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Anti-racist unity needed as Vigilantes in Arizona hunt immigrants

By Teresa Gutierrez

On March 31, at the U.S./Mexico border in Arizona, an anti-immigrant group calling itself the Minuteman Project gathered. It made big news.

The project is described as a "volunteer patrol group in search of furtive immigrants" who cross the desert into the United States in Arizona. One volunteer called it the "biggest neighborhood watch ever."

According to news reports, the Minuteman Project will "post 1,000 volunteers across 23 miles of border." They are reported to plan to stay there for at least the month of April.

The gathering took place on the same day as Cesar Chavez's birthday, in the same state where he was born. Was the timing just a coincidence? Chavez was a Chicano labor leader who devoted his life to fighting for the rights of immigrants and farm workers.

Vigilantes interviewed on CNN on March 31 looked as if their average age was 75. It was hard to imagine them chasing anyone down. But they are armed and dangerous.

An 82-year-old retired Marine sergeant told reporters he was looking for adventure. He had a .38-caliber pistol strapped to his leg.

Another Minuteman, a former kindergarten teacher from Los Angeles, said the project was in response to the failure of the government to stop the flow of immigrants.

The Minutemen have attracted the support of groups such as the Aryan Nation and other white supremacist organizations.

In the first few days that the Minutemen were on the border, they claimed to have participated in the capture of 146 undocumented workers.

On the border

Arizona for the last few years has been the scene of a growing and racist anti-immigrant attack. The federal government in Washington has also focused attention on Arizona.

In 2004, the Department of Homeland Security obtained an initial \$10 million for its Arizona Border Control Initiative. It is adding 200 new border patrol agents, 350 helicopters and an unknown number of aircraft to patrol the remotest parts of the border, further militarizing the U.S./Mexico border.

This will result in increased repression for immigrants.

Already, as a result of the Minutemen, the U.S. Border Patrol has sent 500 more agents to Arizona. The patrol alleges that 51 percent of all undocumented immigrants cross into the U.S. in that state.

The Public Policy Institute of California reports that these new measures will force workers crossing the border to go to more remote areas that are even more dangerous. The number of people who drowned crossing the border rose from 48 in 1994 to 92 in 2000.

At least 151 immigrants are reported to have died in the Arizona desert last year alone. The actual numbers could be much higher.

The movement in Arizona in solidarity with immigrants has responded to this new offensive. The Border Action Network is calling on supporters to "end vigilante hate crimes and impunity on the border" by calling authorities to protest the Minutemen. To find out more about this campaign, visit borderaction.org.

BAN says about the Minutemen: "An ugly movement of armed, militia-style civilian groups has begun patrolling the Arizona border for immigrants. Men, women and children are held at gunpoint, chased by dogs, and in some cases beaten or shot."

Supporters of immigrant rights can also join advocates and immigrants in D.C. on April 27, when a National Day of Action will take place in Washington. For more information, see floc.com.

Behind the right wing

The Minuteman Project is a very dangerous example of the extra-legal measures the capitalist state historically utilizes to

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¡Si se puede!



Cesar Chavez: the struggle continues 6

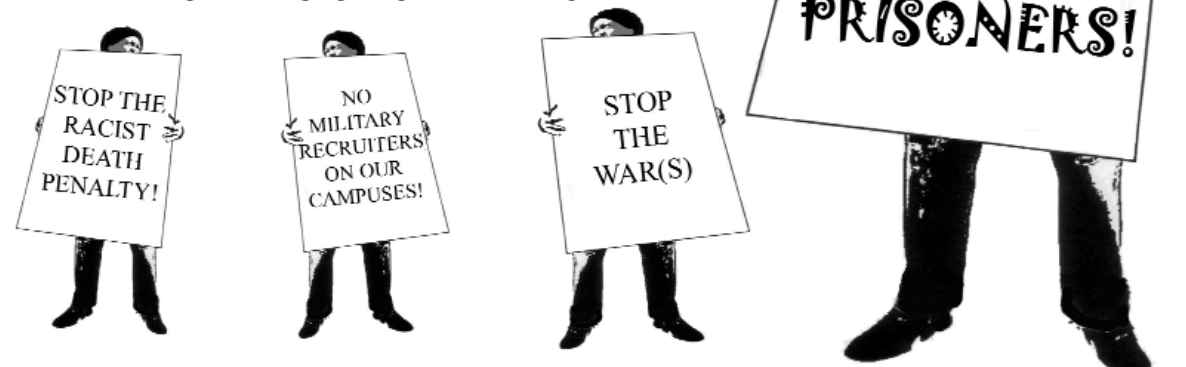
ORGANIZE TO STOP THE LEGAL LYNCHING OF BROTHER MUMIA ABU-JAMAL ON HIS BIRTHDAY

-APRIL 23- -HARLEM-

1PM: Rally and March starting at the Harlem State Office Bldg.

3PM: Program at the Salem United Methodist Church on 129th street and 7th avenue - including Mayor David Dinkins, Pam Africa, City Council Member Margarita Lopez, The Welfare Poets, Nana Soul, Seeds of Wisdom, Spirit Child and many others.

HEAR A LEGAL UPDATE ON THE CURRENT DANGERS MUMIA FACES FROM DEATH ROW



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International Concerned Families and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal;
Free Mumia Coalition, International Action Center; NYC;
Carlos Coca and Sundiata Sadiq, President and Vice-President of the Ossing NAACP (Organization used for identification purposes only);
Harlem Tenants Council;
Pro Libertad;
Iglesia San Romero;
Latin@s for Mumia;
The Jerico Movement;
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BOSTON

State of HIV emergency declared

By Gerry Scoppettuolo

When people with HIV organize and fight back, they move mountains. So it was on March 30, when the Boston City Council voted unanimously to declare HIV infection a "state of emergency" in the city's communities of color.

The campaign for this resolution was led by a community activist, the Rev. Franklyn Hobbs of Healing Our Land, with support from many Black churches, especially the Greater Love Tabernacle Church. Additional support came from the Boston AIDS Consortium, Multicultural AIDS Coalition, Veterans' Benefit Clearinghouse, Project U-Turn and the International Action Center.

Boston joins just a handful of other U.S. cities that have declared such a state of emergency.

Most of those living with the disease in Boston come from communities of color—where people struggling with HIV must also deal with cutbacks in food stamps, in Section 8 Housing vouchers, in homeless beds—and a recent 8.1-percent cut in basic federal Ryan White Title I medical care and support services.

Boston Medical Center's Children's AIDS Program,

which mostly supports 74 children with HIV, lost its entire Ryan White Federal Funding this week. This program serves predominantly the children of women of color with HIV.

The day before the vote, the Rev. Edwin Burks testified at a public hearing on the resolution, saying, "We need housing, food, the basics—how are people going to take care of their own health-care needs?" He spoke openly of his own struggle living with HIV for over 20 years.

The Rev. Gene Eugene of the Multicultural AIDS Coalition spoke of his work in Boston's Fenway neighborhood with homeless young gay men, who are especially at risk for HIV.

Boston AIDS Consortium Executive Director Ed Rebelinski, who is HIV-positive, also spoke eloquently for passage.

During his time to speak at the hearing, the campaign's sponsor, the Rev. Franklyn Hobbs, demanded increased HIV counseling and testing sites across the city, and a special line item in the city's annual budget for HIV services.

Boston currently spends \$1.7 million a year, or about \$3 per person per year, to combat the disease—which infects 1,000 new people a year in Massachusetts. Last summer the city spent 10 times this amount to wine and dine delegates to the Democratic National Convention, and to construct barbed-wire pens to incarcerate protesters.

City Councilor Chuck Turner, political leader of Boston's African American community, pointed out the severity of the problem among African American women and the need for more resources at a time the Pentagon budget is ballooning to \$497 billion. He drew everyone's attention to a banner displayed by the Stonewall Warriors demanding "Money for AIDS, Not for War" and declaring "No Pride in Occupation."

A representative from the IAC spoke out against the \$10 million an hour being spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The denial of basic access to health care for the poor has brought the epidemic to a turning point in the United States. In 2000, the Centers for Disease Control released their Young Mens' Study. The report showed that at the present rate of infection, a 20-year-old African American gay man can expect 40 percent of his peers to be infected by the time he reaches 30.

But evidence of a fight-back movement grows every day—from Boston's HIV-positive-led HIV Call to Action, New England, to the national Campaign to End AIDS, which plans a massive March on Washington in October.

Mobilizing is under way for another "Money for AIDS, not for war" contingent at the May 1 "Troops out now, jobs not war" rally in New York City. For more information, contact IAC Boston, (617) 591-6793. □

Women's event packs Detroit WWP office



WW PHOTO: PHIL BOOTH

The Detroit Workers World Party office was packed on April 2 for a "Women fight back, we won't go back" forum. The speakers pictured above addressed the issues of women and war, science, socialism, the history of International Women's Day, a special tribute to the late Detroit activist Ethel Bailey, and the Stonewall rebellion that birthed the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement. Not in the photo is high school student Angeles Meneses, who spoke on young women's talents in science and math.

—Cheryl LaBash

LOS ANGELES IAC receives Korea solidarity award

At the fourth anniversary celebration of One Korea LA Forum—a major Korean youth organization in Los Angeles fighting for reunification—the International Action Center was one of two organizations presented with awards for solidarity work in opposing U.S. intervention in Korea and supporting the fight for Korean self-determination. ANSWER LA also received an award.

The IAC Solidarity Award read: "One Korea LA Forum is honored to present a solidarity award to International



PHOTO: SUNG-UN JANG

Action Center for its ceaseless support and solidarity for peaceful reunification in Korean Peninsula."

—John Parker

JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, 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.

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WW CALENDAR

BOSTON

Sat., April 16

Justice for Bromley Heath Workers & Tenants. Day of Solidarity: 11 a.m. rally at Heath and Bickford St.; 12:30 p.m. march followed by a BBQ. Sponsored by: Rank and File Committee of Local 3 and SEIU/NCFO Local 3 Endorsed by: City Councilors Chuck Turner and Felix Arroyo; Boston School Bus Union; New England Organization for Human Rights in Haiti; MLK, Jr. Bolivarian Circle; International Action Center; Women's FightBack Network. For info: The Bromley Heath Rank & File Committee: (617) 938-8965; Chuck Turner's office (617) 427-8100, USWA Local 8751 at (617) 524-7073

Sat., April 23

Solidarity with the People's

Struggle in Colombia & Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. Featured speakers: Gerardo Cajamarco, Colombian Trade Unionist; Dario Zapata, Permanent Committee for Colombian Peace; Jorge Marin, MLK, Jr. Bolivarian Circle; Berta Joubert, IAC; City Councilperson Chuck Turner. 6 p.m. At USWA Local 8751, 25 Colgate Rd., Rosindale, Mass. For info Int'l. Action Center (617) 522-6626.

NEW YORK

Fri., April 8

Hear secretariat members, Deirdre Griswold and Monica Moorehead speak on: How imperialism used the pope; Black Workers for Justice campaign in North Carolina respectively. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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Next step: April 16 conference

Youth around the country protest the war, draft

By Dustin Langley

Two years after the Bush administration launched its colonial war against the people of Iraq, a national popular uprising against the occupation has stretched the U.S. military to the breaking point. The Pentagon is struggling to find new recruits, prompting many to fear the return of the draft.

The Army reported on April 1 that it had missed its March recruiting goal by 32 percent. The Marine Corps also came up short. The Army Reserve missed its March goal by 46 percent.

The Army National Guard has not yet released its numbers for March, but has missed its recruiting goal in every month of the current fiscal year through February.

The ongoing strain on the Pentagon and its failure to recruit new cannon fodder has led senior military officials, lawmakers and defense experts to question the viability of the "all volunteer force."

In the Washington Monthly March cover story Phillip Carter and Paul Gastric wrote: "America can remain the world's superpower. Or it can maintain its current all-volunteer military. It can't do both."

Meanwhile, the Selective Service System, the agency responsible for conduct-



ing a draft, is busy fine-tuning the conscription machinery. According to its 2004 Performance Plan, the agency is staffing local draft boards, purchasing new software, training local volunteer registrars, and practicing with the draft lottery process.

All of this is in order to "ensure a mobilization infrastructure of 56 State Headquarters, 442 Area Offices and 1,980 Local Boards [is] operational within 75 days of an authorized return to conscription."

The agency filed a report with Congress on March 31, summarizing its progress in meeting this goal.

On the same day, youth and activists across the country issued their own report: They will refuse to be cannon fodder for the empire.



Left, Buffalo, above, Boston.

WW PHOTO: PETER COOK

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Youth answer: 'Hell no!'

The anti-war group No Draft, No Way had issued a call for a March 31 National Day of Action against the draft and military recruiting. Youth, students and activists across the country took to the streets that day.

In Boston, demonstrators included GI resister Carl Webb, students who walked out of Somerville High School to protest the war, representatives from Steel Workers Local 8751-Boston School Bus Drivers, and HERE/UNITE Local 26. They picketed in front of the downtown Military Recruiting Center. The protest, called by the International Action Center-Boston, received a lot of support from passersby, including a group of students who joined the protest.

In New York City, activists from the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—FIST—were joined by students, parents, clergy, veterans, and anti-war activists for a demonstration at the Board of Education. They occupied the steps of the building and unfurled a banner that read, "Resist the war, stop the draft!"

New York.

PHOTO: JAMEY O'QUINN



'Recruiters off campus!'

WW interview with member of 'City College Four'

On March 9 three students—Hadas Thier, Nicholas Bergreen and Justino Rodriguez—were arrested and beaten by police for demonstrating against military recruiters at City College of New York. The following day, Carol Lang, a CCNY staff member, was also arrested for participating in the protest. The arrests come at a time when students across the U.S. are involved in campaigns to kick recruiters off their campuses. Workers World and FIST organizer Julie Fry spoke with Hadas Thier about her arrest and about the campaign for justice for the City College 4.

WW: Can you tell us about your involvement with counter-recruiting work prior to your arrest and about the campaign against military recruiters at CCNY?

Hadas Thier: Recruiters showed up on campus last semester and we didn't really have an anti-war group. A few of us responded and tried to pull something together, it was fairly spontaneous. We started out with a handful of people. A bunch more joined in and we were able

to kick [the recruiters] off campus. A different set of recruiters showed up a few weeks later, and we pulled people together and shut them down a second time. They were surrounded by us chanting and they weren't able to talk to anyone, so they left. Basically, that's what happened last semester and it helped build more sustained activism. It helped build CAN [Campus Antiwar Network] on campus and a more sustained anti-war movement. This semester, the recruiters came back for career day on March 9, but there was more of a plan for organizing against them.

Part of what built up momentum for the counter-recruitment is that this is an issue that all of us deal with. Our tuition is being raised and financial aid is being cut. So, working class people, primarily people of color at CCNY, are targeted by recruiters. So there is very wide anti-war sentiment and very wide anti-recruitment sentiment as well. Even people who didn't actually participate in our protest were giving us thumbs up or raising their fists.

WW: What happened during the

demonstration where you and the other students were arrested?

HT: About 20 of us got together to protest at the career fair. Four different branches of the military showed up. We wanted to put out a specific message that they were recruiting for people to fight and die in Iraq, that this wasn't a job opportunity. We started chanting "U.S. out of Iraq" and "Recruiters off campus." Very quickly, we were surrounded by CCNY security guards. They shoved us out of the career fair and closed the doors. The police came and we were beaten and arrested.

WW: What were you charged with by the police and what sorts of penalties are you facing from City College?

HT: We were charged with a whole series of things, from resisting arrest up to grade A misdemeanor assault charges. This is also true of the staff member, Carol Lang. In theory, because of the grade A misdemeanor assault charge, we could each face up to a year in jail.

The really outrageous thing is that the school administration very quickly sided with campus security without talking to

In Raleigh, N.C., the local FIST chapter demonstrated in front of a military recruiting station. While more than 30 people protested, several of them blocked the entrance. Meanwhile they read a statement denouncing the war, the draft and military recruiting.

In Bloomington, Ind., people turned out at the newly opened office of the Indiana National Guard for a spirited protest against the draft and military recruiting. Protesters carried big banners reading, "End the occupation of Iraq," and, "Stop recruiting for the war machine," and signs that said, "No recruiting on Kirkwood" and, "You shouldn't have to kill to pay for an education!" The demonstration was publicized by local media for several days prior to the event and was carried live on local radio.

In Buffalo, N.Y., the International Action Center and the Troops Out Now Coalition held a protest in front of the federal office building downtown. Activists carried signs that proclaimed, "Hell no, we won't go" and, "No draft, no way!"

In Worcester, Penn., 60 Methacton High School students walked out of class, voicing their opposition to the war and a potential draft reinstatement. The students convened near the school's flagpole holding anti-draft signs.

No Draft, No Way held a protest in

Continued on page 10



anyone that was arrested, or any witnesses. They didn't do any investigation. They sent out an email to the entire student body the next day stating as a fact that we were guilty. The next day we were all suspended. Lang has also been suspended from her job for 30 days.

They suspended all of us before even giving us a hearing. There is such a lack of democracy or any kind of due process. We've already missed a month of school and will have to withdraw from our classes—classes we've already paid for. So we've already been significantly punished without so much as a hearing. And the pretense for our suspension is that we pose a continuing danger to the campus.

WW: Why do you think the school administration and the police responded in this way to your activities?

HT: I think the counter-recruitment movement has been picking up steam nationally and there is more of a concerted effort to crack down on it. We were made examples, but they might not succeed in that. We may not become the

Continued on page 10

Behind GM's flagging fortunes

By Milt Neidenberg

Charlie "Engine" Wilson, as he was called by his corporate friends, told the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1952: "What's good for the country is good for General Motors and what's good for General Motors is good for the country." Wilson, the head of General Motors, had been nominated to become secretary of defense by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The country had been good to GM. It was awarded the contracts to be the largest single maker of armaments in World War II, making it the largest industrial corporation in the world.

The du Pont family, for years the major owners of GM, did well on war, too. They began their fortune selling gunpowder in 1802. By World War I, the DuPont company supplied 40 percent of all explosives used by the Allies. The price of its stock increased by 5,000 percent during the war period. ("Merchants of Death," H.C. Engelbrecht) Its contracts included selling poison gas long before the U.S. entered that terrible war, in which 10 million died and more than 20 million were injured.

GM had been created in 1910 by William Durant. He had bought out a number of smaller auto companies, including Chevrolet, founded by the French car racer Louis Chevrolet. Durant's master plan was to create semi-autonomous divisions ranging from the low-priced Chevrolet to the Cadillac for the wealthy. DuPont centralized the divisions and combined forces with banker J.P. Morgan. Together these "robber barons" drove out Durant.

Today, 53 years after Wilson's boast to Congress, Wall Street pundits are questioning whether this global industrial monster can weather a financial crisis and escape a fundamental downsizing of the empire. Or, in the words of Barron's, "Could the world's largest auto maker go bust?"

The magnitude of the fallout would be incalculable, especially for corporations that are an integral part of the auto industry: steel, glass, paint, rubber and aluminum. The auto industry has become glutted from overproduction, huge inventories and sluggish sales, in spite of attractive incentives for buyers. GM is a debt-ridden corporation. While attempting to maintain its global empire, it was losing its share of the world market. The General Motors Acceptance Corp., GM's financial arm, is its only money maker.

GM stock has tanked

March 16 was its worst day since the great 1987 stock market crash. GM's stock tanked when it announced that, instead of a hoped-for cash flow of \$2 billion to be distributed to its top-shelf investors, it had a \$2-billion deficit. Its stock plunged over 17 percent, deducting a huge \$2.7 billion from its market value. Top bond agencies like Standard and Poor's cut its credit rating to a notch above junk status, sending GM's future borrowing costs through the roof. At the same time, Ford and Daimler-Chrysler stock also took big hits.

GM became the world's largest auto maker by strong-arming smaller companies into buyouts or mergers: Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Lancia, Subaru (with Fuji), Holden, Isuzu, Suzuki, Maruti, Daewoo, Opel (Vauxhall in the United Kingdom), Holden (Australia/New Zealand) and Saab. It restructured its divisions, setting up GMC truck and Saturn under a new production structure. Each worker in the team had to be proficient in every skill required by the production unit, making speedup more intense than before.

To service this mammoth operation, over 11,800 outlets were set up abroad, comprising dealers and authorized sales, service and parts divisions to compete with other transnational corporations, such as Ford and Daimler-Chrysler, for global markets. In the U.S., GM has 7,600

dealer outlets, made up of Cadillac, Hummer, Buick, Pontiac, GMC truck, Chevrolet, Saturn and Saab. Then there are suppliers like Delphi, spun off from GM a number of years ago, and Delphi's subcontractors.

Clearly, GM is on a collision course to extract concessions from its dealers, suppliers, investors, the United Auto Workers, current UAW production workers and retirees.

Will its subsidiaries and outlets be asked to surrender a share of their profits and reduce prices, when many of them are already financially strapped and on the ropes?

Will the UAW bend to the pressure to reopen the contract, even before the 2007 expiration date? There are indications that this has already happened.

GM's immediate plan is to slash the health benefits of 422,000 retirees and their 260,000 dependents. It also wants to modify the section of the contract saying that, including unemployment benefits, laid-off workers are to receive 95 percent of their current wages for five years. It's a sure sign that more layoffs are coming.

The UAW workers won these benefits through bitter strikes and sacrifices, spending years working under hazardous conditions and speedups that produced cars at an unprecedented rate at a time of bitter competition from Japanese transplants Toyota and Honda as well as from Ford and Chrysler.

U.S. monopoly capitalism's triple crisis

The industrial base of U.S. monopoly capitalism has been shrinking. It is due not only to the capitalist cycles of boom and bust but also to a structural crisis that has the captains of industry and finance shuddering as their imperialist dreams of military domination of the globe continue unabated. The fundamental core industries of the U.S.—steel, auto, textile, shoes, apparel and others—have deteriorated. It should be remembered that the industrial might of these industries was the very foundation of U.S. capitalism.

An article in the New York Times of April 2 partly confirmed this prognosis: "Factory employment, where most of the

recent job losses have occurred, remains stagnant. Manufacturers have restored only a small fraction of the jobs they shed from 2001 through 2003 and manufacturing employment edged down by 8,000 jobs in March. ... The reluctance to hire has been particularly high at manufacturing companies, which shed about 2.7 million jobs during and after the recession of 2001."

The capitalist cyclical crisis caused by overproduction has become intertwined with the structural crisis based on the shrinking of the industrial base. Added to the woes of the ruling class is the geopolitical quagmire. This development grows out of the very nature of the military-industrial complex, which is impelled toward imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to maintain the hegemony of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

Perhaps GM's management was counting on the success of U.S. aggression in the Middle East when it opted to manufacture gas-guzzling SUVs and the Hummer a few years ago. But the quagmire in Iraq and higher oil prices last year turned consumers toward lighter imported vehicles, compounding GM's problems.

The U.S. ruling class has also been hoping that the lighter, more sophisticated high-tech industries—electronics, the satellite sciences, computerization, data processing—and service-oriented industries would strengthen its position in relation to its imperialist rivals. Not likely. The dotcom, highly leveraged companies were a major factor in the 2001 recession.

Stephen Roach, chief economist for Morgan Stanley, an investment bank also in deep crisis, recognizes the symptoms—if not the fundamental danger to capitalism. Known as a Wall Street pessimist, Roach fingered March 16 "as a possible tipping point for America ... the confluence of a record current-account deficit, a disaster from General Motors, and yet another new high for oil prices all speak of an increasingly precarious role for the global hegemon." (Barron's Online, March 21)

Roach was referring to the \$667-billion current deficit in the balance of trade, oil prices hovering over \$57 a barrel, and a

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Black Workers for Justice event Million Worker March leader honored



The "real" Clarence Thomas (at podium), co-chair of the Oct. 17 Million Worker March and a leader of the International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 in San Francisco, gives the keynote address at the Black Workers for Justice 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Support for Labor Banquet in Raleigh, N.C., April 2.

BWFJ played a leadership role in building and supporting the MWM rally held last fall at the Lincoln Memorial, which called for creating an independent work-

ers' movement.

The BWFJ organizes campaigns alongside United Electrical Local 150 to win long-denied collective-bargaining rights for all workers in North Carolina.

Two hundred BWFJ members and supporters from around the country attended the banquet/meeting held at the North Carolina Association of Educators Building.

Stay tuned for more coverage on this important event in Workers World newspaper.

—Story and photo by Monica Moorehead

HOBOKEN, N.J.

City workers win round against layoffs

By Marsha Goldberg
Hoboken, N.J.

In cities and towns all over the United States, the billions of dollars of federal money being siphoned to pay for the occupation of Iraq is resulting in local budget deficits that threaten jobs and social services.

Hoboken, N.J., is a city of 38,000 located right across the Hudson River from New York City. Over the last 25 years, real-estate developers and banks have made millions and millions of dollars from gentrification. Yet the Hoboken City Council has not yet passed a budget this year—because of a \$7.9 million deficit.

On March 21 members of the city council, blaming rising health-insurance costs for city workers, voted not to approve a temporary spending appropriation, and immediately shut down all "non-essential" services.

They closed the only library. They stopped services for seniors, including shuttle

buses elders rely on for transportation. And they suspended almost all other city services for the workers and oppressed communities in Hoboken.

To the politicians on the city council only the police, along with the firefighters, are "essential."

Four hundred fifty city workers were suddenly without a job.

When the city council met again three nights later, these workers fought back. They filled the council room and overflowed into the hallways. And they made themselves heard.

By the end of the meeting they had won a victory. Every worker was hired back—and paid for the days they had been laid off.

The city council now has a May 7 deadline to resolve the budget. In the meantime it's the mayor and council members who will not be paid.

This is only a temporary victory on a small scale, but it shows what can be done by fighting back—especially if magnified by the millions across the country. □

Biggest march and rally in years

UMass students vow 'No contract? No peace!'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Amherst, Mass.

Facing multi-faceted assaults by the administration and its class allies, and aware of the historic importance and national implications of this struggle, students and progressive campus community members at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst responded March 31 with one of the biggest mass actions in years.

More than 600 graduate and undergraduate students, union allies and campus community members answered the call of the Graduate Employee Organization, UAW Local 2322, for a "march for fair wages, health care, benefits and child-care." The march came in response to the administration's refusal to bargain in good faith.

"We're talking about sums that repre-

sent less than 1/1000th of the university's budget. There will be no peace until we get a contract," said Meghan E. McDonough, GEO family issues advocate, speaking on the steps of the Student Union while holding her infant.

GEO, with a membership of 2,400, has been working without a contract since July 1, and has been bargaining with the administration for over a year. Other campus unions are in similar circumstances. The administration continues to propose real wage and health-care cuts, an end to health benefits for currently covered same-sex couples, and drastic increases in child-care costs.

GEO extended a hand of unity to undergraduate students by inviting their newly elected Student Government Association President Pavel Payano to speak at the rally. There are about 18,000 undergrad-



WW PHOTO: BRYAN PFEIFER

March 31 rally at University of Massachusetts.

uates and 6,000 graduate students on campus.

The increasing attacks on all students and campus workers is a focal point of the undergraduate student struggle led by the Take Back UMass coalition, which works with GEO. (www.takebackumass.com)

"What we see happening at UMass is part of a national, racist, right-wing-led, neoliberal agenda," said Cassandra Engeman, GEO member and a Labor Studies graduate student. "UMass wants to depict us as students, not workers, so they can outsource faculty positions to graduate students to save money. This isn't only happening at UMass; it is happening to public universities throughout the country."

No contract, no peace!

Students made use of whistles and of make-shift drums of pots, pans and five-gallon empty water containers as they took over the campus at lunch hour with a blocks-long march from the Student Union—a building won as a result of campus rebellions in the late 1960s—to the Whitmore administration building.

"Whose school? Our school!" they chanted.

Drivers along the campus's main street honked their car horns in support.

A sea of blue placards reading "No contract? No peace!" and with other slogans such as "Students and workers unite" and "Undergraduates support graduate students" could be seen for blocks.

At the administration building, marchers, all the while filmed by campus police and undercover agents, proceeded to the offices of Chancellor John Lombardi and Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Michael Gargano to deliver petitions supporting GEO and undergraduate students.

Participants included members of AFS-CME, the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Massachusetts Society of Professors, members of Local 2322's executive staff including President Ron Pate-naude and Vice President John McGrath, the Million Worker Movement, the National Writers Union, Pioneer Valley Labor Council President Ron Brown, Service Employees, Food and Commercial Workers, the University Staff Association and U.S. Labor Against the War.

The March 31 action was part of an ongoing GEO contract campaign that uses

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Big wins for bus drivers

By Shane Summer
San Francisco

When San Francisco school-bus drivers, members of United Transportation Union Local 1741, learned that the mechanics in their yard had set a strike date, they announced that they would not cross the picket line. The drivers showed the power of union solidarity by holding an informational picket line in support of the mechanics, who are members of Machinists local 1414. Fighting increases in health-benefit costs, as well as attacks on seniority rights, the mechanics had been working without a contract for 18 months.

In response, the school district's department of transportation threatened to do away with guarantees that drivers will receive prevailing wages and benefits no matter which company wins a bid to provide busing services in San Francisco. That language has been part of their contracts for the past 25 years. The contract was going out to bid in late March.

"Some of us were scared," a member of Local 1741 said. "But we asked, are we going to be intimidated? Hell no!"

The drivers' union then held two more picket lines to show their resolve. One Honduran driver told union members at



WW PHOTO: SHANE SUMMER

a support meeting, "I have five people depending on my income and I'm not crossing that picketline."

The bus company, Laidlaw, caved in and gave the mechanics everything they'd demanded.

Following that great victory, another struggle ensued as the school district, true to its threat, removed protective language that covered benefits in bid specifications that went out to prospective contractors. The drivers of Local 1741 met that struggle as they had the other: with unity, courage, and strength.

Fifty drivers marched into a board of education meeting March 8 to protest. Several held up signs stating, "We deserve health care." Others spoke against the attacks on their benefits. Within a week the board of education restored the protective language in the bid specifications. □

Freelance writers win big settlement

By Sue Davis

An \$18 million class-action settlement has finally followed the landmark June 2001 Supreme Court copyright ruling in *New York Times et al. v. Tasini et al.*

The decision had upheld that electronic use of freelance writers' work is a violation of their copyrights.

It's estimated that upwards of 100,000 freelance writers whose work was sold by The New York Times and other named defendants to electronic databases without the writers' permission will be eligi-

ble to make claims for damages.

Announced on March 30, this agreement is the result of class-action lawsuits filed in 2000 by 21 members of the Authors Guild, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and the National Writers Union, which were also associational plaintiffs.

The National Writers Union, UAW Local 1981, brought the original lawsuit in 1993 with help from the Auto Workers.

For more about the settlement, go to the NWU website: www.nwu.org. □

Unions demand: 'Hands off Social Security'

By Monica Moorehead

The AFL-CIO mobilized thousands of its members in over 70 cities March 31 to protest President George W. Bush's insidious plan to privatize Social Security. These protests targeted the White House, Congress and Wall Street—institutions that are conspiring to force workers to set up personal Social Security accounts.

These actions were part of a large-scale initiative organized by the union movement to stop Bush's latest anti-worker assault plan dead in its tracks. Thirty-six union staff employees in 21 states have been assigned to work on this initiative.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who spoke at the Washington, D.C., rally, characterized Bush's attack on Social Security as a "flim-flam scheme." He warned that privatization will cause "benefit cuts, an exploding deficit, huge bills for our children and grandchildren."

In New York City, the center of international finance capital, UNITE-HERE and other unions protested outside the exclusive Ritz-Carlton Hotel where the multi-millionaire investment banker Charles Schwab was attending a luncheon.

Schwab is a high-profile member of the Alliance for Worker Retirement Security, a major backer of Bush's attempt to transform the 60-year-plus federally funded program into a private fund for profit-hungry investors.

UNITE-HERE President Bruce Raynor said at the New York protest, "We're telling the titans of Wall Street to keep their hands off of Social Security."

The Bush administration and its supporters have been put very much on the defensive. Recent polls indicate that a great majority of the U.S. population wants Bush to keep his hands off of Social Security.

Some Republicans are accusing the AFL-CIO of violating labor laws in the area of secondary boycotts, which are boycotts not involving labor disputes.

In response to this accusation, AFL-CIO Associate General Counsel Damon Silvers said demonstrations and labor strikes are not the same since the Social Security protests focus on a public policy.

Silvers said that threatening to have the Labor Department intervene in mass actions intended to save Social Security is a violation of the workers' First Amendment rights. □

¡Si se puede!

CESAR CHAVEZ: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

By Teresa Gutierrez

In late March throughout the United States, but particularly in the Southwest, activities commemorated the birthday of renowned Chicano labor leader and social justice activist Cesar Chavez.

Chavez was born on March 31, 1927. He died at age 66 on April 23, 1993. His life is a great example of this country's rich working-class history.

This labor leader worked to unite many struggles, leading workers to tremendous gains in the process. He is a wonderful example of how oppressed people, despite great obstacles, can come forward to defend their people's rights.

When he died in 1993, more than 50,000 mourners came to honor his life. According to the official Cesar Chavez website, the funeral "was the largest of any labor leader in the history of the U.S."

Now, more than ever, the lessons of Chavez's life illustrate the need to continue the struggle. Today immigrants and farm workers face an incredible backlash.

Arizona—where Chavez was born—is currently in the forefront of a right-wing assault that defaces exactly what he stood for. Vigilante groups dominate the airwaves with hateful racist demagoguery, resulting in a further militarization of the U.S./Mexico border and the criminalization of undocumented workers.

Chavez: a life of struggle

Chavez was born in Yuma, Ariz. From his early days he knew the extreme racism Mexicans in this country face.

According to the Chavez website, the small adobe home where he was born was swindled from his family by unscrupulous white people. In 1938 he and his family moved to California. They eventually settled in San Jose.

Interestingly, Chavez and his family settled in a barrio (neighborhood) called "Sal Si Puedes"—"Get out if you can." Decades later, Chavez and his movement for farm worker rights would come to be characterized by the inspiring slogan "Si, se puede"—"Yes, we can!"

Chavez had a difficult time in school. Spanish was forbidden although that was the language spoken in so many homes of the region.

He remembered having to listen to many racist remarks and noted how schools were so segregated. Chavez said that in integrated schools he felt "like a monkey in a cage."

He would nonetheless grow up to become a world leader, outspoken on many issues including the war in Vietnam. He was the first major labor leader to declare solidarity with lesbians and gays.

Above all, Chavez made his mark in the growing fields of California. His name would become synonymous with the plight of farm workers.

This year on Chavez's birthday, thousands gathered in Los Angeles.

One of those, his granddaughter Christine Chavez Delgado, said: "To some people [my grandfather] was an environmentalist, to some a peace advocate. But I always say that my grandfather was first a labor leader. ..."

"The real way to honor my grandfather," she said, "is to continue supporting unions, because that's really what he was about."

Indeed, one of Chavez' greatest contributions was helping to found the first successful union for farm workers in the United States. In 1962, with the help of Dolores Huerta, he founded the United Farm Workers.

The website continues, "In 1962, there were very few union dues-paying members. By 1970 the UFW got grape growers to accept union contracts and had effectively organized most of that industry. The reason was Cesar Chavez's tireless leadership that included the Delano grape strike, his fasts that focused national attention on farm workers' problems, and the 340-mile march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966."

"What a terrible irony it is that the very people who harvest the food we eat do not have enough food for their own children," Chavez affirmed.

He led many strikes and boycotts. In 1975 these struggles resulted in the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. This law remains the only one in the country that protects farm



Cesar Chavez at a Center for United Labor Action rally in Richmond, Va., in the early 1970s. Banner read: "Victory to the United Farmworkers."



workers' right to unionize.

You don't have to agree with his every position or tactic to see that the farm workers' struggle he led changed the face of labor—and agribusiness—forever.

This struggle made such an indelible mark on the revolutionary and progressive movement that to this day those who were active at that time find it hard to buy grapes or head lettuce.

The struggle continues

After many years of struggle, California declared Chavez's birthday a state holiday. But this victory is now being threatened by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Schwarzenegger has proposed eliminating two of 13 state holidays. Latin@s fear Schwarzenegger will cut the Chavez holiday, since he snubbed it March 31 and went to work.

At a birthday commemoration Mario Jaramillo, a shop steward at Angelica Textile Services in Vallejo, Calif., said: "Because of [Chavez's] work, things changed. In non-union shops, treatment is bad. They push workers hard, demand a lot of work and don't pay enough. Now we have better treatment, wages and working conditions."

Jorge De Haro has worked in the wine fields since 1973. He said he knows "the difference between working with a UFW contract and without."

UFW member Robert Garcia said: "We now have bathrooms, water, reasonable wages in some places, medical insurance,

grievance procedures. Things have improved. But it's a never-ending struggle."

Indeed, many of the commemorations this year were marked by today's struggles, as Chican@s and Mexican@s took on racist and anti-people attacks.

In Salinas, Calif., hundreds commemorated Chavez's birthday by marching against the impending closing of three libraries. One protester said: "When you close libraries, you close off opportunities, particularly in a poor community. Where are kids going to go to use a computer?"

Salinas is a farming community known as the "salad bowl of the world." The city must raise \$500,000 by June. If the branches close, it will become the country's biggest city without a public library.

On March 24 in San Antonio, where about 70 percent of the population is Mexican@/Chican@, over 15,000 people marched to honor Chavez. The demonstration focused on a five-year effort to rename Commerce Street for him. Racist politicians have stymied the Chican@ community's efforts.

The Chavez event was one of the city's biggest demonstrations in a long time.

In Freehold, N.J., immigrants and their supporters blocked an initiative by an anti-immigrant group, the Union of Patriots. These reactionaries had booked the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall for a meeting against Latin@ immigrants. After a round of calls demanding that the VFW cancel the booking—callers pointed out that 80 percent of the VFW's business is Mexican, and that the first Latino GI to die in Iraq was an immigrant—the booking was canceled.

At Southwest College in San Diego, Calif., FIST and MEChA commemorated Chavez's birthday with an event called "Chavez Cafe." The theme was "The Struggle Continues." Ruth Vela of FIST said, "San Diego FIST chose to celebrate the life and historical contributions of Cesar Chavez by reminding people that the struggle continues for youth of color. Youth all over the world are denied health care, safety, food and in some cases even water."

"We feel that as activists it is our duty to call attention to these struggles. Rather than just kick up our heels and celebrate

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COLOMBIA

Human toll of U.S.-backed terror

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The Memories Monument is a shrine bearing the name of each assassinated victim of the Afrocolombian Community of Peace in San José de Apartadó. Eight more names will be added to the monument after the atrocious crime perpetrated Feb. 21 in this northwestern region of Urabá, Antioquia in Colombia.

That day, according to residents of the peace community, members of the 33rd Counterinsurgency Battalion Cacique Lutaima, which is part of the 17th Brigade of the Colombian Army, stormed into the community and brutally killed eight people. The dead are four adults, a 17-year-old, and three children—ages 20 months, 6 and 11 years old.

One of the adults, Luis Eduardo Guerra, was a highly esteemed community leader and member of the Internal Council, a process of peaceful civilian resistance to the armed conflict, since its founding

All were viciously killed with machetes. Some of the bodies showed signs of heavy blows and torture.

The adults' bodies were dismembered, leaving only the trunk. Both the youngest children had their abdomens cut open. Natalia, the 6-year-old girl, had one arm dismembered. They were found buried with their parents, leaders of the community, in their cacao plantation.

The bodies of Beyanira Areiza Guzman, her husband Guerra, and their 11-year-old son Deiner Andres Guerra Tuberquia, whose head had been severed, were lying on the ground close to the river. When their bodies were found, they had already been partly eaten by vultures.

San José de Apartadó is one of eight Peace Communities in Colombia, composed mainly of Afrocolombians and Indigenous people. The communities are an attempt to establish agricultural developments and communal living. Their main objective is to exist and develop

without the interference of any armed sector in the conflict—guerrilla, paramilitaries or Colombian army and police.

However, they have been victims of state terror, especially through the Colombian Army, which works hand in hand with the police and paramilitaries, is trained by the United States through Plan Colombia and aided by the U.S. military and contractors.

For example, the community of Mulatos had 200 families living in its midst a decade ago. Through the army and paramilitaries' aerial bombardments, arbitrary detentions, thefts, tortures and multiple violations including the torching of houses leading to forced displacement, the number decreased to 98 families a year ago. This year, only 10 families remain.

Although the Peace Community residents have made it clear that they do not collaborate with any armed actor, including the guerrillas, they are systematically accused of being accomplices of the guer-

rillas, particularly the FARC-EP, and therefore subjected to the most vicious crimes by the Colombian state's forces and paramilitaries. During the February assassinations, the 17th Cacique Lutaima Battalion wrote graffiti in one of the empty houses that read, "Get out guerrilla, says your worst nightmare, El Cacique."

Many times the state uses paid informants to falsely accuse the residents of being part of the armed insurgent group.

Since its formation eight years ago the community has been the victim of at least 130 homicides by the Army/Paramilitaries and close to 500 crimes, all of them committed with complete impunity to this date. According to the Lawyers' Collective "José Alvear Restrepo," when community residents offer testimony to the authorities, they risk their lives, since many people who had testified trying to get justice have been threatened and some even assassinated.

The situation in San José de Apartadó

IRAQ

Children starving under 'democratic' occupation

By John Catalinotto

Anyone still trying to defend the U.S. occupation of Iraq as somehow more humanitarian than leaving the country to the Iraqis themselves got hit with some overwhelming contrary evidence March 30: United Nations hunger specialist Jean Ziegler announced in a report to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva that twice as many children are malnourished in Iraq now as there were when the occupation began in 2003.

To be precise, "Malnutrition rates in children under five have almost doubled since the U.S.-led intervention - to nearly 8 percent by the end of 2004." Increasing numbers of children in Iraq do not have enough food to eat and more than a quarter are chronically undernourished, the UN report says. The situation is "a result of the war led by coalition forces," Ziegler told the 53-nation commission.

"The silent daily massacre of hunger is a form of murder. It must be battled and eliminated," Ziegler said.

Before the war, using funds from the

"Oil for Food" program, the Ba'athist government led by Saddam Hussein managed to organize the distribution of enough food to Iraq's population to feed almost all of the people. At most this was costing \$1 or \$2 billion a year.

More money than that has disappeared into the accounting morass of the occupation regime. At the beginning of the occupation, the Coalition Occupation Authority seized \$8 billion of the Oil for Food program's assets and still hasn't accounted for it. Halliburton and Bechtel have cost overruns that amount to more than is needed to feed the Iraqis. Yet more Iraqi children are starving now after two years of U.S. occupation.

The malnutrition is a major but not the only factor contributing to the increased death rate among children in Iraq. Along with it is the lack of drinkable water, leading to murderous dysentery and diarrhea, and the complete collapse of the health-care system that before the 1990 sanctions took care of all Iraqis.

The billions poured into Halliburton and Bechtel, who have contracted to

rebuild these systems in Iraq, have so far given next to nothing to the Iraqi people, except they have given the Iraqis more reasons to support the resistance.

Resistance actions growing

In comparison with the months leading up to the rigged Iraqi election Jan. 30—which as of April 5 finally managed to choose a president but still no government—there has been little media coverage of Iraq lately. This seems to be the Bush administration's favorite way of coping with its Iraq dilemma: try publicly to pretend it doesn't exist.

One of the last truly independent reporters in Iraq, Dahr Jamail, said in January that a modest estimate of the proportion of ordinary Iraqis who support the resistance movement was 80 percent. Jamail, who is on a speaking tour in the United States now, made it clear that even those Iraqis who were opponents of Saddam Hussein and who might have welcomed his defeat in 2003 are by now disgusted with the U.S.-led occupation. They consider any Iraqis who work with the new government or with

the Pentagon as collaborators, that is, they hold them in complete contempt.

The resistance attacks over the past few months had concentrated on forces of Iraqi police and the Iraqi National Guard more than on U.S. troops. News in early April indicate that this phase of the resistance may be coming to an end.

On April 3, an insurgent group numbering from 40 to 60 fighters attacked the notorious Abu Ghraib prison and carried on a sustained battle with U.S. troops guarding the prison. This prison camp, where U.S. guards tortured detainees, still holds 3,000 Iraqi prisoners. The Pentagon reported that its forces took 44 casualties, all wounded.

The escalation in tactics by resistance forces means that soldiers in the occupation forces can no longer feel safe even in their heavily armed bases. It also means that the resistance forces feel so confident of their mass support that they can risk large battles and heavy casualties on their own side with the knowledge that there are many more ready to fill the ranks of their combatants. □

U.S. ups funds for Cuba opposition

If you live in the United States, it might be harder to pay your heating bill or for your medicine and doctor's visits; maybe your tuition assistance for school is gone for next term. The new Bush budget proposes to cut 150 human-needs programs. Apparently, though, some special-interest groups in south Florida are having no problem getting federal aid. All they have to do is violate Cuban sovereignty.

While U.S. travelers face harassment and fines for visiting and spending money in Cuba, three separate U.S. government agencies illegally channel funds into Cuba. Since 1996 the U.S. Agency for International Development has spent more than \$35 million. The National Endowment for Democracy paid \$4.9 million since 2000 and proposes to double the annual sum to \$2 million in the next fiscal year. The third organization is a new one, the President's Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, with a proposed budget of \$29 million. (Gary Marx, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 22)

One U.S.-funded agency fronting as an online news agency spends \$3,000 per month paying for freelance articles from

inside Cuba. Dollars and propaganda are distributed through the U.S. Interest Section in Havana, in an effort to provoke a justifiable response from Cuba. Yet when these violators of Cuban law, like the 73 self-styled "dissidents," are charged, tried and convicted in Cuban courts it is portrayed in the U.S. media as a "human-rights violation."

The U.S. slander campaign is failing. At the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, held March 14-April 22 in Geneva, no amount of imperialist bullying could force even a single other country to present a resolution against Cuba—the U.S. had to do it alone.

Former FBI chief admits Cuban Five were not a threat

The International Free the Five Committees, the government and people of Cuba and the families of these political prisoners held in the United States have for seven years demanded that they be freed. The imprisoned five—Antonio

Guerrero, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramon Labañino and Rene González—were jailed for trying to stop U.S.-based espionage against Cuba.

Now the FBI chief responsible for jailing the five and falsely labeling them as spies has stated they really posed no threat to the United States.

According to a March 15 report in the Cuban newspaper Granma, Hector Pesquera, now retired head of the South Florida FBI bureau, was asked, "Do you believe that at some moment the security of the United States was in danger or that they [the Cuban 5] had access to some intelligence information that could be valuable to the enemies of the United States?"

Pesquera answered: "No. For example, in the case of [Antonio] Guerrero a retrospective study of the information was made that he had taken, but the investigation was unable to determine if he had such intelligence information."

Antonio Guerrero is serving a sentence of life plus 10 years. An appeal for all five men was heard by the 11th Circuit Court in March 2004, but a decision has not yet come down.

The interview with Pesquera was part



of a series filmed for TV Marti and broadcast on Radio Marti. Both stations are U.S.-tax-funded propaganda tools in the U.S. war against socialist Cuba.

Why wasn't this information shared with the Cuban Five's defense team?

In February 1998, Hector Pesquera was named FBI special agent in charge in Miami after holding that same post in Puerto Rico. In his previous 22 years with the FBI he had served in Miami and Tampa, Fla., Uruguay and Washington, D.C. in counterintelligence. In 1998, his brother, Ricardo Pesquera got the charges dropped for a Cuban American National Foundation assassin who had been caught in a small boat off Puerto Rico on an admitted mission to kill Cuban President Fidel Castro.

—Cheryl LaBash

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is very critical now, compounded by the public statements of Washington's closest ally in the region, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe. On March 20 Uribe threatened the Peace Community residents, saying that some of their leaders were FARC collaborators and that their community could not be closed to the army and the police, which will enter the village within 20 days. Residents oppose this action since those are the very same forces that have been victimizing them.

On March 30, the police began entering the community. The residents, fearing a bloodbath, have already started to leave the area, once again forced to displace and settle temporarily in a nearby community.

They ask the international community for solidarity in order to preserve their communal project of life.

Next: Paramilitary demobilization and Peace Communities displacement—who benefits? Interview with SINAL-TRAINAL president.

Vigilantes hunt down immigrants

Continued from page 1

get the job done for the bosses and corporations.

The Minutemen criticized President George W. Bush last week when even he labeled them a vigilante group. Despite the public rift, Bush and the Minutemen are on the same side of the class camp.

Both advocate tactics that ultimately will continue the super exploitation of immigrant workers. Two years ago, despite mass pressure for amnesty and legalization of undocumented workers, for example, Bush was opposed to legalization.

An anti-immigrant climate has been whipped up in the media. Criminalizing workers whose sole goal is to work and survive has become common on the "news" channels. So has propaganda blaming immigrants for the layoffs and low pay decided on in corporate boardrooms.

However, when many unions in October 2003 supported a national march for immigrant rights, ending in a rally of 100,000 workers of all nationalities in Queens, N.Y., the capitalist media played it down.

The anti-immigrant vigilantism is calculated to drive immigrants further and further underground. Capitalism would not last a day without the labor of immigrants. The hysteria is calculated to help the capitalists make more profits and have a freer hand to exploit and manipulate workers.

The right wing calculates this backlash to put a chill on the growing organizing efforts carried out by immigrants and their advocates.

In the post-9/11 climate, from the Bush administration to the Minuteman Project to the Federation for American Immi-

gration Reform, efforts are made to link immigrants to the so-called war on terror.

Calls for "closing the border" to "secure our country," and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's statement that al-Qaeda networks may be operating in Mexico, all aim to criminalize and terrorize immigrants.

As long as strawberries need picking, meat needs butchering and groceries need delivering, bosses will continue to demand immigrant labor. At the same time, they want to control them by denying them legal status.

But in the fine tradition of Cesar Chavez, immigrants will continue to organize to fight for their rights.

The tensions between these two class forces will inevitably erupt into more glorious labor struggles like those of the 1930s and 1960s. □

Eyewitness account of Zimbabwean elections

The following are excerpts from remarks by Omowale Clay from the Brooklyn-based December 12 Movement organization on the April 1 broadcast of the Pacifica-based radio show "Democracy Now!" hosted by Amy Goodman. This segment focused on the recent elections in Zimbabwe, in which President Robert Mugabe won a significant re-election victory. Clay traveled throughout Zimbabwe before and during the elections. Go to www.democracynow.org to read entire transcript.

I am speaking to the Pacifica audience from Harare, Zimbabwe. I have been here with a December 12 International Secretariat foreign-observer team, which was invited by the government of Zimbabwe to participate in observation of this historic election. I have been here on the ground for two weeks.

We have traveled through three major provinces and on election day we viewed over 15 constituencies in terms of different polling stations. Yesterday the people of Zimbabwe resoundingly said they will

never be a colony again. Unofficial results have confirmed that Zanu-PF has won a major victory, and by all counts will capture over two-thirds of the electoral vote, which will give them the ability to restructure their constitution.

Democracy in Zimbabwe is not anything new.

For the past 25 years, democracy was brought to Zimbabwe through national liberation, armed struggle, and it was never given to the Zimbabwean people. But since 1980, when the first elections took place, there have been six major parliamentary elections and three presidential elections that have taken place. So no one can teach Zimbabwe democracy.

Zimbabwe is teaching it to the African and pan-African world, as well as to the

neocolonizers who are trying to re-colonize Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has over 5,700,000 registered voters. For this election there were polling stations numbering 8,256. There were 50,000 translucent voting boxes so that everyone could see the ballots that were in the boxes.

There were over 7,000 international observers on the ground here and over 203 international press crews. SADC, the Southern African Development Community, has election observers on the ground and it is important to note that Zimbabwe is the first country and the only country to hold its elections along the guidelines and principles of the SADC election law.

The question of the elections in Zimbabwe is really more tied to the question

of whether Bush and Blair, Britain and the United States, are able to capitalize on their plan to re-colonize Africans. We all know that the land question in Zimbabwe is why Zimbabwe is in the news.

There have been elections and corruption going on all around the Third World. Why is all the attention on Zimbabwe? Why is Tony Blair interested in the elections in Zimbabwe? Since the A1 and A2 land reform programs have been instituted, 14,955,967 acres of land have been returned to over 138,235 households in Zimbabwe, and this is historic. Never in the history of the African world has there been a mass transfer of land, wealth, the real wealth of the people been transferred back to the households. So this is what the real issue is in Zimbabwe. □

Kyrgyzstan's coup:

U.S. interests in Central Asia

By Heather Cottin

Kyrgyzstan, a nation of 5 million people that from 1936 to 1991 was a republic in the former Soviet Union, went through what the imperialist media first described as "a democratic revolution" on March 24.

It was a coup. Bands of people armed with clubs took over Kyrgyzstan's capital of Bishkek, and chased out President Askar Akayev, whose party had just won legislative elections on March 13.

President Akayev fled to Russia at the end of March as violent protests erupted in his Central Asian country. He said that those who opposed him had international support. (AP, April 2)

Akayev said that outside forces, including the U.S. ambassador, helped fuel the revolt that drove him from power.

Akayev's charges raise the question: what interests does the U.S. establishment have in this relatively small and oil-poor country in Asia?

Kyrgyzstan's history

Kyrgyzstan borders the oil-rich Caspian Sea countries of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan

and Uzbekistan and the untapped oil reserves of Xinjiang, China. It is in the heart of the region U.S. government strategists call "Eurasia." Kyrgyzstan has abundant hydro-electric power; significant deposits of gold and rare earth metals; and locally exploitable coal, oil and natural gas.

Kyrgyzstan is about the size of South Dakota. At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, many of the Kyrgyz people were nomadic. While it was a Soviet Republic, Kyrgyz's people flowed into modern cities where workers built factories, hospitals, schools and universities.

On Aug. 30, 1991, Akayev and the republic's Supreme Soviet declared Kyrgyzstan an independent nation. At that time the Kyrgyz president was a darling of U.S. imperialism.

When Kyrgyzstan broke away from the USSR, a campaign of privatization of state-owned enterprises took place. This stripped away the social and economic wellbeing of the majority of the population. It also exacerbated ethnic conflicts as capitalist competition replaced socialist cooperation.

In 2003, some 12 years after the split from the USSR, 50 percent of the Kyrgyz population lived below the poverty line. The switch from state to privately owned business left many people unemployed as jobs were lost and pensions and savings were devalued.

One city's history makes this clear. During the Soviet era, Balikchy was a Kyrgyz city bustling with shipbuilding and fishing industries. Goods from the city were sent to all parts of the Soviet Union. After privatization, Balikchy's industries and factories were sold off and left to rot.

"The Soviet time was much better. Everything was strong and in order," said Sadko Satarov, a former factory worker. (Swissinfo, Dec. 25, 2003)

Post-Soviet poverty

Kyrgyzstan's gross domestic product had fallen 47 percent between 1991 and 1996, when a slow growth resumed. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace applauded this in an article called "Reforms in Kyrgyzstan Go Well." (Anders Åslund, March 3, 2000) Kyrgyzstan is the largest recipient of U.S. aid in Central Asia—Washington has spent \$746 million there since 1992. Yet service on the national debt now accounts for 40 percent of Kyrgyzstan's national budget.

A UN report on the Rights of the Child in 2000 noted that in Kyrgyzstan a huge rise in tuberculosis, diphtheria and other infectious diseases followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the dismantling of the Soviet health-care system.

The Soviet system had eradicated many communicable diseases; its comprehensive health-care services made mandatory immunization and periodic health checks available to the entire population.

Today in Kyrgyzstan, the number of doctors is declining. The "market reforms" mandated by capitalists in the former socialist countries aim to privatize health care as well as education. People must now buy health insurance and medical students must pay for their studies.

The Orange and Rose "revolutions" which recently overpowered legally elected governments in the Ukraine and Georgia were products of U.S.-sponsored destabilization campaigns, with U.S.-backed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting the opposition.

U.S. and NATO troops are stationed not only in Kyrgyzstan, but throughout Central Asia to promote the interests of U.S.-based transnational corporations and U.S. geopolitical interests, including military advantages against China and Russia.

In 1997, Jimmy Carter's former national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, wrote "The Grand Chessboard." In it he asserted the U.S. right to establish "global hegemony," and warned that there were only 10 to 20 years to take control "before the door is closed." Brzezinski wrote of controlling the Eurasian corridor, from the Balkans to Xinjiang and Tibet.

Freedom House, a U.S.-backed NGO, gave Akayev's opposition a printing press and provided them with a professional propagandist to supervise the only print-media outlet.

This press published articles on "how to defeat dictators," including tips on hunger strikes and civil disobedience. When the Kyrgyz government denied the press electricity, the U.S. Embassy stepped in with emergency generators. (Wall Street Journal, Feb. 25)

The Bush administration would call the changes in Kyrgyzstan the first successful "spread of freedom and democracy" in Central Asia, a product of efforts by the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute and the Eurasia Foundation. (Asia Times, March 26) □

South Africans report on Zimbabwe elections

According to an April 4 Prensa Latina article headlined "Election in Zimbabwe reflects will of people, observers say," the South African Observer Mission reported that the Zimbabwean elections took place in an atmosphere "conducive for elections to take place." The article went on to report that the "polling day proceeded without reports of any notable irregularities and that polling stations processed voters quicker without people waiting for long in queues."

The mission, which stationed observers in all of the voting provinces, had the authority to intervene if they observed any glaring interference into the electoral process in Zimbabwe. □

Cesar Chavez & the UFW

Continued from page 6

the historical victories of the past, we hope to arm working class youth with knowledge of their present so that they are better able to fight imperialism in the future."

The plight of farm workers

The United Farm Workers made tremendous gains for workers. Today, the struggle for dignity and wages continues.

Agriculture is still California's largest industry. The state produces more than half the nuts, vegetables and fruits consumed in this country. Nearly every fruit and vegetable is still hand picked. It is backbreaking work.

The business of picking these crops depends on cheap labor. Without it, agribusiness's huge profits would plunge. For example, California strawberry sales are \$840 million annually. Eighty percent of the berries grown in the United States are from California.

In his book "Reefer Madness," Eric Schlosser shows the many ways in which growers reduce labor costs to maximize profits. One way is paying workers off the books to avoid paying unemployment

taxes, workers' compensation, and Medicare and Social Security taxes.

However, many undocumented do pay these taxes. Recent estimates show that undocumented workers put as much as \$7 billion a year into Social Security but never get a penny back. (NewYorkTimes, April 5)

Sharecropping—widespread in California—is one of the "most insidious means by which growers avoid responsibility for their workers," Schlosser writes.

Schlosser's book details the grueling life of strawberry pickers as some of the lowest-paid, hardest work. Migrant workers call the strawberry the fruit of the devil, Schlosser reports.

The back pain is excruciating. Work is seasonal and low paying. Finding a place to sleep, much less a home, is a constant worry, as housing costs are astronomical. The few labor camps around are "grim."

In 2005 in the United States, many migrants actually live in ditches, orchards, fields and even caves.

As long as these conditions exist, leaders like Cesar Chavez will continue to emerge.

Cesar Chavez, presente! □

In death as in life

How imperialism has used the pope

By Deirdre Griswold

It has been a long, long time—if ever—since the ruling classes of all the Western capitalist countries have accorded such unrestrained, reverential, even lavish honors on a leader of the Catholic Church as they are doing now on the death of Pope John Paul II.

Taking the lead is the United States, a country supposedly built on the principle of the separation of church and state, where only 24 percent of the people identify themselves as Roman Catholics. Britain, where the established Anglican church broke with Rome in the 16th century, is a close second.

The media in all the major imperialist countries for weeks put much of their coverage of international and domestic events on hold to give minute details about the pope's health, the crowds in Vatican Square awaiting his death, preparations for his funeral and retrospectives about his impact on world affairs.

Other world events, like the thousands of deaths in Indonesia from the second major earthquake in three months, or the continuing deadly conflicts in occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, have received perfunctory coverage compared to the oceans of media attention devoted to the pope.

Science at the disposal of dogma

All the achievements of modern science—medical procedures to prolong the pope's life; instant communications via satellite, television, radio and the internet informing the whole world of his condition; vehicles able to move hundreds of thousands of mourners quickly to Rome by land, air and sea—have been marshaled in a massive effort to convince the public that the life and death of this one person have had extraordinary, even supernatural consequences for the world.

The irony is that the enormous fortunes of today's ruling capitalist class depend upon revolutionary advances in science and technology that fueled the growth of modern industry. And none of this would have been possible without the class and ideological battles during the feudal period that broke the Catholic Church's monopoly on what people were allowed to think and say.

It was the triumph of the Enlightenment over church dogma that freed up the natural sciences, which in turn allowed a period of stupendous development of the means of production that has totally transformed the world.

For many, many years the ruling class in the United States identified itself as WASP—white Anglo-Saxon Protestant—and took a condescending, even contemptuous attitude toward Catholics and Jews, most of whom arrived here as poor immigrants. Muslims and other religions were completely beyond the pale.

It took almost two centuries before a Catholic could be elected president—and then he had to be the scion of an extremely wealthy and politically powerful family. White supremacist organizations often targeted Catholics

and Jews as well as African Americans.

Poland and the pope

In recent times, however, and especially since the papacy of John Paul II, the strategists of U.S. imperialism have recognized his brand of Catholicism as a very useful tool in the pursuit of their global ambitions. They could live with his professions of peace and his opposition to the death penalty. It was his active anti-communism and his cutting down of those Catholics who promoted "liberation theology," especially in Latin America, that endeared him to the imperialists—whether they be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or non-religious.

Karol Jozef Wojtyla was the first Polish Catholic to become pope. He was chosen at a time when Poland's inability to solve the food problem was moving the country toward crisis. Agriculture was still privately owned and backward, despite decades of state-owned industrial development under a semi-socialist government put in place after the defeat of Nazi Germany. In effect, the workers were subsidizing an inefficient form of peasant agriculture, but their anger over poor conditions was directed at the state and its party.

Wojtyla, just eight months after becoming pope, returned to Poland in 1979 to preach to huge crowds in what was seen as an open challenge to the regime. A year later, the U.S. received him with what was the full red carpet treatment, making his visits to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Des Moines, Chicago and Washington into semi-official holidays. No representative of the Catholic Church had ever been accorded such reverential treatment before.

As the counter-revolution in Poland deepened, the movement Solidarnosc (Solidarity) was pushed among the workers by intellectuals with close ties to the CIA through the AFL-CIO affiliated American Institute for Free Labor Development. It was the only "union" movement to receive the unstinting endorsement of Ronald Reagan, the Wall Street Journal and U.S. capital in general. Wojtyla was an important link in this developing relationship.

Today, Poland is once again part of the world capitalist market. Many of the small farms in Poland that had resisted socialist collectivization have gone under—the victims of capitalist competition. The farmers' protests and blockades of roads went largely unheeded by the world's media—or the church. As late as 1999, one-quarter of the Polish population were employed in agriculture but produced only 6 percent of the country's GDP. The shipyards where Solidarnosc took root have either been closed down or sold to Western corporations. Polish emigres—some of them women trafficked for prostitution—are a common sight in Western Europe.

What the church offers the Polish people is a public, emotional outlet for their suffering. But to end that suffering, a profound revolution in social relations is necessary.

Central America and 'liberation theology'

At the time Wojtyla became pope, powerful movements were underway in Central America to break through the political stranglehold of the landed oligarchy, supported by U.S. imperialism, and set up popular regimes attentive to the wishes and needs of the vast majority—the largely

Indigenous peasants and the workers.

The suffering of the people and their desire for revolutionary change found expression in religion as well as politics, especially among the lower clergy who worked with the poor. In Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, advocates of "liberation theology" tried to move the Catholic Church hierarchy to support these struggles.

Pope John Paul II instead systematically diminished the influence of liberation theologians in the Vatican. He appointed bishops in Latin America who moved the church away from social activism, which he labeled a form of Marxism.

When activist Archbishop Oscar Romero was murdered by the right wing in El Salvador in 1980, two years after Wojtyla became pope, and when even nuns there were raped and murdered by the military, the response from the Vatican was muted.

Pope John Paul II also worked assiduously to reverse the liberal orientation of the 1963 Vatican II Council and return the church to its more authoritarian, hierarchical traditions.

His commitment to the patriarchy was total. Not only would the church continue to be completely male dominated, but challenges to the patriarchal family like a woman's right to choose when and if to have a child—including both contraception and abortion—as well as the right of lesbians and gays to same-sex relationships were to be condemned.

In 1997, 2.5 million German and Austrian Catholics petitioned the pope to admit women priests and married priests and abandon the church's hostility to homosexuality. But the Vatican was unmoved.

Wojtyla had been an actor before entering the priesthood, and made good use of his skills in charming audiences and knowing how to behave on camera, even when he was gravely ill.

All this and the adulation of the capitalist media, however, do not fully explain his popularity with many millions of ordinary people. Here it is necessary to remember what Karl Marx really said when he called religion "the opium of the people."

He was drawing attention to the fact that capitalism has made life unbearably painful in a million ways and religion offers solace and hope, even if in a mythical afterlife. The full quote was: "Religion

"All the achievements of modern science have been marshaled in a massive effort to convince the public that the life and death of this one person have had extraordinary, even supernatural consequences for the world."

is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

It is hard to read these words without emotion. The brutality of life under capitalism is all about us, yet people must try to get through each day without breaking down. Whether it's belief in a better world after death, or drowning one's sorrows in alcohol or drugs, or a combination of many things, people fend off despair and apathy, and reach out to one another, in a variety of ways.

Let us assume that John Paul's preachings against capitalist "materialism" were sincere, even though the church hierarchy certainly do not lack material comforts. He was telling the masses of people that they should put spiritual matters before material ones. In the real world, this means accepting the inequalities of class society—the poor shall be ever with ye—and working on one's spiritual salvation instead.

Marx, of course, was arguing for the building of a revolutionary workers' movement that could rebuild social relations—and the love and solidarity of the human family—on a higher and more equitable level by returning ownership of the means of production to the community of workers who built them. When there is need—less hunger, injustice, war and oppression, how can there be true satisfaction of our emotional and intellectual needs?

The imperialist ruling class are by their very nature extremely interested in material possessions. Yet they found common cause with Pope John Paul II. A cynic might even say he made a pact with the devil. □

Support for Palestinian prisoners

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

Former Palestinian political prisoner Akram Al-Ayasa, and Palestinian lawyer Sahar Francis from the prisoners' support and human rights association Addameer, spoke at a special meeting here on April 1. The event was sponsored by Al-Awda—the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the New York Committee to Defend Palestine and Workers World Party.

Both speakers told of the tremendous hardships and lack of justice these political prisoners face. At present, there are 7,500 political prisoners in Palestine, held by the Israeli government.

Al-Ayasa was detained and harassed at JFK airport immigration desk for hours



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

April 1 WWP meeting.

upon arrival to New York. Despite this, he continued on by taxi cab to the meeting, where the audience eagerly waited for him and stayed for the entire event.

A third scheduled speaker, former political prisoner Ala Jaradat, was denied a visa to enter the United States. □

WAR IN COLOMBIA MADE IN U.S.A.

This book covers the struggle in Colombia from the perspective of trade unionists, human rights activists, and the FARC and ELN insurgencies. Authors include: Fidel Castro, Ramsey Clark, Javier Correa, Rep. Cynthia McKinney and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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No headlines about this war

The pro-Pentagon propaganda machine here usually celebrates war anniversaries, especially wars with few U.S. casualties. Yet take a look at Google News for March 24: Yugoslavia turned up only 38 independent hits. Thirty-four of them involved chess champion Bobby Fischer's asylum in Iceland. The war was almost ignored.

Did someone think it would be harder now to convince people of the 10 years of organized lies and propaganda used to justify aggression against Yugoslavia? Shining a light on the Balkans exposes too much truth about imperialist aggression and its consequences.

On March 24, 1999, a U.S.-led NATO force launched its first sustained aggression against what remained of the once quite successful socialist country of Yugoslavia. At the time, the NATO leaders and U.S. President Bill Clinton claimed this was a "humanitarian war." It featured 78 days of "humanitarian bombing." NATO's propagandists gave the world the obscene term "collateral damage."

During those 78 days, U.S.-NATO forces bombed Yugoslavia's industrial infrastructure, including television stations, apartment complexes and schools. The bombs killed over a thousand civilians, about one-third of them children. They polluted a beautiful country with chemicals, oil spills, and depleted uranium.

The humanitarian side was supposedly helping the Albanian people of the Kosovo and Metochia province of Serbia. To this province the war brought a continued NATO occupation with a United Nations cover. It brought the biggest U.S. military base in Eastern Europe. It brought the most reactionary and corrupt groupings from the Albanian population into power.

Now Kosovo's biggest industries are drug running and prostitution of impoverished women from the East. Meanwhile these ultra-rightists have driven out over 200,000 Serbs, Roma people, Jews and all other nationalities in a very non-humanitarian pogrom under NATO's watch.

Serbia and the other former Yugoslav republics are not free. They are appendages of Western European and U.S. imperialism. Joblessness has reached new heights, poverty new depths. German capital owns Serbia's media lock, stock and barrel, and controls its banks. U.S. Steel owns its biggest steel mills.

Clinton kept better relations with his imperialist allies, and gave them a share of the loot, but NATO bombed Yugoslavia for the same imperialist reasons that Bush invaded Iraq: to overthrow an independent state, to place a puppet in power and to seize control of the resources. The war should be remembered, but as a great imperialist crime. □

GM's flagging fortunes

Continued from page 4

Corporate America view the unions as a hindrance to their system of exploitation. The bosses want a free hand on the vital issues of investing capital, expanding technology to increase production, and laying off workers here to exploit workers abroad.

Labor at the crossroads

The danger to the labor movement is growing under the whip of the triple capitalist crisis and intense competition at home and abroad. It is whipsawing jobs and benefits and Wal-Martizing the workers. Right now it is the airlines that are using the crisis to downsize the unions. Other industries are poised to follow.

The coming period will raise the stakes, not only for the UAW workers, but for the entire labor movement. Wall Street and

The AFL-CIO, led by President John Sweeney, can't keep the debate on these critical issues within the federation. A bold plan of action is needed to build solidarity among the affiliated unions, the rank and file, the organized and the unorganized.

May Day is coming. Celebrated by the international working class in the struggle for the eight-hour day, it was broadened by communists and socialists, especially, into a show of strength by workers everywhere. This year the Million Worker Movement coalition in the U.S. has called for a day of solidarity on May Day to energize the poor and working people. This call could not come at a more opportune time. □

April 16 anti-draft and recruitment conference

Continued from page 3

Charlotte, N.C., in front of the military recruiting station.

In Nashville, Tenn., students held a No Draft, No Way rally across from Vanderbilt University.

In Santa Rosa, Calif., the Sonoma County Peace & Justice Center held a rally at the courthouse featuring anti-draft speakers and music. Students joined in and signed a Conscientious Objectors Pledge of Resistance.

In Ames, Iowa, students walked out of campus at Iowa State University and rallied against the draft.

Next step: April 16 conference

The next steps for the struggle against the draft will include a conference on youth and resistance on April 16. This conference will address the return of the draft, eco-

conomic conscription and youth organizing.

The conference will focus on concrete actions to shut down recruiting and fight the draft—including a campaign to get United States Army's Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps out of schools. These actions will include implementing an opt-out program so that information about students is not given to military recruiters, and an educators' petition demanding that time be given in schools to talk about the truth behind military recruiting and to educate about the draft.

Speakers at the conference will include Gulf War era veteran and activist Monique Code, Pam Africa, Vietnam-era military resister Larry Holmes, and young people involved in counter-recruiting work on high school and college campuses.

For information about the conference, or to register, go to www.NoDraftNoway.org. □

City College interview

Continued from page 3

proper examples.

WW: What kind of support have you received from the community and from other students following the arrests?

HT: There's been an immense amount of support. There was a picket the following week that drew 150 people. Our emails have been swamped with letters of support—we've received over a thousand. There's been significant local news coverage. The professors' union voted not only for a resolution in support, but to donate \$500 to our defense campaign. The staff union voted for a resolution in support of us as well. Students are really angry about what's happening. There's a certain degree of fear, but despite that there's been a strong outpouring of support.

WW: What are the next steps in this campaign? What can people do to support you and the others who were targeted?

HT: We have a court date on April 21, but the most important thing is that we have a disciplinary hearing scheduled before the CCNY administration on Friday, April 7. The hearing will be held at

10 a.m. in Room 1215 of the North Academic Center of City College, which is at 138th & Convent. We want to be both legally prepared and we want to pack the hearing. We want the administration to know that the community and the campus are watching this closely. Right after the hearing we're going to have a meeting to talk about next steps.

People can visit www.citydefensecampaign.org to get information about sending letters or faxes or making phone calls to the CCNY administration to put pressure on them to end our suspensions.

WW: Is there anything else you want people to know about your campaign?

HT: There's been a ton of outrage about what happened to us, specifically about the issue of free speech. But we see it as a broader issue about who's being made to pay for this war, in our communities. More importantly, this is about Iraqi civilians—the death and destruction that's been rained down on Falluja and the over 100,000 Iraqi civilians that have been killed so far. This isn't an issue of whether recruiters have a right to be on campus. It's about what they are recruiting for. We can't allow students to be used as cannon fodder for this project. □

UMass students

Continued from page 5

these student-workers in school, especially the working-class and poor students of color.

According to GEO's website (www.geouaw.org), if the administration's current contract proposals were implemented, a typical graduate student's family could be paying \$5,000 more next year for the same child-care services. Health-care costs would quadruple over the next three years from \$0 to a projected \$508. The administration could also change the benefits at any time without negotiations.

The unity and solidarity displayed on March 31 are what's needed to win a good contract, defeat the administration's student organization restructuring plans and continue building a progressive united front at UMass and nationally, stressed Engeman.

Pfeifer is a Labor Studies graduate student and GEO member at UMass-Amherst. □

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The Terri Schiavo case:

An indictment of capitalist healthcare

By Gene Clancy

Terri Schiavo died on March 31, two weeks after the feeding tube that kept her alive was removed under a court order. For the last 15 years of her life, she had existed in what her doctors described as a state without conscious mental activity. Her motor functions and some reflexes continued.

Schiavo's case became unique. Not because of her medical condition and death. Unfortunately, these cases and the wrenching choices that go with them are all too common. It is because her case was hijacked by the religious right and a sensation-seeking media.

These forces made Terri Schiavo a cause celebre, which eventually involved every level and branch of the Florida and U.S. governments.

This case has rightly been called a tragedy for Terri Schiavo, her husband and parents. But it is a tragedy that had specific causes originating in the U.S. health-care system and a society based on market forces rather than human needs.

Many disabled activists have voiced concern over Terri Schiavo and the manner of her death. They have a real fear that in a class-based, profit driven—and often bigoted—society, disabled people may be seen as disposable, especially in a climate of scarce financial resources.

Even living wills, which allow patients to specify their health-care wishes in the event they are unable to competently express themselves, are subject not only to legal challenges, but may be ignored. Severely disabled people may be pressured to agree to procedures and sign documents which do not reflect their true wishes. (Naomi Jaffe, Common Dreams Newcenter, March 28)

This reasonable concern was cynically and hypocritically manipulated by right-wing religious and political forces in order to push their own agendas—which have little to do with the rights of disabled people, or even the “right to life.”

On the weekend of March 21—following a week in which Medicaid funds were drastically slashed by \$15 billion—right-wing Republican politicians pushed an unprecedented bill through Congress to override the Florida court's decision to remove Schiavo's feeding tube.

Senate Democrats agreed not to challenge a voice vote for a similar bill in the Senate. President George W. Bush flew back from his Texas ranch and signed the bill into law in the middle of the night.

A chorus of media outlets, including much of the mainstream media, jumped on the right-wing bandwagon, viciously attacked Schiavo's husband Michael Schiavo, and gave an almost unchallenged forum to a parade of right-wing bigots.

The real reason for the Republican interference in personal medical decisions affecting Terri Schiavo was contained in a confidential Republican Party briefing note that was leaked to the media. According to the document, the tactical advantage of championing this issue was twofold: “the pro-life base will be excited, [and] this is a great political issue, this is a tough issue for Democrats.” (Scott Piat-

kowski, Rabble News Weblog, March 24)

The gambit may have overreached. The entire federal and Florida state judiciaries rebuffed the overture. And national polls showed overwhelming disapproval of Congress's action.

Who killed Terri Schiavo?

In 1990, Terri Schiavo suffered from bulimia, an eating disorder in which the victim regurgitates food after eating in an attempt to “become thin.” Many health-care professionals believe that for women, bulimia is at least partly caused by unrealistic societal portrayals of feminine beauty pushed by big-business sexist advertising.

The bulimia and a massive daily intake of caffeine led to a chemical imbalance in Schiavo's blood, specifically a lack of potassium, which brought on a heart attack. Her brain was deprived of oxygen for more than five minutes and she suffered massive brain damage. (Mary Jo Malone, St. Petersburg Times, April 24, 2001)

Terri Schiavo's husband, Michael, and her parents Bob Schindler and Mary Schindler, faced a largely uncaring, profit-driven health-care system. With only modest means, they struggled to provide for Schiavo's care.

Michael Schiavo raised \$10,000. He flew to California to try extraordinary therapies for her. He moved into the Schindler home and became a registered nurse.

Facing declining resources, Michael Schiavo and the Schindlers sued Terri Schiavo's doctors and insurance company.

Incredibly, her doctors had failed to take even a single blood sample that could have revealed the chemical imbalance.

They won the lawsuit. But the actual award was far less than they had expected: \$300,000 for Michael Schiavo's “loss” and a \$700,000 “trust fund” to take care of Terri Schiavo. This may appear to be a lot of money. But it is not a lot to care for a severely disabled young woman, with no chance of recovery, for the rest of her life.

The initial solidarity of Schiavo and the Schindlers broke down over who should control these unexpectedly small resources. Soon the matter was in court as the Schindlers and Michael Schiavo disputed everything from Terri Schiavo's guardianship to what her wishes for life or death would have been. (Malone, St. Petersburg Times)

Whose right to life?

During the last weeks of Terri Schiavo's life, the media were filled with posturing right-wing ideologues striving to “save Terri's life.” Closer examination shows that these fulminations were worse than hypocritical—they were cynical to the extreme.

In Houston, on March 15—just before President Bush rushed off to Washington, D.C., to “save Terri Schiavo's life”—a severely disabled Black infant named Sun Hudson was removed from the ventilator on which his life depended by the Children's Hospital administration.

It was done over the strenuous objec-

tions of his mother Wanda Hudson. (Houston Chronicle, March 17) Sun died a few minutes after the ventilator was removed.

The hospital acted under the authority of a law signed by George W. Bush when he was governor of Texas. This law allows hospitals to disregard patients' wishes for continued treatment as long as a panel of doctors and medical ethicists declare that “there is no hope.”

The law had the endorsement of Texas Right to Life when it was signed in 1999. (Newsday.com, March 22)

According to Mario Caballero, a legal assistance fighter for the poor who represented Sun Hudson's mother, the law discriminates against poor people. Patients are given only 10 days to either find another hospital that will accept them or file an appeal. (Houston Chronicle)

In an interview with right-wing talk show host Bill O'Reilly, Caballero responded to a question about why the infant wasn't transferred:

Caballero: Well, we tried to get a transfer to happen. Part of the problem with transferring a person from one hospital to another is that the hospitals are the ones that—they don't take a transfer request from an individual.

O'Reilly: Right.

Caballero: It has to come from the hospital. The hospitals communicate to each other and we, we're having an adversarial relationship with the hospital [Texas Children's]. But the, the—I think her rights were violated. These are decisions that the mother ought to make. And what we really have here is not an ethical issue but it was a financial issue. (Newshounds Online, O'Reilly Flip-Flop, transcript of the O'Reilly Show, March 23)

Elizabeth Sjoberg, an associate general counsel with the Texas Hospital Association, helped draft the 1999 law. She says that “it added various procedures to ensure that a patient's final wishes regarding care were carried out, while still protecting the hospital if it determined that care should be stopped for terminal or irreversibly ill patients.” (Newsday.com)

One wonders just what sort of “protection” Texas Children's hospital needed from a six-month old infant.

Your money or your life!

In Florida, Gov. Jeb Bush intervened mightily in the Terri Schiavo case. In 2003 he went so far as to literally kidnap her from her hospice bed in order to “save her life.”

Yet advocates for the developmentally disabled are saying that Florida has enough money to drastically reduce a 15,000-person waiting list for state services—but the agency in charge of the disabled won't spend the money! (The Terri Schiavo Story, A&E Network, March 31)

Florida activists have charged that the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities has a surplus of \$30 million to \$92 million, but refuses to spend it. In the meantime, at least two severely disabled people on the waiting list died recently after being removed from 24-hour care, and a third was hospitalized following a

“During the last weeks of Terri Schiavo's life, the media were filled with posturing right-wing ideologues striving to ‘save Terri's life.’ Closer examination shows that these fulminations were worse than hypocritical—they were cynical to the extreme.”

medical emergency. (Tampa Tribune, Mar. 28)

Donald L. Bartlett and James B. Steele have detailed the U.S. health-care system in their book “Critical Condition: How Health Care in America Became Big Business and Bad Medicine.”

They write: “We spend more money than anyone else in the world—and have less to show for it. We have a second-rate [insurance] system that doesn't adequately cover half or more of the population. ... We charge the poor far more for their medical services than we do the rich. ... We have a system in such turmoil that almost everyone involved is unhappy—patients, doctors, nurses, aides, technicians. Almost everyone. But for a lucky few, the turmoil is worth a lot of money.”

One of the lucky few is Bill Frist, the Republican Majority leader of the U.S. Senate, who played a pivotal role in pushing through the bill to “save” Terri Schiavo. Perhaps because he does not practice medicine anymore, he was able to diagnose Terri Schiavo's condition without even examining her!

Frist is a heart surgeon and a staunch advocate of free-market medicine. He entered the Senate already a millionaire thanks to his father and brother. They founded what has become HCA, Inc.—the biggest hospital chain in the United States, with more than 200 hospitals and revenues of \$21.8 billion in 2003. Over the years, HCA derived about one-third of its revenue from the federal government's Medicaid and Medicare programs.

In addition to owning the most hospitals, HCA has another dubious distinction: The company has defrauded Medicare, Medicaid and the military's health-care program TRICARE of more money than any other health-care provider in the United States. This is no small achievement in a field where the competition is intense.

In all, HCA paid a total of \$1.7 billion to the federal government in fines, restitution, criminal judgments and to settle Medicare over billing claims. (Bartlett and Steele, p.72) It is a safe bet that this sum is tiny compared by HCA's profits over the same period.

It is evident that capitalist politicians and their right-wing religious allies care little for anyone's life—unless doing so will increase their profit margins. How else to explain their hypocritical posturing over Terri Schiavo while ignoring the 18,000 people within the United States who now die every year for lack of essential health care. (Joe Conason, New York Observer, March 23)

What is needed is a truly caring society that respects the rights of the disabled—and of everyone—to choose either dignified life or dignified death. What is needed is a society that puts people's needs and lives ahead of profits and religious obscurantism and that builds the kind of solidarity among all people that, with the help of science, can lessen suffering.

Clancy is a disabled-rights activist.

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Red Lake, reservaciones del Norte de Minnesota

'El Birmingham del Norte'

Por Mahtowin Munro
and Staphanie Hedgecock

Al momento de ir a la prensa, todavía no se sabe si Jeff Weise actuó solo o en conjunto con otros jóvenes.

La violenta tragedia del joven Jeff Weise de la nación Red Lake Ojibwe, ha mostrado la desesperación y la pobreza en que viven decenas de miles de indígenas en los Estados Unidos.

Weise, un joven Ojibwe que padece de una enfermedad mental, mató a dos miembros de su familia y mató e hirió a varios jóvenes y adultos en la pequeña escuela superior Red Lake, suicidándose luego el 21 de marzo.

La comunidad de Red Lake está devastada. Las 5.000 personas miembros de la Banda Red Lake, se conocen casi todas entre sí o son parientes. En toda la Nación Indígena un dolor intenso se ha sentido al ver morir a muchos indígenas—en su mayoría jóvenes—sin sentido alguno.

Pero mientras la prensa corporativa ha comparado esta tragedia en Red Lake con la tragedia de la escuela Columbine, muchos indígenas han hecho una distinción entre estas. Según Audrey Thayer de la Reservación White Earth: “Esto se trata de un asunto de clase social. Columbine es una comunidad de clase media alta. Esta no. Esta es totalmente diferente.” (Democracy Now! 24 de marzo).

Mattie Harper de Leech Lake, otra reservación Ojibwe cercana, fue entrevistada también en “Democracy Now! Ella detalló la historia de los ataques genocidas contra la soberanía y la cultura indígena que comenzó con el programa de Escuelas de Internos a mediados de la década de los años cincuenta. Dijo: “Los niños morían de malnutrición. Estaban hambrientos. Y se les forzaba a hablar en inglés.”

Harper hizo una conexión directa entre las condiciones de pobreza, la adicción al alcohol y las drogas y la violencia consecuente que sucede hoy en día.

Thayer dijo que en los seis condados del área del Norte de Minnesota, incluyendo Red Lake, Leech Lake y White Earth, el 97

por ciento de las personas en prisión son indígenas. “Nos consideramos el Birmingham del norte”, dijo.

Ella acusó al Gobernador de Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty, “quien ha liquidado completamente los programas estatales que afectan a los indígenas. Tenemos una administración que no da ni un dólar a los indígenas.”

Minnesota tiene una historia de ataques racistas contra los indígenas, incluyendo el movimiento de linchamiento contra los derechos a la pesca que llegó a su cumbre en la década de los años ochenta.

“Cuando se compara con otros grupos... hay la probabilidad de que un porcentaje de un 670 de los indígenas de todas las edades muera de alcoholismo, un 650% de tuberculosis, un 318% de diabetes y un 204% de muerte accidental.” Las muertes debido al alcoholismo son 17 veces más que el promedio nacional. (Washington Post, 25 de marzo).

Los recortes de programas indígenas por Bush

El racismo, la pobreza, la falta de oportunidades de educación y de empleos, viviendas inadecuadas, y el abuso a las drogas y al alcohol, lleva a una alta tasa de suicidio dos a tres veces más alta que el promedio nacional.

Una encuesta nacional de jóvenes indígenas en Minnesota encontró que de 56 estudiantes en noveno grado escolar, el 81% de muchachas y el 43% de muchachos han pensado seriamente en el suicidio.

Casi la mitad de las muchachas y el 20% de los muchachos dijeron que han intentado suicidarse. (Prensa Asociada, 26 de marzo).

La Hermana Patricia Wallis, quien trabaja en el colegio de la iglesia de Red Lake, habló de una “devastadora, inhumana, y persistente pobreza... Si algo pasa, o alguien muere o ha habido un accidente, regularmente [los estudiantes] no vienen. Algun@s se quedan en sus casas porque tienen que cuidar a sus herman@s o tienen que ayudar en la casa.” (Prensa Asociada, 26 de marzo.)

En el 2004, el 80 % de los estudiantes de la Escuela Secundaria Red Lake estaba bajo el nivel de pobreza, cualificando para los beneficios de almuerzo escolar.

Much@s desde los territorios indígenas criticaron al Presidente George W. Bush por no haber expresado pésame a la Nación Red Lake. Bush estaba preocupado promocionando las susodichas reformas antiobreras al sistema de Seguro Social y asumiendo posturas sobre el caso de Terri Schiavo; aparentemente no podía molestarse con notar la tragedia en el territorio indígena.

El director nacional del Movimiento de Indígenas American@s Clyde Bellecourt dijo: “Estamos recibiendo cartas de países alrededor del mundo expresando pésame, ha visitado la Cruz Roja, pero el llamado Gran Padre Blanco en Washington no ha dicho ni hecho una sola cosa. Cuando los hijos del pueblo son asesinados y otros están en el hospital apenas sobreviviendo, él debe ser la primera persona en enviar su pésame.... Si esta fuera una comunidad blanca, no creo que él tendría ningún problema en hacerlo”. (Washington Post, el 24 de mayo)

Como resultado de críticas públicas, Bush finalmente mencionó Red Lake el 25 de marzo. Pero restringió su conciso comentario a reconocer el papel jugado por el guardia de seguridad de la escuela secundaria.

Los verdaderos sentimientos de Bush para el pueblo indígena se muestran en los planes de la administración de recortar más de \$100 millones de programas para esa población el próximo año—programas que están ya extremadamente mermados.

El papel jugado por el medicamento Prozac

El padre de Jeff Weise se suicidó hace cuatro años. Su madre, poco después, sufrió daño permanente al cerebro como resultado de un accidente automovilístico relacionado al uso de alcohol. Weise fue abusado por el novio de su madre y quizás por otros más. Cuando volvió a Red Lake para vivir con otros miembros de su

familia, se sintió aislado y sin amigos.

Claramente, este joven necesitaba ayuda. El pueblo nativo tiene acceso muy limitado a servicios de salud, los cuales en las reservaciones indígenas son ofrecidos por el Servicio de Salud Indígena (IHS por las siglas en inglés) manejado por el gobierno federal. El acceso a servicios de salud mental es especialmente limitado.

Lo que Weise recibió del IHS fue una terapia mínima y una receta para la droga contra la depresión, Prozac. La dosis de Prozac fue aumentada poco antes del incidente.

Muchos artículos han cuestionado la seguridad de prescribir Prozac a los adolescentes. Algunos científicos creen que el medicamento puede incrementar el comportamiento suicida. El doctor Frank Ochberg, ex director asistente del Instituto de Salud Mental, dijo al New York Times que investigaciones recientes le han hecho cambiar de opinión sobre la conexión entre la droga y los actos suicidas. “Las intenciones suicidas y homicidas pueden teóricamente seguir la misma vía”.

Los noticieros comerciales le dieron mucha importancia al hecho de que Weise recientemente había enviado mensajes a sitios en la Web con orientación neo Nazi, como si esto proveyera la solución de la cuestión del porqué ocurrió esta tragedia. Muchos se han preguntado cómo un joven indígena puede identificarse con un neo Nazi.

Weise estaba claramente enajenado y se sentía sin esperanza. Como otros jóvenes en circunstancias semejantes, él pudo haberse sentido atraído a las soluciones simplistas provistas por los programas reaccionarios o fascistas. Toda su vida él se había pasado sufriendo los efectos tóxicos del sistema capitalista, pero no sabía qué etiqueta aplicarle a esa experiencia. Como otros jóvenes enajenados, es posible que él creyera que tenía que culpar a otros por los males del capitalismo.

Hay una ruta de escape importante para la desesperanza de la juventud: es la de volverse parte de la lucha contra el racismo y en pos de la justicia económica y social. □

Crece el movimiento contra el servicio militar obligatorio

Por Dustin Langley

Mientras continúa la ocupación ilegal de Irak y la administración de Bush busca nuevos objetos para su “guerra contra el terrorismo”, se encuentra que no tiene suficientes tropas para cumplir sus ambiciones imperialistas. El Ejército y el Cuerpo de Marina están desplegados a su máxima capacidad y no han podido cumplir sus cuotas de reclutamiento. Las fuerzas de reserva también han experimentado una reducción en la inscripción, y rápidamente se están convirtiendo en una “fuerza despedazada”, según el Teniente General James R. Helmly.

El 31 de marzo, el Sistema de Servicio Selectivo le informará al Presidente Bush que se han cumplido las metas de realización de 2004. Este plan de realización

(ve www.sss.gov) indica que el Sistema de Servicio Selectivo está preparándose para instituir el servicio militar obligatorio. Está proveyendo personal a los puestos locales de servicio militar obligatorio, entrenando a los jefes de registros militares voluntarios para trabajar en escuelas secundarias y universidades, y modernizando el proceso de ingreso para que esté listo a implementar el servicio militar obligatorio a los 75 días de la autorización.

Los organizadores de la organización “Servicio Militar obligatorio? ¡De Ningún Modo!” (No Draft, No Way) han hecho un llamado para un día nacional de acción el 31 de marzo, para oponerse al reclutamiento y al servicio militar obligatorio. Desde Santa Rosa, California hasta Nueva York, los jóvenes, padres, estudiantes y activistas contra el servicio militar obliga-

torio saldrán a las calles para decir “De ninguna manera habrá servicio militar obligatorio”. Las actividades incluyen una huelga estudiantil en Ames, Iowa; una asamblea en Nashville, Tenn.; una manifestación frente a una oficina de reclutamiento en Charlotte, N.C., y otras acciones por el país, incluyendo mítines públicos, desobediencia civil, y entrenamiento para objetores por conciencia.

El próximo paso en la lucha contra el servicio militar obligatorio será una conferencia de la organización “Servicio Militar obligatorio? ¡De Ningún Modo!”, que tendrá lugar el sábado 16 de abril, en Nueva York. Esta conferencia será mucho más que una serie de talleres—será una sesión para movilizar a los oponentes al servicio militar obligatorio.

Los organizadores esperan que fruto de

la conferencia sea establecer equipos en contra del reclutamiento que se enfoquen en escuelas secundarias y campus universitarios específicos para exponer las mentiras de reclutadores militares y trabajar para sacarlos de los campus; establecer grupos locales para luchar contra el servicio militar obligatorio y aconsejar a los potenciales reclutas sobre la resistencia al servicio militar obligatorio; y para lanzar una campaña de protesta y acción contra el reclutamiento y el servicio militar obligatorio.

Para más información o para inscribirse en esta lucha ve: www.NODRAFT-NOWAY.org.

El escritor es un veterano de la Marina y organizador de la campaña De Ninguna Manera habrá Servicio Militar Obligatorio. □