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The tea party movement's backward march

By Jarvis Tyner

After watching the Nashville convention of the tea party movement, it is clear that they continue to be a racist, red-baiting movement against health care reform, jobs for all, an end to war, and economic and social justice.

They are out to bring down Barack Obama because they see him as a force for progressive change and they are against progressive change. They are a movement to take our country back to the policies of Reagan, Bush or worse.

As the conference showed, they have few people of color in their ranks. That is because, while they say they are "color blind," they are against any measures for racial equality and inclusion.

The opening speaker at the conference was none other than the notorious right wing bigot, former Congressman Tom Tancredo.

Tancredo told the nearly all-white gathering that the reason Obama was elected was because people voted for him "who could not even spell the word 'vote' or say it in English." Tancredo went on to call for bringing back literacy tests.

Tancredo's despicable proposal would bring back what was a vicious method of denying the franchise to Black voters and is now illegal, as a way to prevent the election of an Obama type candidate in the future. Looking at his audience, it



wasn't a surprise that his remarks were greeted with cheers and loud applause.

Tancredo went on to blame the election of Obama on "the cult of multiculturalism," whatever that is. Tancredo would no doubt prefer to go back to a time when the cult of segregation dominated our national life.

In response to Tancredo's ridiculous claims, Harvard Professor Charles Ogletree made the

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point on the Rachel Maddow Show that most of Obama's votes came from whites.

But the tea party conference was keynoted by a racist speech and no one there objected.

This was a meeting of people who do not believe that the last presidential election was legitimate. They don't even believe that the president

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is a U.S. citizen. They are opposed to any government spending to help the massive numbers of unemployed, impoverished, foreclosed and evicted - all victims of the Republican-initiated Wall Street ripoff that brought down the nation's economy.

Concern for the 40,000 people who annually die needlessly because they don't have health insurance is not their cup of tea. The 30 million still uninsured should just perish if their coverage is by a government-run program. "Smaller government" is more important.

The tea party notion of "pro-life" does not extend to those who have died because of U.S. preemptive wars, or to the 40,000 people who annually die needlessly because they don't have health insurance. Military spending is exempt from their opposition to big government spending.

Sarah Palin, the \$100,000 speaker, is making hay on the backs of this movement. She thinks she is presidential timber (2012). I doubt it, but for sure she will come out of this a very rich racist, red-baiting demagogue.

Palin has jumped in front of this backward march. Her notion that Obama is more like a college professor and what we need is a commander in chief is another version of calling him "uppity."

Palin knows when she attacks Obama that she is furthering racial division in the country, which is an especially dangerous game to play during hard economic times. Her racist attacks on immigrants, her opposition to any government spending to help working families survive the crisis -- all of these attacks give encouragement to the racist lunatic fringe.

Their aim is to help the extreme right take back the Congress in November and the presidency in 2012.

Whether they succeed depends on the level of activity of the broad democratic, multiracial, labor and people's coalition. If this coalition is activated on the issues of jobs, health care and peace the right will suffer another setback.

This fight cannot be won by Obama alone or by the Democratic majority in Congress alone.

Without street heat, without real grassroots organizing, we could lose the fight for change and be pushed back to the Bush era or worse. We dare not let that happen.



Jarvis Tyner writes for the Peoples World.

U.S. should close Futenma base

By PW Editorial Board

Japanese voters are angry. Last year, they elected a liberal-left reform party that promised to close the U.S. Futenma military base in Okinawa. Last month, the voters in Nago, on the northern part of the island chain, elected a mayor who opposed the relocation of Futenma to their town. The incumbent mayor who lost supported the construction. Yet, the U.S. government is trying to bully the Japanese government with the threat of serious consequences if it doesn't accept relocating the base.

But the people of Japan are not backing down. They want Futenma closed. And the U.S. people should support them.

Japan's Akahata newspaper reports that at the planned construction site for relocating Futenma, Nago residents have been staging a sit-in struggle against the plan. They have set up a tent community on the place where the U.S. plans to build an on-sea heliport, destroying important marine habitat, including coral reefs, with a massive landfill.

The Futenma base opposition is not new.

Residents of Okinawa have argued against its relocation for more than a dozen years. There are some 14 U.S. military bases on Okinawa, which have caused long-standing problems, among them pollution and crime. U.S. soldiers have assaulted, and even raped, Okinawan residents over the years, infuriating the people there and leading to anti-American tensions. In 2005, the U.S. and Japan signed an agreement to move Futenma to Henoko (near Nago). But the will of the Japanese people has to be taken into account.

U.S.-based Just Foreign Policy is urging people to send a message to President Obama and Congress to "respect democracy in Japan" and close, not relocate, the Futenma Air Base.

Such a move would not endanger U.S. security. It would enhance it by showing that the U.S. respects Japan. It would also save billions of dollars a year - for both U.S. and Japanese taxpayers - that could be put to human and environmental needs.

It's the kind of change U.S. voters wanted too.



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Hope grows for U.S.-Cuba scientific cooperation

By Bea Lumpkin

Scientific cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba received a recent boost with the visit of a U.S. delegation to Havana. The delegation was led by Peter Agre head of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The U.S. delegation went to Cuba for meetings aimed at building a foundation for expanded science and engineering cooperation between the two countries. Agre is a Nobel laureate in chemistry.

The visit, November 10 to 13, 2009, brought together nongovernmental science and diplomacy leaders from the United States with science leaders from Cuban institutes and universities and staff from the Cuban Council of State.

The head of the Lounsbery Foundation, which sponsored the visit, Maxmillian Angerholzer III, is quoted in *Science* as saying, "Cuba takes so much pride in its science and medical capacities. When you're trying to use science as a way to bring countries together, it's best to do it when there are similar interests and shared goals."

U.S. delegation members mentioned several fields where the two nations might work together—from meteorology and marine sciences to infectious diseases and informal science education.

The exchange was only the third since the 1960s. Interest in scientific engagement between the two neighbors is growing. An October 2008 editorial in *Science* helped lay the groundwork for the visit. It was co-authored by Sergio Jorge Pastrana, foreign secretary of the Academia de Ciencias de Cuba, and Michael T. Clegg, foreign sec-



retary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. Last spring, President Barack Obama opened up a freer flow of information and humanitarian aid to Cuba. Meanwhile, some members of the U.S. Congress are working on easing or ending the ban on travel to Cuba.

An interesting sidelight of the trip was the part played by Fidel Ángel Castro Díaz-Balart—Fidel Castro's oldest son. The younger Castro is a nuclear physicist and leader in Cuba's science policy community. Arrangements for the U.S.-Cuba exchange had been delayed by the hurricanes that slammed the length of Cuba last fall. Fortunately, Castro Díaz-Balart attended a conference in Japan and met Vaughan Turekian, the chief international officer of AAAS. Turekian told *Science*, "I was able to tell him about our planned delegation and the fact that Peter Agre would be leading it. He was very receptive and helped facilitate a meeting with his own staff when we were in Havana."

While research collaboration was the main topic, the delegation also spent a lot of time talking about making sure that results of their research would be put to work for the people.

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Hansberry home gets landmark status

By Pepe Lozano

Honoring contributions made by the Black Renaissance Literary Movement in the mid-20th century here, the City Council approved official landmark status for the former homes of several well-known African American writers.

One of them is the Lorraine Hansberry House located in the city's Woodlawn community. Hansberry is best known as the author of "A Raisin in the Sun," which was the first drama by an African American woman to be produced on Broadway.

Speaking to the Chicago Tribune, her sister, Mamie Hansberry, now 86 and living in Los Angeles, said she was a teenager in the 1930s when the family first moved into the home, in a white neighborhood. She recalled the time when a chunk of cement was thrown through the family's window. The piece of cement was lodged into the wall, she said.

"That was a grotesque sight to see that lodged in the wall," she told the Tribune. "You know that somebody doesn't like you, doesn't want you there."

Lorraine and Mamie's father Carl Hansberry waged a three-year legal battle for the family's right to live in their new home. The struggle culminated in 1940 with a U.S. Supreme Court decision that helped end racially discriminatory housing covenants in the city.

The Hansberry family and their legal victory became a symbol of progress for the civil rights movement. Their courage and commitment paved the way to challenge segregation and help make civil rights advances.

Las guerras bananeras y el fraude de libre comercio

(parte 2)

Por Emile Schepers

En Aracataca, Colombia en 1928, el ejercito masacró a cientos de trabajadores que estaban en huelga en contra de United Fruit, un incidente que forma un tema central el "Cien Años de Soledad" por Gabriel García Márquez. Y esto no es un historial de cosas del pasado remoto. Actualmente hay acusaciones de parte paramilitares derechistas en Colombia de que tanto Chiquita como Dole han pagado a paramilitares para reprimir con violencia y hasta matar a activistas laborales que amenazan a sus ganancias. Prosecución en los Estados Unidos culminó con una multa de \$25 millones que Chiquita acordó pagar. Hay demandas civiles que todavía están en la corte (<https://nacla.org/node/6315>).

En Guatemala, en 1954, la gerencia de United Fruit creía que reformas progresistas de leyes agrícolas y laborales, patrocinadas por el presidente Jacobo Arbenz, representaban una amenaza para las ganancias. Entre los mayores accionistas de United Fruit se encontraban dos hermanos poderosísimos: El canciller estadounidense John Foster Dulles y el jefe de la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA), Allen Dulles. Arreglaron un golpe de estado que derrocó a Arbenz y sometió a Guatemala a un martirio largo que eventualmente cobró un saldo de 200,000 vidas inocentes, quizás más.

Pues, la capacidad de las grandes

empresas bananeras basadas en los Estados Unidos de producir plátanos mas baratos no se debe solo a la escala de sus operaciones, sino también a la represión que logran emplear en contra de los obreros y sindicatos en los países donde tienen sus mayores unidades. Y el gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha respaldado esta represión.

Esto nos hace pensar bien de lo "libre" de "libre comercio". ¿Libre para quien? Obviamente no para los trabajadores de las fincas bananeras en lugares como Honduras, donde, por enésima vez, un golpe de estado ha puesto en jaque a las reformas laborales y agrícolas.

Los países del grupo APC reclaman que el nuevo arreglo los perjudica y favorece a las transnacionales basadas en los Estados Unidos. Pero también es el caso que de los países antiguamente excluidos por los altos aranceles europeos, hay varios, como Ecuador, Nicaragua y Guatemala, que ahora tienen gobiernos más progresistas que intentan mejorar las condiciones de sus obreros y agricultores. Excluir a esos países del enorme mercado europeo no los ayuda tampoco. De modo que regresar a lo antiguo no es la respuesta.

Todo el tópico de comercio internacional debe re pensarse desde el fondo, en una manera que favorece los derechos de obreros y campesinos y no las ganancias de los monopolios.