middle East. In the past 50 years the IDF has invaded and occupied parts of Egypt, Lebanon and Syria numerous times.

Palestinians fight back

On June 25 an armed group of Palestinians conducted a commando-type operation called "Operation Scattering Illusion" that they had planned for six months. (Maan News Agency, July 4) It required the building of a deep tunnel almost a kilometer long from one part of Occupied Palestine to another, as well as the constant surveillance of an IDF out-

post near the Zionist settlement of Kibbutz Kerem Shalom.

While some commandos staged a diversionary attack nearby, the rest exited the tunnel and struck at 5:30 a.m. They split into three teams. One attacked an armored personnel carrier. Another attacked an observation post with rocket-propelled grenades. The third team attacked a Merkava Mk 3 battle tank.

Two of the four-member tank crew were killed and another was wounded. The fourth was captured and is now a prisoner of war.

In only 10 minutes the attack was over and most of the commandos returned from where they came. Muhammad Farawneh and Hamid Rantisi were killed. Rantisi, 24, was also a swimming coach.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz described the operation as "one of [Hamas's] greatest operational victories of the last six years against the Israel Defense

Forces." (English edition, June 30)

Collective punishment

In response the Zionists have launched an attack against the civilian population and infrastructure of the Gaza region of Palestine from the ground, air and sea, destroying bridges and electricity-generating power plants. Bulldozers have devastated olive groves and other planted lands near Beit Lahya and Khan Younis. The IDF also fired air-to-ground missiles into some of the most densely populated urban communities in the world.

The IDF did all this with the Bush administration's okay.

The Zionist attack has heightened the sense of unity in the Palestinian camp. The tensions between many organizations have evaporated. And thus far, the ground attack appears to have failed to draw out large numbers of Palestinian fighters into the open where the IDF has the advantage.

Imperialism is the real enemy

Anti-Iran protest misdirects LGBT struggle

By Leslie Feinberg

As U.S. and European finance capitalists rattle their high-tech sabers at oil-rich Iran, the arrogant neocolonialist demand for "regime change" is being echoed by a coalition of seemingly disparate gay political forces in the citadels of imperialism. Their political campaign to "save gay Iranians" coincides with the ratcheting up of economic and military threats against Tehran by their own war-ready governments, which are ordering the formerly colonized country to surrender its sovereignty and right to self-determination.

A call for a political mobilization against Iran on June 19 is being officially billed as the "International Day of Action Against Homophobic Persecution in Iran." The title obscures the question: Is there a widespread, state-sponsored pogrom against same-sex love in Iran? Event organizers say yes. The facts, however, make the motivation for this mobilization politically suspect.

The year-long charges of a systematic state pogrom in Iran against gays have coincided with U.S.-led attempts to stop the sovereign country from developing nuclear technology.

Taking the historic struggle to end oppression based on sexuality, gender and sex out of the world context of today's battle by formerly colonized countries against imperialism will not advance the goal of sexual and gender liberation—here or in Iran—nor will it build genuine international ties of solidarity. In fact, it misdirects the struggle into alignment with the worldwide goals of imperialism.

July 19 is the first anniversary of the execution of two young men in Mashad—the second-largest city in Iran. Those calling for the anti-Iran event claim the two were hung for being "gay." The Iranian government says they were involved in a gang rape.

Within hours after the July executions, gay neoconservative journalist Andrew Sullivan—former editor of the New Repub-

lic magazine—obtained a photo of the hanging to post along with his blog account entitled "Islamists Versus Gays."

The London-based gay rights group OutRage!—which focuses its ire on countries that are former or current colonies of England—also quickly posted a media release stating: "Two gay teenagers were publicly executed in Iran on 19 July 2005 for the 'crime' of homosexuality."

Gay political pundit Doug Ireland, a longtime journalist for the Nation magazine, also hastened to declare in his blog headline: "Iran Executes 2 Gay Teenagers."

These and spin-off cyber reports in the days after July 19 circled the globe while the truth was still lacing up its sneakers.

Since then, so many organizations and media have disputed that the executions were based on consensual sex that it's almost unbelievable this allegation is still circulating as currency.

Based on mistranslation

It turned out that OutRage! had based its charge that the two young men were executed for consensual sex on a mistranslation of a July 19 Iranian Students News Agency article and a report from the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). Another name for NCRI is Mojahedin Khalq (MKO). Although designated a "foreign terrorist organization" by the U.S. State Department in 1997, this group was befriended by John Ashcroft when he was a U.S. senator from Missouri. (Newsweek, Sept. 26, 2002)

The political wing of the NCRI has reportedly funneled information about Iran to the Bush administration. Baruch College history professor Ervand Abrahamian describes the NCRI as having as little credibility as Pentagon puppet Ahmad Chalabi "and the Iraqi enthusiasts for liberation and invasion." (Richard Kim, The Nation, Aug. 7, 2005)

Even the U.S.-based International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International—which are better

known for aiming their political fire at targets of imperialism—"urged organizations to refrain from casting the incident as a gay issue." (Kim)

Human Rights Watch revealed that the rape charge had been mistranslated from Farsi. Scott Long, the group's LGBT Rights Project director, stated, "There is no evidence that this was a consensual act. ... A whole tissue of speculation has been woven around mistranslations and omissions and this has been solidified into a narrative that this is a gay rights case." (Kim)

Many other sources, none of them "soft" on Tehran, also reported that the two young men were executed for taking part with at least three others in abducting and gang-raping a 13-year-old boy at knife point. These included the New York Times, Associated Press, Fox News Channel and Times of London and Radio Free Europe.

Yet Andrew Sullivan, Doug Ireland and OutRage! still charge that two "gay" youth were executed last July 19, and that this proves the basis of a murderous pogrom in full fury in Iran.

'Anti-war' fig leaf

The London-based OutRage! and Paris-based International Day Against Homophobia jointly called the July 19 anti-Iran event. IGLHRC and the International Lesbian & Gay Association have reportedly offered endorsements and logistical support. Andrew Sullivan is the contact for the Provincetown event; The New Republic researcher-journalist Rob Anderson is the contact for D.C.

The event's "call to action" demands the following: An end to all executions in Iran, "especially the execution of minors, [an end] to the arrest, torture and imprisonment of Iranian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and repeal of the Iranian penal code's criminalization of same-sex relationships" and a stop to the deportation to Iran of "LGBT asylum seekers."

The organizers call for aid to the strug-

gle of Iranians for "democracy, social justice and human rights." That demand is certainly in harmony with the seven-fold increase in "emergency" funds the White House recently requested for political propaganda in its internal war to weaken Iran and overturn its hard-won independence.

The last demand is a little fluttering fig leaf: opposition to foreign military intervention in Iran. (Washington Blade, July 7)

Are the July 19 political forces really opposed to imperialist military intervention? Listen to what they said in the first week after the executions last summer.

Peter Tatchell, head of OutRage!, stated, "This is just the latest barbarity by the Islamo-fascists in Iran ... the entire country is a gigantic prison, with Islamic rule sustained by detention without trial, torture and state-sanctioned murder." Sounding more Bush than Blair, Tatchell condemned the British Labor Party for "pursuing friendly relations with this murderous regime" and urged the "international community"—the imperialist powers and those willing to line up with them—"to treat Iran as a pariah state, break off diplomatic relations, impose trade sanctions and give practical support to the democratic and left opposition inside Iran."

In essence, Tatchell is calling for economic warfare (sanctions); threat of military action ("pariah state" status); abandonment of diplomatic pressure (over Iran's right to develop nuclear energy); and regime change (destabilizing the government from within). These are tactics that a wing of the capitalist class in the U.S. and Europe would be more than willing to back—if they would prove effective to recolonize Iran.

Sullivan made his position sharply clear when he ended his blog entry with the lament: "I'm saddened that more gay organizations haven't rallied to the war against Muslim religious fanatics. This is our war too."

The Log Cabin Republicans lost no time in joining the fray in their July 26 state-

Continued on page 9

Vote or no vote, Mexicans are fighting back

By Dante Strobino
Mexico City, Mexico

While the contested presidential election in Mexico remains the focus of intense struggle, accumulated social conflicts continue to go unresolved.

The teachers' union in Oaxaca, along with hundreds of thousands of supporters, continues to fight back.

Flower merchants and supporters in Atenco who refuse to leave their market so Wal-Mart can build a store there are raped, killed and imprisoned.

Some 65 miners in the Pasta coal mines of Conchos, Coahuila, are killed due to unsafe conditions ignored by Secretary of Labor Francisco Salazar. Workers in Sonora shut down the nation's largest copper mines. And workers at the Villacero steel plant, Latin America's largest steel bar manufacturer, continue their four-month strike.

Although the votes were cast on July 2, as of July 10 there was still no clear winner in the presidential race. The Federal Electoral Institute's (IFE) official count on July 6 gave right-wing National Action Party (PAN) candidate Felipe Calderón a 0.57 percent lead over the left-leaning advocate of the poor, Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador. This razor-thin margin is being contested by López Obrador.

There is a long history of fraud in Mexican elections. While usually perpetrated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), it is now the PAN that has stacked the IFE in its favor. IFE President Luis Carlos Ugalde has admitted that 2.6 million votes were not included in the preliminary count because of "inconsistencies."

The people are very conscious of all this and are taking things into their own hands in some locations. Teachers in Oaxaca claimed fraud on election day and detained an election official in his hotel. (La Jornada, July 3) Others in Atenco

burnt their election cards and party propaganda to protest the election.

Who are López Obrador & the PRD?

López Obrador, if elected, would be a progressive step forward for Mexico, but it remains to be seen if he will be more in line with Brazil's President Lula Da Silva and Chile's Michelle Bachelet or with the policies and practices of Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez and Bolivia's Evo Morales.

Running as a candidate of the Alliance for the Good of All, a coalition that includes the PRD, the Workers Party and Convergence, López Obrador is willing to work with the left. When he was chair of the PRD, most of the 26 members of his cabinet had, at some time in the past, been members of either Trotskyist, Maoist or other Marxist, left-wing parties. As mayor of Mexico City, his cabinet was composed of 50 percent women. He promises to do the same if elected president. The PRD was the first party ever to have a woman elected mayor.

At López Obrador's final campaign rally in Mexico City's historic town square, the Zócalo, over 150,000 people tightly packed the streets. The working-class character of his party was obvious as peasants, national unions, Indigenous and youth gathered around to listen. Calderón's rally, by contrast, was held in the expensive Azteca Stadium and attracted middle- and ruling-class Mexicans.

This truly was a class vote.

Let the people decide

Five days before the election, the National Coordinator of Educational Workers (CNTE), Local 22, of Oaxaca met with union officials to hand in 150,000 signatures demanding cost-of-living

EZLN 'Other Campaign' supporters march through the Mexico City streets on Election Day, July 2.



WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

salary adjustments and the resignation of notorious PRI Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. Upon leaving the meeting, the CNTE marched through the streets of downtown Mexico City with thousands of supporters.

The next day, Local 22 initiated a nationwide general strike with the support of several other major unions. The strike was called off, however, in order not to disrupt the elections, and instead the fourth mega-march in four weeks occurred. "The government is doing everything they can to repress our strength at this important moment for the bourgeois parties, but we refuse to be quieted and continue to organize around our demands," a teacher in Local 22 told Workers World.

Two days before the election, the Zapatistas held the Third National Assembly for adherents of the "Other Campaign." About 1,200 people gathered from all over the country. Subcommander Marcos said little but served as emcee as students, Indigenous, women, workers, migrants, sex workers, self-identified queers, les-

bians, transgender people, and representatives from the U.S. made suggestions about the movement's direction after the election. Many emphasized the struggle to free some 30 political prisoners from Atenco being held in Santiaguillo Prison and La Palma Maximum Security Unit. Supporters have maintained a demonstration outside the prison since their incarceration on May 4.

On election day, instead of waiting in the voting lines, the Zapatistas continued with their "Other Campaign." Over 60,000 supporters marched through downtown Mexico City voicing their opposition and chanting "Assassins! Rapists!" at the cops who ringed the city's monuments.

None of the presidential candidates "offer a just or urgent solution for the liberation of our 30 detained comrades from Atenco, San Salvador," an indigenous Zapatista woman from Chiapas told Workers World, "For this, the choice is not between voting and not voting, our only option is to organize from the ground up and to the left."

The people are in the streets protesting election fraud in several locations, particularly in Guanajuata, Queretaro and Tabasco. López Obrador on July 10, in a mass rally organized to defend the vote, called for the people to march from all over the country into Mexico City to hold ongoing protests and demand a recount.

Earlier, he had employed similar tactics when the right tried to use a technicality to prevent him from becoming a candidate for president. The presence of over 2 million people in the streets threatened the big bankers' stability and López Obrador eventually beat back this political challenge.

At press time 3 million people from all over Mexico are heading to the capital city for a rally on July 16 in solidarity with the PRD □

New York campus staff shows solidarity with Oaxaca



About 70 people came to the demonstration that the Professional Staff Congress (AFT 2334) called June 28 to support the striking teachers of Oaxaca, Mexico. The PSC represents 20,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York.

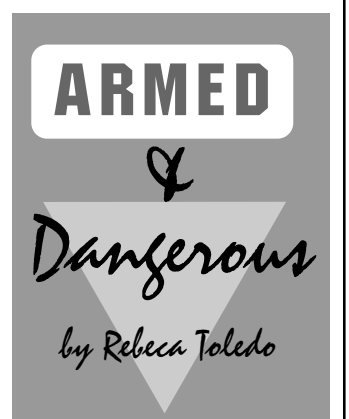
The United Federation of Teachers (AFT Local 2) endorsed the demonstration and sent a contingent. The UFT represents 91,000 teachers and staff in the kindergarten through 12th grade system of New York City.

—Story and photo by G. Dunkel

Read why the Pentagon declared war on lesbians and gays

Author Rebeca Toledo lays bare the real meaning of the fight for gay rights in the armed forces—and shows why it's a key battle in the ongoing struggle to end oppression, exploitation and war itself.

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Compared to U.S. 2000 election

Mexican presidential struggle mounts

By Teresa Gutierrez

World Cup soccer fans were not the only ones waiting with bated breath for a passionately awaited outcome this past week. The presidential elections in Mexico also had the world's attention. Who will be the next president of Mexico? Will it be the pro-U.S. candidate Felipe Calderón of the conservative PAN (National Action Party) or is it Andrés Manuel López Obrador, of the left-leaning PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution)?

Revolutionary and progressive forces around the world are intently following political developments in Mexico. Much is at stake in this strategic country of over 100 million people. Mexico is, after all, at the very front door of the United States, making this nation the only oppressed Third World country that shares a border with the colossus monster that is U.S. imperialism, Mexico's unmerciful oppressor.

Not just who will next administer the state in Mexico is at stake. Will the state of the masses be genuinely addressed, for the benefit of the people? Will the outcome of the elections lead to a government that is more in tune to the interests of the people, and less to world capitalist interests? Or will the elections lead to yet another government that is totally in the pocket of U.S. imperialism, leading to further capitalist domination?

As of this writing, election results are at a stalemate. But they are at a stalemate because López Obrador and his supporters are waging a significant struggle against perceived voter fraud. Most important, it is a struggle that the revolutionary movement can be encouraged by because a decisive factor has arisen: the Mexican people are playing a major role in this struggle. The Mexican masses are not just sitting idly by awaiting an outcome from higher up.

Struggle in the country mounts

On July 8, as a result of a call put out by

López Obrador, approximately half a million people took to the streets of Mexico City. They gathered at the famous Zócalo, a main plaza in Mexico City that has a long history of revolutionary gatherings. The people convened to demand their right to a fair election and to repudiate the official results.

On July 6, Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) announced that pro-U.S. candidate, Felipe Calderón, was the presumed victor. But the margin for his victory was so slight that it immediately raised suspicion. The vote was 36.37 percent for Calderón and 35.37 percent for López Obrador, a narrow margin of only 243,000 more votes for Calderón.

The slight margin in favor of Calderón smelled fishy. And sure enough, the PRD was immediately able to show irregularities in the election.

As a result of López Obrador refusing to cave in to the results of the IFE, the process must now go through other channels. The IFE has until Aug. 31 to rule on whether it will grant López Obrador's request for a recount. If it does, the next step is to the highest electoral court in the country, the Federal Judicial Electoral Tribunal, which must then carry out a ballot-by-ballot recount as requested by the PRD. The TEPJF (its Spanish acronym) has until Sept. 6 to declare a winner.

Evidence of fraud gathered

On July 9, López Obrador's party, the PRD, turned over to the electoral court nine boxes of material that was evidence of fraud and a "dirty election campaign." The PRD submitted a 900-page legal brief that substantiated the PRD's claim of election fraud.

"We have proof that basic rules were flagrantly violated," said Ricardo Monreal, a representative for López Obrador.

The brief states that some polling places had more votes than registered voters, that the PAN, the party of the current Mexican President, Vicente Fox, had fun-

neled government money to Calderón's campaign, and that spending limits had been violated.

The submitted material also contains campaign materials and electoral documents that substantiate the fraud. The material highlights irregularities at more than half the 300 district offices across the country.

It includes a video that showed voter fraud in Fox's home state of Guanajuato, where someone is recorded illegally stuffing a ballot box in the race for Congress. Another video showed that election officials in the state of Querétaro had wrongly given Calderón 200 more votes than he had really won at one polling station alone.

According to La Jornada, a leading Mexican newspaper, in 11 out of 12 voting districts in Chiapas, distinct irregularities were documented. Many other states also reported voter irregularities.

In addition, the PRD alleges that a software program had been used that tampered with vote count reports. According to a July 8 Salon article, a PRD spokesperson at a press conference in Mexico City on July 7 drew comparisons of Mexico's presidential election to the U.S. election in 2000, where it is popularly recognized that George Bush stole the election from African American, elderly and Jewish voters.

The PRD provided details where the "votes reported by the government's preliminary tabulation system, called the PREP, did not match the actual voting record, always to the deficit of López Obrador and the benefit of Calderón, in one case by as many as 3,828 votes."

According to a PRD spokesperson, the inconsistencies "cannot be chalked up to human error or deliberate destroying of paper votes, but to conspiracy, to a source code like the one ... designed in Florida that systematically moved votes from the PRD to the PAN."

"We are going to enlist the help of information crime experts to look for a code inside the [electronic tabulation] system

and then we need a recount, vote by vote," continued the spokesperson.

Ruling class elements pushed back

The current PAN president, Vicente Fox, and the candidate, Felipe Calderón, are both denying fraud. Mexican officials and the right-wing press are attempting to pour cold water on the efforts by the PRD to contest the election by discrediting the claims of fraud. Calderón had the audacity to hold presidential-type meetings and discussions about national policy, and is looking into presidential appointees.

Calderón, a former energy minister, has reason to be confident. The IFE is controlled by the PAN and contains not a single PRD affiliate.

Calderón made several policy announcements, including stating that he was against the proposed U.S./Mexico border wall—a bone thrown as a result of the mass sympathy that exists in Mexico for immigrants in the U.S. and against U.S. immigration policy. While López Obrador is for renegotiating NAFTA, Calderón is for further privatization and U.S. economic domination.

Once the masses went into motion and clear examples of fraud were documented, the election was clearly put into question. Yet many foreign representatives sent messages of congratulations to Felipe Calderón, including the presidents of Guatemala, Colombia and Spain. President George Bush sent an early message of congratulations, but according to La Jornada, Washington said it would remain open to later results.

Interestingly, the Financial Times of England was reported in La Jornada to state that the vote should be counted fairly.

Solidarity from the U.S. urgent

There is an old saying in Mexico: "So far from God, so close to the United States."

Make no mistake about it; Washington may have its hands full with the unjust war

Continued on page 11

Anti-Iran protest misdirects LGBT struggle

Continued from page 7

ment that began, "In the wake of news stories and photographs documenting the hanging of two gay Iranian teenagers, Log Cabin Republicans re-affirm their commitment to the global war on terror."

The largest lesbian and gay organization in the U.S.—the Human Rights Campaign—condemned the executions in a letter to the U.S. State Department, which it hailed as part of "the world's greatest democracy."

Imperialist 'regime change'

The Iranian people have already experienced the pain and suffering of imperialist-levered "regime change." In 1953, the CIA and British spy agencies bribed a segment of the Iranian military, overturned the progressive nationalist government of Mohammed Mossadegh, and seized Iran's oil wealth. They installed the Shah on a royal throne—a truly fascist regime under which the Iranian people and the left-wing political movement suffered terror and torture at the hands of SAVAK forces, trained by the CIA.

Widespread reports that the Shah was bisexual, his prime minister homosexual and two men connected to the royal court were married in a symbolic ceremony generated religious anger at an already

despised U.S.-backed secular regime.

In 1979, the left had been decimated under the Shah, so it was Islamic forces that filled the void, leading the anti-imperialist revolution that kicked out the U.S. and British imperialists and took back the country's resources.

Shortly after the revolution for independence, Ayatollah Khomeini called for a death penalty for homosexuality. But over the last quarter century, according to the publishers of MAHA—an Iranian Farsi-language e-magazine dealing with same-sex love—things have changed.

In an on-line interview with Project GayRussia.Ru dated Aug. 25, 2005, the MAHA representative explained, "The GLBT situation in Iran has changed over the past 26 years. The regime does not systematically persecute gays anymore, there are still some gay websites, there are some parks and cinemas where everyone knows that these places are meeting places for gays; furthermore it is legal in Iran that a transsexual applies for sex change and it is fully accepted by the government. There are some medias which sometimes (not often) write about such issues. Having said that, the Islamic law, according to which gays' punishment is death, is still in force but it is thought not much followed by the regime nowadays." (www.gayrussia.ru)

Today, Tehran offers more rights to transsexuals than any other government on the planet, including low-cost government loans for surgery and free hormones. Khomeini made the initial decision and it has since been reconfirmed by many other Iranian clerics. Iran also leads in AIDS prevention and treatment in the Middle East.

U.S. hands off Iran!

Imperialist-instigated regime change, invasion or occupation of Iran would usher in neocolonialism—a form of enslavement that the 70-million strong Iranian population as a whole would certainly fight with the same tenacity as the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and Palestine.

The Pentagon is no vehicle for gay liberation. The CIA is using anti-gay and anti-trans humiliation and rape—from Abu Ghraib to Guantanamo—as bedrock components of its science of torture.

And a two-year study released by Amnesty International of London on March 23 concluded that across the United States, "Beatings, sexual violence, verbal abuse, harassment and humiliation by law enforcement officials against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people take place on any given day in detention centers, prisons, in the home and on the street."

Racism, immigrant-bashing, misogyny,

youth homelessness, lack of jobs, no health insurance, an economic draft, minimal Deaf and disabled accessibility, apartments priced out of reach, anti-Muslim, Arab and South Asian round-ups and forced deportations—and the domestic theo-cons behind the neo-cons—these are the enemies of the LGBT population in the U.S., not Iran. And the LGBT movements in the centers of finance capital need to build genuine ties with working and oppressed peoples of all sexualities, genders and sexes around the world who are in the economic, political and military cross-hairs of these imperialist powers.

The good news is that so many people in the U.S. don't want a war against Iran and sincerely want to see peace in the Middle East. Last year, after the reported executions in Mashad made headlines in all the LGBT media, the online lesbian and gay publication "The Advocate" conducted a poll. It asked if the executions in Mashad would make respondents line up behind Washington's objectives against Iran. More than 70 percent answered "no."

To find out more about how to help build the anti-war movement to defend Iran against imperialism, visit www.StopWarOnIran.org.

Email: lfeinberg@workers.org



Same-sex marriage

Bigotry, plain and simple: There's no other way to define the July 6 ruling upholding blatant discrimination against same-sex couples by the highest court in New York State. The judges' decision was more ideologically reactionary than the Georgia constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage that passed the same day.

The New York judges' majority ruling was bizarre, arguing that since opposite-sex couples can "accidentally" procreate, marriage provides stability to heterosexual parenting. Should the marriage certificate be replaced with a "parenthood license" that mandates heterosexual procreation?

And what about LGBT children? What about lesbian, gay, bi and trans parents?

The ruling added insult to injury by arguing that the discrimination was evenly spread across the board because heterosexuals couldn't marry someone of the same sex, either.

The most potent poison at the root of the decision was the Noah's Ark argument, based on "intuition" and "experience," that heterosexuality is necessary for children to flourish.

Yet the June 29 Arkansas Supreme Court ruling that overturned the only statewide ban on same-sex foster parenting based itself on the weight of scientific research that unambiguously states that overall, children fare just as well with same-sex as with opposite-sex

parenting. That's a powerful conclusion given the toll of oppression.

In reality, the New York judges tossed the decision on same-sex marriage back to legislators, who themselves see the issue as a hot political potato. The Republican Party has made a feint towards its own right wing about a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage rights, while Democrats are openly trying to defeat the demand state by state.

Presidential hopeful John Kerry publicly took that tack—and he's a senator from the only state in which the grassroots struggle has won the right to same-sex marriage.

State discrimination denies more than 1,000 important economic and social rights to same-sex couples—from health insurance to Social Security, bereavement leave to tenant rights, child custody to foster parenting. The demand for same-sex marriage rights is a basic bourgeois democratic demand that opens up the potential for larger struggles and for a greater understanding of the reactionary societal role of the state machinery—the anti-LGBT Pentagon and cops, courts and prisons.

Which way forward to win this demand to end discrimination? The thousands who came out to protest on July 6, angered by this court decision—from Manhattan to Buffalo—demonstrated that this just demand will be won in the streets. □

Haitian killer arrested — but not for his real crimes

By G. Dunkel

The U.S. State Department granted Emmanuel "Toto" Constant asylum in 2000, even after he was convicted by a Haitian court of committing mass murder in 1994 in the Raboteau neighborhood of Gonaïves, Haiti's second-largest city. He also has been charged with organizing gang rapes of Aristide supporters during the first coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The State Department had decided that the justice system in Haiti was not fit to judge a CIA agent who was a mass murderer. Constant then settled down in New York City, where he was the frequent target of demonstrations.

While still in Haiti, Constant had headed the Front for Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), which the Haitian military set up in 1991 and used as a front for violent attacks on Aristide supporters. "Frap" is the Creole word for punch.

But when Constant allegedly tried to extend his impunity to cover stealing from a U.S. bank, he found that it had definite limits.

He was arrested, arraigned July 7, and ordered to post \$50,000 bail. His real estate broker's license will also be subject to suspension, since his crime is alleged to be connected to real-estate transactions.

Moira Feeney, an attorney with the San Francisco-based Center for Justice and Accountability, brought a federal suit in

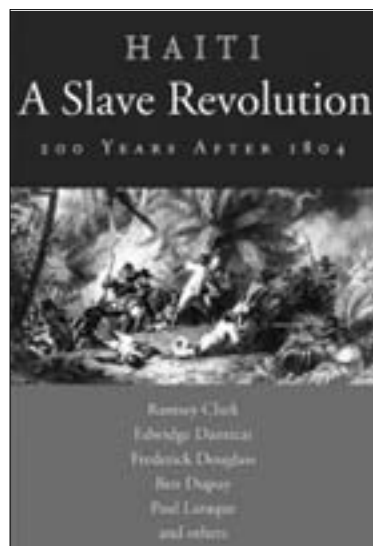
2005 on behalf of three women who say they were his victims and now live in the United States. They claim that members of FRAPH engaged in a "systematic campaign of violence against women," beating and raping them. The details of Constant's suspicious transaction were revealed in this lawsuit.

As someone who has worked undercover for the U.S., Constant was so sure of his impunity that he didn't even hire a lawyer to defend himself in the suit.

Feeney told the Associated Press, "We're thrilled that he's in custody, and we're also concerned he's a flight risk."

Radio Metropole, the radio station in Haiti where most people get their news, featured the story of Constant's arrest and release.

Email: gdunkel@workers.org



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MASSACHUSETTS FORUM

What's behind the Darfur campaign

By Catherine Donaghy

A well-attended forum entitled "Darfur, An Open Discussion on Intervention, Regime Change & the Politics of Genocide" was held July 6 at Smith College in Northampton, Mass.

The goal of the event organizers was to answer those clamoring for U.S. intervention in Darfur. According to independent journalist Keith Harmon Snow, the forum was organized in response to a June 21 event, "Witnessing Darfur - A Benefit for the People of Darfur," which he said raised \$10,000 for groups such as Human Rights Watch.

Panelist Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, gave a historical materialist overview of the underdevelopment of African nations by the U.S., Britain, and European colonial powers. She explained that the word "genocide" is being used for war propaganda, and posed a question to the audience: "How could anyone dare say that they were not against 'genocide'?" She added that by claiming this as a "moral imperative," the U.S. corporate media is shaping the issue on Darfur.

Flounders brought up that it is the U.S. that is militarizing the area by funding and arming rebel groups in Chad and Darfur. She went on to say that, in fact, the U.S. caused more than half of the deaths in Sudan—when under President Bill Clinton, the U.S. military bombed the El Shifah pharmaceutical plant in 1998, which supplied 60 percent of Sudan's medicines.

Smith College Professor Elliot Fratkin gave a detailed history of Sudan covering almost a thousand years and emphasizing interethnic and intertribal conflicts. He was the only speaker on the panel who supported sending UN troops to Darfur to mediate among the Sudanese forces in Darfur.

The next panelist to speak, Keith Harmon Snow, emphasized: "People need to know they are being lied to [in regard to Darfur]. ... Sudan and the Darfur region have a lot of oil, and it has two-thirds of the world's supply of high-quality gum arabic. Corporations such as Coke, Pepsi, and Pfizer rely on cheap supplies of gum arabic." He went on to say that "The mass media and Hollywood are fooling the public about what's really happening in Sudan. ... The CIA and USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] are the real forces who want to overthrow the government of Sudan."

When asked what he thought was important about holding Thursday's forum, organizer and panelist Dimitri Oram replied, "For the first time, one of

these events on Darfur is really shining a light on the U.S. role in Darfur and other African nations." He continued, "The Rwandan Defense Forces sent to Darfur are themselves responsible for crimes against humanity and acts of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and these troops were trained and are highly linked to the U.S. military." Oram compared the U.S. claims of genocide in Darfur to the war propaganda used to justify U.S. military intervention in Bosnia and in Kosovo.

The last speaker on the panel, Dr. Enoch Page, Associate Professor of Anthropology at UMASS Amherst and expert on the anthropology of genocide, brought up the fact that the people of the United States do not need to look abroad to find cases of genocide. He pointed out that the 1949 United Nations definition of "genocide" has been and continues to be carried out against African Americans here in the United States. He reminded the audience that part of the UN definition includes killing members of a racial group; causing psychological damage to members of the group; and creating conditions of financial hardship for members of the group.

Professor Page raised the "attempt at systematic destruction of African American people by the U.S." and stressed that, "We must talk about that fact whenever there is a discussion on 'genocide.'"

Professor Page suggested, "Africa is still being punished for its brave resistance and overthrowing of its colonial oppressors." When asked what information coming out of the forum he thought was important, Professor Page replied, "That the U.S. is causing the conflict in Darfur, and wants to overthrow the Islamic government there because it has a vested interest in the region, not because of 'genocide.'"

During the question and answer period, Sara Flounders responded to the suggestion that UN troops should be sent in to Darfur by reminding the audience of past military interventions in which UN troops, pressed by U.S. resolutions, were involved: four million Koreans killed in the "UN Korean Conflict," the 1991 war on Iraq, the 13 years of UN starvation sanctions imposed on Iraq with 1.5 million deaths, along with the massacre of civilians by UN troops in Haiti and Somalia.

Organizers of the forum included Keith Harmon Snow, independent photojournalist, human rights and genocide investigator; Deborah Chandler, graphic designer; Dimitri Oram, writer and researcher; and Doug White, member of the Northampton Committee to Stop the War in Iraq.

The entire meeting is available on audio at www.traprockpeace.org. □

Rich land, impoverished people

In Congo, imperialists intervene in many ways

By G. Dunkel

The Congo is scheduled to hold elections for president and its parliament July 30, the first real elections since 1965. There are 33 candidates for president, with the current president, Joseph Kabila, considered the favorite, and 10,000 candidates for parliament.

International donors will be spending \$400 million on this election. Most of the ballots are going to be distributed by air, since the country has less than 300 miles of paved roads.

The United Nations has 17,000 soldiers in the Congo in an operation called MONUC. The European Union, in its first major foreign deployment, has sent 2,500 soldiers to back them up, calling its operation Eufor-RDC. (RDC are the French initials for the Congo's official name, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.)

President Kabila has said he would prefer soldiers from the Southern African Development Community. Mosinuo Lekota, South Africa's defense minister, speaking about Eufor-RDC, told the press in February, "The presence of foreign troops in the Congo is not necessary. If need be, the SADC, of which the Congo is a member, can send some." German Defense Minister Franz-Joseph Jung, in defending Eufor-RDC, had what he considered a decisive argument: "The stability of this region rich in raw materials will be profitable for German industry." (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 2006)

The European imperialists want their own troops on the ground to protect their own interests. The United States also has a long history of involvement and interference in the Congo.

The elections have drawn attention from major newspapers in the United States and Britain, as well as France, Belgium and Germany—the former colonial powers in central Africa.

These articles paint a vivid picture of the recent history of the Congo. The July 1 New York Times even went so far as to call the civil war that raged from the fall of President Mobutu in 1997 to 2002 "the world's deadliest conflict since World War II."

But the Times did not give the figure—4 million deaths—that lies behind its assertion. This count was published in the *Lancet*, a British medical journal, and is

accepted as authoritative by the UN.

While these press reports raise some of the motivations that lie behind this extraordinary intervention in the Congo—namely, that it is potentially the richest country in Africa and has a strategically important location in the center of the continent—they don't put them in a historical context of imperialist interventions.

The "Congo Free State" was officially recognized by the 1885 Berlin Conference as the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium. The U.S. government had recognized Leopold's claim the previous year. The CFS responded to a number of revolts with bloody suppression and killed millions of people to produce rubber, coffee and other agricultural products and bring them to market. It then was converted into a Belgian colony in 1908, when its mineral wealth became apparent and Leopold's viciousness became a hindrance to investment.

The Congo was a huge source of wealth and profits for Belgium and its French and German partners, but the African liberation movement began to challenge its control in the late 1950s. Patrice Lumumba founded the National Congolese Movement in 1958 and then became prime minister. When he declared he wanted to work with the Soviet Union and other progressive countries to develop the Congo, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, on Aug. 18, 1960, authorized his assassination.

While the CIA and the U.S. government have never confessed to this, a previously unpublished interview with a White House minute-taker surfaced in 2000. The minute-taker, Robert Johnson, had told the staff of the Senate intelligence committee that "he vividly recalled the president turning to Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, 'in the full hearing of all those in attendance, and saying something to the effect that Lumumba should be eliminated. There was stunned silence for about 15 seconds and the meeting continued.'" (*Guardian*, Aug. 10, 2000)

In December 1960, with U.S. and CIA support, Col. Joseph Mobutu and Gen. Kasavubu overthrew the government. Lumumba fled but was caught and turned over by UN forces to Mobutu's troops, who let a firing squad of Belgian soldiers and cops kill this outstanding African patriot in January 1961. The UN and the U.S. then

managed to cobble together a "unity" government which lasted until Mobutu openly seized power in 1965.

The Lumumba forces had reorganized in 1963 and managed to take Kisangani, an important city in the eastern Congo. Che Guevara and other Cubans gave them military training for some months. Then the U.S. dropped Belgian paratroopers and provided air cover to a mercenary column that took the city back for the government.

From 1965 through 1990, Mobutu, who now called himself Mobutu Sese Seko, ruled without much serious opposition, although the Lumumbists managed to hold on in the east and wage a low-level guerrilla war. He enriched himself, some of his cronies and the Belgian-French-U.S. mining companies that exploited the Congo's mineral wealth, while providing essential logistical support to the U.S.-backed Unita forces that were trying to seize Angola and its oil riches for big oil. But he lost favor with the imperialists, partly because his price tag was too large and because opposition to him was growing.

The post-Mobutu transition began in 1990 and ended when Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who was one of the Lumumbist leaders in the eastern Congo and the father of the current president, was installed as president by a force consisting mainly of Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers in 1997. The role the U.S. played in the fall of Mobutu and the installation of Kabila came through its influence in Uganda and Rwanda.

A year later, Kabila dismissed the Rwandan commander of his army. When a Ugandan and Rwandan column tried to seize the Congolese capital, Angola, Zimbabwe and later Namibia stepped in and kept Kabila in power. But the civil war and its millions of casualties was on.

The opposition to Kabila's central government soon split into at least four movements that fought each other as well. They managed to finance their struggles by selling diamonds, some gold and especially coltan, a rare mineral used in cell phones and laptop computers. Kivu, a province in the eastern Congo, had 80 percent of the

world's supply.

All these minerals could be produced by thousands of workers digging in individual pits, picking out the diamonds or the gold, or processing the coltan without heavy investments or technology. As the political chaos in the Congo grew more intense, Laurent Kabila was assassinated in January of 2001. The market for what the Congo was producing shifted and the Western interests that were making big profits realized they were going to have to make some big investments. That is something they are very loathe to do in a politically volatile situation.

The Western imperialists also get the World Bank to monitor the financial practices of poor Third World countries and keep them from requiring large foreign-owned companies to provide housing, retirement benefits and health care to their workers.

They could replace the hundreds of thousands of miners working around Lubumbashi, who make a dollar or so a day, with a few thousand workers using heavy equipment and not making much more. They also can make the heavy investment that developing new mines elsewhere will require.

That was the reason for the peace treaty signed in Sun City, South Africa, in 2003, which was supposed to be finalized by a national election held July 30, 2006.

The imperialist interests hiding behind the World Bank and the upcoming elections are not going to get a free ride. Besides the miners protesting upcoming job losses, the port workers in Matadi, the Congo's only deep-water port for oceangoing vessels, struck for two weeks in early June and forced the government to replace their bosses.

The people of the Congo have been struggling many ways since their country was seized back in the 1880s. All signs point to the struggle continuing.

Sources consulted: Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, "The Congo from Leopold to Kabila" and G. Heins and H. Donnay, "Lumumba: the last fifty days."

Email: gdunkel@workers.org

Mexican presidential struggle

Continued from page 9

in Iraq, the crisis in Palestine and so on. But imperialism is intimately involved in developments in Mexico. The only reason Calderón has not been declared a winner is because a mass struggle has been waged.

In the U.S., solidarity with the Mexican people is of the utmost urgency. The hand of imperialism can easily determine the course of the elections. Washington prefers the PAN, which is a party with clear capitalist interests anxious to continue the sell-off of Mexico's resources for its own gain.

But when the Mexican masses rallied on Saturday at the Zócalo, it was a signal that enough is enough. For decades, the government of Mexico has been complicit with U.S. ideology. Fair elections have his-

torically been denied to the Mexican masses. The struggle for a López Obrador victory is a reflection of a struggle for basic bourgeois democratic rights, a right that imperialism and the Mexican bourgeoisie want to continue to deny.

How far will this struggle go? Will the yearning to end exploitation and imperialist domination intensify? Will the forces behind change in Mexico prevail? Only time will tell.

Here in the U.S., the task of the progressive and revolutionary movement is to demand respect for the peoples' will in Mexico, to demand an end to pro-U.S. governments, to call for fair elections and a repeal of NAFTA, as well as solidarity with the Mexican people and full rights for Mexican and all immigrants. □

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Después de dar sus votos Los pobres de México votan con sus pies

Protestando contra el intento de la derecha de robarse las elecciones

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

(Primera de dos partes)

Al tiempo en que este artículo iba a la prensa, los resultados de las elecciones presidenciales del 2 de julio en México todavía no se sabían.

Por ahora es un empate entre Felipe Calderón, el candidato derechista del pro estadounidense Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) y Andrés Manuel López Obrador, candidato del progresista Partido Democrático de la Revolución (PRD). A López Obrador popularmente se le conoce en México como AMLO.

Los resultados preliminares muestran un avance para el PAN, con el 36.38% de los votos para Calderón y un 35.34% para López Obrador.

López Obrador ha pedido un recuento, ya que hay indicios de fraude. El PRD ha recopilado una lista de irregularidades y violaciones a las leyes electorales, incluyendo la desaparición de 3 millones de votos. Después de que AMLO denunció esto, los oficiales electorales admitieron que "hasta 3 millones de votos no habían sido contados en los resultados preliminares."

El Washington Post reportó que se ha reunido un equipo de abogados y que tomará meses para obtener los resultados finales. Pero algo sí es seguro. Y es que México está una vez más a punto de hacer historia.

México está en una encrucijada, y las elecciones presidenciales apenas reflejan las profundas contradicciones que impactan sobre las masas mexicanas.

La pregunta principal no es tanto quién haya ganado las elecciones del 2006, aún siendo tan importantes, sino que ¿hacia dónde va México? ¿Cómo las pobres condiciones sociales en que viven las masas mexicanas serán resueltas? ¿Qué papel jugará la izquierda ahora en resolver estas condiciones?

¿Continuará la soberanía de México siendo socavada por los Estados Unidos?

¿Podrá unirse a los líderes que están surgiendo en América Latina quienes también son cabezas de estado cuyas políticas hacia la izquierda han estremecido el centro del imperialismo? O, ¿continuará México bajo la bota de Washington, resultando en el dominio opresivo neocolonialista e imperialista en el siglo 21?

Y más importante aún, ¿Cuáles son los sentimientos de las masas mexicanas? ¿Hacia dónde irán? ¿Se unirán los millones de campesinos desplazados, los obreros maltratados, los sin techo, los indígenas perseguidos, los jóvenes desempleados y las madres con niños hambrientos, en una fuerza militante que pueda romper las cadenas opresoras de una vez y por todas? ¿Quién les guiará?

Sólo el tiempo lo dirá.

Pero por ahora las elecciones presidenciales del 2006 deben servir como recordatorio para el pueblo de los Estados Unidos de que todo lo que pase en México está inextricablemente atado a este país.

Ningún tipo de desarrollo económico, político o social

ocurre en México sin que Washington no solo ponga atención sino que interfiera de todas y de cualquier manera hasta alcanzar la meta que sirva al imperialismo.

A través de los años, instituciones económicas y políticas estadounidenses se han arraigado en México. Los Estados Unidos estornudan y México es quien se resfía.

Alguien debería recordarle esto al "periodista" de la cadena CNN, Lou Dobbs. Su retórica racista y demagoga sobre la cuestión migratoria—un punto que está íntimamente atado a las relaciones entre México y Estados Unidos—puede responderse con una sola demanda: El imperialismo debe salir de México para que los trabajadores no se vean forzados a salir.

Elecciones mexicanas, imperialismo estadounidense

Los cambios fundamentales no se ganan por medio de elecciones. Es la lucha—donde las masas están en movimiento y tienen conciencia de clase—lo que lleva al cambio verdadero. La intervención de los trabajadores oprimidos luchando por sus propios intereses es lo decisivo en hacer historia. Ellos son los verdaderos agentes del cambio, como los marxistas siempre han destacado.

En el contexto moderno, cualquier fenómeno que ocurra en el contexto de la relación entre una nación oprimida y una nación opresora, también tiene que ver con toda esa relación, como Lenin explicó tan detalladamente cuando actualizó las teorías de Marx después del desarrollo del imperialismo capitalista y el capital financiero.

La historia de México está llena de intervenciones por los Estados Unidos. Las elecciones en México ocurren bajo una pesada nube de dominación imperialista. En México, hasta este acto básico parlamentario burgués está manchado por la fetidez de la podredumbre del imperialismo y por la amenaza de una intervención.

Las elecciones del 2006 no son diferentes.

Los revolucionarios alrededor del mundo observaron estas elecciones con mucho interés. Se esperaba que López Obrador fuera un candidato que se convertiría en otro representante del sentimiento antiimperialista que se extiende dramáticamente por todas las Américas. De hecho, el tema de su campaña era "Todo para los pobres".

Qué avance tan significativo sería para el campo revolucionario tener a la mera puerta de los Estados Unidos un líder antiimperialista, un presidente preocupado por el bienestar de las masas y no por el bienestar del Fondo Monetario Internacional.

Por eso, la burguesía capitalista también observó con mucho interés estas elecciones.

Desde el primer día, la prensa capitalista en México, al igual que en los Estados Unidos hizo todo lo posible para satanizar a López Obrador. Reportes televisivos continuamente se referían a López Obrador como a un "líder populista" peligroso. Lo compararon con Hugo Chávez de Venezuela, y amenazaron con que si fuera elegido llevaría a más inestabilidad y hasta violencia a México.

De alguna manera la prensa olvidó que en las elecciones del 1988, más de 500 miembros del Partido Revolucionario Democrático fueron asesinados—y que el Partido Revolucionario Institucional, en aquel tiempo en el poder, se benefició de ello.

Un profesor de los EEUU, supuesto experto en las relaciones entre México y los EEUU, dijo que López Obrador no es tanto un "fascista" sino que es un "Mesías". La clase dominante estaba realmente preocupada porque López Obrador ya había demostrado que realmente está preocupado por la miseria en su país.

Como alcalde del Distrito Federal—una posición importante mantenida por su partido izquierdista—López Obrador había llevado a cabo reformas sociales sin precedentes.

El alcalde López Obrador había lanzado una campaña exhaustiva de salud pública basada "en los derechos sociales y la redistribución de recursos", según la revista American Journal of Public Health de diciembre del 2003. La revista reportó también que "una pensión para gente de la tercera edad y servicios médicos gratuitos están financiados por concesiones, eliminando la corrupción y el malgasto rutinario del gobierno".

López Obrador prometió que promovería más de lo mismo si fuera elegido presidente. Esto no es poco viniendo de un candidato presidencial en un país que comparte una frontera de 2000 millas con el coloso imperial del norte.

Además, López Obrador está, según se ha reportado, en contra del Tratado de Libre Comercio con los EEUU y Canadá, el cual ha forzado a tantos trabajadores y campesinos mexicanos en los años recientes; y que le gustaría renegociar las condiciones de tal acuerdo si fuera elegido presidente. Requiere fuerza política para lograr tal meta. ¿Puede hacerlo sin movilizar las masas en una forma contundente?

Por cierto, los imperialistas estadounidenses no podrían aceptar la presencia de otro Chávez en su puerta principal. □



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