

MUNDO OBRERO

Bush aumenta amenazas contra Irán 12

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN

- Immigrant fight-back then and now 5
- Stop execution of Iraqi women 9
- Campaign for the Cuban Five 8

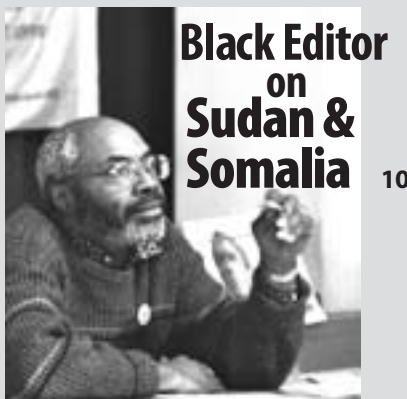
CHRYSLER

More jobs on chopping block 4

lavender & red

1959 CUBAN REVOLUTION

First step for sexual liberation 8



February protests show Struggle heats up vs. Iraq war funding

By Monica Moorehead
New York

The struggle from below to force Congress to vote NO on any additional funding for the racist occupation of and war on Iraq got a tremendous shot in the arm this past week with numerous anti-war protests organized across the U.S. From the West Coast to the East Coast, thousands of people and especially students took to the streets to demand, "Cut off war funding now and bring the troops home."

The Feb. 15-17 protests sent a clear message that there is growing mass awareness that Congress cannot be counted on as a whole to stop the Bush administration's objective of staying in Iraq for an indefinite amount of time—even after the Nov. 7 elections, which became an anti-war mandate from registered voters.

The Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) initiated a national call for the Feb. 17 demonstrations. TONC is urging all progressive movements and activists, of all political persuasions, to unite and come to Washington, D.C., for the march on the Pentagon called by ANSWER for March 17. TONC is also urging activists to occupy Washington, D.C., while the debate on the war funding takes place.

A TONC leaflet passed out in New York and elsewhere on Feb. 17 reads in part: "President Bush won't stop the war. ... Congress won't stop the war. ... It's time to ... occupy Washington. ... Across the U.S., activists and organizers are planning buses, car caravans, vans and peace trains to Washington—not just to march, but to stay, because it's time to go from mere protest to resistance. We need a massive mobilization on the streets of Washington as Congress votes on war funding. We hope to set up an encampment in D.C. beginning the week of March 12."

TONC demands include an "immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal from Iraq; an end to colonial occupation and imperialist aggression from Africa to Asia, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Haiti, the Philippines and Puerto Rico; no new wars against Iran, Syria or North Korea; hands off Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Lebanon; solidarity with immigrant workers and

WW COMMENTARY:

Congress could stop the war 9

Katrina survivors; stop the war at home—stop racist police terror—stop ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] raids; military recruiters out of our schools and communities and no draft—education, not war."

Chapel Hill, N.C.

On Feb. 16, while Rep. David Price (4th District-N.C.) was on the floor of the House debating a meaningless nonbinding resolution, six youth were sitting in on the floor of his office, demanding that the funds for the war on Iraq be cut off and that the people's needs start being met. The six youth, members of U. of N.C.-Chapel Hill SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), were subsequently arrested for the action.

The demonstration, organized in coordination with the Troops Out Now Coalition's "Cut Off ALL War Funds Day,"
Continued on page 6



PHOTO: ELENA EVERETT

Students hang banner in front of Rep. David Price's office, Chapel Hill, Feb. 16.



Feb. 17 march, NYC.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Subscribe to Workers World

- 4 weeks trial subscription \$1
- One year subscription: \$25

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Workers World Newspaper

55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011

212-627-2994 www.workers.org

MILWAUKEE

Youth focus of Black History Month

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

The war on the Black Nation within the United States, particularly on the youth and how to fight back, sparked lively discussion at two Black History Month events at the U. of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

Speaking before a packed room of multinational campus members, representatives from three community-based Milwaukee youth organizations spoke Feb. 13 on "The Reality of African-American youth." On Feb. 15, M1 of the hip hop group Dead Prez also spoke at the university.

The chair for both events, Dr. Ahmed Mbalia, an assistant professor in the department of Africology and a member of the Pan African Revolutionary Socialist Party, began the Feb. 13 panel discussion by describing the effects of institutional racism confronting African Americans, specifically youth in Milwaukee, and nationwide. He described health care disparities, endemic poverty, unemployment rates which are double that of whites, failing schools and how African-American youth in Wisconsin are imprisoned at the highest rates in the nation.

"Our youth are a product of the environment they come from. This is a population that is indeed faced with major crises," said Mbalia.

Reggie Moore of Urban Underground grew up and still resides in Milwaukee. He described how he had to search for institutional assistance beyond his family and kinship networks while he saw this wasn't the case in more affluent areas. This, in part, led him and others to create Urban Underground in 2000. Moore said much of the organization's focus is "how to create spaces for young people in this community" and help them overcome personal challenges. Activities, mostly led by young African-American women, include community organizing such as fighting police brutality and harassment, educational programs, finding alternatives to incarceration and workshops.

Victor Barnett, executive director of Running Rebels, described how this organization has participated in helping thousands of youth since 1980. Barnett said one of the main goals of Running Rebels is to "show the youth that someone cares about them." With an expansive office in the central city, the organization runs a variety of programs focusing on educational and recreational activities. These include mentoring, tutoring, crisis stabilization, anger management, daily living skills, a music instruction program and an after-school and summer safe-and-sound program.

"We have to save us. If you're not organized then nothing's going to happen. As college students you can create change," began Carey Jenkins of Campaign Against Violence, which works with 18- to 35-year-olds teaching non-violent conflict resolution, voter education and more. His organization recently conducted a survey in predominantly African-American neighborhoods and found that many residents felt "a lack of resources" was a major reason why their communities were being devastated. Jenkins closed with a spoken word rap about a 7-year-old girl shot dead by a stray bullet and asked, "If cocaine is running the economy are they really concerned about the youth?"

Questions by audience members included the role of the corporate media, such as Clear Channel, that often only portray African Americans as criminals and sub-

human; how to build unity between African Americans and other disenfranchised individuals and communities, including the white working class; the role of African-American and other women; the often negative treatment of youth by police and security personnel at public spaces such as Mayfair Mall; the lack of public spaces for youth; the relationships between youth and elders; nutrition; the role of unions and churches; the U.S. war on Iraq and its effect on poor communities; and the negative and positive aspects of hip hop culture.

Concluded Mbalia, "We must no longer sit back and do nothing. If you are unorganized you can't control any situation. If you're organized you can make a difference. Youth are the spark."

'Defeat imperialism!'

On Feb. 15 M1, or Mutulu Olugabala, focused on the relationship between Black revolutionaries in the 1960s and 1970s and the international movements arising from these roots, including hip hop. Olugabala is currently on a U.S. speaking tour that is being filmed for a future DVD release. He had just come from Omaha, Neb., Malcolm X's birthplace.

Olugabala, wearing a military hat with a red star insignia and "Cuba" above the star, spoke before a large multinational audience that included many long-time Black and other liberation movement freedom fighters—including African-American Milwaukee City Council Alderman Michael McGee Jr., who is currently under racist attack for defending and supporting working class and oppressed people.

Olugabala described his personal journey, beginning with his formative years from his birth in Jamaica to living in Brooklyn, Raleigh, N.C., and Tallahassee, Fla., where he met his Dead Prez partner Sticman, helped form the Black Survival Movement and joined the African People's Socialist Party and the National Democratic Uhuru (Freedom) Movement.

From there he gave an overview of the U.S. "undeclared war" on the Black Nation in the latter half of the twentieth century largely waged through COINTELPRO, a counterinsurgency program that used assassinations, torture and other forms of terror against the Black and other liberation movements. Olugabala stressed that particular targets of U.S. imperialism were the Black Panther's people's programs and dynamic leaders, organizers and theoreticians such as Assata Shakur, Fred Hampton Sr., Dr. Huey P. Newton and Geronimo ji-Jaga Pratt. The inspiration these struggles gave to international liberation movements was another main reason for their neutralization, said Olugabala. He said after the military defeat of the U.S. liberation movements, beginning in the early 1970s, the U.S. "doped out the 'hood and brought in crack cocaine in the most vicious way," in another form of racist neutralization.

Olugabala closed by stressing the need for revolutionary political education, using the science of dialectical and historical materialism, and declared that organizing to build for socialism to defeat imperialism is the way forward.

"All of us have a role to play in this struggle that we're in," said Olugabala. Suggesting a life mission to those progressives and revolutionaries present, he concluded: "I'm going to do everything I can to defeat imperialism. That's my job." □

This week ...



★ In the U.S.

Struggle heats up vs. Iraq war funding 1
 Youth focus of Black History Month events 2
 Al-Arian hospitalized on 23rd day of hunger strike 3
 Federal judge trounces Ohio prison system 3
 NAACP People's Assembly builds a working-class movement 3
 Chrysler to cut 13,000 jobs 4
 On the picket line 4
 Court rules in favor of protesters 5
 Congress could stop the war—but won't 9

★ Around the world

International women's rights 5
 International women's campaign for the Cuban Five 8
 Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five 8
 Sex-changes in Cuba will be no-cost. 8
 Lavender & red, part 91 8
 Stop execution of Iraqi women 9
 Black editor in Detroit on: Somalia and Sudan 10
 International briefs 11

★ Editorials

The prisons are the crime 10

★ Noticias En Español

Bush aumenta amenazas contra Irán 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
 Vol. 49, No. 8 • March 1, 2007
 Closing date: Feb. 21, 2007
 Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
 West Coast Editor: John Parker
 Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt
 Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
 Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez
 Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas
 Internet: Janet Mayes
 Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2007 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to WWnews-subscribe@workersworld.net. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US.

Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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

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

Al-Arian hospitalized on 23rd day of hunger strike

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Palestinian professor and activist Dr. Sami Al-Arian was taken from his Virginia prison cell to a federal medical facility in Butner, N.C., following his collapse on Feb. 13, the 23rd day of his hunger strike protesting the U.S. government's ongoing persecution of him for his political beliefs and activities.

Solidarity actions, including an international campaign of messages calling for his release and a rolling hunger strike by supporters, are being coordinated by a coalition of Muslim and human rights groups.

Al-Arian, a respected academic, Muslim leader and human and civil rights activist, has been the subject of government surveillance and right-wing propaganda for over a decade.

His arrest in February 2003 on numer-

ous charges of operating a "terrorist" cell in the U.S.—just weeks before the U.S. "shock and awe" attack on Iraq—was part of general assault on opposition to the Bush administration's policies at home and abroad, designed to intimidate people from speaking out.

His trial, costing some \$80 million, came after he spent close to two-and-a-half years in solitary confinement under the most brutal and harsh conditions. In a stunning defeat in December 2005—after a six-month trial where the defense rested immediately after the conclusion of the government's case—12 Florida jurors acquitted him of the most serious charges and deadlocked 10-2 for acquittal on the minor ones.

The federal prosecutors threatened to retry him on the remaining charges despite the jury's thorough repudiation

of their case. Al-Arian and his legal team reached a plea agreement that in exchange for admitting to a minor charge, he would be allowed to leave the country voluntarily and would not be subpoenaed to testify in any other matters, thus allowing him to reunite with his family.

On May 1, 2006, the Florida judge rejected the agreement and sentenced Al-Arian to the maximum time. This meant that he was still in federal custody when Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon Kromberg, in the Eastern District of Virginia, began grand jury hearings into "terrorist" activities by Islamic charities and think tanks.

Al-Arian, citing his plea agreement, has refused to answer any questions before two consecutive grand juries. Held in contempt of court, his prison time has been extended indefinitely.

He began a hunger strike on Jan.

22 to call attention to the U.S. government's criminal violation of his civil and human rights and its blatant disregard for the conditions agreed to in the plea arrangement.

On Feb. 7 he was interviewed on Democracy Now, which allowed millions to learn first-hand about his case and to hear the conviction in his voice as he firmly stated: "Freedom is more precious to me than life itself and if I have to sacrifice, I will. But I will not give in."

Al-Arian concluded the interview by thanking all those who have supported him and urged those listening to "continue the struggle ... for civil rights in this country. I think we are going to win."

For more information and the names and addresses to send messages of support to, please go to www.freesamialarian.com or www.masnet.org. □

Federal judge trounces Ohio prison system

By Sharon Danann
Cleveland

"Incarceration at OSP [Ohio State Penitentiary] is synonymous with extreme isolation. ... OSP cells have solid metal doors with metal strips along their sides and bottoms which prevent conversation or communication with other inmates. ... It is fair to say OSP inmates are deprived of almost any environmental or sensory stimuli and of almost all human contact."

Is this the slant of a muckraking journalist? No, these are the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, delivering the opinion for a unanimous court in June 2005 in a class action lawsuit, *Austin et al. v. Wilkinson et al.*, filed by courageous OSP prisoners. That decision focused on protecting inmates' rights of due process in decisions about transfers to OSP.

On Feb. 16 in Cleveland there was a U.S. District Court hearing on another important aspect of this lawsuit. More than 50 prisoners at OSP are in a status called "Level 5," as so clearly described by Justice Kennedy. They are in solitary confinement 23 hours a day, let out only to shower and have "recreation" alone.

Inmates cannot be considered for parole until they are on Level 3.

Most of the prisoners with convictions related to the April 1993 rebellion in the prison at Lucasville, Ohio, have been on Level 5 for almost 14 years. This includes four of the five men known as the Lucasville Five, who were given death sentences in sham trials following the uprising. Handcuffed and shackled but unbowed, Bomani Shakur (Keith Lamar) of the Lucasville Five was in court as one of the prisoner plaintiffs.

Representing the prisoners, attorneys Staughton Lynd and Alice Lynd called a witness, Lloyd Slider, who had injured a guard 15 years ago in an incident unrelated to the Lucasville uprising. Because the guard's subsequent death was ruled to be medical malpractice, the inmate was charged with felonious assault but not murder, and he received a 12 to 15 year sentence.

In great detail, evidence was presented of reviews of the prisoner's conduct, which had been "excellent" and even "model inmate" with all programs completed. Repeatedly, there were recommendations to reduce his level, only to have those overruled. The reasoning given was, "The

seriousness of his placement offense outweighs his behavior."

The state's attorney, Mark Landes, raised that the prisoner had been able to file appeals and informal complaints. However, these appeals did not alter the prison's decisions.

However, Judge James Gwin engaged in some questioning of his own. The judge objected to a process in which decisions were being made by "some functionary, somebody who doesn't really answer to anybody." In reference to keeping this prisoner with a good conduct record at Level 5, he asked, "What evidence in the record supports that?"

Landes replied, "The record of what he has done previously is enough."

Judge Gwin commented that that was "seemingly vindictive." Addressing the fact that inmates kept at Level 5 never get to go before a parole board, he went on: "Prison officials are not the Parole Board. Doesn't Ohio law give that authority to the Parole Board? The Parole Board doesn't even get a say."

To the delight of a courtroom full of prisoner supporters, Judge Gwin then asked: "Aren't you a bit embarrassed by this? The inmates deserve a hearing that's

meaningful, rather than just boilerplate."

Each time Mr. Landes tried to reply, Judge Gwin interrupted him again. His final shot was, "The country ought to be embarrassed."

At that, Mr. Landes raised his voice and fired back, "Someone else had a hand in that and that was Slider and his hand was on a ten-inch shank going in the back of the neck of the corrections officer."

There it was for all to see, the true motivations of the prison system—clannish revenge and vindictiveness: you hurt one of our own and we will never forget. The judge had cleverly gotten him to reveal them, and the hearing was over.

Even though it is exciting to hear the representatives of the prison system get so thoroughly pummeled the state has shown its willingness to appeal all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, so this is far from over. But as the prison movement gathers momentum all across the country, prisoners will continue to organize within the prisons and their supporters will continue to pack the courtrooms, march in the streets and get the word out in any way we can.

"*Lucasville: The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising*" is available at Leftbooks.com.

NAACP People's Assembly builds a working-class movement

By Dante Strobino
Raleigh, N.C.

On Feb. 10, thousands of African Americans and other working people marched through the streets of downtown Raleigh, N.C., in the NAACP's Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HKonJ) People's Assembly. Under the new progressive leadership of its president, the Rev. William Barber, the North Carolina NAACP organized this event to put forward a powerful 14-point program demanding union jobs, health care, and education not war. This was the biggest demonstration in recent Raleigh history, only surpassed in 2003 when 7,000 marched demanding an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Statewide, the only demonstrations bigger than this in several years were last year's May Day immigrant worker manifestations.

The HKonJ "People's Agenda" included:

- 1) "All children need high quality, well-funded, diverse schools
- 2) Livable wages and support for low-income people

- 3) Health care for all
- 4) Redress two ugly chapters in NC's racist history: the overthrow of the biracial 1898 Wilmington government and the sterilization of poor, mainly Black, women from 1947-1977
- 5) Same-day registration and public financing of elections
- 6) Lift every historically black college and university
- 7) Document and redress 200 years of state discrimination in hiring and contracting
- 8) Provide affordable housing and stop consumer abuse
- 9) Abolish racially biased death penalty and mandatory sentencing laws; reform our prisons
- 10) Put young people to work to save the environment and fight for environmental justice
- 11) Collective bargaining for public employees
- 12) Protect the rights of immigrants from Latin America and other nations
- 13) Organize, strengthen and provide



NORTH CAROLINA

PHOTO: BEN CARROLL

- 14) Bring our troops home from Iraq now!"

Unions & anti-war groups unite

What was unique about this event was the presence of working-class and labor organizations. Union flags and banners could be seen flying in the air everywhere. Unions such as United Electrical Local 150, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, the Teamsters and UFCW made a visible impact on the march, which made this a rare occasion in North Carolina—the state with the second lowest unionization rate

in the country, with less than 3 percent of workers belonging to unions.

UE Local 150 and its Raleigh City Workers Union chapter had a particularly strong delegation. UE members carried emphasizing the fight for collective bargaining and living wages. Local 150 has been involved over the past two years in the International Worker Justice Campaign to repeal NC General Statute 95-98, a legacy of Jim Crow that denies public-sector workers, mainly African American, the right to be represented by a union contract. This struggle, strengthened by last September's sanitation work-

Continued on page 5

'The St. Valentine's Day Massacre'

Chrysler to cut 13,000 jobs

By Martha Grevatt

February 14 is a day when many workers enjoy a special dinner with their romantic partners, but not everyone is celebrating. Chrysler workers and their loved ones are facing a bleak future; the company chose that day to announce that 13,000 jobs will be permanently wiped out.

Workers in the plants have been dreading the heartbreaking news and are calling it the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre." Rumors have been flying since Feb. 4, when the media speculated that plants would be closed and 10,000 hourly jobs would be cut. Later reports hinted that an additional 1,000 salaried employees would face the axe.

The morning of Feb. 14 DaimlerChrysler (DCX) executives announced the actual figure, which includes 9,000 U.S. hourly workers represented by the United Auto Workers union, 2,000 Canadian hourly workers represented by the Canadian Auto Workers union, and 2,000—not 1,000—salaried employees. The Newark, Del., assembly plant, with 2,100 workers, and the Cleveland Parts Depot, with 100 workers, will be closed. Two other assembly plants, in St. Louis and in Warren, Mich., will see their workforces reduced by an entire shift.

The rest of the damage will be spread across the other Chrysler plants in North America. DCX, formed in 1998 by the buyout of Chrysler by Daimler-Benz of Germany, will not rule out dumping Chrysler altogether. "Our thinking does not exclude any options," stated CEO Dieter Zetsche. (Detroit News, Feb. 14)

To explore those strategic "options," DCX retained JPMorgan as a consultant. Word of the cuts and the possible spinoff was met with glee on Wall Street—by Feb. 16 DCX stocks had climbed 14 percent to a seven-year high.

Now the highly secretive DCX board has admitted that they have been in talks with General Motors for two months. That GM might buy Chrysler begs the question: If GM is so poor that it had to cut 35,000 jobs and get the remaining employees to take a pay cut in 2006, where does it get all its spending money? (Could it be JPMorgan?)

With this plan, codenamed "Project X," Chrysler joins Ford and GM-Delphi in a restructuring that will kill a total of 100,000 jobs. Project X adds to the havoc already wreaked by the 2001 decision to eliminate 26,000 Chrysler jobs. This "turnaround" and subsequent cuts have actually taken out 46,000 jobs—one third of the Chrysler workforce. When is enough enough?

The company is crying over a 7 percent drop in U.S. sales from 2005 to 2006. Yet if sales have dropped only 7 percent (really only 5 percent when its sales abroad are factored in), how do the bosses justify eliminating 16 percent of the workforce? In fact, sales are creeping back up. January 2007 showed a 1 percent increase compared to January 2006. Last month Chrysler sold more vehicles than Ford, a major feat for the com-

pany that was always the smallest of the Big Three.

DCX is not losing money; profits at the parent company have actually increased from \$6.8 billion in 2005—when the Mercedes division lost money but the Chrysler group made almost \$2 billion—to \$7.3 billion in 2006.

It's no secret that Chrysler's financial wounds are self-inflicted. Its addiction to profits, specifically the \$10,000 profit it was making per SUV, drove it to overproduce the Dodge Durango model. High gas prices and concern around global warming have made SUVs unattractive to consumers, yet when Durango sales plummeted DCX pinned its hopes on the Chrysler Aspen, a high-end version of the Durango.

Both models are built at the Newark plant, which for many years has had a "Modern Operating Agreement." At its inception, both management and the UAW leadership heralded it as a cooperative venture that would empower hourly employees. It was supposed to safeguard jobs by making plants "more competitive." In fact, it reduced jobs by cutting the number of classifications while creating positions for "clipboard-toters," a derisive term coined by the rank-and-file for union members who functioned as "team leaders."

Now Newark is just the latest MOA plant to get the axe. So much for teamwork.

From Detroit to Newark to Wall Street, the capitalist media paint a fatalistic picture. They use words such as "nervous," "solemn" and "somber," to "upset and crying" to describe the workers' mood. Headlines already speak of "pinching pennies." A Detroit paper even quoted a salaried engineer as saying that "everybody does understand that these are essential steps." (Detroit News, Feb. 15)

The papers aren't telling the whole story. DCX workers and the concerned community have posted online some bitter yet astute comments below stories in the Newark News Journal:

"The reason Chrysler was acquired by Mercedes was the fact that Chrysler was the most profitable of the big three in 1998. They had 7 billion in a rainy day account. After the merger the money was released to build a Mercedes plant in Alabama."

"The Newark Assembly Plant has had the BEST production rates of any of the Chrysler group plants. The Newark Assembly Plant has had the BEST quality of those same plants. So, the decision to shutdown the plant came down to money and not performance."

"Maybe [Chrysler Group CEO Tom] LaSorda should give up some of his paycheck, too."

"Chrysler stock (DCX) is up \$5.25, over 8 percent. Laying off workers is like printing money for the stockholders."

"They literally sucked us dry. Sad. Very sad."

And one boldly asked, "WHERE IS THE UNION NOW—WHY DOESN'T THE UAW STRIKE?"

A fitting question indeed, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Flint sitdown

strike. Both past history and current events—beginning October 2004 with Delphi declaring bankruptcy and threatening to tear up its union contracts and close 21 plants—beg the question. What are the prospects for struggle?

UAW President Ron Gettelfinger called the cuts "devastating" and has pledged to uphold the contracts, which expire in September and contain a moratorium on plant closings until then. However, his stated intention to negotiate buyout packages suggests an outlook that Project X is inevitable and can't be fought. Gettelfinger, who sits on the DCX Board of Supervisors, should be informing the membership of exactly what might be in store for them.

The mood in the plants is not yet one of fightback. Workers are waiting to hear the specifics of buyout packages designed to ease the pain. The corporate media are doing their best to cultivate a culture of resignation. Their message is subtler than that of 70 years ago—when the Flint Journal was under the complete control of General Motors—but in the end it still boils down to "you can't fight city hall."

Nevertheless, the sheer magnitude of the crisis and its global implications provide openings. DCX is a huge conglomerate whose tentacles circle the globe. The knife wielded in Stuttgart is cutting heads not only in North America but in every continent—with the possible exception of Antarctica. In a voice that could put one to sleep, Zetsche spoke unfeelingly about the success of the "head count reduction" program at Mercedes. The increased sharing of common components, which reduces jobs at both Chrysler and Mercedes, creates links between workers around the world.

The repercussions of the cuts are immense. The Newark plant, for example, generates \$800 million for the economy of the state of Delaware. In Michigan, where 5,500 jobs are slated to be lost, the average annual income dropped \$3,000 from 2001 to 2004, and this latest crisis will drive wages down further. All the industries involved in making a car, from rubber to steel to glass, are impacted.

A global working class coalition, drawing in every affected sector of the economy and every hard-hit community, could re-raise the slogan "A job is a right." When the workers in Flint were accused of violating GM's property rights by taking over the plants, they argued that they had a property right to their jobs—a right that then Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins felt compelled to acknowledge.

This right is enshrined in the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. The Job Is a Right Campaign revived the slogan in 1987 during a massive wave of plant shutdowns. Since then a moratorium on closings has been a part of UAW contracts with the Big Three.

The urgency of the situation calls for making job security clauses watertight, and expanding them to the growing number of underpaid, temporary workers in the auto industry. Enough is enough; it's time to put people before profits. □

ON THE PICKETLINE

by Sue Davis

Women's class-action suit vs. Wal-Mart

A federal appeals court in San Francisco ruled 2 to 1 on Feb. 6 that the largest sex discrimination lawsuit in this country's history could proceed as a class-action suit. Plaintiffs' lead lawyer Brad Seligman estimated that the class—all women who have worked at Wal-Mart since December 21, 1998—includes more than two million women. "Simple math, given the size of the class and the types of disparities we've shown, indicates that the losses to women are in the billions," Seligman told the New York Times. (Feb. 7)

After a review of extensive evidence, the two-judge majority found "significant proof of a corporate policy of discrimination." They also concluded that "female employees nationwide were subject to a common pattern and practice of discrimination." With so much at stake, Wal-Mart announced that it would ask a full panel of 15 appeals court judges to consider the case.

In another case resolved on Jan. 25, Wal-Mart agreed to settle a federal suit and pay \$33.5 million in back wages plus interest to 86,680 workers. However, more than 40 state lawsuits, which accuse the world's largest, wealthiest retailer of not paying overtime and making employees work off the clock, are still pending.

Immigrants: captive labor

How did 12 Guatemalans granted six-month legal work visas to plant pine trees in North Carolina end up as captive laborers in Connecticut? After their passports were confiscated, the immigrants were forced to work nearly 80-hour weeks for \$3.75 an hour, denied emergency medical care and threatened with jail and deportation if they complained.

A federal court in Hartford will hear the case the men have brought against Imperial Nurseries, a large plant wholesaler. Law students in Yale's Workers and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic helped the Guatemalans file the suit. (New York Times, Feb. 8)

Supermarket baggers fight for hourly wages

Organizers representing the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are scouting supermarkets throughout New York's five boroughs to unionize unpaid baggers. These workers are forced to subsist on tips that range from \$4 to \$30 an hour.

On Feb. 10, workers at Food Bazaar on Manhattan Avenue in Williamsburg held a picket line to publicize their legal suit demanding hourly wages. And the Bushwick community group Make the Road by Walking is demanding more than \$1 million in back wages for baggers at the Associated on Knickerbocker Avenue. (New York Times, Feb. 11)

Though two large chains, Gristedes and Food Emporium, each agreed several years ago to \$3 million settlements after they were accused of paying delivery workers \$75 for a 60-hour week, progress for these sub-minimum-wage workers is painfully slow. Legal suits are often fought store by store through the attorney general's labor bureau.

With \$7.15 as the state's new minimum wage as of Jan. 1 and with union organizers on the case, there's a ray of hope for these below-poverty-level workers.

Paid sick leave mandated

As of Feb. 5, San Francisco became the first U.S. city requiring employers to give workers paid sick leave. Workers will also be able to miss work to help a sick family member or a domestic partner. Workers will accrue one hour of paid leave for every 30 hours of work.

The new policy, passed by a ballot vote in November, was promoted by a coalition of mostly young restaurant workers, who make up many of the more than 100,000 workers without sick leave. The city should also be applauded for having the highest local minimum wage in the country: \$9.14 an hour. □

Immigrant Rights & International Women's Rights:

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Two historic struggles intertwine this year in the month of March: for immigrant rights and for international women's rights.

March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD). It began as a day to bring working-class and poor women and women of oppressed nationalities into the class struggle. And it provided a day for women to affirm their liberation as well as that of their male loved ones, co-workers and community members.

The seeds for a formal celebration of IWD began in 1907 at an International Conference of Socialist Women. It was organized by German socialist Clara Zetkin. Participants included Russian Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai. The call for an international women's day came from Zetkin in 1910 at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen, and European socialists began to celebrate IWD in 1911. (www.marxists.org)

In 1917, on International Women's Day, thousands of women needle-trade workers walked off their jobs in Petrograd, joined by working-class men, swelling the crowd to tens of thousands and providing the spark that ignited the Russian Revolution. (www.cwluherstory.com)

In the U.S., an early militant strike by immigrant women in the New York City garment industries on March 8, 1857 may have inspired communist women to later choose the date for the official IWD.

'Bread and roses'

On that date in 1857, soldiers fired on women textile workers as they demon-

strated for a shorter work week in New York City.

On March 8, 1908, tens of thousands of needle-trade women workers poured through the streets of New York "to protest child labor, sweatshop working conditions and demand votes for women." (www.holtlaborlibrary.org)

These women workers came from many countries. In the 1911 Lowell, Mass., "Bread and Roses" strike, the women workers had come from 24 different nations and spoke more than 40 languages. (www.oah.org)

Seventy-five percent of all women factory workers in 1920 were recent or first-generation immigrants. ("American Women in the Progressive Era": 1993)

The dangers they faced were extreme.

In 1911 when a fire started in the Triangle Shirtwaist sweatshop in Manhattan, 146 young women workers perished inside. Most were between the ages of 13 and 25. Most were recent emigrants to the U.S.

Women leaders in immigration struggle

Today, undocumented immigrant women, and men, face extremely dangerous work, brutally long hours, exploitatively low wages and lack of child care and health benefits.

Undocumented women workers also face threats of rape and sexual or domestic violence, especially if they could face deportation if they reported the abuse.

Like the immigrant women workers in New York City who resisted in such famous actions as the "Uprising of 20,000" in 1910, women today are providing leadership in the developing immigrant rights struggle that sprang to life last year in the U.S.

These women bring traditions of resis-



Elvira Arellano

Two struggles intertwined

tance and struggle from their home countries, infusing the class struggle here with new vitality and experience, tactics and strategy.

Last March 28, another "uprising of 20,000" took place when that same number of students walked out of classes in at least 70 high schools in Southern California to protest anti-immigrant laws proposed in the U.S. Senate.

One of them was Rosalina García, a 15-year-old high school student from Santa Ana, Calif., who faced police with guns, tasers and masks. The cops, she noted, were being particularly hostile towards the women. But, she said, "I'm never going to give up." (www.uprisingradio.org)

The outpouring of millions of immigrant and undocumented workers called forth by the organizing of the March 25 Coalition took to the streets across the U.S. for months, with women providing key leadership.

Last May, Evelina Molina helped bring 40,000 people into the streets of Santa Rosa in northern California, using her skills as a radio broadcaster and producer at KBBF Spanish-language public radio, and her knowledge of the history of farm

worker organizing.

And last November in North Carolina, two Latina workers led more than 1,000 Latin@ and African American co-workers in a walkout from the world's biggest hog-processing plant. They were protesting the crackdown on documented and undocumented workers by the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement Agency (ICE)—actions meant to intimidate workers from organizing. (www.fistyouth.blogspot.com)

Elvira Arellano, 31-year-old founder of La Familia Unida Latina, continues her more than 6-month struggle against deportation from her place of sanctuary in a Chicago church. Mother of a U.S.-born son, she has brought forward the special oppression and resistance of women immigrant workers, saying, "I fight so the undocumented people will be respected."

'A woman's place is in the struggle!'

Teresa Cervas, Southern California coordinator for the progressive Filipino organization BAYAN-USA, notes, "Filipinos are the number one export of our country, forced to leave our homeland and move to other countries for work and economic

Continued on page 11

NEW YORK CITY

Court rules in favor of protesters

By Dustin Langley
New York

In a victory in the struggle against police misconduct, on Feb. 15, Federal Judge Charles Haight ordered the New York Police Department to immediately stop the routine videotaping of protesters engaged in lawful political activity. Haight ruled that the NYPD has routinely violated what is known as the Handschu agreement.

In the ruling, the judge cited two events that the NYPD illegally videotaped. One was the March 19, 2005, march called by the Troops Out Now Coalition, when activists marched from Harlem's historic Marcus Garvey Park to Central Park and then to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's mansion. The other was a march organized by the Coalition for the Homeless in December 2005.

The NYPD used hidden cameras, undercover police and a blimp belonging to the Fuji Corporation to film protesters. The judge called the police behavior "egregious"—stating that there was no reason to suspect that the participants were involved in unlawful behavior.

Lawyers involved in the case said the ruling will provide a precedent to challenge other surveillance activities, including the use of undercover officers at political gatherings.

The Handschu Agreement is named for attorney Barbara Handschu, who brought a class action suit against the NYPD's infamous "Red Squad," officially known as the Special Services Division, on behalf of members of the Black Panther Party. The Red Squad was the city's political police force, which gathered files on thousands of individuals and organizations involved in

progressive political activity. In 1985, rather than have the unit disbanded, the NYPD agreed to guidelines that forbade the surveillance of lawful political activity.

In 2002, the NYPD Commissioner of Intelligence David Cohen, formerly of the CIA, won a relaxation of the Handschu guidelines under Interim Order 47. Working with the Joint Terrorism Task Force of the FBI and with other federal agencies, the NYPD once again began widespread surveillance of individuals and organizations involved in progressive political activity.

According to the New York Times, "In recent years, police officers have disguised themselves as protesters, shouted feigned objections when uniformed officers were making arrests, and pretended to be mourners at a memorial event for bicycle riders killed in traffic accidents." (Feb. 16)

The ruling by Judge Haight affirmed the Handschu guidelines, which state that the police may conduct investigations—including videotaping—of political activity only if they have reason to believe that unlawful activity may take place and only after they have received written permission from the deputy commissioner in charge of the Intelligence Division.

"The NYPD had transformed the atmosphere for political dissent in New York City with its omnipresent videotaping of every demonstration, regardless of the likelihood or suspicion of criminal activity," said Donna Lieberman, New York Civil Liberties Union executive director. "This decision should restore the expectation that New Yorkers can participate in lawful demonstrations without fear of being placed in political dossiers." (www.nyclu.org) □

NAACP People's Assembly

Continued from page 3

ers' strike, has really pushed the issue of collective bargaining into the consciousness of most working and progressive people in North Carolina.

FLOC recently won the first labor contract for migrant workers. And, with the Food and Commercial Workers, FLOC has waged a 15-year fight to win union representation for workers in the Smithfield hog plant. This struggle has played an important role in the broader battle for immigrants' rights, and has also helped advance an alliance between Black and Brown workers, a necessary weapon to strengthen working-class power.

Toward the back of the Feb. 10 march was a sizable contingent of anti-war organizations and local peace coalitions. Between this anti-war contingent and the labor crowd marched a vibrant youth and student contingent from Raleigh FIST—Fight Imperialism Stand Together. Their banner read: "Collective bargaining rights now—justice for immigrant workers—feed the cities, not the war." FIST marched alongside students from Chapel Hill Students for a Democratic Society, who have been fighting to shut down a newly built military recruiting center.

This unity between anti-war and labor organizations is a strong sign that the movement to end the multiple oppressions caused by racist, capitalist society is developing a mass character.

A movement, not a moment

Organizers emphasized that this march was not just a one-day event. Rather, it was an initial step in forging a mass movement to fight for the people's agenda. The event

was coordinated by a number of progressive allies of the NAACP that have created a new coalition consisting of the AFL-CIO, UE Local 150, Black Workers for Justice, North Carolina Justice Center, El Pueblo, United Food and Commercial Workers, North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus, North Carolina Council of Churches, General Baptist State Convention, Triangle Urban League, People of Faith Against the Death Penalty and others.

United under the 14-point program, these organizations are fighting against the cutbacks that working people face as a result of heightened U.S. imperialism. Organizing continues in the state's rural and urban counties, and intersections between these struggles are now becoming institutionalized. Under the leadership of the most oppressed, North Carolina working people are in a position to build the necessary power to throw off their chains.

Saladin Muhammad, chair of Black Workers for Justice and organizer with UE Local 150, said: "If we can identify some of the key social movements that the platform represents and speak to and get these key movements to take off in a real fight around that; and make connections to struggles centered inside the work place, on environmental justice or around the war, it will have the possibility of leading flanks of this assembly movement. It will be important to establish an assembly movement towards people's popular power. In this time it is becoming clearer that either two parties or the institutions to address social needs are not going to do anything. Just like in Mexico where there is sense of dual power or popular power by peoples, this mobilization can allow deeper education about building people's power." □

Struggle heats up vs. Iraq war funding

Continued from page 1

garnered support from youth and students, community members and veterans, as several dozen demonstrated outside while the sit-in was taking place. During the demonstration, youth unfurled a banner from the roof of the building which read "Closed for Business."

The six youth inside the office presented Price's aides with three principal demands: that Price speak with them and pledge to vote against the upcoming supplemental funding bill and all war funding; that Price use his influence to compel other representatives to vote against war funding; and that he oppose all aggression against Iran, whether through sanctions or overt military action. When the aides in the office refused to get Price on the phone, the youth decided to sit-in at the office until their demands were met.

Alisan Fathalizadeh, a 20-year-old student who was taken from the office by the Chapel Hill police as she was reading the group's statement, explained what spurred her to participate in this action: "We've tried our best to work within the system, but when the system is flawed, little can realistically be accomplished. ... As an Iranian-American, this war is personal. It is directly aimed at people just like me and with the way things are progressing, it will target my family directly. I feel so helpless and distant being here, that taking action against the issue is the very least that I can do to show support for all of my family in Iran."

This action demonstrates a larger tactical change taking place within the anti-war movement, moving from symbolic protest to resistance.

The six youth were charged with first-degree trespass and released on an unsecured bond. They plan to pack the courthouse with supporters at their first court appearance March 26.

CALIFORNIA

Students shut down highway

An estimated 3,000 students from the U. of California-Santa Barbara marched against the Iraq war on Feb. 15. Hundreds of them shut down Highway 217 in a sit-down protest near the school. Students chanted, "Whose streets? Our streets!" and carried signs such as "Make levees, not war!"

According to an eyewitness account posted on dailykos.com, "A crowd of 2,000-3,000 students blocked the bike tunnel. After about an hour of speeches, including one by a U.S. Marine who initially supported but has now turned against the war, the organizers decided we should go walk across campus to give the people who didn't ditch a chance to change their minds and join us ... on the middle of our campus, in the middle of the day, disrupting everything, loud, angry, and passionate. I've been to protests before, but I've never felt so empowered as I did today. ...

"We then paused and regrouped and considered our options before deciding to walk down the freeway. I must have driven down that freeway a thousand times, but here I was walking on the double yellow lines! In the middle of the day! I watched as cars made u-turns up ahead to avoid being enveloped by the crowd, still around a thousand strong.

"We walked down for about half a mile before we were halted by a hastily assembled police line in front of a Caltrans roadblock redirecting traffic. ... Students were giving speeches about why we oppose the war and why we need to withdraw and the parallels between Iraq and Vietnam and why we need to stay out of Iran and Peace



Ignacio Meneses introducing María Sánchez at Feb. 17 Detroit speak-out.

Out University ... and the U.C.'s links to nuclear weapons labs like Los Alamos and other topics."

Video excerpts of this protest are posted at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU7Av-PKqH.

NEW YORK STATE

Hundreds of activists braved the cold for a march and rally that began at Times Square in New York City on Feb. 17. Thousands of passersby also stopped to hear the passionate speeches of activists demanding that the troops be brought home now from Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and that the hundreds of billions of dollars being spent for war go instead to fund health care, housing, education and all human needs.

There was a lot of general enthusiasm expressed for going to D.C. the week before the march on the Pentagon, in order to put pressure on Congress to vote NO against putting one more penny towards funding the criminal war in Iraq. Following the Times Square rally, the protestors marched to the offices of Sen. Hillary Clinton, a 2008 presidential candidate, who voted for the Iraq War in 2002.

Speakers included Berna Ellorin, BAYAN-USA; Mary Lou, Al-Awda, Palestine Right of Return Coalition; Mary Klopert, Grannies for Peace; Ellie Ommani, American-Iranian Friendship Committee; Comrade Shahid, Pakistani USA Freedom Forum; Mia Cruz, FIST; Fallou Gueye, Union of African Workers-Senegalese; Jesse Heiwa, Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five; WayQuay, Leonard Peltier Defense Committee; Jonathan Brown, World Can't Wait; TONC representatives Larry Holmes, Brenda Stokely, Sara Flounders, Sharon Black and Dustin Langley.

Other speakers included Councilperson Charles Barron, who recently introduced a local resolution against the war funding, Chris Silvera, chair of the Teamsters National Black Caucus and representatives from Millions for Mumia and Fanmi Lavalas.

At Columbia University in West Harlem, 300 to 400 students rallied against the Iraq War on Feb. 15. The event was sponsored by a coalition of student groups. Following the rally the students marched around the perimeter of the campus "to take their message to the community" chanting "What the hell is Congress

for—cut the war funds—stop the war" and "Not another nickel, not another dime for Bush's war crimes."

The International Action Center, along with anti-war students, held a picket line in downtown Buffalo on Feb. 16 despite below-zero, blizzard conditions.

DETROIT

The cost of the war and the urgently felt need to cut off funding to end it now was not a matter of statistics at the "Not One More Penny for War" Town Hall Meeting at Central United Methodist Church on Feb. 17. Hundreds of hungry Detroiters line up daily to eat a meal in that very room while over \$9 billion was looted from Michigan taxpayers alone to fund the war. Andrea Hackett, whose daughter served two tours of duty in Iraq, called the war genocidal, both for the Iraqi people and here.

Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan African News Wire and co-founder of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI), moderated the speak-out.

Azikiwe said: "We're calling for a total cut off of funding for the war in Iraq. It is obvious the war is a failure. We think the funds that are being used—that are being wasted—every day in Iraq to carry out this war that the U.S. government knows it cannot win should be used to fund human needs right here in the City of Detroit, right here in the state of Michigan, right here in the United States. It has to stop and the only way it is going to stop is that the masses of people have to get involved."

Detroit City Councilmember JoAnn Watson said not one damn dime should be spent on the war, "That's why we don't have money for health care, for education."



Debbie Johnson from the Detroit Action Network for Reproductive Rights said the billions for the war are taking food from tables and resulting in cuts in Medicaid and Medicare that tens of millions rely on.

State Sen. Martha Scott called for an end to the war in Iraq and the war against the people of her district who do not have the fundamental services necessary to live in dignity. Scott said: "The \$2.9 trillion federal budget will cut Medicaid, home heating assistance, HIV/AIDS and mental health funding and eradicate homelessness assistance. It will eliminate before- and after-school programs."

Rep. John Conyers called for educational programs that let everyone go to school without cost. He agreed that suffering in Michigan is caused by the war; that \$2 trillion in direct and indirect costs and climbing are going to endless war. This is the only war where taxes for the wealthy decreased. He said, "Close down the war!"

Maureen Taylor, chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, stressed that water service is shut off to 45,000 Detroit residences each year. Children in households without water are put in foster care because not having water is called neglect. The state or county government has taken title to 40,000 abandoned houses. There are 14,000 to 15,000 homeless people in this area.

Michael Merriweather, a Stop the War Slate Candidate on the 2006 Green Party ticket and member of SDS and MECAWI, suggested that possibilities not be limited to returning to the way things were in the past, but to look to the future and make the kind of life and world we want and need and take this in our own hands.

Ignacio Meneses from Latinos Unidos de Michigan introduced María Sánchez, whose spouse was deported in 2003—separating her family, severely destabilizing her life and that of her three children and forcing her onto public assistance. Meneses called on everyone to help stop the raids and deportations on May Day by not going to work or school, not shopping and not selling.

Jeff Montgomery from the Triangle Foundation, Michigan's statewide civil rights, advocacy and anti-violence organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, expressed the full solidarity of the organization's leadership. He said if there is any emergency funding, it should be for Detroit and Flint, for the poor and homeless.

David Sole, president of UAW Local 2334, likened conditions in Michigan to an economic Katrina. He explained the Michigan governor has emergency powers to declare an economic disaster and stop utility shutoffs,



Cleveland, Feb. 17.



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

foreclosures, evictions and plant closings. This emergency measure was used during the 1930s by Gov. Frank Murphy and was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court and is still on the books. Sole called on everyone to become an organizer.

Two representatives from the Windsor Peace Coalition in Canada brought the message that they are holding a March 17 demonstration at the Canadian entrance to the Detroit Windsor Tunnel. Like Detroit, Windsor, dependant on the auto industry, has lost thousands of jobs.

Sandra Hines is a leader in the fight against police brutality and to save her neighborhood school, Courtis Elementary, one of the 51 schools tagged for closing due to Detroit public school budget deficits. Hines stressed that action was needed now. She said, "This is a war on the people here, not just Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq."

The message of the heightening struggle to end the war was reported in the Detroit Free Press on Sunday and on Channel 2 TV.

CLEVELAND

Despite cold and snow, Cleveland TONC held a lively demonstration across from the West Side Market, a popular indoor/outdoor food market—symbolizing the food that many are forced to go without in this, the most impoverished city in the U.S. The demonstration was joined by the Northeast Ohio Antiwar Coalition, Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee, Cleveland Nonviolence Network and the Baldwin-Wallace College chapter of FIST.

PHILADELPHIA

A group of activists from SEIU, Vietnam Veterans for Peace, community organizations and the International Action Center gathered Feb. 17 in Center City for a speak-



Signing petitions against war funding, Philadelphia, Feb. 17.



NYC march Feb. 17. Larry Holmes, Brenda Stokely, Charles Barron at rally, above. Bernadette Ellorin, right.

out against the war. It was an open mike session where passersby could talk freely about their opposition to the war.

A young African-American man who holds a low wage job with no benefits in a fast food chain criticized Bush for waging war in Iraq while ignoring the victims of Katrina.

A middle-aged owner of a vending cart stated that "A lot of people get killed for nothing. ... We have to stop the war by working together." Nick, a high school student, spoke about recruiters going after the youth, particularly poor kids.

Julia López, director of Centro Pedro Clavel, a service-oriented agency in the Latin@ community, remarked, "Our youth are living without resources, being brainwashed through the media. They are not getting the facts to make an informed decision, instead are being indoctrinated by the media, sent to kill and die. There is no budget for education but suddenly billions of dollars appear to fight a war and kill innocent people."

A young African-American man, referring to Bush, said, "When is he going to have enough, man, how many bodies have to be laid down before he gets the message?"

Tili Ayala, a young mother of two, stated, "You have to speak out or else the government will speak out for you. We have to be the voice."

MASSACHUSETTS

In Springfield, an economically distressed city largely run by a control board established by former Gov. Mitt Romney, the message of "money for jobs, not war" was the central theme of a noon news conference held at the Federal Building. All local media outlets, print, TV and radio covered the news conference. A multi-national group of area activists picketed the Federal building.



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Among those who spoke were Democratic state representative and chair of the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus, Benjamin Swan, who personally endorsed the Troops Out Now Coalition's national "No More \$\$ For War" campaign.

Representatives of Arise for Social Justice, a Springfield poor people's rights organization, and Out Now, a Western Mass. lesbian/gay/bi/trans youth organization, also urged opposition to continued funding for the war.

The Rev. Louis Alvarenga of Acción Latino, a Springfield-based immigrant rights organization, stated, "Many of the soldiers dying in Iraq are Latin@. The immigrant community is suffering from this war by losing our young men and women in Iraq and by the money being taken away from healthcare, housing and jobs in our communities here at home. We're here to stop this war."

Greg Speeter of the Northampton-based National Priorities Project provided a sobering assessment of the war's financial impact on Springfield and surrounding communities. The Priorities Project provides information about the effects of military spending on the national budget and on cities across the country. (www.nationalpriorities.org)

Nick Camerota of the Western Mass. IAC/Troops Out Now Organizing Committee urged people to support the online petition drive to stop war funding and called attention to U.S. threats of war against Iran.

In Boston a squad of volunteers for TONC distributed 1,000 flyers at a busy downtown intersection. The Boston City Council had just a few days earlier passed a resolution condemning the Iraq War which also urged people to go to Washington on March 17 to protest the war. The resolution was introduced by Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner and passed 8-3.



Police arrest FIST organizer Ben Carroll at Chapel Hill protest.

GEORGIA

Kennesaw State University students led a successful street vigil/rally on busy Barrett Parkway in Cobb County Feb. 17, with students and supporters receiving much positive response from drivers—many hundreds of encouraging shouts and horn honks.

The Columbus Peace and Justice Coalition held their opening event Feb. 17 in Columbus—a Peace in the Park rally. They attracted 30-40 people, made new contacts and got media coverage.

"I think the time has come for the fence-sitters and the people who have otherwise just sort of stood on the sidelines to get out and have their voices heard as well," stated Brett Johnson. (WRBL News, Feb. 18)

The group is organizing a caravan to leave Columbus on March 16 to attend the March on the Pentagon March 17. For more information, contact the Columbus Peace and Justice Coalition at cpjc.ga@gmail.com.

Sharon Black, Ben Carroll, Catherine Donaghy, Ellie Dorritte, Martha Grevatt, Cheryl LaBash, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Dianne Mathiowetz, Bob McCubbin and Gerry Scoppettuolo contributed to this article.

WW PHOTOS: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI, SUSAN SCHNUR, MONICA MOOREHEAD

International women's campaign for the Cuban Five

By Cheryl LaBash

A special appeal to women around the world is coming from the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five.

This year—from International Women's Day on March 8 through Mother's Day on May 14—women are called to rise up against the injustice being done to the Cuban Five and their families, demonstrate solidarity by all means possible and demand that the U.S. government immediately grant visas to spouses of the Five who are denied visitation.

These five Cuban men had monitored the CIA-backed paramilitary organizations

in Florida with the aim of protecting their beloved homeland, socialist Cuba, from the kind of attacks that have killed more than 3,000 Cubans and others. These innocent men, who are in fact heroes against U.S. terror, were railroaded to prison in June 2001. They are serving total sentences of four life terms plus 74 years.

For the families of the more than 2 million people imprisoned in the United States, visiting is often extremely difficult. Prisons are built in rural areas far from concentrated population centers. Travel is expensive and difficult to arrange. The separation from spouses, children, parents and other loved ones is a cruel punishment beyond any court sentence.

On average, the Cuban Five receive family visits once a year. This is a violation of the prisoners' rights. But it is even more severe for two of the Five: René González and Gerardo Hernández.

The U.S. government has blocked visits by spouse Olga Salanueva to René González for six years. Adriana Pérez has not been allowed to visit her spouse, Gerardo Hernández, since he was arrested in 1998. Both women have requested visas on seven occasions and have been denied every single time. René González' daughters—Irma, now 18, and Yvette, now 8 years old—were only recently able to visit their father for the first time since his imprisonment.

The injustice is intentional psychological torture. According to an article in ZNET by Salim Lamrani, "Adriana Pérez was granted a U.S. visa to visit Gerardo in Lompoc Federal Penitentiary after waiting for five years. But upon her arrival in the United States, she was detained by the FBI, interrogated for 11 hours and then expelled to Cuba without seeing him."

Olga Salanueva was a resident in the United States for two years after the Five were arrested. In July 2002, the Miami prosecutors attempted to use René González' family to force him to plead guilty. In retaliation for his courageous refusal to lie about his innocence, Olga Salanueva was arrested for three months and then deported to Cuba.

This treatment of the Cuban Five and their families violates the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the U.S. Constitution and is widely condemned around the world as pressure demanding their freedom grows.

The International Committee has proposed a number of initiatives: to incorporate the demand for visas to Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva into all actions organized on International Women's Day; to ask women journalists and other writers to mention the violations these two women are suffering; to send messages to Condoleezza Rice demanding visas; and to publicize the struggle of the Cuban Five and their families. □

Dynamic grass-roots mobilization

Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five extends around the world

By Leslie Feinberg

An extraordinary mobilization of Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five is extending around the world.

To read and sign on to the call, visit www.freethefivey.org and look for the rainbow. Individuals and organizations are urged to help circulate the call far and wide.

The five political prisoners—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—are serving long sentences in U.S. penitentiaries for the "crime" of infiltrating CIA-backed fascist commando groups in order to halt terror attacks against Cuba from U.S. soil.

The Rainbow Solidarity for the Cuban Five call demands a new trial and freedom for these political prisoners, defense of Cuban sovereignty and self-determination and a halt to the illegal U.S. acts of war against Cuba—including the economic blockade and CIA-trained, funded and armed attacks by mercenary "contra" armies operating from this country.

The solidarity initiative has inspired self-motivated grass-roots organizing by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (LGBT) and other activists who fight oppression based on sexuality, gender expression and sex.



Circling the globe

Individuals and organizations from more than 32 countries and 43 states in the U.S. have signed on.

Volunteers have translated the introduction to the initiative and the call itself, so that it is now available in Spanish, English, simplified and traditional Chinese, Farsi, Turkish, Greek, Portuguese, Japanese, Italian, French and German.

ASWAT—the Palestinian lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexual organization—is translating the introduction and call into Arabic.

LGBT and feminist activists in Croatia are translating and circulating the call.

Translations and downloadable leaflets and petitions are constantly being updated on the www.freethefivey.org Web site.

More information about the Cuban Five is available on that Web site or at www.freethefive.org. □

Sex-changes in Cuba will be no-cost, like all health care

Cuba's National Assembly of Popular Power has agreed to discuss making sex-reassignment surgery free of cost to all "transexuales" on the island who request it.

The entire public health care system in Cuba is free of charge.

Mariela Castro Espín, director of the National Center of Sexual Education (CENESEX), has led the move to make sex-reassignment available to Cubans free to all who seek it. Mariela Castro, a leader in her own right, is the daughter of renowned revolutionary leader Vilma Espín and acting Cuban President Raúl Castro.

The newsletter *Diversidad* (Diversity) reported: "The measure would complement the present Identity Law that already acknowledges the right of citizens to change name and sexual identity. This

places Cuba at the vanguard of the legislations that acknowledge the rights of transvestites, transsexuals and transgender in Latin America."

It places Cuba at the vanguard of legislations in North America, as well. Sex-reassignment is priced out of reach for many transsexual men and women in the U.S. And health care in general is a pricey privilege denied tens of millions in the heartland of imperialism.

The publication reported that Cuba's parliament will also discuss legislative recognition of same-sex unions.

For an in-depth historical materialist look at the trajectory of the Cuban Revolution since 1959 on same-sex love and gender variance, read the *Lavender & Red* series at: www.workers.org. Look for the lavender and red logo.

—Leslie Feinberg



By Leslie Feinberg

The first revolutionary step toward the liberation of sexuality, gender expression and oppressed sexes in Cuba was the dismantling of the sex-for-profit industry and interconnected gambling dens and drug-distribution networks. This concrete, material first act by the Cuban Revolution unshackled human bodies, desire and gender expression from capitalist commodification, commercialization and exploitation.

For almost half a millennium the island had been manacled by colonialism, capitalism and imperialism. The holds of their ships brought enslaved peoples from Africa. Their advanced weaponry was cocked and trained on the enslaved laborers. The ideological lash of the Roman Catholic Church sliced to the bone. White supremacist, racist ideology, patriarchal oppression of women and state-enforced repression against same-sex love ruled the economic and social order.

Early Cuban Revolution paved road to

Just as colonialism and imperialism left the island's fertile soil cultivated as a single-crop plantation, class enslavement tilled the fields of culture.

When the revolutionary process began, it had to start from there.

Before the 1959 Revolution, the burgeoning sector of the Cuban economy was Havana's prostitution industry, booming with Cold War consumption—the largest in the Caribbean—and the gambling, drugs and tourism connected to it. U.S. crime syndicate bosses and wealthy Cubans with connections to Batista's regime owned the profitable operations.

Researchers Lourdes Arguelles and B. Ruby Rich note that this illegal economy "employed more than two hundred thousand workers as petty traders, casino operators, entertainers, servants and prostitutes." ("Hidden From History")

Many were homosexual—male and female—and many male homosexuals were feminine. Crime bosses also exploited tens of thousands of heterosexual women and men in the prostitution industry.

All performed to the sexual whims of the fathers and scions of the U.S. and Cuban ruling classes.

Cuban citizen, translator and interpreter Leonardo Hechavarría, and Cuban defender, typographer and gay rights activist Marcel Hatch, sum up that era: "Before the 1959 Revolution, life for lesbians and gays was one of extreme isolation and repression, enforced by civil law, augmented by Catholic dogma. Patriarchal attitudes made lesbians invisible. If discovered, they'd often suffer sexual abuse, disgrace in the community, and job loss.

"Havana's gay male underground—some 200,000—was a purgatory of prostitution to American tourists, domestic servitude, and constant threats of violence and blackmail." ("Gays in Cuba, from the Hollywood School of Falsification," walterlippmann.com)

Arguelles and Rich explained: "It was just a profitable commodification of sexual fantasy. For the vast majority, homosexuality made life a shameful and guilt-ridden experience. Such was gay Havana

in the fabled 'avant la guerre' period."

Reactionaries prey on dislocation

For male homosexuals in Havana, particularly those who were feminine and/or cross-dressing, social outlets for congregating were limited once this large-scale illegal economy was shut down.

As a result, Arguelles and Rich explained, this "prolonged the relationship between the declining underworld and more progressive homosexuals, locking the two groups together for sheer companionship and sexual pleasure."

That was truer for Cuban males than females.

Thetworesearchers noted, "Homosexual perspectives on the revolution could shift according to class interests."

Middle-class homosexuals whose privileges were threatened by agrarian and urban reforms banded, they said, with "the remaining veterans of the underworld" to oppose the revolution.

"Some veterans of the old underworld enclave joined counter-revolutionary activ-

Activists around the world urged to help stop execution of Iraqi women

By Brenda Ryan

People around the world are being called on to help stop the execution of three Iraqi women who have been sentenced to hang March 3.

Wassan Talib, age 31, Zainab Fadhil, age 25, and Liqa Omar Muhammad, age 26, were accused of participating in the resistance against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and sentenced to death by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Court. The three women, who denied the charges against them, were prevented from seeing a lawyer and tried in violation of the Geneva Convention.

The three women are being held at Baghdad's Al-Kadhimiya Prison. Talib has a 3-year-old daughter imprisoned with her, and Liqa has a 1-year-old daughter she gave birth to in prison.

The World Tribunal on Iraq and the BRussels Tribunal Executive Committee launched an international campaign to demand the release of the women.

"The United States and its local conspirators, in creating hundreds of thousands of widows and reducing life in Iraq to a struggle for bare survival have placed women in the crosshairs and now on the gallows,"

organizers of the two groups said in a statement.

"We celebrate the numberless acts of resistance of Iraqi women, whether their resilience in the face of a culture of rape, torture and murder by U.S. and Iraqi forces, their fortitude in continuing to give life amid state-sponsored genocide, their dignity as they try to maintain a semblance of normality for their children and families, their courage in burying their husbands, sons, daughter or brothers, or in direct action against an illegal and failed military occupation."

The groups call for protests in front of every Iraqi embassy in the world. And they ask that individuals call and write to local and national newspapers to pressure human rights groups to intervene and to write to the Iraqi authorities to demand that the immoral and illegal execution be halted and the women released.

The Iraqi government can't charge anyone with taking part in the resistance, the groups say. Citing a 1982 resolution of the U.N. General Assembly, they say international law affirms "the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle."

People are asked to send faxes and e-mails with the subject line: "Re: The Imminent execution of Wassan Talib, Zainab Fadhil and Liqa Omar Muhammad" to:

Minister of Justice Hashim Al-Shilbi

head-minister@iraq-justice.org

Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki: iraqigov@yahoo.com

President Jalal Talabani: www.iraqipresidency.net/greetings-send.php?language=arabic

Int'l Committee of the Red Cross: 011-41-22-733-2057 press.gva@icrc.org

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:

011-41-22-917-9008/ tb-petitions@ohchr.org

UN Representative in Iraq Said Arikat: 212-963-2800

arikat@un.org

IRIN News Agency: 011-971-4-368-1024

pat@irnnews.org

Amnesty International: 011-44-20-7956-1157

cjurgens@amnesty.org

Al-Jazeera: 011-974-442-6865/ press.int@aljazeera.net

Reuters: 011-44-20-7542-4064/ Eileen.wise@reuters.com

BBC: 011-44-20-7557-1254/ Michael.grade@bbc.co.uk □

Congress could stop the war—but won't

By Robert Dobrow

"The mountain labored and brought forth a mouse."

Surely, the tens of millions of voters who went to the polls last November in a wave of deep anti-war sentiment, returning the Democratic Party to its leadership position in the House of Representatives, had more in mind than a two-paragraph, non-binding paper resolution.

The House vote opposing sending more troops to Iraq was certainly a rebuke to Bush and a rare show of opposition by the legislative wing of the capitalist government to the executive. But the resolution lacks teeth or will. If the legislators meant what they said, they could stop the war now. The House of Representatives has the constitutionally designated "power of the purse" and could stop the bloodshed, the torture, the aggression in an instant by voting down spending on the war.

"Legal scholars normally sympathetic to the executive branch," writes the Boston Globe in a recent commentary on the congressional vote, "agreed that

Congress could stop the war by choking off funding." The Globe quoted John Yoo, one of the chief legal architects of the justifications for the Bush administration's torture policies: "Congress has complete control over the power of the purse, and it can simply say that no funds can be spent in Iraq if it wants to." (Jan. 9)

But the Democratic leadership doesn't really want to show independence from the Pentagon or the military-industrial complex. Their opposition to the war in Iraq is based on tactics, not on principle. Most of those who want to withdraw from Iraq are eager to beef up the war machine for new adventures against Iran, or Afghanistan, or South America. So fearful are they of being labeled "anti-military," their resolution made sure to state loud and clear that they "support the troops," by which they really mean that they support the military leadership, the bosses in uniform, the Pentagon war machine.

Writes Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in a recent piece "Iraq War Lie Detector

Test": "The latest version of the 'hide behind the troops' mode of argument is to claim that Congress lacks the ability to end the war. The story goes that President Bush is commander in chief of the armed forces, and that if he does not want to end the war, then Congress cannot force his hand. According to this argument, if Congress were to use its control of the budget to restrict funding, it would jeopardize our troops stationed in Iraq by denying them the supplies and ammunition needed to defend themselves.

"This argument is garbage. Congress has the authority to require the top military commanders in Iraq to produce a plan for safely withdrawing our troops from the country. It can also require these commanders to give their best estimate of the cost of this plan. It can then appropriate this money, specifying that the funds be used for the withdrawal plan designed by the military." (www.truthout.org)

Those far right, neocon pundits and legal scholars—who always oppose every single progressive piece of legislation with

the bogus "original intent" legal argument that the Constitution should be followed to the letter of the law and not "interpreted" by "activist" judges—never seem to quote this patently clear passage from the Constitution:

"The Congress shall have the power ... to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water; ... to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces; ... to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States."

For the past 60 years, Congress—and that includes both branches and both capitalist parties—has steadily handed over its constitutionally designated war powers to the executive and the military-industrial complex. At this time of Congressional discussion over the Iraq war, much attention from the anti-war movement is focused on whether Congress will resist this trend or expose itself as a submissive servant of the same war machine. □

WW
Commentary

sexual liberation

ities or were pushed into them by the CIA," Arguelles and Rich reported. "Not a few of the progressive homosexuals became implicated by default in counter-revolutionary activities and were even jailed.

"Young homosexuals seeking contact with 'the community' in the bars and famous cruising areas of La Rampa were thus introduced to counter-revolutionary ideology and practice. One example of such a dynamic is the case of Rolando Cubela, a homosexual student leader who fought in the revolutionary army but was later enlisted by the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro."

The two researchers concluded, "Homosexual bars and La Rampa cruising areas were perceived, in some cases correctly, as centers of counter-revolutionary activities and began to be systematically treated as such."

Cuban women organize for gains

The overall situation for Cuban women who loved women had its own characteristics.

Under the triple weight of the patriarchies of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism, a dynamic women's movement emerged in Cuba as early as the 1920s and Cuban women won the right to vote and be elected to public office in 1934. (thegully.com)

After the 1959 seizure of state power, it was Cuban women as a whole who became the driving force to break the chokehold of centuries-old patriarchal economic and social organization, and the attitudes about women and femininity it engendered.

The Cuban Women's Federation formed quickly after the Revolution in 1960. It exerted immeasurably more power because it was a part of the Revolution, not apart from it.

At a 1966 leadership meeting of the Federation of Cuban Women, President Fidel Castro observed, "Women's participation in the Revolution was a revolution in the revolution, and if we were asked what the most revolutionary thing that the revolution is doing, we would answer

that it is precisely this—the revolution that is occurring among the women of our country."

Hechavarría and Hatch stressed, "Following the Revolution, women won near full equality under the law, including pay equity, the right to child care, abortion, and military service, among other historic gains, laying the basis for their higher social and political status.

"This foundation, a first in the Americas, played an important role in women's greater independence and sexual freedom, a prerequisite for homosexual liberation. The Revolution also destroyed the Mafia-controlled U.S. tourist driven prostitution trade that held many Cuban women and gay men in bondage."

Hechavarría and Hatch added, "The Revolution undertook to provide ample education and employment opportunities for female prostitutes.

"Advances for women in general were naturally extended to lesbians, and many became among the most ardent defenders of the Revolution."

Revolutionizing the sexes

Cuban men, as well as women, had been treated as the property of other men—the patriarchs of property.

Revolutionary Cuban men have carried out their own work to consciously build the consciousness of a "new man" on the basis of new social principles.

Ché Guevara, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution as a whole challenged all Cuban men to examine male consciousness, attitudes and behaviors.

This revolutionary effort, which continues today, aimed to change old ways that men were taught to interact with women. Like the Revolution itself, this work is most profoundly meaningful because it is a process, not a single act.

The Revolution challenged the biology-is-destiny "natural order" ideologies of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism that elevated patriarchs to rule.

The Revolution challenged the reactionary biological determinist concept that men are innately superior and wom-

Continued on page 11



The prisons are the crime

A new report released by The Pew Charitable Trusts warns that unless policies change in states across the U.S., taxpayers could be paying as much as \$27.5 billion for the prison industrial complex over the next five years. This number consists of \$12.5 billion to construct new prison beds, as well as an additional \$15 billion for prison operations themselves. (www.pewtrusts.org)

What is more alarming, however, is the number of lives that these policies will damage. The report estimates that by 2011, one in every 178 U.S. residents—1.7 million men and women—will be incarcerated. The number of prisoners will outnumber the residents of Atlanta, Baltimore and Denver combined.

Given the continued racist criminalization in the media, schools and in the streets, this population will undoubtedly be disproportionately people of color. Given the continuing drop in jobs and social services across the country, the majority of this population will undoubtedly be poor.

As the world gears up to celebrate International Working Women's Day, the report announces that women are expected to be the fastest growing population of prisoners, with a 16 percent increase in their incarceration over five years. The population of men in prison is expected to also increase by 12 percent.

A media release for the report states, "A significant driver of the expected increase in the prison population is the cumulative impact of state policy decisions. These include mandatory minimum prison sentences, reduced parole grant rates and high recidivism [re-arrest] rates."

"It's a tempting leap of logic to assume the more people behind bars, the less crime there will be," the report stated. But, it admitted, "there is no clear cause and effect."

The prison industrial complex is a system where working-class people are warehoused, forced to work for slave wages, and subject to racism, sexism, anti-LGBT bigotry, rape, torture, harassment and abuse at the hands of prison officials.

Just as the repression of immigrants serves the bosses who can super-exploit immigrant labor with the threat of deportation, the prison system serves bosses who can pay below-minimum wages for services ranging from telemarketing to building furniture—used in public schools in some states—to data entry.

People are often incarcerated for crimes of survival, or for crimes related to drug offenses in a world where many turn to drugs as an escape from the oppression they face in their daily lives. If and when prisoners are released, they generally face the same conditions upon return to the outside world, with the added stigma of a criminal record.

It doesn't take rocket science to figure out what is needed to create healthy communities and healthy individuals: Jobs at a decent wage, and training. Universal education. Social services, including health care, child care, after-school and drug-rehabilitation programs. Cultural enrichment. An environment that promotes growth and potential. Why doesn't the government take the money used for the prisons—and the war, for that matter—and put it towards these solutions?

The answer is that the government isn't interested in any of this. Its focus is on one thing, and one thing only—profits for the capitalist class. And as long as the prison industrial complex is profitable they say: Let the taxpayers subsidize it.

But as always, repression breeds resistance. The marches demanding justice for victims of police killings—like Sean Bell in New York, Kathryn Johnston in Atlanta and others—are a reflection of this. The demand of "not one more penny for war" at the Feb. 17 marches included the war at home against people of color and the poor. And the horrors of the prisons themselves will inevitably bring more into the movement for justice and liberation—just look at revolutionaries Malcolm X and George Jackson. □

Subscribe to Workers World newspaper

4 weeks trial subscription \$1 One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Workers World Newspaper

55 W. 17 St. 5 FL., NY, NY 10011

212-627-2994

www.workers.org

**FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL • LEONARD PELTIER
THE CUBAN FIVE & ALL U.S. POLITICAL PRISONERS**

PART II

Black editor in Detroit on: Somalia & Sudan

From a talk entitled "A review of developments in Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and the role of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament: Aspects of the politics of contemporary Africa in the era of continuing imperialism" delivered at a Detroit Workers World public meeting on Feb. 10 by Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan-African News Wire.

Azikiwe is a co-founder of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI). He can be heard on radio weekly on WDTW, 1310 AM, on Sundays from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. in Detroit. In Toronto, he can be heard on Thursdays on CKLN, 88.1 FM, from 9:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m. This broadcast can be heard online at www.ckln.fm.

The talk was dedicated to the memory of the late Mama Adelaide Tambo, the African National Congress Women's League leader and widow of the late Oliver R. Tambo, longtime acting president of the ANC while Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in South Africa. Go to www.workers.org/2007/world/colonialism-0222/ to read the first installment of this talk.

Prior to the advent of European colonialism the center of world economic activity heavily centered on the so-called Indian Ocean basin. It was the necessity of Europe to break out of this isolation that provided incentives for the expeditions and the slave trade. Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, was a major link in the Indian Ocean basin. This area was connected through trade, culture and transport with Mombasa, Beira and Aden, leading into Asia Minor, China, Malaysia and Japan.

During the colonial era in Somalia, the people resisted the onslaught of several western European powers. The people of Somalia were eventually divided among five different nations: Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Kenya—which was colonized by the British—and Ethiopia, as a result of the expansion of the Abyssinian monarchy.

When the country gained its independence in 1960, it resulted in the unification of the sections that had been controlled by Britain and Italy. However, the areas controlled by the French eventually became Djibouti as an independent nation. Somalis living in Ethiopia and Kenya remained under the control of these states despite a longing for total reunification.

In 1969, a group of military officers responding to popular pressure seized control of the government in Mogadishu. Their politics were left-leaning in an effort to break with the legacy of colonialism that was imposed by the British and the Italians. By 1974, a Mogadishu Declaration was issued pledging to pursue a non-capitalist path and expressing solidarity with the overall struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa and the world.

Meanwhile in neighboring Ethiopia a general strike beginning in early 1974 led to the eventual collapse of the monarchy under His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie. A group of young military officers called the "Dergue" seized power in the absence of a well-developed nationalist or socialist political party that was capable of taking control of the state.

By 1977, the Dergue had declared itself socialist and moved towards an alliance with the Soviet Union and Cuba. The government sent students into the countryside to engage in a literacy and development program. A military base controlled by the United States in Ethiopia was abandoned as the country brought in advisers from Cuba to help build up its security.

Unfortunately, when Jimmy Carter became president of the United States in 1977, a

concerted campaign was launched to bring Somalia back into the Western sphere of influence. The government of Siad Barre was armed by the Carter administration and encouraged to attack Ethiopia in the Ogaden region, purportedly in support of ethnic Somalis suffering national oppression inside Ethiopia.

In the early months of 1978, the Ethiopian military, along with Cuban internationalist forces, entered the Ogaden region and put down the rebellion as well as defeating the Somali military troops who had crossed over into Ethiopian territory. Despite promises by the U.S. to intervene on behalf of Somalia, they did not dare do so, remembering the tremendous defeats during 1975 in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as well as Angola. By the early 1980s, famine had swept through large sections of Somalia. In 1991, the government of Siad Barre fled, leaving the country stateless.

When the administration of George H.W. Bush invaded Somalia in December of 1992, this appeared to many as an effort to exert American imperialist influence in the Horn of Africa. When Bill Clinton inherited this occupation under the guise of providing humanitarian assistance from United Nations coordinated sources, the stakes became greater due to efforts aimed at disarming political factions hostile to America's desire to establish permanent bases in this region of the continent.

After the United States military massacred over 50 Somali elders holding a meeting in Mogadishu on July of 1993, the Americans were on a collision course with large sections of the population. A clash on Oct. 3, 1993, in Mogadishu resulting in the deaths of many U.S. soldiers sent shockwaves through the country and led eventually to an American withdrawal from Somalia in 1994.

Today the Americans have intervened once again in Somalia. They are using the pretext of the involvement of al-Qaeda or other Islamic so-called "terrorists" as the cause of their involvement. As anti-imperialists and organizers within the anti-war movement, we realize that any statement of cause for American military involvement must be held to strict scrutiny on the basis of the many falsehoods utilized to justify invasions and occupations.

This is why the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice has raised the question of American involvement in Somalia right alongside the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the role of the U.S. in the overthrow of the Aristide government in Haiti in February of 2004.

Sudan: legacy of British colonialism and U.S. interference

Sudan was also colonized by Britain during the late 19th century. The imperialists' methodology of divide and conquer was employed where the peoples of the south, north and west were taught that they were separate entities. Some of the earliest nationalist movements on the continent took place in Sudan, with rebellions after the conclusion of World War I extending through the early 1920s.

Some of the elements within the nationalist movement pushed for a unification plan with Egypt. Others sought a solution to the colonial problem through the breaking down of the barriers erected by British colonialism. On the eve of independence, which took place in 1956, the people in the south mutinied within the paramilitary colonial forces, hampering the potential for a national identity in the country. The conflict with the southern region of the country lasted from 1955 through 1972, when a negotiated settlement was reached. However, a decade later, the conflict reemerged in 1983 and lasted for 20 years until a peace

Continued on page 11

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

—John Catalinotto (*jcat@workers.org*)

RWANDA, CENTRAL AFRICA:

French judge exposes U.S. role in 1994 events

In a report to French prosecutors late last year that broke into the news in mid-February, French Magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere accused Paul Kagame, who is now president of Rwanda, of ordering the 1994 assassinations of the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda. The deaths of the presidents, who were attempting to negotiate a peace agreement, sparked a civil war and led to the killing of hundreds of thousands of Rwanda's people, who now number 9 million.

Kagame is a U.S. client who in 1994 was leading an army called the Rwandan Patriotic Front, made up of Rwandan exiled Tutsis who had invaded their home country from Uganda. He was treated at the time as a hero in the U.S. media and by U.S. government figures. Kagame had been trained at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Leavenworth, Kan., before returning to Uganda to lead the RPF.

Bruguiere's report calls attention to the competition between French colonial interests on one side and U.S.-British support for the RPF as contributing to the ensuing massacre in the former Belgian colony. The ruling RPF made English an official language in Rwanda in 1996 along with French and the local language.

The 67-page French report includes charges that U.S. and U.N. officials, to protect Kagame, helped cover up earlier inquiries. It presents testimony from exiled Kagame bodyguards, spies and commanders. They identified a commando team that allegedly shot down the plane that killed the two presidents. "Kagame deliberately chose a modus operandi that, in the particularly tense environment ... between the Hutu and Tutsi communities, could only cause bloody retaliation against the Tutsi community," says Bruguiere's report. The implication is that Kagame accepted a probable massacre of Rwandans and even of his own Tutsi ethnic group as a price for seizing power in the country.

Since 1994, imperialist apologists have used the Rwandan massacre as a propaganda weapon to justify intervention from Western countries in Africa, most recently in Somalia and Sudan, and other parts of the world—for example, the Balkans from 1995 to 1999—as alleged peacekeepers. Bruguiere's report exposes the Western imperialist role as oppressor in Africa and competition among the imperialists as a key factor in the deaths.

ITALY:

200,000 say 'no U.S. base expansion'

Some 200,000 people, far more than organizers expected, marched in Vicenza, Italy, on Feb. 17 to protest plans to nearly double the size of the U.S. military base in that city, from 2,750 to 4,500 troops. The Pentagon plans to keep in Vicenza the entire 173rd Airborne, a rapid deployment force now split between Vicenza's Camp Ederle and Ramstein in Germany. The 173rd answers to the European Command, which can send U.S. forces into an area of almost 22 million square miles, including 90 countries.

Vicenza's citizens had been protesting plans to build the larger base for months, as it threatens their environment and the tranquility of the city. But people came from all over Italy to join the national protest because the new base also threatens to make Italy a source of U.S.-NATO aggression throughout the African continent and nearby Asian countries as well as Eastern Europe. Many Italians demonstrating have said this also makes Italy and especially Vicenza a target, since it will house the aggressors.

In the weeks before the demonstration, the Italian government and its right-wing opposition violence-baited the protesters, recalling the anti-globalization protest in Genoa in the summer of 2001—when demonstrators clashed with police, who brutally attacked the protest and even shot one youth to death. These slanders were repeated in the Italian corporate media. The U.S. Embassy also butted in with a letter "warning" U.S. citizens to stay away from Vicenza as the demonstrators were "anti-American."

A group of U.S. expatriates organized from Florence exposed these slanders with an open letter to the ambassador, saying the contents of his letter "disseminate fear and ignorance and are offensive to the intelligence of U.S. citizens in Italy." The group, U.S. Citizens Against War (Florence), also participated in the Vicenza march.

The authorities had a 1,300-person force of local police and carabinieri (federal police) on hand to repress the marchers, if necessary. This time, despite all the baiting and provocations from the government, there were no confrontations.

The massive protest has also caused problems for the "center-left" government led by Romano Prodi, because parties that make up his ruling coalition—including the Refoundation Communist Party and the Greens—joined the protest. These par-

of basics like food, water and shelter during and after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. They are naming themselves as Internally Displaced Person (IDP's). (www.peopleshurricane.org)

There are estimates that up to 80 percent of Katrina survivors were women of color. (Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 2006)

Central to the struggle against the government-made catastrophes of the hurricanes are the African-American women of the Gulf Coast, like Dyan French Cole, also known as Mama D, a long-time community leader.

Out of her home in the Seventh Ward, she and the "Soul Patrol" provide free food to her neighbors, help clean up their houses, fight to keep housing from being demolished and fight for the right of human beings to have a home from which they will not be torn away by the forces of money and power. (www.aas.duke.edu/katrina) □

ties had not broken with the government over its decisions to keep Italian troops in Afghanistan and send troops to Lebanon.

PHILIPPINES:

Health workers demand national budget funds

Doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers from dozens of hospitals, clinics and health offices marched to the Department of Budget and Management in Manila to protest the refusal of the government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to release the funds approved by the Philippine Congress for 2006. The health care group joined other government employees in demanding a 3,000 Philippine peso across-the-board salary increase instead of the promised 10-percent increase. "This is not even enough to cover the recent increase in prices of basic commodities," said Emma Manuel, president of the Alliance of Health Workers. The AHW says that the government is continuing to decrease the health budget, privatize government hospitals and increase hospital fees, while not allocating benefits.

GUINEA, WEST AFRICA:

State of siege called against strike

Faced with a resumed general strike that was taking shape as a political uprising, Guinean President Lansana Conté called a state of siege. The strike resumed because Conté had appointed a close ally as prime minister instead of sticking to the agreement to share power with opposition parties, which had ended an earlier strike. Hundreds of civilians have been killed by the military since early January, when the strike struggles first broke out. (See WW, Feb. 15)

During the state of siege, the military has carried out raids and arrested 278 people as of Feb. 16, according to a government source, including leaders of all the opposition parties and some trade-union leaders. A spokesperson for one of those opposition parties, the Union of the People of Guinea (RPG), told the French Press Agency on Feb. 18 that "more than a half of our federal and regional leadership have been arrested or found it necessary to take exile in other cities." The state of siege originally had a curfew that allowed movement only six hours during the day, though it has subsequently been slightly relaxed.

Lavender and red

Continued from page 9

en are naturally submissive.

But genuine economic and social equality for women, and profound change of the attitudes of men, could only be generated by economic and social reorganization that could lift the standard of living for all. Imperialism was determined to thwart and sabotage that work at every moment. U.S. finance capital cinched the island in an economic noose, and the Pentagon cordoned the island, attacking overtly and covertly.

As Washington and the Pentagon ratcheted up the pressure on Cuba, and the CIA having spearheaded the commando invasion at Playa Girón, the entire island's population had to be organized and mobilized to meet two huge tasks in 1965—military defense of the Revolution and harvest of the crop that sustained economic life.

agreement was reached in 2003.

The Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army led the southern rebellion under John Garang. A government of national unity was established with the understanding that the people in southern Sudan would eventually vote whether the people would remain in the unity government or establish an autonomous region in the south. It was after the agreement between Khartoum and the SPLA was reached that the conflict in the Darfur region erupted. Two rebel groups surfaced. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had links with the National Islamic Front (NIF) that became an opposition force in northern politics. The NIF initially played a pivotal role in the Omar al-Bashir government inside the country.

However, a split occurred, placing the NIF in opposition to the president and also the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) that appeared to be independent of northern influences. Since 2003, the Darfur rebel movement has further fragmented with splits inside the SLM/A largely over a peace agreement with Khartoum.

The imperialist nations and their allied press agencies have sought to portray the conflict in Darfur as an African/Arab conflagration with fundamental racial dimensions. Nonetheless, Darfur is predominately Islamic, like the population in the north. There is no pronounced racial difference between the peoples of the country. It is the legacy of British imperialism and U.S. interference that is at the root cause of the current conflict. These divisions are politicized in an effort to provide a rationale for possible military intervention. Consequently, anti-imperialists should look at the struggle in Darfur in light of American and British imperialists' aims in the region.

China has stepped up its economic investments in Sudan. The country is rich in oil and consequently provides the American government with an incentive to seek dominance over the resources. The only true and lasting solution to the Darfur crisis lies within the Sudanese people themselves and does not require a military occupation by the West.

Distributed by: The Pan-African Research and Documentation Center, 50 SCB Box 47, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; e-mail: ac6123@wayne.edu

Immigration & Int'l Women's Day

Continued from page 5

stability." The Philippines sends more nurses to the U.S. than any other country. Of the several thousand a year, the overwhelming majority are female.

Affiliated with BAYAN, the group "Babae" (Woman) organizes for "the rights and welfare of multi-generational Filipino women in the United States." Their chant is: "We are people! We are not illegal! A woman's place is in the struggle!"

In the U.S. South, organizers are making the connection between the rights of immigrants to stay and the right of Katrina survivors—who are primarily African-American—to return to their homes. (Mississippi Immigrant Rights Association)

Both those born in the Gulf Coast region and those who have immigrated there refer to the U.N. principles on internal displacement to indict the U.S. for denial

Everyone—of all sexes, genders and sexualities, from children to elders—was called up for these two life-and-death tasks.

Inside Cuba, trying to fit many thousands of urban homosexual and/or transgender males into agricultural work sharpened a social contradiction.

Outside Cuba, propagandistic exploitation of this contradiction led to the single greatest slander against the Cuban Revolution in the history of the workers' state.

Next: Vilification of the Cuban Revolution.

Parts 1-90 can be read at workers.org. Look for the lavender and red logo. Parts 86-90 also explore sexuality, gender and sex on the island before and after the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

Bush aumenta las amenazas de guerra contra Irán

Por LeiLani Dowell

Usando un aluvión de “evidencias” anónimas y no confirmadas, Washington ha intentado forjar la opinión pública en contra del gobierno de Irán a través de un anuncio similar a los anuncios que produjeron la invasión de Irak en el 2003.

El Presidente Bush dijo que el anuncio no fue hecho con la intención de ser amenaza de guerra contra Irán. Sin embargo, dado el incremento en las hostilidades de la administración hacia ese país—incluyendo la imposición de sanciones, la instalación de portaaviones cerca de las costas de Irán con el intento de provocar un altercado, y el reciente alegato de que hay armas iraníes en Irak—una movida agresiva por parte de Washington no está fuera de lo posible.

Es necesario que el movimiento anti-guerra y antiimperialista tome estas amenazas de guerra por los Estados Unidos contra Irán muy en serio, y exija del Congreso, del Pentágono y de la Casa Blanca “¡no más guerras!”

Una nueva campaña publicitaria

Durante una rueda de prensa el 10 de febrero en la Zona Verde en Bagdad, aún los oficiales que presentaron la evidencia—un alto oficial de la defensa, un analista de la defensa y un experto en explosivos, rehusaron identificarse públicamente—a la vez que presentaban lo que ellos llamaron fragmentos de las más mortíferas municiones y armas en Irak.

Alegaron que los “niveles más altos” del gobierno iraní han estado sufriendo estas armas—conocidas como Penetradores Explosivamente Formados—a las fuerzas de resistencia en Irak y que esas armas han sido responsable por la muerte de 170 de las 3.000 y pico de bajas estadounidenses.

A l@s corresponsales de prensa no se les permitió grabar o fotografiar ningún aspecto de la reunión. (Washington Post, 12 de febrero) En su lugar, fueron provistas a la prensa las fotografías de las municiones. El periódico “The Los Angeles Times” reporta que, “Los oficiales dijeron que siguiendo el rastro de cada pieza mostrada conduce a Irán, aunque para los ojos no entrenados no habían marcas iraníes fuera de las encontradas en la dinamita. Algunas de las municiones tenían escritura occidental”.

No se dio ninguna explicación sobre qué era lo que identificaba a estas armas como de fabricación iraní. No se dio ninguna evidencia concreta que ligara al gobierno iraní y la manufactura o transferencia de estas armas a Irak.

El vocero de la Cancillería de Irán, Mohammad Ali Hosseini, lo puso en claro: “No se puede confiar en tales acusaciones ni ser presentadas como evidencias. Estados Unidos tiene una larga historia de fabricación de evidencias. Tales acusaciones son inaceptables. (AP, 13 de febrero)

Si la administración de Bush ya ha optado por lanzar una nueva guerra en contra de Irán en un futuro cercano o no, decididamente ha aumentado la campaña a favor de una guerra.

Prensa corporativa ayuda campaña bélica

Como de costumbre, los medios de comunicación corporativos han apoyado esta campaña publicando en primera plana y con la más alta prioridad esta reciente ola de acusaciones contra Irán. A pesar de que la “evidencia” presentada es a lo sumo dudosa, la han presentado de forma para que se establezca un caso en la conciencia pública.

Sin embargo, hasta los medios de comunicación monopolistas han sido forzados, en forma limitada, a reconocer que esta campaña propagandística está siguiendo el mismo patrón que el truco de “las armas de destrucción masiva” utilizado contra Irak. Dada las consecuencias de la cobertura de las mentiras utilizadas para vender la guerra de Irak, algunos de los periódicos intentaron protegerse publicando editoriales al día siguiente cuestionando la falta de evidencia concreta, y hasta los motivos de la conferencia de prensa donde la noticia fue divulgada.

El día después de la presentación, el oficial de alto rango militar, el general Peter Pace, del Estado Mayor Conjunto de los EEUU, admitió a la radiodifusora, Voz de América, “Yo no diría según lo que yo sé, que el gobierno de Irán sepa claramente o sea cómplice”. (Prensa Asociada, 13 de febrero)

Intentando minimizar la importancia de la crítica que siguió a la declaración de Pace, el Presidente George Bush aseveró en una conferencia de prensa el 14 de febrero que él estaba convencido de que el gobierno de Irán está proporcionando armas a combatientes en Irak. Un periodista le preguntó, “¿Cuáles son las garantías que le puede dar al pueblo estadounidense de que los reportes de inteligencia están correctos esta vez?”

Bush dio una respuesta simplista y eva-

siva: “Sabemos que están. Sabemos que están suministrados por la Fuerza Quds. Sabemos que la Fuerza Quds es parte del gobierno de Irán. ... Mi trabajo es proteger a nuestras tropas”. (New York Times, 14 del febrero)

Intensificación es distracción de Irak

El 7 de noviembre pasado, una mayoría de votantes votó para proteger a las tropas trayéndolas a casa, en lo que fue considerado un referendo a favor de la retirada de las tropas de Irak. Esos mismos millones de personas están prestando mucha atención a los votos pendientes en el Congreso sobre el aumento de fondos para la guerra, y a pesar de las voces de las masas expresadas en las urnas electorales, tal parece que el Congreso sólo está dispuesto a proponer resoluciones no vinculantes contra la prolongada ocupación de Irak.

Considerando el voto en el Congreso, la nueva campaña de propaganda contra Irán parece como si fuera otra distracción con la intención de moderar los sentimientos contra la guerra de una mayoría abrumadora de la clase trabajadora en los Estados Unidos. El momento escogido para divulgar la “noticia”, apenas un mes antes del cuarto aniversario de la guerra el 17 de marzo, cuando masivas protestas antiguerra están programadas para ese día en Washington y alrededor del país, no es una coincidencia.

En una entrevista del 12 de febrero en el programa de televisión “Good Morning America”, el presidente de Irán, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad puntualizó: “Yo creo que los americanos han cometido un error en Irak ... y es por eso que está intentando acusar a otros pueblos, y acusar a otros no va a resolver el problema”.

Ahmadinejad señaló además que hay evidencia clara y abierta de que los Estados Unidos es el mayor ejecutor de la violencia en Irak: “Yo les puedo dar cifras y números que se saben: más de 160.000 tropas estadounidenses están en Irak. ¿Qué están haciendo en Irak?”

No se puede descartar la agresión estadounidense

Aunque la posibilidad de una nueva guerra parece arriesgada para la administración de Bush y posiblemente podría resultar en una situación peor para ellos que la actual, no quiere decir que los militaristas en Washington no corran el riesgo de una guerra desastrosa en un esfuerzo imprudente para invertir su derrota.

El periódico “The Los Angeles Times” reporta que Israel, el aliado más leal de los Estados Unidos en la región, “ha empezado una campaña insólitamente abierta para incitar presiones internacionales tanto políticas como económicas contra Irán. Ellos advierten que el tiempo se está acabando e insinúan que recurrirán a la fuerza militar si fallan esas presiones.” (7 de febrero)

Además, algunos demócratas destacados se han sumado a la postura de amenazas contra Irán. En una entrevista en “Democracy Now”, la directora del grupo Acción para la Paz de Nueva Hampshire (New Hampshire Peace Action), Anne Miller, describió una conversación que había tenido con la candidata presidencial demócrata Hillary Clinton: “Me acerqué a la senadora y ... le pregunté si ella de veras dejaría todas opciones en la mesa [en cuanto a Irán] y cómo podría ella amenazar, en efecto, a los niños de otros países con genocidio nuclear. Ella me clavó los ojos, y dijo ‘No hay opciones quitadas de la mesa.’” (13 de febrero)

Durante el debate sobre Irak en el Congreso el 13 de febrero, el representante. Anthony Weiner, D-NY, sugirió que si bien Irak era el blanco equivocado, Irán es el correcto: “Nuestra acción en Irak nos ha estirado hasta el límite.

¿Saben qué mandaría el mensaje correcto? Retirar algunas de esas tropas de Bagdad y mandarlas a la frontera con Irán.”

Mientras que hay indicios que señalan el deseo de la administración de un ataque aéreo contra Irán para tratar de reducir las bajas estadounidenses — y asegurar la muerte y la destrucción del pueblo iraní — otro indicio alarmante es el deseo de Bush de añadir 92.000 tropas al ejército en los próximos cinco años, como expresó en su discurso sobre el Estado de la Unión el 23 de enero.

El teniente general jubilado del ejército William Odom, quien fue director del programa de la Guerra de Estrellas (Star-Wars) de Ronald Reagan, advirtió, “El miedo a que el Congreso le haga frente [a la guerra en Irak] ayuda a explicar la prisa de la administración y los neo-conservadores de expandir la guerra a Irán. Aquí vemos semejanzas con la estrategia de Nixon y Kissinger en Vietnam: ampliar la guerra hasta Camboya y Laos. Solo que esta vez, las consecuencias adversas serían mucho peor.” (Washington Post, 11 de febrero)

Correo electrónico: ldowell@workers.org

