

## MUNDO OBRERO

!Sí se puede! 12



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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## Detroit crisis leads to call:

# Feed the cities Starve the Pentagon

By Cheryl LaBash  
Detroit

The hundreds of billions of dollars spent by the Pentagon on the illegal war and occupation of Iraq have meant more poverty, more cutbacks and a plummeting standard of living for the workers, poor and people of color in the U.S.

Now a national call has been issued for a broad, multinational, united fightback movement to push back the White House and the military generals.

This fightback response comes from Black elected officials as well as trade unionists and community activists, based mainly here in Detroit. The call is for a national conference to "Reclaim Our Cities and Fight the Bush Budget that Starves the Cities to Feed the Pentagon"—to be held this coming fall in Detroit.

The initial endorsers of this call range from unionists to community leaders to elected officials.

They include Maryann Mahaffey, president of the Detroit City Council; JoAnn Watson, Detroit City Council member; Marian Kramer, co-president of the National Welfare Rights Union; Millie Hall, president of Metro-Detroit Coalition of Labor Union Women; Nathan Head, president of Metro-Detroit Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; David Sole, president of UAW Local 2334; Maureen Taylor, chairperson of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and Sylvia Orduno of the same group; Tom Stephens, staff attorney of the Guild/Sugar Law Center; and Clarence Thomas, national co-chair of the Million Worker March and a leader of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

The call expresses the frustration of so many who are burdened with the budget cuts:

"Many cities are facing devastating budget crises. We are tired of accepting further cutbacks, more layoffs and pressure to privatize. We need a national movement to demand that the billions wasted on war and the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan be used instead to meet the needs of the people here at home.

"The new Bush budget cuts 150 domestic programs while it pushes the spending for war to over half a trillion dollars a year! Tax breaks for the rich, attacks on our Social Security, and skyrocketing health care costs (with tens of millions having no health coverage at all) all add to the crisis. Debts to the big banks strangle our cities with tens and hundreds of millions of dollars in interest alone each year.

"It is time to launch a struggle to win our right to health care, quality education, decent housing, food, utilities and a job.

The money is there to guarantee everyone a decent life. This is the richest country in the world."

A May 14 strategy meeting called by the Million Worker March leadership will take place in Detroit to take up this conference initiative, among other important issues.

There are plenty of good reasons for holding an important conference of this kind in large cities and even small towns. Detroit, once the heartland of the auto industry, has come to symbolize a crisis that is creating a seething anger from the workers and oppressed population in many parts of the country.

#### Black city ready for struggle

For instance, on April 6, Detroit city workers closely watched the aftermath of a 42-inch water main break on Jefferson Avenue. Round-the-clock emergency crews swung into action to restore pressure to a hospital, four schools, residences and the General Motor's headquarters in the Renaissance Center. But it wasn't

employees of the city out there—a private contractor got the job.

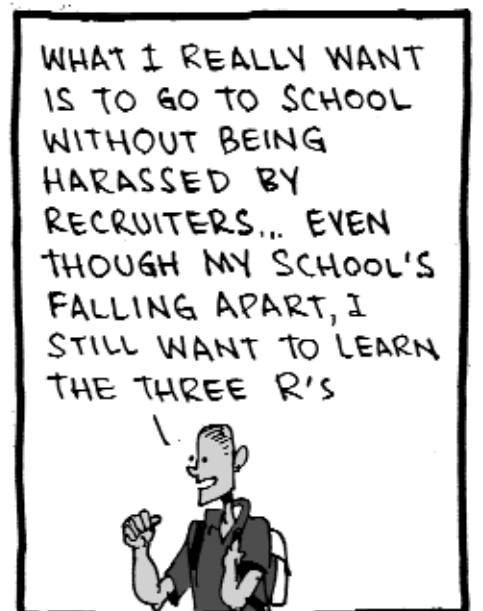
Those privately contracted crews were a sneak peek of what to expect from the 2005-2006 proposed City Budget, to be announced April 12. City workers and residents will be told to pay for the budget deficit through layoffs, service cuts, health and pension benefit cuts and privatization.

Already, shortened hours at Neighborhood Services offices are hurting the homeless and other desperate Detroiters. Layoffs have robbed almost 1,000 workers of their secure livelihood. The Belle Isle Aquarium, a 100-year-old cultural institution, has closed down.

City workers and the community won't accept the wage and service cuts quietly. Resistance has already prevented or reduced some of the city administration's attempts to balance the budget at the expense of the people.

Reflecting the mood and concerns of the residents, half the members of the Detroit

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# Young Harry Hay and the Wobblies



This week ...

By Leslie Feinberg

The Mattachine movement for homosexual emancipation in the United States was initiated by a core group of five leftists in 1950 at the height of the anti-communist and anti-gay McCarthyite witch hunt. Two of the founders were members of the Communist Party (CPUSA), another had been active in the party in the Midwest after the war, and the other two leftists could be described as "fellow travelers."

The short-lived Mattachine movement drew an estimated 5,000 homosexuals in California to its ranks in the early 1950s. And, Will Roscoe noted, "its name, carrying the promise of freedom, spread throughout the United States and the world." ("Radically Gay")

The political beliefs and experience of the founding members were far from incidental to organizing for homosexual emancipation.

That was particularly true for Harry Hay, the key figure in launching the Mattachine movement.

Hay had spent more than 17 years in the CPUSA. He wasn't just a member; he had been a respected Marxist teacher and a tireless organizer. Communist politics, a Marxist world view, a historical materialist vista of history, and immersion in the class struggle gave material shape to Hay's vision of homosexual emancipation.

## Ticket to the working-class struggle

Hay had been born in England in 1912 with a silver spoon in his mouth. He spent his early years in Chile, where his father was a wealthy mining engineer employed by Anaconda Copper. The family returned to the U.S. in 1917, where he grew up in southern California.

Hay so loved theater and opera that at the end of his freshman year in high school, at the age of 13, his father sent him to labor for the summer in the hay fields of Western Nevada to "toughen him up."

Hay worked alongside miners who did farm work in the summers. Many were Wobblies—members of the Industrial Workers of the World—whose ambition was to organize workers into "one big union."

Those hay wagons became a school of Marxism for Hay. In his biography, "The Trouble with Harry Hay," Stuart Timmons described, "Among the greasy, thumbworn pamphlets, Harry remembered Karl Marx's Value, Price and Profit and Wage-Labor and Capital. By day, they drilled him in the principles of exploitation, organization and unity. By campfire, they told him stories. 'I was immersed in the first great railroad strike of 1887, the Haymarket Massacre, and the dreadful Ludlow Massacre, where Rockefeller goons gunned down 14 women and children in the snow on Christmas Eve, 1913.'"

Hay also recalled being chilled by the anti-gay attitudes that many workers, including Wobblies, had been soci-

etally imbued with and which remained unexamined and unchallenged.

However, the Wobblies gave Hay an IWW card that was his ticket to work on a tramp steamer. The experience with these militant miners gave him more than that.

Timmons summed up, "Though he had already been earning money for several years, and the silver spoon of his infancy had long tarnished, he now had words to identify himself as 'a working-class kid.' He played down any class rebellion on his part, and said that his new politicization merely gave a theoretical basis for his personal hatred of his father's staunch conservatism.

"The Wobblies' praise for his honest toil strengthened this new political bond, and each winter he eagerly awaited the return of summer and their companionship."



## Hay's first 'bulls-eye'

Hay's first gay experience was with someone who had ties to the much shorter-lived 1924 Society for Human Rights based in Chicago, whose founder, Henry Gerber, had been deeply inspired by contact with the Germany Homosexual Emancipation Movement.

Hay, who never lost his early love of theater, moved to Los Angeles—an urban magnet for many homosexuals—and became a struggling actor during the depths of the capitalist economic Depression of the early 1930s.

It was Will Geer, perhaps best remembered today as "Grandpa Walton" of the 1970s television series "The Waltons," who first introduced Hay to the left-wing current in Los Angeles and to the Communist Party. Over coffee with Geer and Maude Allen, said Timmons, "They hashed over the anti-socialist Palmer Raids made by the federal government in the 1920s, the Sacco and Vanzetti trials, and various strikes—fascinating stuff to this young man."

Geer and Hay helped organized demonstrations during these hard Depression years to support unemployed workers, exploited field laborers and labor unions. They chained themselves to a lamppost at the old UCLA campus while distributing leaflets for the American League Against War and Fascism.

One of the most life-altering demonstrations for Hay, which he reportedly loved to rehash, was in Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles. Says his biography, "The Milk Strike was an action called in 1933 by the wives and mothers of the poor and unemployed to make the government stop allowing surplus milk to be poured down the storm drains to keep the price up. They wanted it for the needy. A crowd of thousands turned out downtown in the shadow of the newly built City Hall."

Hay saw police posted atop nearby buildings aiming their machine guns at the crowd. Cops charged, swinging

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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., Roslindale, Mass. For info Int'l. Action Center (617) 522-6626.

### LOS ANGELES

#### Fri., April 22

IAC Forum: Upheaval in Lebanon: What U.S. progressives need to know and how the U.S. presence in the Middle East hurts working people here at home. Hear Joyce Chediak, a Lebanese-American who has written extensively on the Middle East for Workers World newspaper. Also John Parker, West Coast Coordinator of the International Action Center. 7:30 p.m. At IAC, 5274 W Pico Blvd, Suite 203 (between LaBrea and Fairfax). For info (323) 936-7266.

### NEW YORK

#### Fri., April 8

Workers World Party Meeting: Guest speaker Jorge Farinacci, a leader of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico. 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

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# In support of campus workers

## Students sit in at Washington U

By Larry Hales

College and university students across the country are beginning to join with campus workers to take up their fight for benefits and better wages. Currently, the focus of this struggle is on Washington University in St. Louis, where students are sitting in to support workers' demands for a living wage.

Harvard students were among the first to protest. Four years ago they staged large rallies and sit-ins to demand a living wage for the workers on their campus. Students at Georgetown, Stanford, SUNY Purchase and now Washington U., to name a few, have also begun to call for better wages for campus employees.

This includes a living wage for those hired by subcontractors, since deferring jobs to subcontractors continues to be a way for university administrators to try to escape blame and embarrassment.

Four years ago, students and workers at Harvard were victorious in getting the administration to acknowledge that it wasn't paying the wages needed to live in Boston and to begin addressing this problem. Though many students at Harvard and other top schools don't come from working-class backgrounds, they have been responding to a further developing sensitivity.

The cost of living ascends while wages descend. The wealthy are seeing their fortunes climb; bosses are getting

greater bonuses for slashing wages and benefits. Indicators that point to a recovering economy and job gains only obfuscate the growing gap between rich and poor. The Dow Jones and Nasdaq stock price averages indicate nothing for the poor, just that corporations are becoming more cut-throat. The jobs opening up are overwhelmingly in the low-paying, few-benefits service sector.

It takes nary a degree to understand that college and university campuses mirror what happens outside them. Schools like Harvard have huge endowments—Harvard's is near \$20 billion—but the workers are not being paid living wages. These workers keep the grounds, repair the buildings' facilities, and supply and serve meals to the students. Some students are waking up to the conditions that workers face and are carrying the fight forward along with the workers.

At Washington U. such a battle is underway. On April 5, some 20 students occupied and began sitting-in in the admissions office of this "top-notch" university. They brought signs, petitions, fliers, sleeping bags and food with them, vowing to stay until the chancellor of the school decided to pay living wages to 500 workers on the campus.

Washington U. has an endowment of more than \$4 billion. It pays the majority of its food-service workers, janitorial staff and groundskeepers barely \$8 an

hour, even though last year a standard of \$9.79 plus full benefits was set by the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. Those hired directly by the university make this standard, but those subcontracted start at \$7.50 an hour.

The Student Worker Alliance started calling for a living wage for all employees of the university in 2003. The current sit-in is timed around "April Welcome," when the university has its open house and hundreds of high school seniors and transfer students from around the country converge on the campus. The students at Washington U. are willing to miss classes and to risk their standings until the demand of living wages for all university employees is met.

Across the country people are taking notice. This mood is being matched by the throngs of young people not able to attend college because of few options and those wary of taking out the loans required to pay rising tuition costs.

This mood carries over to the fight to stop the Medicaid cuts, the fight to beat back the threat to Social Security, and the battle to stop the atrocious bankruptcy bill from being passed.

These battles are not being waged by capitalist politicians but by those affected the most by proposed cuts. It is all part of a current in opposition to reactionary Bushism, a current strengthened by the timeliness of last October's Million Worker March. □



Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

## A Native Nazi?

The recent high school shooting rampage in the Indian reservation at Red Lake, Minn., is as ironic as it is amazing.

A 16-year-old Chippewa [Ojibwe] boy sprays his school with deadly shotgun fire, is a reputed admirer of Adolph Hitler, and doodled in his books by scribbling swastikas.

According to some published sources, Jeff Weise visited neo-Nazi websites, listened to Marilyn Manson music, and went by the online handle of todesengel: German for "death angel."



There is something deeply disturbing about an Indian kid who deeply admired Adolph Hitler.

The irony, of course, was that Hitler viewed Native Americans—and all other nonwhite people—as untermenschen, German for "subhumans." If young Jeff's vision were to prevail, he would be spelling doom for the Chippewa, the fourth-largest Indian tribe in the U.S., after the Cherokee, the Navajo and the Sioux. Indeed, it would spell the end for all people of color!

And therein lies the rub.

How does a 16-year-old Chippewa boy, in modern-day America, come to loathe his own people so profoundly that he not only slays nine people but, before the deeds, that they were dead to him in his heart?

We all pass through the perilous desert of youth, when the words of parents, teachers and elders are but buzzing in the ears, annoyances to be ignored, and, if angry enough, if alienated enough, rebelled against.

Young Jeff Weise, orphaned at an early age by the suicide of his father and the death by a car accident of his mother, grew into a world which he met with hatred. [Weise's mother is alive, but has permanent brain damage and lives in a nursing home—WW.] What happened recently was but a manifestation of that inner hate against others.

We have often discussed and written about Black self-hatred, the projection of hate against the self that splashes against those who are closest to us; who look most like us.

That hatred is a reflection of the very real hatred against Black life that has animated American history for five centuries.

We are not alone in this psychological tragedy.

Imagine what wells in the heart of a boy, whose people were once masters of this land; but are now relegated to small, isolated communities—called "reservations," no less!—while these relative newcomers, these "palefaces," run the country of your ancient ancestors and try to run the whole world.

Then, there is the cultural imperialism that comes through radio sets, TVs, iPods, and on the computer. These machines project the rightness of whiteness and, rarely, the great and historic achievements of Red people. What would he learn? What *could* he learn, but hatred?

His fellow students said he was a "smart" boy, but a little "weird."

Did he know that the first great city in North America, named Cohokia—near present-day St. Louis!—had about 40,000 Red residents around the year 1000?

Did he know of the history of his own clan [nation], the Chippewa?

We don't know, but it seems he did not. He could not.

For if he did, how could he act in a way that made Floyd Jourdain, chairman of the Red Lake Chippewa Tribe, say the day he slew family, fellow students and, last, himself was the "darkest day in the history of this tribe." (USA Today, March 23)

He was alienated, isolated, alone—and perhaps lost.

A Native Nazi! He probably knew more about Adolph Hitler than Leonard Peltier!

A lost soul. □

## Anti-draft conference

With counter-recruitment efforts gaining momentum across the country, and the threat of a draft bringing more youth, parents and educators into the movement, a national conference against the draft and military recruiting will be held on April 16 at P.S. 41 in Manhattan.

This strategy and planning conference will have workshops that cover fighting for military-free schools, organizing to stop the draft and counter-recruiting. Participants will include activists, military resisters, veterans, parents and students.

Notable participants include Carl Webb, a member of the Army National Guard who refused orders to deploy to Iraq; Hadas Their, a student who was arrested at the City College of New York for protesting against military recruiters on campus; and Monique Code, a Desert Storm veteran.

P.S. 41 is located at 116 W 11th St. in Manhattan, between 6th and 7th avenues. For more information, visit [www.NoDraftNoWay.org](http://www.NoDraftNoWay.org) or call (212) 633-6646.

—LeiLani Dowell



## Young Harry Hay & the Wobblies

Continued from page 2

their clubs at protesters' skulls. "Women were grabbing and shielding their children, and every so often you would see someone go down with a bloody head. The police were being absolutely brutal, without provocation. I think they may have wanted to incite a riot so they could clear the crowd."

As he backed away from the police melee towards a bookstore, Harry grabbed one of the bricks used to keep stacks of newspapers from flying away in a breeze. "I made no conscious decision. I just found myself heaving it and catching a policeman right in the temple. He slid off his horse and a hundred faces turned to me in amazement. No one was more amazed than I. Always before, I had been the one who threw the ball like a sissy. This 'bull' was my first bull's-eye ever!"

Timmons described what happened next. "Sympathizers murmuring in Yiddish, Portuguese and English grabbed him. He heard, 'We've got to hide this kid before the cops get him.'" They guided him through a labyrinth of connected old 1880s tenement buildings. "He was pushed through rooms that immigrant women and children rarely left, across catwalks and planks, up, up, hearing the occasional reassurance, 'Everything's fine. Just don't look down.'"

Hay arrived at a living room in the slums filled with men. Presiding over them was Clarabelle. Hay heard the other men refer to Clarabelle, who was born male-bodied, with the female pronoun. Clarabelle had hennaed hair and wore a peasant blouse slung low over one shoulder.

"Harry had heard of Clarabelle as one of the most powerful of the 'Queen Mothers' who traditionally oversaw the

temperamental comings and goings in the districts of town where they lived; Harry felt that such figures formed a regional network of salons among some pre-Stonewall gays," Timmons explained.

Hay himself recalled, "Clarabelle controlled Bunker Hill and had at least a dozen 'lieutenants' covering stations, one called the Fruit Tank—that was our nickname for the jail cell for queers. Clarabelle was legendary, a [1930s movie star] Mary Boland type who really knew how to pin a curl while giving an order.

"My dear,' she said to me, 'we saw what you did, knocking that old cop off his high horse, and it should have been done years ago. We'll have to hide you; they'll be after you soon. Cup of coffee first? No, no time. They're already on their way.'"

Next: Answering the "siren song of revolution."

# Delivery man stuck in elevator as cops terrorize building

By G. Dunkel  
New York

Ming Kuang Chen, who delivers for a Chinese restaurant in the Bronx, spent 81 hours in a broken elevator—even as police were terrorizing residents of the building looking for him everywhere but in the most likely place.

After he finished his drops on April 1 at Tracey Towers on Mosholu Parkway, Chen took an express elevator to the lobby. The elevator stopped between the third and fourth floors.

Speaking through an interpreter at a news conference April 8, he explained, “I waved to the [security] camera, I tried to stand right in front of it, hoping someone would see me.”

“I kept pressing the alarm key, I tried to talk to security through the intercom. I did manage to speak to somebody, but I couldn’t understand what he said back.”

When Chen didn’t return to the restaurant, his colleagues called the police after finding his bicycle locked up in front of the building.

The cops brought in bloodhounds, divers to search a nearby lake, and a heli-

copter to search the roofs. On April 2, they went through the whole building, peering down the elevator shafts and searching each of the 871 apartments.

Tenant Richard Hoyen, 55, told the Daily News, “They looked under the bed, in all the closets. How could he be in an elevator all this time?”

When they couldn’t get in, they broke down doors. Troy Smith, who lives on the 34th floor, came home with some friends to find cops with helmets and flak jackets in his apartment.

They cuffed him and took him to the station because he was wearing a T-shirt with a stain on it. At the station house they made him sign a statement giving the cops permission to test his T-shirt for blood.

They kept on asking him, “Where is the Chinese man and what did you do with him?” Smith repeatedly answered he knew nothing about what had happened to the delivery person.

The cops finally dug up an old warrant on Smith, which let them keep him over the weekend, but they had to let his friends go. Meanwhile, Chen was still in the elevator, forcing the door open when he had to urinate.

Every time he used the intercom, a light flashed indicating he was calling from Elevator #2. But the security officers disregarded his calls, they say, because they mistook his accent for drunkenness.

The cops didn’t physically inspect the elevators, but looked at TV monitors, which produce a small, poor-quality image and don’t cover the whole space.

Finally, after more than three days, maintenance workers responded to cries from the elevator and called the fire department, which lowered it to the lobby and took Chen to Montefiore Hospital. He was treated for dehydration and released.

The cops were so embarrassed that they told the press Chen was “illegal” and probably had been held by the people who smuggled him into the country, since there was no urine in the elevator. Releasing this information is against city policy, but Chen would have much more difficulty suing the cops or the security firm, which ignored his cries for help, if he is sent back to China.

As for a lawsuit, “He hasn’t ruled it out, but he hasn’t given it any consideration at all,” said City Council member John Liu, who is helping Chen. Liu is the first city

councilperson of Chinese origin. “A lawsuit seems to be on everybody else’s mind, but it’s not on his right now. He’s working on his recovery and thinking about how to support his family.”

His wife and 10-year-old son live in China.

While it may not have a direct connection to this incident, the three firms that provide most of the elevator repair and maintenance in New York—Otis, Schindler and Kone—locked out their workers March 17. They would rather go with untrained or poorly qualified replacement workers, or see their work done by other firms, than bargain with United Elevator Workers Local 1 after the contract has expired.

Local 1 elevator mechanics have four years of classroom training, four years of on-the-job training as apprentices, and then are required to pass a state and federally mandated mechanics examination.

If the lockout goes on, and elevators become less and less reliable and safe, the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who use elevators every day to move around their city will risk being caught in a situation like Chen’s, or perhaps worse. □

## Feed the cities, starve the Pentagon

Continued from page 1

City Council question and oppose the proposed budget cuts. That is why the word “receivership” is appearing more often in the media. Right now it’s a threat to cool the resistance.

Under receivership, the state appoints an Emergency Financial Manager to run the city’s financial affairs in place of the elected representatives.

Some 86 percent of Detroit’s residents are African American. They remember well the hard and bloody battles only 40 years ago for the right of Black people to vote. Even fresher is the memory of thousands of disenfranchised voters in the presidential elections of 2000 and 2004.

In November 2004, Detroiters refused to accept a second-class school board any

longer, voting down Proposal E by a two-to-one margin. The vote followed an unremitting, five-year grassroots struggle to regain control of the School Board from a state-appointed “reform” board.

Why should a representative of the bond traders or banks take over a financially troubled city? Isn’t that the fox guarding the chicken coop? Why not a community/labor committee to run the city’s financial affairs instead of a state Emergency Financial Manager?

Wouldn’t the first order of business be to protect and expand city jobs and services, to implement a policy of no utility shut-offs for households, to open up vacant public housing units for homeless families and to stop evictions? What about implementing free universal health care

and reducing class sizes in the schools?

Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick’s “right-sizing” city government is the public sector version of industrial restructuring in auto, steel, electric, telephone and the news media. The result is union busting, lower wages, slashed benefits and a nomadic future as workers try to cobble together an economically secure life. Only 12 percent of U.S. workers have union protection. The public sector has the highest rate of union jobs.

General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and the City of Detroit point to traditional defined benefit pensions and health care costs as the root of financial woes. Instead of demanding national health care and better social security programs to equal their capitalist competitors overseas, their

solution is to attack benefits and shift the financial burden to the working class.

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Workers, who watched their work go to outside contractors this week, told their union for the first time that they want to do something to fight back. In the coming weeks, as the class lines and issues get even clearer, they’ll get their chance to do just that.

These developments and many more speak to the need for a national conference that demands “Feed the Cities, Starve the Pentagon.”

For more information about the National Conference to Reclaim Our Cities, call UAW Local 2334 at (313) 680-5508 or email national\_conference\_of\_cities@earthlink.net. □

## California workers protest cuts

By J. Marquardt  
San Francisco

Several thousand labor union workers, retirees, their families and friends stopped traffic for two hours on the streets surrounding the fancy Ritz-Carlton Hotel here on the evening of April 5. They rallied and picketed against Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and his wealthy supporters, who were dining inside the hotel. Speaker after speaker denounced Schwarzenegger’s plans to slash education funding; reduce pension, disability and death benefits to public employees; cut nursing staffs; and weaken state labor regulations.

The protest was organized by both state and local unions, including AFSCME District Council 57; California State Employees Unions SEIU Local 1000; California Nurses Association; California Teachers Association; Service Employees International Union; and United Transportation Union Local 1741, School Bus Drivers.

The lively crowd held signs in Chinese, English and Spanish, saying: “Nurses heal—Arnold wheels & deals,” “Arnold

can’t be bought—Big Business already owns him,” and “Students—OUR ‘special interest.’”

Speaker after speaker denounced the “governator’s” plans. A speaker from the California Labor Council expressed the sentiments of the crowd: “The cuts are for only one thing—to go after workers. We must fight and keep it in the streets on behalf of the real heroes—the workers!”

The protest had an impact. Within two

days Schwarzenegger started withdrawing some of his outrageous proposals. Feeling the heat from firefighters across the state, he dropped his plans to reduce their disability and death benefits. With labor picketing every public appearance Schwarzenegger makes, more victories are sure to follow. □



WW PHOTOS: J. MARQUARDT

Leon Chow, above, of the Healthcare Workers Union.

## As Washington cuts public housing

# Workers lead campaign for justice

By Bob Traynham and Steve Kirschbaum  
Boston

The maintenance workers at Bromley Heath, Boston's largest public housing development, are taking their campaign for contract justice and fairness for the residents to the streets of Boston in a mass day of solidarity scheduled for Saturday, April 16.

The workers, members of SEIU Firemen and Oilers, Local 3, are seeking fair increases in wages and benefits for their families and improvements in the contract in order to end management's unjust and discriminatory practices that endanger the workers' health and safety.

They are also demanding fairness for the over 1,500 tenants who, like other public housing residents throughout the country, face deteriorating, dismal conditions as a result of massive federal housing cuts and decades of city neglect.

Organized by the recently formed Bromley Heath Workers Rank and File Committee and co-sponsored by their union, the solidarity day is designed to put a spotlight on their issues, build solidarity for their contract struggle and lay the basis for a city-wide campaign against public housing cuts.

The activity has been endorsed by a broad array of community, labor and political activists, including Boston City Councilors Chuck Turner and Felix Arroyo, the Greater Boston Labor Council, Boston School Bus Union, International Action Center, New England Human Rights for Haiti, Women's Fight Back Network and the Bolivarian Circle. The day of solidarity will start with a rally at 11:00 a.m. at Heath and Bickford streets, followed by a march through the community led by a mobile sound and stage truck. It will end with a union-sponsored barbecue for the community in a park at Bromley Heath.

### Workers fight for contract justice

After over two years of negotiations, the Tenant Management Corporation (TMC) continues to refuse to agree to the workers' demands for a new contract. Bromley Heath (BH) is one of Boston's largest housing developments and one of its poorest as a result of decades of racist neglect. All the tenants are people of color.

Only 30 workers, also Black and Latino, maintain the buildings and grounds and repair and refurbish the apartments and common areas. They are highly skilled professionals—painters, carpenters, laborers and custodians—who are paid outrageously below industry standards and much less than what their counterparts in the building trades unions get.

This is racism, pure and simple.

They serve the community under the worst conditions: understaffed, overworked and lacking adequate resources. TMC illegally and unjustly directs them to perform hazardous duties—such as cleaning up human waste, blood products and medical syringes—without proper training or protective gear. They work under a management regime that is characterized by unjust discipline, unfair promotions, arbitrary actions regarding vacation and sick time, denial of seniority and other union rights, and obstruction of the grievance procedure.

The workers say that TMC runs a "temporary worker" hiring scam, firing and rehiring when the probationary period expires, to circumvent the recognition sec-



Bromley Heath maintenance workers.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

tion of the contract. This violates the rights of the workers and the union.

### Support for community control

A unique feature of this struggle is the issue of the TMC. Bromley Heath is the only tenant-managed housing development in Boston and one of the few throughout the country. The community won this vital concession in 1967 as a result of years of hard-fought battles.

The Bromley Heath workers stand 100 percent in support of this important gain for community control. In fact, when the TMC was the target of a racist attack recently and was removed by the Boston Housing Authority, the Bromley Heath workers added their support to the community's successful campaign for its restoration.

It is therefore ironic and regrettable that the TMC is now playing a part in the unjust treatment of the workers. In fact, since the organizing began for the day of solidarity, management has embarked on an ugly campaign of retaliation against the workers and their leaders. There has been a wave of unjust discipline, written warnings, threatened suspensions and terminations.

"Temporary" workers pictured on a leaflet and poster say they have been threatened. Harassment by management, they say, has escalated, particularly from two of the white supervisors, one of whom is a former prison guard.

### Justice for workers and residents

The struggle of the workers for economic justice, dignity and respect is one with the community's struggle for justice. The workers have deep roots in the community. Some have grown up in the development and have family, friends and loved ones living there now. Members of the Rank and File Committee have strong bonds with the residents.

They constantly struggle against management's order to "just finish the job quick" in order to guarantee that quality repairs are done. They host workshops to train tenants in home repair and aid other tenants' rights and community endeavors. The workers' contract demands will concretely improve conditions for the residents.

The Rank and File Committee has made the struggle for economic justice for BH tenants and public housing generally a key element of their campaign. They are call-

ing for a fightback against Bush's federal cuts in housing.

Boston's public housing has been a victim of cutbacks from Washington administrations, Democratic and Republican alike. Now, things are slated to get even worse. "If the changes sought by the administration take effect, they will result in one of the biggest cuts since Washington first began subsidizing housing: as much as \$480 million, or 14 percent, of the \$3.4 billion federal budget for day-to-day operations, including labor, maintenance, insurance and utilities, at the nation's 3,100 housing authorities." ("U.S. Plans New, Deep Cuts in Housing Aid," New York Times, April 8)

At a time when Bush and the war-makers are spending billions on criminal wars of conquest, public housing must be included as a domestic casualty of war. What the Pentagon spends in one week on the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan would provide more than the funds necessary to bring every public housing unit in Boston up to code.

### Rank and File Committee is key

The BH Rank and File Committee was formed only one month ago. In that short time they have revitalized their union and waged an impressive campaign for justice for the workers and tenants at BH.

They have issued leaflets and held near-daily forums in the maintenance lunchroom. They have expanded their steering committee to include all the constituencies within the local.

Local 3 staff members now meet daily with the committee and are filing grievances and unfair labor practice charges

that address the workers' concerns. Local 3 has now formally added the committee's leaders to the negotiating committee. The union played a key role when a delegation of seven leaders of the Rank and File Committee attended an April 5 meeting of the Greater Boston Labor Council that resulted in a unanimous resolution of support for their struggle and the day of solidarity. It sent out a mailing the next day to all affiliates, urging members to attend.

The committee has met many difficult and complex challenges while building the struggle for public housing rights and contract justice from the TMC while defending community control against racist forces in the city. Their mobilization for the demonstration is progressing at a fever pitch.

Workers are going door to door, leafletting supermarkets and subway stations and poster everywhere. A Latina teacher at a neighborhood school told one worker that she was so moved by the campaign that she is organizing everyone she knows to attend the day of solidarity. BH committee leaders have given weekly updates at International Action Center mobilizer meetings, where solidarity support is being organized.

The day of solidarity is just the first step in the workers' campaign for justice. They are determined to fight until victory is won. Messages of support and solidarity can be sent to Bromley Heath Workers Rank and File Committee, P.O. Box 413, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

*Traynham and Kirschbaum are steward and chief steward, respectively, with USWA 8751, Boston school bus drivers' union.*

## RALLY on MAY DAY

MAY 1 • INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

1:00 pm Union Square, NYC

#4, 5, 6, R, Q, N, L train to 14 St., Union Square

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## BLACK WORKERS FOR JUSTICE

# Launch Southern campaign for

By Monica Moorehead  
Raleigh, N.C.

A significant pro-labor, anti-racist event occurred here in Raleigh on April 2. It was the 22nd annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Support for Labor Banquet hosted by the Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ).

About 200 union, community, student and political activists and supporters from the local area, as well as from other parts of the South and the U.S., filled a hall at the North Carolina Association of Educators building. Among the invited delegations were the Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) youth group, International Action Center and Workers World Party.

BWFJ, founded in 1981, played a national role in helping to build the Oct. 17 Million Worker March rally in Washington, D.C., last year. It mobilized workers from the South to heed the call to build an independent workers' movement free from the shackles of the pro-big business

Democratic and Republican parties.

Decorating the walls inside the banquet hall were a wide range of political signs: "Fight for a living wage." "Stop the war on Palestine." "Stop privatization." "Resist war, racism and repression. End discrimination." "We need living wages and collective bargaining now!" "Demand peace, justice and reparations." "Honor Dr. King with working class political actions." "Jobs, not jails; educate, not incarcerate." And "Stop the execution, save Mumia."

Musical numbers were performed by the Fruit of Labor singers—the cultural component of BWFJ—along with Washington, D.C., vocalists Pam Parker and Lucy Murphy.

Saladin Muhammad, BWFJ's national chairperson, introduced the keynote speaker: Clarence Thomas, co-chair of the Million Worker March and a leader of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in San Francisco.

Thomas recalled that a similar call for a Million Worker March was made in 1941

by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, led by A. Philip Randolph and C.L. Dellums. These two Black union leaders wanted to bring 100,000 Black workers to Washington, D.C., to demand an end to racist discrimination in hiring practices. The plans for the march forced President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the hiring of people of color in the federal government and by federal contractors.

Thomas praised the first president of the ILWU, Australian-born Harry Bridges, who practiced what he preached when it came to building anti-racist class solidarity. Bridges, whom Thomas referred to as a Marxist, made a conscious effort to bring unorganized Black workers into the ILWU back in 1934. At that time, the majority-white trade unions still maintained an openly racist policy of shutting their doors to Black and other oppressed workers. This meant that Black workers, through no fault of their own, were forced to cross picket lines during

strikes to put food on the table.

Thomas ended his talk with a resounding, urgent call to revive May Day, or International Workers' Day, which grew out of the struggle in this country for the eight-hour day.

A group of Latino workers associated with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee received one of the self-determination awards at the banquet. FLOC won a hard-fought historic union contract for 8,000 immigrant farm workers last year, the first of its kind in North Carolina, with the growers.

Larry Holmes, co-director of the International Action Center, gave a solidarity message in which he praised the BWJF and ILWU Local 10 in their ongoing efforts to build the MWM movement.

He, along with other members of the New York committee of the MWM, accepted a self-determination award on behalf of Brenda Stokely, AFSCME District Council 1707 president and MWM leader, who was unable to attend the banquet.

Ashaki Binta, the BWFJ's director of organization, focused her remarks on a very important campaign that BWFJ, along with the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, UE Local 150, initiated last August. It is called the International Worker Justice Campaign for Collective Bargaining Rights.

### Battling horrendous conditions

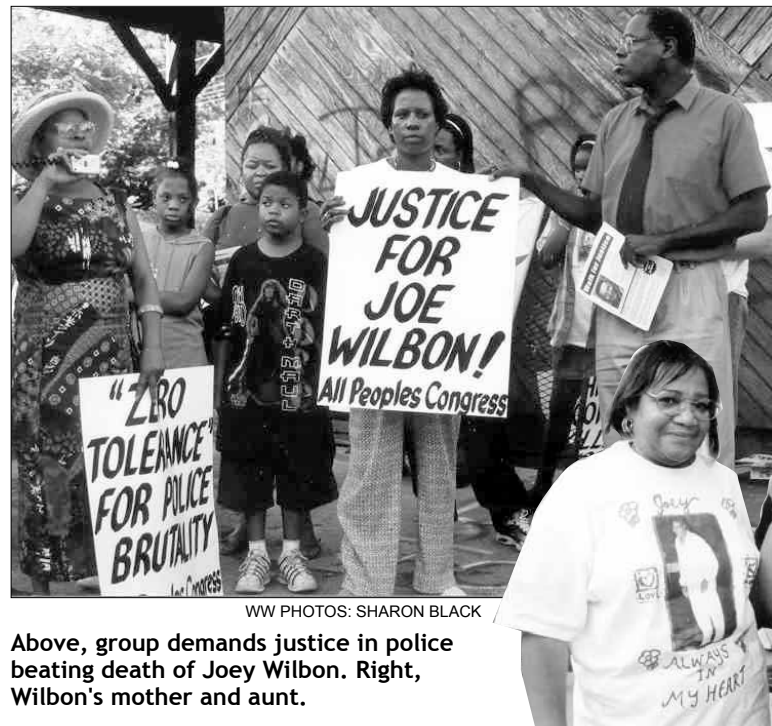
Why is an initiative like the IWJC so desperately needed in North Carolina?

North Carolina is a former Confederate state. It is home to the arch-bigot and reactionary Jesse Helms who, while no longer in the U.S. Senate, still has close ties to multi-billion-dollar agribusiness interests, especially the tobacco industry.

North Carolina is one of 22 states that passed a so-called "right to work" law—enacted there in March 1947. It states, in essence, that an employee "cannot be required to join or pay dues or fees to a union."

This law gives the green light to the profit-driven bosses and their repressive state apparatus, including the Ku Klux Klan, to use all kinds of illegal scare tac-

## Police brutality trial to begin



A police brutality trial in the beating death of Joey Wilbon will start April 19 in Baltimore, Md.

Wilbon, an auto mechanic with a family, was about to look at a customer's car outside his shop on July 5, 2000, when he was approached and beaten by a Baltimore city police officer. Wilbon died while in police custody. Asked about the details of the case, the Baltimore police declined comment, and the state refused to release an autopsy report.

This case of police brutality against a Black worker was first reported in Workers World of Sept. 21, 2000.

Renee Washington, Wilbon's fiancée and a member of Baltimore's All Peoples Congress, has championed this cause through protest and determination.

Washington's fighting spirit has brought the case to the public eye and now to trial.

The All Peoples Congress has vowed to show solidarity with Washington and the Wilbon family.

—Eddie Boyd

WW PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK  
Above, group demands justice in police beating death of Joey Wilbon. Right, Wilbon's mother and aunt.

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



**-APRIL 23- -HARLEM-**

**1 PM: Rally & March starting at the Harlem State Office Building**

**3 PM: Program at the Salem United Methodist Church on 129th St. & 7th Ave. - including Mayor David Dinkins, Pam Africa, City Council Members Margarita Lopez & Charles Barron, The Welfare Poets, Nana Soul, Hasan Salaam, Seeds of Wisdom, Spirit Child and many others**

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



**Sponsoring Organizations:**  
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 Ossining NAACP; Harlem Tenants Council; Pro Libertad; Iglesia San Romero; Latin@s for Mumia; The Jerico Movement; New York Friends of MOVE; The National Mumia Task Force; Patrice Lumumba Coalition; December 12th Movement

# or union rights

tics—from carrying out physical terror against union organizers or those who are sympathetic to unions to promoting the vilest anti-communist propaganda—to keep workers from wanting to join unions.

Based on Department of Commerce statistics from the year 2000, the second most profitable industry in North Carolina—after finance, insurance and real estate—is the government. Government workers are considered public-sector workers. Most public-sector workers in the South are not unionized.

Out of all 50 states, North Carolina is ranked last in the percentage of workers in unions—less than 5 percent of all workers in the state are organized. North Carolina also ranks 50th in state and local governmental workers having the right to collective bargaining.

Government workers who have no union contract are left at the mercy of the bosses. They can be fired without due process, suffer intense discrimination, get starvation wages, no benefits and much more.

This assault on collective bargaining is directly tied to the high poverty rate in North Carolina. An estimated 20 percent of the nearly 2 million children in this state live in poverty. In some counties, the child poverty rate is over 40 percent. (commonsense.org)



## Organize the South!

Binta said the banquet was “the expression of our ongoing unity in the fight to ‘Organize the South’; to build the new trade union movement in the South; to support the building of UE Local 150, UE Local 160, the Carolina Auto, Aerospace and Metal Workers Union (CAAMWU), and the non-majority union movement.

“It is our expression of unity to build a women workers’ consciousness and leadership movement; to build African-American and Latino unity; to build the movements for environmental, health care, economic, social, and political justice; to build the fight for Black political power and working class independence. ...

“We must understand our work and campaign in direct relation to opposition to this unjust war being waged in Iraq, Central Asia and the Middle East. The massive increases in military spending ... and the massive cuts in taxes for the corporations and the rich are forcing these huge deficits and directly resulting in the crises at the state budget levels across this country. ...

“The United States and the State of North Carolina must be held accountable! We will file charges this year with the International Labor Organization against the United States and the State of North



WW PHOTOS: LEFT, MONICA MOOREHEAD ABOVE, SUE KELLY

Left to right, BWFJ leader Angaza Laughinghouse, Clarence Thomas, UE 150 member Larsene Taylor, Larry Holmes, Saladin Muhammad and Monica Moorehead. Far left, Ashaki Binta.

Carolina for their violations of the Core Labor Standards and Conventions on the Right to Collective Bargaining.”

She ended her talk with an appeal to “collect 50,000 signatures on petitions by Dec. 1 calling for the right to collective bargaining.” She also asked that IWJC committees be organized in cities and towns across the state.

The AFL-CIO, especially the Service Employees and the Food and Commercial Workers, are targeting North Carolina and other “right to work” states with long overdue union drives.

The BWFJ and UE 150 are appealing to these national unions to join forces with them in mobilizing a mass, grassroots union organizing drive throughout the state, from the bottom up.

On April 3 BWFJ hosted a strategy meeting to discuss concrete ideas of how to spread the word about the IWJC to broader sectors of the progressive movement here and worldwide.

Reports were given by Black workers from Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, Virginia and elsewhere about the uphill battle they face to get their grievances challenging racism and sexism on the job heard when there is no union backing them up.

Black Workers for Justice are on the front lines in a state and region where the legacy of slavery is alive and well. It is in the interests of progressive forces everywhere to assist them and their union allies to support IWJC, which is also an appeal to globalize the struggle against the super-exploitation of all workers. The IWJC is another glorious example of why solidarity is not an act of charity but an act of necessity that will lead to broader class unity against capitalism.

For more information, contact International Worker Justice Campaign, c/o PO Box 3857, Chapel Hill, NC 27515; phone (919) 593-7558; email abinta@nc.rr.com.

## At media conference

# Black Waxx tackles censorship and racism

By Usavior  
New York

**BLACK WAXX**—the label that produced the “Troops Out Now” compact disk and “Over the Influence”—put together a dynamic panel of speakers to address the issue of racism and censorship on April 10 during the New York City Grassroots Media Conference 2005, hosted by the New School. The conference was designed to encourage dialog and strategy among grassroots organizations and individuals on how media can be inclusive and accountable to the diverse communities of New York.

Three generations of recording artistry were represented on the panel: Abiodun Oyewole of the Last Poets, Wise Intelligent of the Poor Righteous Teachers and Nana Soul of Black Waxx. Also on the panel were award-winning journalist Nayaba Arinde of the Daily Challenge and publisher/editor-in-chief of the Black Star News, Milton Allimadi.

Usavior, the panel’s moderator and a founder of the Artists and Activists United for Peace Coalition, set the tone for the discussion by reading a resolution he drafted. It calls for city officials to hold public hearings to investigate charges of censorship and to present said findings to the Federal Communications Commission to challenge radio stations’ broadcasting licenses. New York City Council member Charles Barron has agreed to introduce the resolution to the council for formal consideration.

Allimadi spoke of the dangers of believing everything you read in the paper. “You have to learn to read between the lines. [The New York Times] keeps printing stories with Black or Puerto Rican drug dealers being led away in handcuffs. That’s just

a small part. Who’s flying the planes, growing the drugs, allowing them into the country? Where is the rest of the story?” he asked.

The panel was a resounding success. Said Priya Reddy of Warcry Independent Cinema, “This was by far one of the best workshops at the conference.”

Wise Intelligent of the Poor Righteous Teachers, when asked how to mobilize our youth, stated, “You have to make sure these kids’ basic needs are met before you can get them to do anything. And right now, the gangs are meeting those needs; they’re buying the sneakers and paying the bills. So they get the allegiance.”

The session was supposed to last one and a half hours, but went on for almost three. Even then, the audience seemed reluctant to leave, continuing the energizing conversation in the lobby.

Journalist Nayaba Arinde remarked, “People need to know that they are afraid of us. That’s why they come at us so hard. We need to have more forums like this everywhere, on a daily basis. Then we’ll know that we are not the minority, and that we don’t have to accept those labels.”

Nana Soul stressed the importance of engaging people who lack information on an equal level. “They aren’t lesser beings who have to catch up to you; they are the real victims of white supremacy. If you come at them from on high, you’ll hit a brick wall. Superiority and ego will never free the people.”

As far as what people thought the strategy against censorship ought to be, Oyewole summed it up best: “We don’t need mainstream radio! The Last Poets sold untold thousands of records and are known and respected throughout the world without any radio play at all. The

people have the power. Always have and always will.”

Usavior, a freelance journalist, is on the steering committee for CAHM (Committee Against Hate Media) and

presently works at Black Waxx Recordings, Inc. He is also the producer of the Troops Out Now CD project. For information, contact usavior@blackwaxx.com.

## JERSEY CITY

# Activists & artists honor Robeson

The Community Awareness Series is entering its 28th year as an important institution that found a permanent home at the Miller Branch Library in Jersey City’s predominantly Black community. The series’ organizers, who had to fight long and hard to get any kind of city funding, offer progressive forums on current issues of an international, national and local nature, free to the public. A major theme of CAS has been “Supporting Art, Culture and Education.”

The CAS presented a moving and exhilarating cultural tribute to the late, great African American singer, actor and social activist Paul Robeson on April 9—the 107th anniversary of his birthday. His career was virtually destroyed in the U.S. by the vicious, McCarthyite witch hunt in the 1950s. Robeson was openly sympathetic towards socialism and communism and performed throughout Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. His unprecedented international popularity as a Black performer at that time made him a major target of the U.S. capitalist government. He died in 1976.



Paul Robeson used his powerful voice in songs of social activism, defying the McCarthy witchhunt.

Daoud-David Williams and Kwame Agyeaman, long-time CAS representatives, spoke about the contributions made by Robeson to the struggle against capitalism, imperialism and racism.

Veteran musicians Joe Lee Wilson, Charles Davis, Bruce Cox, Calvin Hill and Richard Clemmons electrified the audience with their jazz, blues and ballad renditions.

— Monica Moorehead

## In U.S. jails

# Cuban 5 still wait for justice

By Teresa Gutierrez

March 2005 marked one year since the filing of the last appeal in the case of the Cuban Five.

The Five are Cubans who were arrested in 1998 in the U.S. The U.S. government charged the Five with engaging in espionage against military bases and threatening "national security." The Cubans were trying to monitor and prevent terror attacks from U.S. soil against their island nation.

They were given unprecedented sentences in correspondence with these charges. Their trial took place in Miami where the anti-Cuban right wing is so strong that a fair trial is impossible.

On March 10, 2004, lawyers for the Five submitted an appeal of the sentences. The lawyers had expected a result by the end of the year, but 2004 came and went with no notice.

The Cuban National Assembly issued a statement on the anniversary.

It read in part: "A year has gone by since the March 10 hearing. In the case of the Five ... the presiding judge should have looked at federal sentencing alternatives. The maximum for their case was 26 years. Nevertheless the judge increased this limit, using factors not presented to the jury, condemning them to serve life terms."

Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, René González and



Ramón Labañino continue to wait for justice in five federal prisons throughout the U.S.

The slow movement in the legal channel is one example of the importance of fighting the case politically. The most important thing for Cuban Five supporters and progressives to do is to organize on behalf of the Five.

### Struggle grows to defend the Five

In the U.S. and around the world, the movement to defend the Five continues to grow.

A Cuban website reports that last month members of the newly formed Russian Committee for the Liberation of the Cuban Five demanded the release from U.S. jails of these fighters against terrorism.

A statement presented in Moscow declared, "[T]he Cuban government was forced to take measures to defend its sov-

ereignty and safeguard the security of its citizens, owing to constant threats of sabotage and terrorist actions by the U.S."

In February, the Irish National vowed to take up the case of the Five.

In the Spanish province of Andalusia, Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez—wives of two of the Five—met with parliamentarians and students in the city of Seville. The Andalusian Parliament presented a motion urging the central government to demand a retrial.

Prensa Latina reports that the Cuban Five were at the center of the Venezuela-Cuba Mutual Solidarity Meeting that took place in Caracas on April 8-10.

Organizers of the committee said that the case of the Five was a main issue for the 400 national delegates at the event and was included in three round-table talks.

Organizers told Prensa Latina before the event, "Defending the cause of the Cuban Five has caused much enthusiasm among Venezuelans. Videos, explanations and experiences will be presented, thus providing an action strategy to continue demanding their liberation."

Leonard Weinglass, the attorney for Antonio Guerrero, spoke at the University of New Mexico in March on the case.

He pointed out that "although no evidence of espionage was introduced at the trial, the five were convicted on fabricated charges of conspiracy against the national security of the U.S. Their sentences exceeded those of high profile espionage

cases in the U.S. resulting in the death of U.S. agents and exposure of life-threatening national security secrets."

Weinglass points out that the trial was one of the longest in the United States. The record was massive, with 118 volumes of testimony and over 800 documents introduced as exhibits.

A news whiteout occurred during the trial despite the fact that this was a notable trial. Three U.S. military generals, an admiral and a White House advisor to the U.S. testified.

One shocking fact of the case is that the lawyers filing the March appeal were allotted only 15 minutes to argue the case. Lawyers had three minutes to defend each client.

Weinglass says that "if you receive a traffic ticket in New York City and appear in court you will be given at least 15 minutes. My client [Antonio Guerrero] is serving life; I had to review 20,000 pages of documents, 118 volumes of transcripts to present my case in three minutes."

Last year, right after the appeal was submitted, a Cuban American Republican legislator made a comment that demonstrates why Cuba is forced to monitor the right wing in Florida.

Lincoln Diaz Balart, long known for his rabid anti-Cuba views, proposed on a Miami television program that Cuban President Fidel Castro be assassinated. He said that U.S. spies should infiltrate foreign tourism in order to carry that out. □

# Civil rights groups denounce REAL ID

By LeiLani Dowell

More than 60 different civil and human rights organizations have denounced the "REAL ID Act" passed by the House of Representatives on Feb. 10. This insidiously anti-immigrant act is attached to an \$81-billion war appropriations bill. The Senate is set to vote on this measure on April 14.

The "REAL ID Act" contains a laundry list of attacks against immigrants.

It would prohibit federal agencies and airlines from accepting state-issued identification cards and drivers' licenses that

could have been issued without verifying recipients' immigration status.

In effect, this would require state motor vehicle departments to enforce immigration laws.

The money needed to upgrade the systems of many of these agencies could be anywhere from \$500 to \$700 million.

The news agency UPI estimates that there are 12 million undocumented workers in the United States. These immigrant workers are often forced by neoliberal economic policies or war imposed on their home countries by the United States to seek work here.

## Wal-Mart fined— for wrong reason

By Sue Davis

Wal-Mart, the country's largest retailer with 3,600 stores and \$10.3 billion in stolen profits, has agreed to pay the federal government \$11 million to settle complaints that hundreds of undocumented workers had cleaned its stores. Though this settlement is four times larger than any other single payment to the government in similar cases, it's but a pittance from the retailer's cash register, which rang up \$288.2 billion in sales last year.

Several cases, one in 2001 and another in 2003, exposed the fact that janitors at more than 60 Wal-Mart stores in 25 states were routinely forced to work eight-hour shifts, seven days a week, with no overtime. Some workers were even locked in the stores overnight.

Ironically, these outrageously illegal working conditions were only exposed when federal investigators arrested the

workers for being undocumented.

The real crime is that Wal-Mart super-exploited the workers under such horrendous working conditions. So why should the \$11 million go to the federal government? The money belongs in the pockets of the workers, who deserve reparations for their unpaid labor—especially those who were imprisoned.

Attorney James L. Linsey, representing workers in a New Jersey lawsuit, is suing Wal-Mart and the contractors who supplied the janitors for not paying 10,000 immigrants time-and-a-half for overtime. "It's time for Wal-Mart to focus on the individuals who were systematically exploited and to consider what amount of reparations is appropriate," said Linsey. He added, "It's outrageous this could occur in the early 21st century." (New York Times, March 19)

Outrageous, but not unexpected, when you consider Wal-Mart's lust for profits. □

Eleven states currently offer drivers' licenses to undocumented workers. Passage of the act would ensure that these 12 million workers—many of whom need to drive to jobs or get employment as drivers—would be unlicensed.

If passed, a state technically would not have to comply with the law, but if it didn't any license it issued would not be recognized by airlines or federal agencies.

Exactly how this is to be enforced is not clear. But if licenses were to be suspended by cross-checking information with Social Security records—as was done recently in New York and other cities—it would also serve as an attack on transgender and transsexual people.

If the sex of an individual in Social Security records doesn't match their driver's license, that person will also lose the right to drive. In New York, hundreds of trans people have already received letters threatening suspension of their licenses.

Anti-domestic-violence advocacy groups also caution that passage of the REAL ID Act would pose a threat to all survivors of domestic violence, because it would require them to list their principal residential address on their driver's license and state identification card.

The group Legal Momentum: Advancing Women's Rights states, "For people fleeing domestic abuse or stalking, the option to use an alternate address is not a matter of convenience or preference; it can be a matter of life or death."

### Fight for immigrant rights!

In what Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, calls "the boldest executive branch power grab we have seen in decades," the act includes a section called "Waiver of Laws Necessary for Improvement of Barriers at Borders."

This gives the secretary of Homeland Security ultimate authority to waive all laws necessary "to ensure expeditious construction of ... barriers and roads." In addition, it bars courts from hearing any claims based on such actions. Currently a wall is being built across the San Diego-Mexico border that has prompted protests by workers and activists on each side of the border.

With this new provision, the secretary of Homeland Security could suddenly declare the Minutemen—an armed vigilante group terrorizing immigrants at the Arizona-Mexico border—a legal enforcement agency. The possibilities for the misuse of power under this provision are endless.

The act would also make it harder for immigrants to be approved for asylum in the United States and prevent them from appealing unfavorable decisions from immigration judges, including deportation. This would include lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people who are fleeing persecution. And it would make it more difficult for domestic abuse survivors to seek asylum in the U.S., which contradicts the Violence Against Women Act passed in 1994.

The appropriations bill, which is being called a "must-pass" bill in the media, includes funding for the illegal and atrocious wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This makes the connections between the trumped up "war on terror" at home and abroad even clearer.

The resistance needed to combat these wars is building. Forces are mobilizing for a National Day for Immigrant Rights on April 27 in Washington, D.C., and for a "Jobs Not War" May Day rally on May 1 in New York City.

For more information on the April 27 demonstration, contact (419) 243-3456. For more information on the May 1 demonstration, contact (212) 633-6646. □



# Why Asians fear U.S./Japanese militarism

By Fred Goldstein

A steadily ascending campaign of provocations by the increasingly outspoken militarist wing of the Japanese capitalist ruling class has raised political tensions to the boiling point in East Asia and touched off a storm of anti-Japanese demonstrations in China and South Korea.

At the instigation and with the encouragement of its overlords in Washington, a revived Japanese imperialism has moved to shed its so-called "pacifist" camouflage and bared its teeth in brazen defiance of the peoples of the region it once conquered and enslaved.

The immediate event which touched off the wave of mass demonstrations was the approval by the Japanese government of revised textbooks which removed references to the wars of conquest and the atrocities committed by Japanese imperialism during the period of 1895 to 1945.

The Japanese Embassy in Beijing was stoned and Japanese stores were attacked when thousands came out at a government-approved demonstration on April 9. The demonstrations spread to more Chinese cities the next day, "with a crowd of 10,000 chanting anti-Japanese slogans in Shenzhen. Earlier in the day another 10,000 demonstrators surrounded the Japanese consulate in Guangzhou." (Los Angeles Times, April 11)

## Textbook written by militarists

The Chinese ambassador in Tokyo, Wang Yi, was summoned to the Japanese foreign ministry by Foreign Minister Nobutaka Mashimura, who asked for an apology and restitution for damages. Wang said that the Chinese government did not endorse the violence, but refused to apologize and would not shake hands with Mashimura. Wang was quoted as saying that "the Japanese side must earnestly and properly treat major issues that relate to Chinese people's feelings, such as the history of invasion against China."

In fact, the word "invasion" was not mentioned in the revised history textbooks approved by the Japanese Education Ministry on April 5.

Japan invaded and occupied Korea in 1910 and held that country until 1945. The Japanese militarist regime in 1931 invaded Chinese territory and seized what was then called Manchuria. Japan then steadily expanded its invasion and occupation to the entire Chinese mainland, and remained until the end of World War II in 1945.

The current Japanese government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has refused to disavow the textbook revisions, which removed all references to "comfort women," a term for women forced to become sex slaves for the Japanese military during the occupations. It is estimated that up to 200,000 women suffered this fate during the Japanese occupation of China and Korea.

All references were removed to the infamous "rape of Nanking" in 1937, in which up to 300,000 Chinese were systematically slaughtered by Japanese imperial troops when the emperor Hirohito ordered everyone in what was then the Chinese capital city to be killed.

All references to the forced labor of millions of Chinese and Koreans was omitted as well.

## Chinese regard invasion as holocaust

A glimpse of some of the atrocities in Nanking was given in a Dec. 17, 1937, dispatch to the New York Times.

After referring to "wholesale atrocities

and vandalism," the Times correspondent continued: "The killing of civilians was widespread. Foreigners who traveled widely through the city Wednesday found civilian dead on every street. Some of the victims were aged men, women and children. ... Many victims were bayoneted and some of the wounds were barbarously cruel.

"The Japanese looting amounted almost to plundering of the entire city. Nearly every building was entered by Japanese soldiers, often under the eyes of their officers, and the men took whatever they wanted. The Japanese soldiers often impressed Chinese to carry their loot. ...

"Thousands of prisoners were executed by the Japanese. Most of the Chinese soldiers who had been interned in the safety zone were shot in masses. ... A favorite method of execution was to herd groups of a dozen men at entrances of a dugout and to shoot them so the bodies toppled inside."

These accounts can be found online at The Modern History SourceBook, www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html.

This massacre went on for days and similar crimes were committed as the Japanese imperial army advanced deeper into China. It is understandable that the Chinese regard this invasion as their holocaust.

It has been an added source of outrage that Koizumi has gone to the Yasukuni shrine, a military burial ground that contains the remains of 14 condemned war criminals, to pay tribute. Furthermore, there is a move afoot to turn the emperor's birthday, which was changed to Green Day, back into an imperial commemoration.

Previous Japanese governments have been more conciliatory about acknowledging Japan's war crimes and previous textbooks have had references to them. But the Japanese Society for the History Textbook Reform, with right-wing nationalist and militarist politics, began revising the textbooks in 2001. The new revision goes further in obliterating references to Japanese war crimes and takes a new aggressive stance.

The largest newspaper in Japan, Yomiuri Shimbun, has applauded the textbook changes and declared that the "publishers had good reason to remove the references" to "comfort women." (International Herald Tribune, April 7)

The weekly magazine Guoji Shengqu Daobao, published by Xinhua News Agency of China, ran an article accusing Mitsubishi Motors, Ajinomoto Co., Hino Motors Ltd., Isuzu Motors, Chugai Pharmaceutical and Asahi Breweries, among others, of being supporters of the new textbooks.

But the demonstrations are about more than textbooks and more than history alone. It is about the present and the future plans of Japanese and U.S. imperialism in the region. The textbooks reflect a new aggressive posture by Tokyo, which is taking advantage of the fact that Washington is playing the Japan card against the People's Republic of China.

## Taiwan and the anti-China alliance

On Feb. 19, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld met with their Japanese counterparts to renew U.S.-Japanese military ties. For the first time the two imperialist powers included the security of Taiwan as "a common strategic objective." According to the Feb. 21 Washington Post: "In addition, the U.S.-Japanese statement drew attention to China's rapid military modernization program, calling it a matter of concern. ..."

This aggressively challenging statement

**The Chinese regard imperial Japan's invasion and the 1937 'rape of Nanking' as their holocaust. But new Japanese textbooks have removed references to this and other atrocities.**

represents a sharp departure for the Japanese government, which has up until now avoided taking a position on the military defense of Taiwan.

The island of Taiwan was part of China for centuries before a rising Japanese imperialism, in its first major colonial war—the so-called Sino-Japanese War of 1895—annexed Taiwan and made it a prefecture of Japan. The fact that Taiwan was part of China was recognized by all the imperialist powers after World War II, when it was returned to China.

Only after the U.S.-supported counter-revolutionary armies of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) retreated in defeat to the island in 1949 did Washington make Taiwan, then called Formosa, into a U.S. protectorate and a base from which to threaten the newly formed People's Republic. In fact, Washington demanded that its puppet government in Taiwan be diplomatically recognized as "China." It forced the UN Security Council to give China's seat to the Jiang clique instead of to the one-fourth of the human race represented by the Chinese socialist government. This arrangement lasted until 1971.

The current demonstrations in China are also aimed at blocking Japanese membership in the United Nations Security Council. To that extent they are also directed against the U.S.

Condoleezza Rice, speaking at Sophia University in Tokyo on March 19 in her first visit to Asia as secretary of state, declared that "the United States unambiguously supports a permanent seat for Japan on the United Nations Security Council."

Rice demanded that China pressure North Korea to reenter six-party talks on its future. She spoke of U.S. "concern" about a "Chinese military buildup" and said that the best way to deal with this "is to keep strong alliances and make certain that America's military forces are second to none."

Rice added, "On both the regional and global levels, the U.S.-Japanese alliance is modernizing, most recently through our agreement on Common Strategic Objectives."

After talking about how the U.S. military will keep forces in the Pacific second to none, she then vowed to uphold the Taiwan Relations Act, which declares U.S. intention to defend Taiwan militarily and told the Chinese to restrict themselves to peaceful means.

Japan has the second-largest navy in the Pacific, after the U.S. Its so-called Self Defense Force has a military budget larger than England's. It is ordering new helicopter aircraft carriers and is working on a joint missile-defense system with the Pentagon. And there is a movement afoot to revise the famous Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which forbids Japan from settling international disputes by force.

For the secretary of state of U.S. imperialism to go to Tokyo, the seat of Japanese imperialism, and brazenly bask in a new military alliance while lecturing the government of one-fifth of humanity on how to conduct its affairs is the height of imperialist arrogance. It took the greatest anti-colonial revolution in history, the Chinese socialist revolution of 1949, to gain independence from the two imperialist powers that have now formally moved to "contain" China.

After dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, incinerating hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians, Washington rapidly moved to revive Japanese imperialism as a base to contain the Chinese Revolution and to threaten the Soviet Union in the east. Japan, with all its U.S. military bases, was known as a virtual "U.S. aircraft carrier" in the Pacific.

Since the collapse of the USSR, China has emerged as a growing power that is challenging the U.S. and Japan economically in Asia, Latin America and Africa. It has signed major pacts with Brazil and Venezuela. It is becoming a dominant force among the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries. It has assisted the Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Rwanda and is modernizing its navy and military to meet the growing threat of U.S. and Japanese imperialism.

## Despite Iraq, Bush looks East

In addition, China has just signed an historic agreement to settle its border dispute with India and an accompanying set of pacts on trade. If this new partnership can sustain itself, it will defeat a 40-year campaign by the U.S. to manipulate India against China and set the two most populous former colonial peoples against each other. This would be a major blow to U.S. imperialist geo-strategic policy.

When the Bush administration first came into office, it turned its aggressive intentions to the East and to China. It embarked on setting up a Theater Missile Defense System encompassing South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. It equipped Taiwan with advance missile destroyers. It carried out provocative spy flights into Chinese air space and created an international crisis.

It was after Sept. 11, 2001, that Washington had to shift its attention to the Middle East and seized the opportunity to try to reconquer that oil-rich and geostrategic region, where three continents converge.

While trying to manage the crisis in Iraq, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice are now also returning to their original aggressive orientation towards China, which has grown more urgent in light of world economic tensions: the crisis of declining U.S. exports, the loss of markets to China, China's growing political influence and the implications of all this for U.S. capitalism as a whole.

The Middle East, while certainly a vitally strategic region of the world, is too limited an arena for the adventurist, expansionist militarists in the Pentagon and on Wall Street. While they hope to reap vast oil profits there and get great military and economic leverage, the gigantic productive forces of U.S. high-tech capitalism require a much larger arena.

This is why the growing threats to China and North Korea must be taken seriously. This is why the drive to the East is so fraught with danger and why the anti-war movement must carefully watch U.S.-Japanese provocations in the Pacific and be ready to expand the anti-militarist, anti-imperialist struggle. □

## May Day

All over the world workers and oppressed peoples will scan the horizon of the United States for signs of struggle on May Day.

The revolutionary tradition of May Day—international workers' day—was established through struggle here, in the citadel of imperialism. The battles by workers in Chicago in 1886 against the bosses and police for the right to receive a full day's wages for eight hours of labor led to the proclamation of May Day.

The significance of this militant working-class milestone, won in the streets, is recognized more widely outside the U.S. than inside. The unrelenting ideological offensive by the capitalist class here—particularly the steady torrent of anti-communist red-baiting—has tried to replace May Day with a toned-down alternative: Labor Day.

What led to the worker upsurge of 1886? An anti-labor offensive by the capitalist class after the 1873 economic crisis. The bosses tried to make workers bear the burden of that capitalist economic crash. However, this gave rise to a tide of labor resistance and also led to the organization of Black workers. Laboring and oppressed peoples around the world were inspired by the struggle of workers in this country.

## Cuba's human rights

'Human rights abuses.' The Carter administration raised this phrase from a vague, demagogic political generality to a battle cry against any government that didn't knuckle under to the demands of the world's greatest violator of human rights: U.S. finance capital and its military might.

Every administration in Washington since then has used the phrase to take aim at the Cuban Revolution—which, by the way, is still standing tall decades later against imperial determination to recolonize the island nation.

But now a tough task has gotten a whole lot tougher for the Bush administration. Washington double-speak about the Cuban workers' state and "human rights abuses" invites an analysis of who is the perpetrator and who is the victim.

U.S. imperialism has waged an unceasing, covert and illegal war against the Cuban people since they overthrew the Batista dictatorship in 1959.

The economic blockade, which Washington tries to justify by blaming Cuba for "human rights abuses," is itself an act of undeclared economic warfare that violates even bourgeois international law.

Five Cuban prisoners of that war are locked behind bars in jails in the U.S. for the "crime" of trying to monitor right-wing Cuban exiles who have launched terrorist attacks on the island from Miami.

The Bay of Pigs invasion, political infiltration, economic sabotage, assassination attempts against Cuba's leader Fidel Castro, terror bombings—it is warlords in Washington who must stand in the dock for these crimes.

Today, the Million Worker Movement—led by militant Black union leaders—has called for a May Day 2005 rally in New York's Union Square, the place where militant workers in solidarity with their sisters and brothers around the world gathered on this day for so many years. They are joined in this call by the Troops Out Now Coalition, which just organized the successful anti-war march through Harlem and on to Central Park on March 19.

The cost of war for imperial empire is staggering. The cities here are being starved to pay the high cost of attempts to recolonize Iraq. The surplus wealth created by labor is being funneled into the military-industrial complex. And it is workers, disproportionately from oppressed nationalities, who are being ordered to go kill Iraqi workers in a war that benefits only the military contractors and oil companies.

The clarion call to instead "Starve the Pentagon, feed the cities!" coming from Black leadership in the union movement must be heard and heeded.

On Sunday, May 1, be in Union Square, N.Y., at 1 p.m. Help make it a day in which the multinational U.S. working class takes its place alongside the workers of the world. □

But this year, as U.S. diplomats roam the halls of the United Nations trying to round up a few nations' votes—those who are weak enough, beholden enough or complicit enough to have been roped into lining up against Cuba in past years—they are finding it ever more difficult.

The brutal military occupation of Iraq, the blank check for the Israeli military settler occupation of historic Palestine, attempts to overturn the elected government and revolutionary process in Venezuela, support for the fascist regime in Colombia, saber rattling against the people of Syria, Iran and North Korea—these are the elephants sitting in the middle of the UN General Assembly.

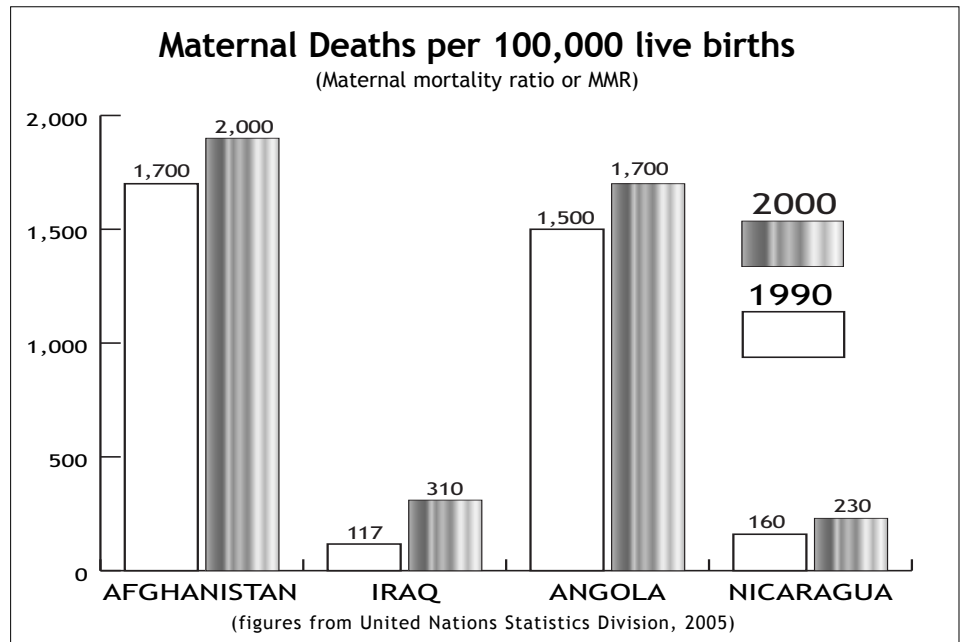
And it's not just Abu Ghraib that's become a symbol of Washington's ruthlessness when it meets opposition to its wars of plunder and profit.

Guantanamo—that little sliver of Cuba that the Pentagon militarily occupies in defiance of the will of the Cuban people—is now known around the world as a CIA torture chamber, where the screams of its prisoners cannot be heard.

Even under a narrow definition of "human rights abuses," it is Washington that should be in the dock, not Cuba.

But what about broader human rights? Cuba, despite its constant struggle to survive Washington's subversion, has been building an economic system in which people are guaranteed a job, inexpensive rent, free health care, free education and the opportunity to participate in organizing their neighborhoods, their jobs and their country's future.

The Emperor in the Oval Office must be praying that none of his subjects will notice he isn't wearing clothing. □



## WHO calls mother/child deaths a 'massacre'

By Ellen Y.

Each year, half a million women die in childbirth. Nearly 11 million children under 5 die of poverty-related illnesses. On World Health Day, April 7, Dr. Marie-Paul Kieny, head of the World Health Organization's family health department, called these deaths a "scandal" and a "massacre" as WHO issued its annual World Health Report, this year entitled "Make every mother and child count."

The report discusses these largely preventable deaths as due to lack of access to life-saving care. It estimates that an increase of \$9 billion a year for each of the next 10 years is needed for the 75 countries with the worst outcomes to achieve the goal of cutting down maternal mortality by three quarters and child mortality by two thirds.

Most of the deaths of children under 5 are avoidable through existing interventions that are simple, affordable and effective. They include oral rehydration therapy—a simple drink of clean water with some sugar and salt—for diarrhea, antibiotics for respiratory infections, effective anti-malarial drugs and insecticide-treated netting, vitamin A, promotion of breastfeeding, immunization against measles and other diseases, plus skilled care during pregnancy and childbirth with access to high-tech obstetric care when needed.

Nursing newborn babies immediately after birth and keeping them warm could also reduce deaths in the critical first hours of life. Four million of the childhood deaths occur in the first days and weeks of life.

The 68,000 maternal deaths resulting from an estimated 18 million unsafe abortions performed every year are almost completely avoidable. What's needed is access to legal abortions using safe techniques.

Out of a total of 136 million births a year worldwide, WHO estimates that trained midwives and doctors deliver less than two thirds the babies born in less developed countries, such as those in Latin America, and only one third in the least developed countries, such as most of Africa.

Lack of access to skilled care and to life-saving interventions—including surgery, blood transfusions, antibiotics and anti-hypertension medication—is the primary reason why large numbers of poor mothers, particularly in rural areas, die in childbirth. Malnutrition in young children makes them die of diseases that would not otherwise be fatal and stunts their brains as well as their bodies.

The report focuses on those developing countries where progress in maternal and child health is slow, stagnating or has even gone into reverse in recent years. The WHO laid most of the blame for those set-

backs on the collapse of basic health care, mainly due to conflicts or political strife.

### What report doesn't say

Most of the poorest countries in the world today are rich in natural and human resources, but they have been plundered by colonialism and imperialism. Their political, economic and social structures have been forcibly engineered to meet the needs of foreign lenders, rather than the people. The World Bank's promotion of user fees and privatized health care has led to reduced access to services for millions of poor people.

Now there is concern that this staggering burden of poverty and illness could undermine the ability of transnational corporations to reap profits from the less developed countries.

In countries directly under attack by the U.S. today or suffering from the ongoing effects of undeclared "dirty wars," maternal mortality is increasing.

In places where women do not have reliable, woman-controlled methods of contraception, the risk of dying in each pregnancy is multiplied by the many times a woman becomes pregnant. Women in Africa have a 1 in 16 lifetime risk of dying from giving birth.

Cuba is also a country targeted by the U.S., but it has a socialist economy and a wonderful free health system. Cuban mothers have only a 1 in 1,600 lifetime risk of dying in childbirth. Other women in Latin America and the Caribbean have a 10-fold greater risk of death, while African women have a 100-fold greater risk than their Cuban sisters.

In the United States, there are between five and six maternal deaths per 100,000 live births for white women, but the risk is four times greater for African American women.

The WHO report emphasized the need for human resources: doctors, midwives, nurses, technicians and others vital to maternal-child health programs. It noted the disparity between care for rich and poor, in cities versus rural areas.

The shortage of trained personnel is made worse by the "brain drain" in poor countries. Doctors and other skilled health workers, many of whom were educated at public expense, often must emigrate to Europe or the U.S. if they want to find better pay and working conditions. Well-funded non-governmental organizations and foundations compete with impoverished ministries of health to hire health care providers. NGOs may provide much-needed resources, but are not answerable to local people or governments.

Ellen Y. has been a nurse practitioner for over 20 years.

# Huge Baghdad protest says 'U.S. out now!'

By John Catalinotto

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told U.S. soldiers in Iraq on April 12 that "We don't have an exit strategy, we have a victory strategy." Just three days earlier, on the second anniversary of the U.S. capture of Baghdad, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had sent a different message.

Following a call by Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the largest anti-occupation demonstration yet took place in Firdos Square in central Baghdad on April 9.

Its message: "U.S. get out of Iraq!" Some estimates of the crowd were as high as 300,000.

The next day organizers said they would follow up this protest with a continuing non-violent campaign to get the U.S. and other foreign troops out of Iraq.

Iraqi police cars had blocked off main roads in central Baghdad and two major bridges across the Tigris River, which cuts the capital in half. Heavily armed U.S. troops were stationed on the rooftops.

Meanwhile, the crowd marched through the streets, chanting: "No, no USA. No, no America. No, no to the occupation."

Demonstrators carried cardboard cutouts of U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, calling them "international terrorists."

While some slogans also targeted the former Iraqi president, they mainly criticized Saddam Hussein for his cooperation with the U.S. in the 1980s against Iran.

The Baghdad protest, while largely Shiite, was also supported by the Sunni Association of Muslim Scholars. Christian Iraqis also participated.

There were similar anti-occupation protests in mostly Sunni Ramadi and in Baiji and Najaf, where al-Sadr's Mehdi Army put up its strongest resistance last year.

Al-Sadr's written speech pointed out how the occupiers have united the Iraqi people against them: "In our unity, you have cut off the tongues of all the people who are saying if the occupation left there would be civil war." For Sadr's safety, his representative Sheikh Nasir al-Saaidi delivered the speech.

"There will be no peace and no security until the occupation leaves," al-Sadr wrote.

The organizers wanted the world to get the message directly, so some held banners in English. One read, "Force the occupation to leave from our country."

To emphasize their feelings, the protesters pulled down effigies of the leaders of the occupation from platforms, mimicking the staged toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue two years earlier.

In 2003, Saddam Hussein's statue was pulled down by a U.S. tank crew and a few hundred Iraqis, many recently flown in from exile abroad. Television cameras did tight shots of the crowd to make it appear denser than it was, and the scenes were then broadcast repeatedly on the world's greatest propaganda machine.

## Media spin

U.S. and other occupation forces also tried to give their own media spin to the progress of the Iraq occupation and the demonstration April 9. Much was done to try to minimize the impact of this anti-U.S. protest in Baghdad on world opinion.

Many of the articles emphasized differences between responses of the Sunni and Shiite communities to the call. Others emphasized differences between Iraqis who want to carry out demonstrations and those who carry on the armed struggle. Some drew attention to an alleged dispute over whether the resistance should target U.S. troops or the Iraqi puppet forces.

Since there is no publicly acknowledged national leadership of the resistance, it is hard to verify or deny these reports. But it is easy to see what the imperialist media refuse to print: that the overwhelming majority of Iraqis want the U.S. and the other foreign occupiers out of their country, that tens of thousands will fight for this and hundreds of thousands will risk their lives in the streets.

Pentagon commanders are now talking about U.S. troops leaving Iraq over the

next two years, "if all goes well." They try to put a smiling face on the news, claiming that resistance attacks on U.S. forces have decreased and that more Iraqis are being trained for the police and army.

Similar reports a few months ago were quickly shown to be a complete fantasy. Even now, many observers believe the puppet Iraqi forces are thoroughly infiltrated by people sympathetic to the resistance. With so much of the population sympathetic to the resistance, this should be no big surprise, except perhaps to Rumsfeld.

Meanwhile, Pentagon commanders are having their own trouble filling the U.S. ranks with new soldiers, sailors and marines. In the April 12 New York Times, a full-page ad for the National Guard ran opposite the page with news from Iraq. It's hard to believe that a human, not a computer, decided on such a placement. □

## ALI KASED Palestinian activist & orator

By Michael Kramer and Bill Cecil

Ali Kased, a well-known Palestinian activist and freedom fighter, died on April 3. He was an internationalist who supported national liberation and workers' struggles.

Kased was a leader in the Palestinian and Arab communities in New York City and New Jersey. Most recently he helped guide and inspire Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, and, despite failing health, was one of the keynote speakers at Al-Awda's 2003 annual international convention. His analysis of the decades-long Palestinian struggle for national liberation was both brilliant and sobering. He was also a prominent member of the Palestine Congress of North America.

Kased (sometimes spelled Qased) was born in a Palestinian village near Ramallah on May 27, 1942. At that time Palestine was a British colony where armed Zionist settlers—mostly from Europe—were already in confrontation with the indigenous Palestinian population. By May 1948 over 750,000 Palestinians had been brutally exiled at gunpoint.

Palestine then became politically divided between racist Zionist settlers based in Tel Aviv, who were closely allied with imperialism, and a reactionary U.S.- and British-backed puppet monarchy based in Amman, Jordan.

Growing up in this environment led Ali to dedicate his life to the struggle for the right of the Palestinian people to live in freedom in their own state in all of Palestine and to liberate the entire Middle East from colonialist and imperialist oppression.

As a teenager Kased was already an activist. He was forced into exile and went to Egypt, where he obtained degrees in economics and political science from the American University of Cairo. There he was influenced by the pan-Arab ideas of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose army-based nationalist movement had overthrown the British puppet monarchy of King Farouk. Ali joined the Nasser-inspired Arab Nationalist Movement.

In 1967 the U.S.-financed Israeli state launched a surprise attack on Egypt, Syria and Jordan and extended its brutal rule over all of Palestine and parts of Egypt and Syria as well. Like many young Palestinians, Kased contrasted the inability of the bourgeois Arab governments to mobilize the masses for an effective defense with the powerful people's struggle against the

U.S. war machine then raging in Vietnam. He came to support the revolutionary Marxist current that emerged out of the Arab Nationalist Movement under the leadership of Dr. George Habash.

In the 1960s Kased went to study at the University of Puerto Rico and obtained a Master's degree there. In 1970 he moved to New York, where he worked closely with Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth wing of Workers World Party, to organize protests against visiting Israeli officials and U.S. aid to Israel.

In 1975 he helped organize the Committee for a Democratic Palestine, so that the Palestinian people's struggle would have a political voice inside the United States. Ali and the CDP were part of the coalition that launched the historic march of 100,000 people on the Pentagon in 1981—the first mass antiwar demonstration in the U.S. to hear a Palestinian speaker.

In 1981, Ali helped create the November 29 Coalition for Palestine, a turning point for the Palestine support movement in the U.S. It was named after the date the U.S. forced the creation of the racist Israeli state in the United Nations, now marked as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The November 29 Coalition organized the first mass marches for Palestine in the United States, drawing in large numbers of people from outside the Arab community. The coalition built ties with Black, Latino, Native and Asian communities. When the Reagan regime backed the bloody Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the coalition organized protests of tens of thousands in Washington, D.C., and other cities across the country.

In a show of Black-Palestinian solidarity, the coalition mobilized thousands to help confront and break up a Ku Klux Klan rally in Washington on Nov. 29, 1982. It later metamorphosed into the Palestine Solidarity Committee, which organized delegations to Palestine and helped build solidarity with the first Intifada.

Ali will be remembered for his powerful oratory, both in Arabic and English, and his unflinching optimism, even in the gravest situations. His work and his voice gave life to the Palestinian people's struggle for many in the U.S. and inspired many to become involved.

Kased is survived by his wife and life partner of 29 years, Fatma; his daughters Arwa, Khulood, Rama and Reem; his sons Jamil and Hakim; and four grandchildren. □

## Italian regional elections

# Right swamped, gay communist wins seat

By John Catalinotto

Regional elections in Italy April 3 show a landslide shift of votes away from the rightist governing coalition led by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi. In Puglia, one of Italy's southernmost regions, openly gay candidate Nicchi Vendola of the Communist Refoundation Party (PRC) was elected president of the regional government.

The vote overall, however, was not so much a victory for the left as a broad, mass rejection of Berlusconi and his rightist alliance. Even leaders of the right wing have acknowledged this setback and some have suggested that Berlusconi declare national elections a year earlier than the scheduled 2006. The premier has so far refused to consider this path.

A search on Google-News Italy turned up dozens of reports from Italian lesbian and gay organizations, particularly Arcigay and Arcilesbia, that enthusiastically greeted Vendola's election. This popular gay communist's victory was all the more significant since Puglia is not a region in which social issues like lesbian and gay rights have made advances.

Aside from this triumph in Puglia, however, the PRC made no significant gains, although some small communist and environmental parties did.

Six of the 13 regions involved in the vote switched from rightist to center-left governments. The center-left now controls 16 of Italy's 20 regional governments.

In terms of the popular vote across all

the regions, the center-left out-pollled the rightist coalition by 53 percent to 44 percent. This was a complete reversal of the last regional elections in 2000, when Berlusconi's "House of Freedom" coalition out-pollled the center-left by exactly the same margin.

Berlusconi suffered this loss even though he completely controls the private broadcast television networks—he owns the three channels—and his government exerts enormous pressure on the publicly owned channels. But the reality of everyday life—economic stagnation, a frontal government attack on workers' rights, continued participation in the U.S. occupation of Iraq—broke through the media image of the ruling group.

After the quick expulsion from office of Spain's Premier Jose Maria Aznar a year ago, the Italian premier became the European leader most closely identified with the policies of George W. Bush and Tony Blair regarding Iraq. So far all he's gotten for it is to have Italian communist journalist Giuliana Sgrena shot and a secret service officer killed by U.S. troops in Iraq.

The center-left coalition, now called the Union, itself has been no great boon to Italy's workers. The last time it was in office, it pushed Italy into the U.S.-NATO imperialist war on Yugoslavia. At the same time it sliced away at workers' rights, pensions and other working-class gains. This paved the way for Berlusconi to win in 2001, who then attacked the workers head on. □

## !Sí se puede! César Chávez: la lucha continúa

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

A finales de marzo en todos los Estados Unidos, pero particularmente en el sureste, hubo actividades que conmemoraron el nacimiento de conocido chicano dirigente laboral y activista por la justicia social, César Chávez.

Chávez nació el 31 de marzo de 1927 y murió a la edad de 66 años el 23 de abril de 1993. Su vida es un gran ejemplo de la rica historia de la lucha de clase en este país.

Este líder laboral laboró para unir muchas luchas, llevando a los trabajadores a grandes logros en su proceso. Él es un gran ejemplo de cómo los oprimidos, a pesar de grandes obstáculos, pueden salir adelante para defender sus derechos de pueblo.

Cuando él murió en 1993, más de 50.000 partidarios fueron a honrar su vida. Según la página digital oficial en la Red Mundial de César Chávez, el funeral “fue el más grande presenciado por un líder laboral en la historia de los Estados Unidos.

Ahora más que nunca, las lecciones de la vida de Chávez ilustran la necesidad de continuar la lucha. Hoy los inmigrantes y los campesinos enfrentan una lucha increíble.

Arizona—donde Chávez nació—está actualmente al frente de un asalto por la derecha que rompe con todas las razones de su lucha. Grupos de vigilantes dominan las olas radiales con demagogia racista, resultando en aún más militarización de la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos y la criminalización de los trabajadores indocumentados.

### Chávez: una vida de lucha

Chávez nació en Yuma, Arizona. Desde muy temprano él sabía del extremo racismo que los mexicanos enfrentaban en este país.

Según la página digital de Chávez, la pequeña casa de adobe donde él nació fue robada por gente blanca sin escrúpulos. En 1938 él y su familia se mudaron a California. Ellos eventualmente se quedaron en San José.

De manera interesante, Chávez y su familia llegaron a vivir en un barrio llamado “Sal Si Puedes”. Décadas después, Chávez y su movimiento social por los derechos de los trabajadores de las tierras este movimiento se llegó a caracterizar por el coro, “Sí, se puede”.

Chávez tuvo dificultades en la escuela. Era prohibido hablar el español aunque esta era el idioma en muchos hogares de la región.

Él contaba que recordaba muchas veces escuchar cuando se decían muchas declaraciones racistas y notó como las escuelas estaban segregadas, el se sintió como “un mono en una jaula”.

Sin embargo, después de todo, él se convirtió en un líder mundial, que hablaba sobre muchos temas, incluyendo la guerra en Vietnam. El fue el primer líder laboral que declaró la solidaridad con las lesbianas y los gays.

Sobre todo, Chávez dejó su marca en los campos de California. Su nombre se convirtió en sinónimo con la lucha de los tra-

bajadores de las tierras.

Este año en la fecha de nacimiento de Chávez, miles se reunieron en Los Angeles.

Su nieta Christine Chávez Delgado, dijo: “Para algunas personas él era un activista por el medio ambiente, para otros hablaba por la paz. Pero yo siempre digo que mi abuelo fue primero un líder laboral.

En 1962, con la ayuda de Dolores Huerta, él fundó el sindicato United Farm Workers.

Y continúa leyendo la página del portal, “En 1962, había pocos miembros en el sindicato. Ya para el 1970, la UFW forzó a los cultivadores de uva a aceptar los contratos con el sindicato organizando así la mayoría de la industria. La razón de esa victoria fue el liderazgo incansable de Cesar Chávez a través de la huelga de la uva de Delano, sus huelgas de hambre que enfocó la atención nacional a los problemas de l@s obrer@s agrícolas, y la marcha de las 340 millas desde Delano hasta Sacramento en 1966”.

“Que ironía tan terrible es que la misma gente que cosecha el alimento que comemos no tenga suficiente para sus propios hijos”, afirmó Chávez.

El encabezó muchas huelgas y boicoteos. En 1975 estas luchas resultaron en la promulgación de la Ley de Relaciones Laborales de Agricultores de California. Esta ley permanece como la única en el país que protege el derecho de los rabajadores agrícolas a organizarse en sindicatos.

No es necesario estar de acuerdo con todas las posiciones o tácticas para ver que la lucha de los trabajadores agrícolas que él encabezó cambió la faz de los sindicatos —y de la industria agrícola— para siempre.

Esta lucha dejó una huella tan profunda en el movimiento revolucionario y progresista que hasta hoy, los que fueron activistas en aquel entonces, aún lo piensan dos veces antes de comprar uvas o lechuga.

### La lucha continúa

Después de muchos años de lucha, California declaró el día del cumpleaños de Chávez como día feriado. Pero esta victoria ahora está siendo amenazada por el gobernador, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Schwarzenegger ha propuesto la eliminación de dos de los 13 días feriados estatales. L@s latin@s temen que Schwarzenegger elimine el día conmemorativo de Chávez porque lo ignoró el 31 de marzo cuando trabajó como si fuera un día normal.

En una conmemoración del , Mario Jaramillo, un representante del sindicato en la empresa de Servicios de Tela Angelica en Vallejo California, dijo: “Por su trabajo [de Chávez], las cosas cambiaron. En talleres no sindicalizados, el trato es malo. Presionan a los trabajadores duramente, demandando mucho



César Chávez

y sin pagar una compensación adecuada. Ahora disfrutamos un trato mejor, un salario mejor y mejores condiciones de trabajo”.

Jorge de Haro ha trabajado en los campos de vino desde 1973. Él dijo que conoce “la diferencia entre trabajar con un contrato de la UFW y sin él”.

El miembro de la UFW Robert García dijo: “Ahora tenemos cuartos de baño, agua, salarios razonables en algunos lugares, seguro médico, y procedimientos para dar las quejas”. Las cosas han mejorado. Pero es una lucha sin fin”.

De hecho, muchas de las conmemoraciones este año estuvieron marcadas por las luchas de hoy, al enfrentar chican@s y mexican@s los ataques racistas y contra el pueblo.

En Salinas, California, cientos conmemoraron el cumpleaños de Chávez marchando en contra del cierre de tres bibliotecas. Una persona en la protesta dijo: “Cuando cierran las bibliotecas, cierran las oportunidades, particularmente en un barrio pobre. ¿Dónde pueden ir los jóvenes para encontrar una computadora?”

Salinas es una comunidad agrícola conocida como la cornucopia del mundo. La ciudad tiene que recaudar \$500.000 para junio. Si cierran las bibliotecas, será la ciudad más grande del país sin una biblioteca pública.

El 24 de marzo en San Antonio, Texas, donde aproximadamente un 70 por ciento de la población es mexicana o chicana, más de 15.000 personas marcharon para honrar a Chávez. La manifestación se centró en un esfuerzo ya desde cinco años para cambiar el nombre de Commerce Street (calle del comercio) a Calle Chávez. Los políticos racistas han frustrado los esfuerzos de la comunidad chicana.

La actividad de Chávez fue una de las manifestaciones más grandes en la ciudad desde hace mucho tiempo.

En Freehold, Nueva Jersey, inmigrantes y sus simpatizantes bloquearon una acción propuesta por un grupo anti-inmigrante, la Unión de Patriotas. Estos reaccionarios habían reservado un salón de los Veteranos de Guerras Extranjeras para un mitin en contra de l@s inmigrantes latin@s. Después que una serie de llamadas demandando que los VGE cancelaran la reservación —informando que el 80 por ciento de los usuarios del negocio de los VGE es mexicano, y que el primer soldado latino que murió en Irak era un inmigrante — ellos cancelaron la reservación.

En la Universidad del Suroeste en San Diego, Calif., FIST y MEChA conmemoraron el cumpleaños de Chávez con un evento que se llamaba “El Café de Chávez”. El tema fue “La Lucha Continúa”. Ruth Vela, una organizadora de FIST, dijo, “FIST de San Diego eligió celebrar la vida y las contribuciones históricas de César Chávez recordándole al pueblo que la

lucha continúa para la juventud de color. Al@s jóvenes por todas partes del mundo se les está negando el cuidado de la salud, seguridad, alimentación y en algunos casos, aún el agua.

“Creemos que como activistas, es nuestro deber llamar la atención a estas luchas. Antes que festejar y celebrar las victorias históricas del pasado, queremos armar a la juventud de la clase trabajadora con el conocimiento de su presente para que así pueda luchar mejor contra el imperialismo en el futuro.”

### Condición de l@s trabajador@s agricultores

Los Trabajadores Agrícola Unidos ganaron avances tremendos para l@s trabajador@s. Hoy todavía continúa la lucha por la dignidad y por un sueldo viable.

La agricultura es todavía la industria más grande en California. El estado produce más de la mitad de las nueces, vegetales y frutas consumidos en este país. Casi cada fruta y cada vegetal es recogido a mano. Es trabajo que quiebra la espalda.

El negocio de recoger estas cosechas depende de la obra de mano barata. Sin ella, las ganancias enormes de la industria agrícola disminuirían tremendamente. Por ejemplo, la venta anual de las fresas de California equivale a \$840 millones. Ochenta por ciento de las frutillas cultivadas en los Estados Unidos es de California.

En su libro “Reefer Madness”, Eric Schlosser muestra las muchas maneras en que los cultivadores rebajan los costos laborales para acrecentar al máximo su ganancia. Una manera de hacer ésto es pagar a los trabajadores bajo la mesa para evitar pagar los impuestos de la seguridad de desempleo, compensación de trabajadores, y los impuestos de Medicare y Seguridad Social.

Sin embargo, much@s trabajador@s indocumentad@spagan estos impuestos. Los cálculos recientes muestran que l@s trabajador@s sin documentos pagan hasta \$7 mil millones al año a la Seguridad Social pero no recuperan ni siquiera un centavo. (New York Times, 5 de abril).

El trabajo como aparcerero — extendido por todo California — es una de las medidas “más insidiosa por la cuál los cultivadores evitan la responsabilidad para con sus trabajador@s,” escribe Schlosser.

El libro de Schlosser describe detalladamente la vida difícil de los recogedores de fresas como el trabajo que paga menos y es más duro. L@s trabajador@s migrantes llaman la fresa la fruta del diablo, informa Schlosser.

El dolor de la espalda que sufren l@s recogedor@s, es tremendo. El trabajo es por temporada y paga poco. Encontrar un lugar dónde dormir, mucho menos una casa, es una preocupación constante, por ser el costo de la vivienda astronómico. Los pocos campamentos para l@s trabajador@s son “pésimos”.

En 2005 en los Estados Unidos, muchos migrantes viven actualmente en acequias, huertos, prados, e incluso en cuevas.

Mientras existan estas condiciones, líderes como César Chávez continuarán emergiendo.

César Chávez, ¡presente! □