

John Randolph -



Acting on principle

PAGES 8-9

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists:

Mobilize the vote

Bush lies 'coming and going,' CBTU leader charges

By Scott Marshall and Jim Wilkerson

ATLANTA - Energy and solidarity lit up the 33rd Annual Convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). Meeting here over the Memorial Day weekend, CBTU set a clear course to mobilize for the November elections and to end the George Bush presidency.

A huge banner hung across the stage in the Hyatt Regency Convention Center's main ballroom boldly proclaimed, "On the road to the ballot box: Building a coalition for victory. Vote!"

CBTU President Bill Lucy, in his keynote speech, called Bush's economic policies the worst for working people since the Great Depression. He traced the history of Republican trickle-down economic policies, including the assault on social programs and labor during the Nixon, Reagan and Senior Bush years. Calling George W. Bush the "Commander in Thief," Lucy said the younger Bush's policies are the most disastrous of all. He cit-

ed current attacks on Social Security, overtime pay, health care and public education, and the Bush administration's drive to help corporations outsource jobs to low-wage countries.

Reminding the crowd that Herbert Hoover's solution to the Depression of the 1920s and '30s was to have unemployed workers sell apples on street corners, Lucy said, "Our people do not intend to live in poverty in the midst of unchallenged wealth." He noted that it is always the working class that rebuilds society and the nation's wealth after corporate greed has ruined things.

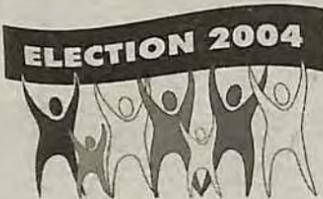
Lucy used strong words about Bush's war in Iraq. He charged that the Bush administration lied "coming and going" to push us into this war. Further, he said, Bush has "dragged the good name of our country through the mud overseas," with his "Wyatt Earp policies." To thunderous applause, Lucy said people are tired of the hypocrisy of what he called a "color coded" foreign policy that attacks

and discriminates against countries populated by people of color.

Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), also gave a fiery speech on the conven-

tion's opening day. Roberts denounced the Bush administration's economic policies as the "greatest shift of

Continued on page 14



Empty boots send a plea: 'End Iraq war'

By Tim Wheeler

WASHINGTON - George W. Bush praised the "fierce courage" of U.S. soldiers as he laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day. The same weekend, he dedicated the World War II memorial, posing as the "war president" in his bid for a second term.

But a Quaker vigil on Capitol Hill, May 25-27, featured hundreds of pairs of black combat boots symbolizing the 813 GIs who have died in a needless, immoral war in Iraq, and the demand that U.S. troops be brought home alive.

The empty boots were arrayed neatly on the grass in Upper Senate Park May 25 with the name and rank of a dead soldier pinned to each pair. Nearby was a paper "wall" listing the names of 10,000 Iraqi civilians killed so far.

Kneeling in grief beside one pair of boots was Ivan Medina of Middletown, N.Y., whose twin brother, Irving, died in Iraq Nov. 14, 2003. A roadside bomb exploded as his unit, the First Armored Division, rolled past.

Continued on page 14



AP
Combat boots bearing the names of 813 U.S. soldiers who have died in the war in Iraq are displayed during a vigil by the American Friends Service Committee near the U. S. Capitol in Washington May 25.

Laundry treats workers like dirt 5

State pensions face crisis 6

New Yorkers: It's time to veto Vito 12



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International notes

Venezuela: Economy is growing

The Central Bank says Venezuela's economy grew by nearly 30 percent in the first quarter 2004, compared to the same period last year, Venezuelanalysis.com reported.

In the first quarter of 2003, a lockout organized by big business opponents of President Hugo Chavez stalled the national oil industry, causing oil related economic activity to drop by 47 percent and the GDP to drop by 27.8 percent.

The Central Bank said that in the first three months of 2004, oil related activity grew by 72.5 percent, while non-oil activity grew by 18.9 percent compared to last year.

The Venezuelan government and independent economic experts had expected the economy to grow between 6.5 and 8 percent this year. But in April, the IMF predicted the country should expect an economic growth rate of 9 to 10 percent, making Venezuela the country with the largest economic growth in Latin America.

Cuba:

Worldwide campaign to free the "Five"

Around 1,900 groups in 140 countries belonging to the World Movement of Solidarity with Cuba are working to publicize the case of the five Cuban anti-terrorist heroes railroaded into U.S. prisons, and the number is growing fast, according to a report just released by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

Arrested in September 1998 and jailed in solitary and inhumane conditions, the five - Rene Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino and Fernando Gonzalez - were sentenced to harsh terms ranging from 15 years to double life imprisonment. Funds were raised earlier this year to buy a full-page ad in the New York Times to publicize the injustices in the case.

Besides the organizations linked with the World Movement of Solidarity, some 237 groups in 79 countries have been created specifically to work for freedom for the Cuban Five.

United Kingdom:

Postal workers reject ultra-right leaflets

For the first time, postal workers in Wales are using their contract's conscience clause to refuse to deliver election leaflets by the far-right British National Party, IC Wales.co.uk reported last week. Their action followed a North Wales police investigation into a different BNP leaflet linking the asylum issue with suicide bombers, which was called "inflammatory" and "hateful" by an area Member of Parliament.

The BNP claimed the Communication Workers' Union was illegally encouraging the non-delivery of its material. But CWU southeast Wales branch secretary Charlie Balch said it was clear a

lot of union members had problems with the fliers. "People have consciences and they are refusing to deliver this sort of stuff to homes our service has to go to day in day out, 52 weeks a year," he said. "There is an ethnic mix to some of the areas we have to deliver to and we represent people from many ethnic backgrounds. In a lot of our offices we will get a large amount of people refusing to carry anything to do with the BNP."

India: Trade unions present demands

India's leading trade unions last week presented the new United Progressive Alliance government with their demands for points in the UPA's Common Minimum Program.

The unions called for measures to improve working people's lives, including the country's 370 million unorganized workers.

Among the demands: ensuring minimum wages, a viable pension program, a program of social security, a comprehensive new law protecting the interests of workers in agriculture and in unorganized sectors, and a complete halt in privatizing profitable and strategic public sector entities.

Joining in presenting the demands were the All India Trade Union Congress, the Center for Indian Trade Unions, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the All India Central Council of Trade Unions and the Trade Union Coordination Committee.

Sudan: Gov't & rebels sign new pact

The Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed three key pacts May 26, bringing them closer to a comprehensive peace agreement, the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks reported.

The pacts covering power-sharing and administration of contested areas during a six-year interim period were reached after bilateral talks between Sudan's First Vice President Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha and SPLM/A Chairman John Garang.

Negotiators are to agree on a formula for a permanent ceasefire by mid-July, and signing of a comprehensive peace agreement is to follow.

The agreement was widely welcomed by both northern and southern Sudanese. But Human Rights Watch and others warned that civil war continues to rage in the Darfur region of western Sudan, where over a million people have been displaced by militias allied with the government, in actions that HRW and others have called "ethnic cleansing."

International Notes are compiled by Marilyn Bechtel (mbechtel@pww.org)

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Costa Ricans: No to CAFTA

Thousands of government workers marched to the Congress protesting against the Central America Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., in San Jose, Costa Rica, May 31.

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New stage in Iraq's struggle vs. occupation

By Susan Webb

News Analysis

With the naming of an interim Iraqi government following a contentious process, Iraq's struggle for sovereignty and an end to the U.S. occupation enters a new phase. That struggle will focus on establishing Iraqi control over the nation's life and wresting military, political and economic control away from the U.S.

Although President Bush is hailing the interim administration as a victory for his policies, it was Iraqi political leaders, working with UN representative Lakhdar Brahimi, who ultimately determined the makeup of the new leadership, rejecting some candidates pushed by the White House and Pentagon.

In a controversial move, Iyad Allawi, a Shiite former Baathist exile with CIA ties, was named interim prime minister. According to Iraqis involved in the negotiations that led to his selection, other contenders were rejected by the main Islamic parties as being too liberal, and Kurdish parties had concerns about some nominees. In the end, Allawi, a secularist on the Iraqi Governing Council who was in charge of security, a major concern for most Iraqis, was seen as an acceptable if not wildly popular compromise. One official told the UK Observer that Allawi was "the least bad of all the options."

Although Allawi's close ties

to the State Department and CIA are seen as undermining his credibility, he is also seen by some as a skillful administrator well positioned to deal with the deteriorating security in Iraq. He is also viewed as a clever tactician, an Iraqi political observer told the World, and the hope is that he will not fully serve U.S. interests.

Some commentators link Allawi's appointment to conflict between the State Department, CIA and military officials, on one hand, and neo-conservative ideologues in the Pentagon and Vice President Dick Cheney, who long promoted war on Iraq. Following the June 30 official handover of political power to the interim Iraqi government, the Pentagon-controlled Coalition Provisional Authority will disband and the U.S. occupation will shift to State Department control, based in a huge U.S. embassy headed by John Negroponte, a long-time foreign service operative tied to CIA activities in Central America.

Allawi is a bitter opponent of Ahmad Chalabi, the neo-cons' favorite. Chalabi and his close allies were excluded from the interim government. Chalabi "is effectively finished, at least for the time being," Iraqi Communist Party spokesperson Salam Ali said.

Ghazi Yawar, a Sunni leader of the prominent Shammar tribe,

was named interim president. The tribe, one of the largest and most influential in the region, includes both Shia and Sunni Muslim clans. Yawar, a member of the now-disbanded Governing Council, has had good relations with both Shiites and Kurds. He has been strongly critical of the U.S. occupation.

The two interim vice presidents are Ibrahim Jaafari, from one of the two main Shiite parties, the Dawa Party, and Rowsch Shaways, president of the Kurdish National Assembly and member of the Kurdish Democratic Party, one of the two major Kurdish parties.

Significantly, Kurds hold several positions in the interim government. Among them is Hoshiyar Zebari, a member of the KDP, who continues as foreign minister. The deputy prime minister, Barham Saleh, is prime minister of the Kurdish regional government and a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the other major Kurdish party. Kurds won autonomy in their region in the 1970s, but they were allowed no role in the central Iraqi government. Their autonomy was undermined by Saddam Hussein, who slaughtered thousands of Kurds in 1975. Today Iraqi progressives see federalism - in which Kurds have local self-rule but also participate in the national government, with other Iraqi nationalities - as a key element in building a unified, independent nation.

In another new step, six of the 33 cabinet members are wom-



Newly appointed Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi reads the names of the new Iraqi interim government members in Baghdad, June 1.

en. Iraqi Communist Party member Mufid Al-Jazairy continues as culture minister.

Preparations are now under way for a national conference of 1,000 in July. That meeting will choose a national council of 100 that will, hopefully, exercise influence over the interim government, ICP spokesperson Ali said. The council is supposed to be able to veto - by a two-thirds majority vote - laws approved by the interim government. Ali, a London-based member of the ICP Central Committee, said the council's "watchdog" role was a compromise. "It should have had

real authority, he said."

Iraqi Communists are now focusing on the political and electoral struggles ahead, Ali told the World.

Ali said the ICP intends to play an active role in the struggle for full Iraqi sovereignty. He noted that the U.S. is maneuvering to get a UN Security Council resolution that will allow it to retain military and economic control in Iraq. An amended draft submitted by the U.S. effectively allows U.S. troops to remain in Iraq until the end of 2005, he pointed out.

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Attorney released from Ashcroft hell

By Susan E. Wheeler

PORTLAND, Ore. - The FBI apologized to Portland attorney Brandon Mayfield on May 24 after he was released from two weeks in the Multnomah County Detention Center. While Mayfield was held without charges as a "material witness," headlines insinuated he had been involved in the March 11 train bombings in Madrid.

Mayfield, an honorably discharged U.S. Army lieutenant, married and the father of three young children, told a news conference that as an American Muslim he had been singled out and discriminated against. "Notwithstanding the judge's gag order, the government put out its theory and its facts while we were prevented from saying anything," he said.

The U.S. government had maintained that Mayfield's fingerprints were found on a plastic bag containing detonators, even after Spanish authorities questioned the FBI's conclusion. Mayfield's family, the Muslim community, and friends rallied to his defense. His mother angrily denounced the attempted frame-up, pointing out that her son had not left the U.S. in years.

Twenty-five percent of Mayfield's practice involved representing Muslims in civil and immigration cases. A Muslim convert, he had been under FBI surveillance months before the Madrid train bombing in a clear case of "guilt by association." His home and office were searched without warrants.

Then Spanish authorities linked the fingerprint to an Algerian. Mayfield's attorney said, "But for the unusual circumstance of another national police agency conducting its own independent investigation, Mr.



Portland attorney Brandon Mayfield is backed by family and friends during an announcement in Portland, Ore., May 24, that a federal judge dismissed the case against him. Seated in the front row behind Mayfield are his children, from left to right, Famir, 10, Shane, 15, and Sharla, 12.

Mayfield would still be incarcerated."

Mayfield pointed out that the FBI is holding a thousand or more detainees without criminal charges under the sweeping "material witness" clause of the Patriot Act, detainees who are as innocent as he is.

One of Mayfield's clients in a civil family matter was Jeffrey Leon Battle, one of the "Portland Seven." These young African American Muslims were charged in October, 2002 with conspiring to fight against U.S. troops in Afghanistan. None of the Portland Seven was ever in Afghanistan, and the FBI has provided no evidence that they ever contacted al Qaida or the Taliban. Nevertheless, last November, Battle and fellow defendant Patrice Lumumba Ford were sentenced to 18 years. Ford and Battle had accepted a plea agreement after their attorneys concluded that there was no way they could get a fair trial.

Much of the evidence against them during their trial came from a paid informer who had goaded them into acts of adventurism.

The FBI used the Portland Seven case to whip up anti-Muslim hysteria, sending spies to infiltrate a Portland mosque. For months, police helicopters circled over the mosque to intimidate the congregation. The FBI charged that the Islamic Center of Portland (ICP) had raised funds for the Portland Seven - understandable, if true, since several of the defendants were members of the ICP.

The witchhunt was so intense that ICP President Alaa Abujinem last year became a co-plaintiff in an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit against Attorney General John Ashcroft and FBI Director Robert Mueller. The lawsuit asked the court to find the USA Patriot Act unconstitutional.

Saudi-born Abujinem, a U.S. citizen,

told a news conference, "In America, the Bill of Rights does not allow the police and FBI to investigate me or other Muslim immigrants when we have done nothing wrong. Yet in recent months I have been treated as a suspicious person in my adopted country," he said.

The FBI's flimsy evidence against Mayfield raises questions about the evidence used in railroading the Portland Seven. Stanley Cohen, who has ably defended Muslims around the country, said Ford, his Portland Seven client, a graduate of Portland State University, fluent in Chinese, was forced to accept a plea in the face of a possible life sentence.

At their sentencing, Battle stated that the Seven were "victims of terrorism, not terrorists."

The Portland cases bring to mind the attempted frame-up of Capt. James Yee, the Muslim chaplain from the Pentagon's Guantanamo Bay Detention Center. Yee was arrested on suspicion of spying and finally released in December 2003, after three months in solitary confinement in a South Carolina Navy brig. All charges were dropped.

In an act of revenge, the Bush gang accused Yee of adultery and possession of pornography. "He was defamed and smeared and accused of being a spy," said Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "Then all of a sudden, they're not even sorry. They're saying, 'You can go now, and for good measure we'll throw in a few charges to further damage your reputation.' It's a very suspicious scenario that developed."

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GOP assault on school funding fails

By Jeremy Ryan

AUSTIN, Texas - The Texas Legislature adjourned its special session on public school finance May 19, two days early, as Republican lawmakers and the Republican governor failed to agree on a new funding structure for the state's public schools.

The Texas Federation of Teachers and state AFL-CIO said that the lack of agreement was the best outcome that Texas workers could have expected from this ill-conceived and poorly executed special session.

It's not that the state's system for funding public education doesn't need fixing - it does, in the worst way. But Republican proposals for fixing the system would have benefited a handful of wealthy school districts at the expense of nearly 90 percent of the other districts and capped the amount of money that the state could spend on health and human services.

The teachers union warned that while Republican efforts had suffered a major setback, the state GOP had not given up trying to turn back the clock on the state's 20-year effort to make public

schools in Texas more equitable.

In 1984, the Edgewood Independent School District, a working-class, Latino district in San Antonio, filed suit in state court, challenging the way Texas funded public education. At the time, most public education funding came from local property taxes. Property-rich districts could afford to provide a first-rate education, but most of Texas' school districts couldn't.

After years of litigation, the state Supreme Court found merit in Edgewood's challenge and instructed the Legislature to make education funding more equitable. The Legislature eventually enacted a system that took some money from rich districts and redistributed it to others. Eighty-eight percent of all of Texas school districts benefited, but residents of the wealthy districts called the system unfair and labeled it "Robin Hood."

When Republicans took control of state government in 2003, they made plans to eliminate the more equitable system. However, congressional redistricting took higher priority and they decided to put it off until a special session in 2004.

House Republicans introduced HJR 1, a constitutional

amendment that would take one-third of all projected state revenue increases and use it to lower property taxes without adding new revenue to the state's education system. But the House leadership couldn't muster the votes it needed. It did, however, pass a bill

containing substantial property tax cuts but failed to provide the revenue to implement them, which enraged and flabbergasted senators. Senators met as a committee of the whole and heard testimony but gave up on trying to enact legislation two days before the sched-

uled end of the special session. The Senate and House both established working groups to draft new plans and it's possible Perry will call another special session as early as July.

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Fast 4 Education at Calif. state capitol

By Dan Bacher and Gail Ryall

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - Six activists from West Contra Costa County, including one mother, two teachers, one student and two community members, are now on a water-only "Fast 4 Education" at the state capitol to bring attention to the struggle for equitable education.

The activists started their fast May 10 to demand that Proposition 98, passed by the voters in 1988, be fully funded. The governor reduced Proposition 98 by \$2 billion, gutting the budget of school districts throughout the state, according to the group, which also marched 70 miles from San Pablo to Sacramento in April.

Wendy Gonzalez, a first-year elementary teacher in the district and one of those on the fast, emphasized the deplorable condition of the schools.

"There is more support for the students in the street and the gangs than there is in our schools," Gonzalez said.

Jessica Vasquez, who teaches a film class to sixth graders, said the schools are also physically in shambles. "The bathrooms are in bad shape, the ceilings are coming down in the classrooms and the school looks like a prison," she said.

"When I ask the students what they want to be, they often tell me, 'to be alive,'" Vasquez added. "This is sad - when they should be saying they want to be a doctor, teacher, engineer or other profession."

The idea for the fast came about after the activists felt that the march wasn't effective, since neither the governor's staff nor the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, would meet

Continued on page 5



National Clips

NASHVILLE, Tenn.: Hundreds demand "Fire Bush"

While the grotesque amounts of money the Bush administration is spending on this campaign captures headlines, the grassroots movement to dump Bush is out at every stop, every photo-op and every day of the week. Nashville is no exception. Hundreds of hand-made signs saying "Bush Sold America Down the River to Halliburton and Saudi Arabia," and "Out of Iraq Now" lined Bush's motorcade route May 27.

"I'm 57 years old. I don't want my grandsons to die in unprovoked war," Joe B. Scott told reporters after police released him. Scott had refused to stay within the "protest pen" and had taken his "Fire Bush" sign to where it was more visible.

In a statement, Randy Button, chairman of the Tennessee Democratic Party slammed the visit. "George Bush hasn't spent any time with the No. 1 crisis of skyrocketing gas prices," he said. "Yet he has plenty of time to raise hundreds of millions of dollars at fund raisers." Bush took \$1.7 million out of Tennessee.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.: Co. puts profit before public welfare

Looking for work is tough, but McWane Pipe, owned by one of Alabama's richest families, is toxic. On May 25 a federal grand jury here handed down a 25-count indictment charging McWane with illegal dumping into this city's drinking water and other environmental crimes. The indictment names four top executives in the \$2-billion-a-year corporation.

"The big message is that these environmental laws are on the books for a purpose," said Alice H. Martin, U.S. Attorney in Birmingham. "McWane put pipes and profits before the public welfare."

The investigation into McWane started in 2003 following a series of articles in the

New York Times that exposed more than 4,600 injuries among the corporation's workers. According to the indictment, McWane conspired to routinely dump thousands of gallons of wastewater, lied to investigators, intimidated workers and altered accident scenes.

JACKSON, Miss.: City Council votes to condemn Patriot Act

By a 4-1 vote May 25, the Jackson City Council became the first city in Mississippi to oppose the USA Patriot Act. "The vote by the City Council says that we need not sacrifice freedom to be secure," said Nsombi Lambricht, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Missis-

sippi. "Mississippi's history shows what happens when those in control have an expansive array of powers at their disposal."

Jackson joins 319 other municipalities acting to protect the democratic rights and privacy of their residents. The movement to protect the Constitution from Bush and Ashcroft now represents over 51 million U.S. residents and is expanding.

SACRAMENTO: Californians unite to enact health care

A coalition of more than 100 labor, medical, consumer, religious and community organizations, Health Access California, on May 26 kicked off its campaign to enact Senate Bill 2, requiring companies with 200

or more workers to provide family medical coverage or pay into a state fund. If the campaign is successful in the November referendum, California would join Hawaii as the only states in the country where employer-based health coverage is the law.

"Everybody who works hard and plays by the rules deserves affordable health insurance," said Anthony Wright, spokesman for the state-wide coalition. Wright pointed out that with the California Medical Association supporting the measure, this effort represents the first time medical providers and consumers are on the same side.

"At least a dozen states are considering this kind of legislation, so what happens in California, obviously, will be very relevant to the discussion at the state level," said health benefits expert Patricia Butler.

Art Pulaski, president of the California AFL-CIO, added that the law will relieve overcrowding in hospital emergency rooms. "You and I are paying for that in the concept of cost-shifting."

WASHINGTON: Vets advance rights of gays in military

Representatives on Capitol Hill looked out into their waiting rooms to see dozens of gay and lesbian military veterans and supporters demanding an end to the ban on gays in the armed services.

The more than 60 people from 22 states included Patricia and Wally Kutteles, parents of slain Army private Barry Winchell, Brigadier Gen. Keith Kerr, Brigadier Gen. Virgil Richard and retired Rear Admiral Alan Steinman. According to a December 2003 Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans support lifting the ban on gays in the military.

National Clips are compiled by Denise Winebrenner-Edwards (dwinebr696@aol.com). Gary Dotterman, Judith Le Blanc and Julia Lutsky contributed to this week's clips.



Police attack workers in Indiana

Members of the Indiana State Police hit striking members of IUE/CWA Local 84907 at Visteon Corp. in Bedford, Ind., May 31. The strike began early Sunday after members of the International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America voted to reject a contract offer from the auto parts supplier. The company had announced plans in April to relocate part of its Bedford operations, eliminating as many as 600 of the plant's 1,150 jobs.

Laundry corp. treats workers like dirt

By Tony Pecinovsky

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Nearly 100 UNITE and Jobs with Justice members, as well as, youth and community activists rallied outside of the Angelica Corp. shareholders meeting here, May 25. At issue are Angelica's repeated labor law and health and safety violations.

Nationwide UNITE has filed over 30 unfair labor practice charges against Angelica, the largest chain of hospital laundries in the nation, for threatening plant closures, withholding information, spying on workers and suspension or termination of pro-union workers. OSHA has also fined Angelica for not providing adequate hazardous equipment training. In two separate plants OSHA fined the company over \$50,000 because of health and safety violations.

After the rally, the People's Weekly World interviewed Miguel Flores, a former Angelica employee from Texas. Flores was fired for supporting the union.

"The UNITE campaign started on a Friday," he told the World. "The following Monday they suspended me. And by that Friday I was fired."

"When the campaign started the company was in a frenzy," Flores continued. "They began holding captive audience meetings and speaking out against the union. Then they began promising better benefits. They said 'We can resolve our problems together. We don't need a union.'"

Flores spoke up at a "captive audience" meeting. Later that day management asked him to

sign a letter stating that he had "thrown a laundry basket down a ramp." Flores refused and was then suspended for three days and fired when he returned.

He said, "As much as they focus on money and production, they should be focused on the workers! Our insurance is too expensive. We work 10-12 hours one day, and then, 2-3 hours the next, so they don't have to pay us overtime. Single mothers can't get time off to take care of their children. Angelica is extremely abusive to its workers," Flores added.

Last year Angelica made \$275 million in sales and CEO Steven O'Hara's salary was \$450,000, not including perks, bonuses and stock options.

While O'Hara makes around \$250 an hour, the average Angelica worker makes between \$6.50 and \$9 an hour. Angelica is only "focused on production," said Flores. "That is all they care about. 'More! Faster and faster! Quantity not quality!' They don't value the work we do. It's not right. They yell at us a lot. We feel humiliated and used. We know that Angelica makes a lot of money off of us."

Safety is also a major concern for Angelica workers. "We handle extremely dirty linens," Flores said. "We handle diaper cloths, linen with blood clots and needles." Flores said he had to quickly sort through numerous 200-pound bags "straight from the hospitals. Many bags still had blood, guts, body fluids, and different blood-borne diseases. We could get hepatitis or HIV," he said.

This process is called "soil sort," Flores said. "It used to

take 10 to 12 people to handle all the bags of linen. Now Angelica expects five to six people to do the job of 12."

UNITE's Angelica strategy includes three key components. First, UNITE is organizing to turn all 29 Angelica facilities into union shops. Currently about two-thirds of Angelica's employees are union. Second, UNITE is stepping up pressure in its union shops — "making them hot" — activating members, signing petitions, calling OSHA, filing grievances. "We want Angelica to feel the heat," the union said in a statement.

Third, UNITE is talking to Angelica's corporate customers, explaining to them how this campaign and the treatment of workers affects them.

"I want O'Hara to know that we want dignity and respect. We want more benefits, better salaries, and workable schedules. We want Angelica to recognize seniority and to value its work-

ers," said Flores. "I want Angelica to think about what would happen if all the workers went out on strike."

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Paying an arm at the pump

The owners of Mountain Crossing Mercantile use humor to lighten the moods of their customers as they pump fuel in their cars at their establishment in Jonas Ridge, N.C., May 23. As gas prices throughout the country continue to rise, without relief in sight.

Fast 4 Education

Continued from page 4

with them. "We decided to engage in the fast so we could pressure the officials to meet with us," said Cesar Cruz, a former conflict management teacher in San Pablo. "After we fasted 10 days in Oakland, we decided to bring our fast to Sacramento."

The hunger strike appears to already be having an impact. The group met with Jack O'Connell to discuss their demands May 20. "O'Connell endorsed two of our demands to fully fund Proposition 98 and to endorse a new formula for equitable funding in the schools," said Cruz. However, a 35-minute meeting between the organizers

and three of the Governor's staff, was less fruitful. "They told us little of a whole lot of nothing," Cruz said.

On May 28 Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg introduced the fasters to the entire California Assembly. Afterwards, negotiations with Fabian Nuñez, Assembly speaker and Darrell Steinberg, chair of the Budget Committee, took place.

The group has vowed to keep their hunger strike going until their demands are incorporated into the state education budget, according to Gabriel Hernandez, fast organizer. For more information, contact (408) 835-6633 or log on to <http://www.Fast4Education.org>

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Becerra tells voters Rumsfeld has to go

Special to the World

LOS ANGELES — "Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld must resign or be fired," said Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.) to a May 22 meeting with constituents from the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, part of his congressional district here. Becerra told the more than 100 residents, primarily

Latino and Asian Pacific American, at the "Coffee With Your Congressman" gathering that he opposed a military draft and that he would not vote for the \$25 billion "blank check" of additional funding for the Iraq war.

Becerra was responding to the questions raised by peace activists in his district who were dismayed at statements he

made in an April 30 Spanish language television interview where he indicated he was considering supporting a universal military draft.

"I am opposed to the draft," declared Becerra, who stressed that he had opposed the Iraq war from the beginning because "it should only have been pursued as a last resort" and there was "no exit strategy."

He went on to outline four reasons for calling for the removal of Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense. First, the "information given for the Iraq war was false." Second, Rumsfeld was responsible, as revealed by the 9-11 Commission, for the illegal use of funds for the war in Afghanistan to secretly prepare for war with Iraq, said the congressman, who is the senior Latino representative from California. Third, "Rumsfeld knew" far in advance of news stories about the torture of innocent imprisoned Iraqis by U.S. troops and said or did nothing, continued Becerra. "I am sure it is not just 6-8 prison guards involved," he said.

Finally, Rumsfeld was responsible for the administration's failure to list any expenditure for the Iraq war in this year's federal budget so that Congress wouldn't vote on war spending until after the Nov. 2 elections, Becerra said.

The Bush administration is now requesting \$25 billion more for the Iraq war, the congressman said, yet the result of the previous \$167 billion was "nothing but more deaths."

The current \$25 billion proposal does not specify what the funds are for and contains no exit strategy, Becerra said, so he will oppose it.

Though strongly critical of the Bush administration's Iraq policy, Becerra did qualify his positions. He said if the war continues it would require far higher troop levels and far higher expenditures to adequately supply the troops in order to carry out their orders safely. Any more troops "cannot be reservists," he said, and low-income people are suffering the brunt of the casualties, so the issue of who fights in the war needs further debate.

The congressman indicated his support for a community forum on Iraq where differing points of view would be presented. Lincoln Heights resident Rosalio Munoz, who raised the war issue at the meeting on behalf of the Chicana/Chicano Peace Committee, stated "Such a meeting could be a great way of alerting our community to the destructive consequences of Bush's war presidency on our district and the need for bringing our troops home as key."



Rumsfeld resign!

More than 100 anti-war protesters march to the main gate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., May 29, to protest Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's giving the dedication address at graduation.

Wal-Mart gets one foot in the door

By Emile Schepers

CHICAGO - Ignoring hundreds of protesters, the City Council voted May 26 to allow one Wal-Mart store to be built here. However, a proposal for a second store did not get approval at this time.

The vote was preceded by more than a year of debate as to whether Wal-Mart would be beneficial or detrimental to the impoverished North Austin area on Chicago's Northwest Side. Earlier this year, it was disclosed that Wal-Mart had already quietly gotten authorization to build a second store, in the area of an abandoned steel mill on the South side.

Opponents of the Wal-Mart project included the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 881, which represents supermarket workers in the area. An anti-Wal-Mart coalition was built, including in its ranks the Chicago Federation of Labor, ACORN, Jobs with Justice, Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, and many other groups.

Wal-Mart claimed that the two stores would bring jobs into economically depressed inner city neighborhoods. But a study carried out by the Center for Urban Economic Development of the University of Illinois in Chicago reveals that the West Side project would actually cost the area about 65 jobs. This is because the competition by Wal-Mart will cause the closing or retrenchment of other retail trade establishments in the area. Wal-Mart works its sales personnel at a 51 percent higher productivity rate, so workers laid off in other stores can be replaced by a smaller number of Wal-Mart employees. This study and the testimony of many other experts, including Wal-Mart employees, clearly illustrated the down side of Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart opponents saturated the City Council and the press with information about Wal-Mart's anti-labor policies, which cost the public money because employees are compensated so badly that they have to rely on public health and social services to survive.

Wal-Mart's strategy, made

possible by its deep pockets, was to inundate the area with misinformation. Wal-Mart contributed money to community organizations and bought ads in local media. The University of Illinois study was completely ignored by the Chicago area media, which simply parroted the line, over and over, that Wal-Mart would bring jobs. Both liberal and conservative columnists in the city's press got into the act, ferociously attacking the UFCW and other Wal-Mart opponents. Right-wing columnists accused the anti-Wal-Mart forces of being opposed to free enterprise, while liberal commentators accused Wal-Mart opponents of racism for denying unemployed African American youth the opportunity to work at Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart refused to sign an agreement with community and labor groups that would have committed it to hiring neighborhood people, including ex-convicts. Yet some of the commentators told the public that Wal-Mart had agreed to do these things.

In the end, the vote was 32 to

15 to approve the West Side project. However, the South side project failed to get the 26 votes needed to pass, and will be sent back to the City Council Zoning Committee.

Several of the aldermen who voted in favor of one or both projects denounced Wal-Mart's labor practices but explained that they did not want to thwart the wishes of the two City Council members in whose wards the stores will be built. Unstated was the fear that these aldermen would later sabotage some of the pet projects of those who voted "no." The fact that Mayor Richard Daley, whose brother does legal work for Wal-Mart, was pushing hard for the project makes it surprising that so many voted against it.

Wal-Mart says it will keep trying to get the South side store approved, and the anti-Wal-Mart coalition says it will try to stop it, as well as continuing efforts to unionize the giant chain.

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Mayor goes after pensions

Houston pension guarantees gone

By Joe Redhill

HOUSTON - This city's mayor, Bill White, hastily called a municipal election early in his term so as to hold a referendum on Proposition 1. Its passage allows the city to opt out of a state law protecting city employees' pensions. According to the Houston Chronicle, White said he "needed the flexibility to reduce city employee retirement benefits because of a \$2.7 billion pension benefit shortfall."

Only 8.5 percent of the voters went to the polls on May 15 and approved Proposition 1 by 72 percent to 28 percent. The opposition, led by Harris County AFL-CIO, Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Houston Federation of Teachers, was unable to sufficiently mobilize working people to vote against it.

Meanwhile, a slick campaign featuring television and newspaper ads and mass mailings, combined with Chronicle editorials promoting the mayor's support of this reactionary proposition, mobilized right-wing voter turnout. Wealthy, conservative Republican voters turned out heavily to support their class interests.

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Reject CAFTA

Demonstrators against the U.S. Central American Free Trade Agreement gather in Washington, May 28, outside where U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and Central American trade ministers signed the agreement. Congress now has to vote to ratify the agreement.

AP



State pension crisis

By John Case

In the wake of numerous pension scandals and swindles since the 2000 market crash, it should come as no surprise that many U.S. state retirement plans are seriously under-funded. The breadth and depth of the refinancing efforts highlight speculative abuses and miscalculations by many pension fund managers in the 1990's boom years.

The Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation reported large under-funding issues for both private and public defined benefit plans. Public plans are not subject to ERISA's funding, vesting, disclosure and fiduciary rules, insufficient as they are. Public employees in many states will now have to struggle to protect their retirement systems from the same kind of disaster that hit private funds.

- California, Illinois, Kansas, New Jersey, Oregon, West Virginia and Wisconsin have authorized bonds, i.e. deficits, to address state or local unfunded liabilities.

- New York authorized local governments to bond for any contributions in excess of 7 percent of salaries for FY 2005.

- Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska and Washington increased mandatory contribution rates by statute. Many states do not require legislation to increase contribution rates.

- Colorado, Missouri, New York and New Jersey limited the mandatory contributions of state agency employers and local governments in order to phase in substantial increases in contributions. (The Colorado legislation was vetoed.)

- Missouri and New Jersey prohibited benefit increases until pensions systems' finances improve.

- Oregon completely reorganized the Public Employee Retirement System to address an unfunded accrued liability of \$15 billion as of October 2002.

- Illinois cut contributions to five state pension plans by \$3 billion through 2005 to avert a budget crisis. But this is expected to have a \$20 billion tab down the road.

Instead of counting on another boom in the stock market to rescue them, the \$8 billion Maine State Retirement System shifted the bulk of its \$3 billion fixed-income allocation to Treasury inflation-protected securities (TIPS), which are adjusted to reflect inflation. This approach is tailored to more closely match the fund's liabilities, lessening the opportunity for high-flying returns, but also substantially lessening risk of an underfunded plan.

Because public pension funds typically have assets in the billions of dollars, they are often a subject for unethical dealings and inappropriate behavior by public pension officials. The Securities and Exchange Commission documented "pay-to-play" allegations in 17 states and drafted a stringent rule as a result. "Pay-to-Play" is the pervasive practice of requiring municipal securities participants to make political contributions to municipal officials in order to be considered as an underwriter or advisor the municipality's pension fund.

The proposed rule received so many "negative responses" from public fund officials and investment firms that the SEC backed off of the regulation.

The at-risk pension plans discussed here are all "defined benefit" pension plans. They put the burden of satisfying pension promises on the plan sponsor or employer. What's "defined" is the benefit, not the contribution. Most workers do not have resources to risk in the stock market. Employers, and thus public pension plans, are clearly feeling the pain of a real social liability. They are charged with making contributions sufficient to satisfy fund liabilities.

Despite the growth of the economy at the end of the 1990s, public plans' liabilities were increasing at a faster pace than the economy. Since 2000, matters have worsened. In the short term, managers passed expenses on to future generations by issuing Pension Obligation Bonds. These POBs allow the plans to engage in classic arbitrage, postponing a reckoning in the hope of being saved by another boom.

The Bush administration would like to relieve investors of the liability of actually paying pensions owed to workers. Forget "defined benefit" plans - they sound too much like an "entitlement." Following Maine's example would give them a headache thinking of all those forgone "huge returns." Why not put everyone's future in the IRAs and Keogh plans (the stock market). In fact, why not put Social Security there too. Do nothing about reforming ERISA to protect Enron workers, or steel workers, of course.

Bush to workers: Work till you're dead, or nearly so. Then die on the steps of private "for profit" hospital begging for treatment. Well, it solves the impending pension crunch!

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SEIU opens doors to individual members

By Mark Gruenberg

WASHINGTON (PAI)—The Service Employees Union will start in June to recruit individuals who want to join the union but who don't have a contract. The "Fight for the Future" campaign will "take the fight for our families' economic future to the next level," said President Andrew Stern in a "blog" on SEIU's website in May.

"To have a real chance to win, SEIU must open its doors, change its rules and find ways to formally

and officially link up with millions of you who are not SEIU members," he explained. SEIU, the AFL-CIO's largest union, had 1,387,500 members in 2003, the latest year available, AFL-CIO figures show. It gained 75,000 over the prior year and has led the federation in increasing its numbers over the last five years. Only the Teachers union had similar increases.

Stern calls the new drive "open sourcing" the union movement. The AFL-CIO's drive for similar individual memberships has yet to produce any hard data.

Under the plan, new SEIU individual members would get a membership card and "opportunities to participate with like-minded people" in mobilizations and activism around issues such as workers' rights, civil rights and justice on the job.

"Since you wouldn't get all the benefits of being a full member of SEIU - having an 800-pound gorilla fight for you on the job, health benefits, etc. - you would only pay a nominal annual member fee" of \$10-\$25, Stern said.

Stern did not say how much

of a role such new members would have in deciding union activities, though he pledged they "would have a chance to have a real say in the shape and direction" of the broader movement for worker justice.

He also posed questions for fellow bloggers on how to grow the SEIU through new memberships without "cannibalizing all the great groups already out there," which share the union's goals in separate fields.

Black unionists sign up new voters

By Scott Marshall

ATLANTA - Linda Fields is an organizer with 1199 Health Care workers in Philadelphia. She was one of the delegates at the Atlanta convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists who went out to register new voters May 29 during the meeting's Friday morning session. At the Town Hall meeting that evening, Fields moved the whole convention by speaking about her experience.

An elderly woman was nervous about people coming to her door, Fields said, so "I started out talking to her about flowers." Eventually the woman expressed frustration at the lack of attention to the problems of her neighborhood. She questioned what good voting would do. Fields demanded that the convention answer that woman's question. "CBTU is a powerful organization," Fields said. "We can make sure that someone in government calls that lady and helps her."

Fields told the World that when she registers someone to vote, she doesn't see it as putting a new name on a voters list. "For me it is a commitment to that person, to fight side-by-side with them, to educate them and to

bring them into the struggles." Fields gave another example. Friday morning she also registered two ex-felons. "They were afraid. They didn't know that they had the right to vote. One had been off probation and out of prison for four years and didn't know his rights," she said. She told them that registering to vote was not enough. "Now you have to help me reach other ex-offenders who don't know their rights," Fields told the new voters.

Kenneth Diggs is the national field director for Voices for Working Families and one of the people who put the CBTU voter registration trip together. In summing up the experience, Diggs told the World, "Getting on the bus there was some grumbling about how long we'd be gone. How much of the convention would we miss? But when it was time to go, I had a hard time getting them back on the bus. They wanted to stay and do more." Diggs agrees with Fields that voter registration is not enough in itself. He believes it has to be tied to local struggles and issues. "Issues drive people more than anything else," he said.

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Scott Marshall
Linda Fields, 1199 organizer, says registering voters is "a commitment to that person."



Scott Marshall
Kenneth Diggs, field organizer for Voices for Working Families, took CBTU delegates to an Atlanta neighborhood to register voters.

CPUSA maps work among Mexican Americans

Special to the World

TUCSON, Ariz. - Communist Party leaders and activists met here to discuss plans to bring out the broadest possible Mexican American and Latino vote to defeat the ultra right in the November elections and to strengthen the CPUSA's work among this section of the population. The participants at the meeting, held in the Salt of the Earth Labor College on May 15-16, came chiefly from the Southwest and the West Coast.

Lorenzo Torrez, chair of the Party's Mexican American Equality Commission, reviewed the Commission's work in the recent period. He proposed the organizing of a left-center Latino coalition to mobilize the progressive sentiments of U.S. Latinos.

Rosalfo Muñoz, CPUSA organizer in Southern

California, reported on Latinos and the elections. He noted that the presidential race will be decided in key "battleground states." A number of these, such as Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, are states where Mexican Americans are concentrated, he said.

Muñoz proposed that the CPUSA put out literature in both Spanish and English explaining what is at stake for Latinos in the upcoming elections.

José A. Cruz, editor of Nuestro Mundo, the Spanish-language section of the People's Weekly World, discussed ways of improving the paper's coverage of critical issues in the Mexican American and Latino communities.

On Saturday evening, meeting participants were joined by local activists from the Latino, labor, peace and justice movements to celebrate Torrez' birthday and his decades of activities in progressive politics.

The Nation's Health/Workers' Safety

By Phil E. Benjamin

Corporate greed creates crises

Two simple examples of the unrelenting attack on working people: drug prices and no paid sick time at work. Two examples of corporate greed: Bush's use of taxpayer money to advertise his bogus Medicare legislation and the massive give-away to Medicare HMO profiteers. These examples emphasize the importance of replacing Republicans with pro-people candidates in the year 2004 election.

Drug prices are killing people

A front page story in the May 19 issue of the Wall Street Journal says it all: "Higher Co-pays May Take Toll on Health." A joint study by the Harvard Medical School and Medco Health Solutions found that when co-payments were doubled for common prescription drugs, 31 percent of people with allergic rhinitis stopped taking their prescribed drugs. Arthritis sufferers dropped their drug use by 27 percent, and patients with diabetes dropped their drug use for that life threatening illness by 23 percent. An increase in co-pay from as little as \$5 to \$10 can make that life change.

No sick time for recovery

Another study, this one by the Institute for Women's Policy Research has found that over 60 million workers cannot take paid time off if they are sick. Of course, those earning the lowest wages are also those with the least sick time. Low-wage workers also often end up with the most dangerous work, work that only attracts desperate unemployed or soon-to-be-unemployed workers. The attack on women, in this area of worker exploitation, is even more dramatic. The Institute found that women workers, especially those with family responsibilities, have higher rates of illness and absenteeism than men do, yet are less likely than men to be entitled to any paid time off.

Where's the money?

The Bush administration and its corporate allies and media experts are quick to talk about the need for administrative cost effectiveness and productivity ("keep 'em working"), but when it comes to feeding their corporate allies, the sky's the limit. For example, the Government Accounting Office, one of the few remaining independent government agencies, has found that the Bush administration broke the law in using public monies to advertise its bogus Medicare Program. Now, you have to really be blatant to get this kind of ruling and in fact the Bush administration's "info-mercials" were pure "Bush for President" propaganda. Millions of taxpayer dollars were spent on this partisan effort. That money would have been better spent in getting drugs into the hands of those in need.

Millions to privatize Medicare HMOs

Finally, in an excellent report, the Commonwealth Fund revealed that the federal government under the Bush administration paid an extra \$2.75 billion in 2004 to the private, mostly for-profit HMOs to remain in the Medicare Program. This is over and above the money that these HMO insurance carriers routinely receive when a Medicare recipient leaves the federal program and joins a private Medicare HMO.

Dump Bush and change Congress

Facts from these reports are just a few more tools to use to explain to your co-workers, family and friends how important this year's election is. The White House is certainly within reach as are both the House and Senate. Let's get to work.

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Acting on principle: John Randolph's life and legacy

By Noel Rabinowitz

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — John Randolph, a great light of stage and screen, was laid to rest here Feb. 24 at age 88. Actor and activist, Randolph shined his light through the anti-Communist hysteria of the McCarthyite 1950s. He was systematically banned from film and TV for over a decade by the Hollywood blacklisting of those named as Communist, but made a triumphant 30-year comeback with his principles intact.

Young Randolph, of middle-class Jewish immigrant stock grew up in the Bronx in the 1930s. This was a hard time for anyone to find work, as the Great Depression still gripped the country in massive unemployment.

Randolph's first stage work came via the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA), which created work projects for the unemployed in their field of skill.

"I was in the theater project part of the WPA and we did original works," said Randolph. The Federal Theater Project (FTP), formed in August 1935, performed across the country. Its mission was to bring affordable theater productions to working class communities. Two-thirds of the FTP productions were free and the rest were cheap. Their Negro Theater Unit's "Macbeth," which electrified Harlem, for example, had a price scale from 15 to 40 cents, compared to a ticket price of \$1 to \$3 for a Broadway show then.

One of the FTP's children's plays was called "Revolt of the Beavers." Randolph describes the 1937 production. "There were beavers stripping the bark. They made the food, but they were always hungry. And I was on the other side. I played a reactionary beaver. There was 'Rough,' 'Tough' and 'Gruff.' I was 'Tough,'" said the smiling Randolph.

His first brush with stardom was also his first brush with anti-communism. We were "hounded by Boy Scout Troop 237 in the Bronx who said "Revolt of the Beavers" was a Communist play," said Randolph. And the FTP would soon be engulfed in the gathering tempest of right-wing attack.

In 1938 Rep. Martin Dies of Texas established a committee in the House to investigate "un-American" activities, especially of the FTP that Dies claimed was "nothing but straight Communist propaganda."

With corporate monopolies of 1938 facing a rising tide of union victories and progressive social changes, the right wing could not afford public arts programs that spread pro-worker politics. Dies' hostile "red-baiting" attack on the FTP from his House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) led to the 1939 WPA appropriations bill to specify none of its funds "shall be available ... for the operation of any Theatre Project."

However, three other WPA arts projects — music, art and writing — held on to their embattled funding until 1941. It was in this context that Randolph gained political



File photo
Actor Ossie Davis sits with John Randolph at the 1988 tribute to Randolph in New York City. "Law and Order" actor Sam Waterston was also among those who honored Randolph that night.

and union experience.

"I met all these wonderful people. Then I became the editor of the newspaper in the union that was formed in the City Projects Council. Unheard of. A union? The government giving you money and you formed a union?"

While HUAC continued to operate through World War II, Randolph served in the Army Air Force as a control tower operator and firefighter, never sent overseas due to health reasons — the same that had kept him from joining the Abraham Lincoln Brigades (ALB) fighting in Spain against Franco Fascism. In later years, he was made an honorary ALB veteran for his fundraising dedication.

Randolph was active in the early civil rights struggles and participated in efforts to open up the stage and screen to actors of all races. He said, "I've been with African American actors all my life. I

was in 'Native Son' and we went all over the country." In fact, he married his wife, actress Sarah Cunningham, in the break between two performances of "Native Son" in Chicago in 1945.

Soon after the Cold War was declared, the venomous Republican Joe McCarthy chaired the new Senate version of HUAC. McCarthy's HUAC, formed in 1951, lived off hunting "reds" in high places of government power and Hollywood glamour.

"Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" was the battering ram of the red scare. Hollywood studio bosses actively ran their part by sharing a list of accused Communists (the "blacklist") with each other and the FBI.

Blacklisted actors, writers and directors could not work and could only "clear their name" by naming others for HUAC. Hollywood was poisoned by an atmosphere of fear and paranoia where thousands lost their work and some, their lives. In so doing, the studios gained power over the unions and their workers by muzzling the most outspoken and setting worker against worker.

As a known progressive unionist and activist and rising actor of the screen, Randolph was betrayed to the blacklist by another actor who was "under suspicion." He and Cunningham were subpoenaed by HUAC in 1955. They both refused to answer any questions, plead-

ing the 5th Amendment — the only way not to incriminate others nor get thrown in jail.

Randolph was a proud member of the Communist Party. His defiance of HUAC was based not on fear, but on principles plainly written by Randolph to the Committee prior to the hearing, "I may think what I want, and associate with whom I please, either in the union, on the stage, or in politics."

Like before the blacklist, Randolph was a steady activist as he worked to overcome it. "I've been in every struggle in my day. I go back to the early days of the civil rights movement. ... I picketed against war. I marched for peace. I was elected to union office. I loved what I was doing. I didn't try to dodge it. So, I say, 'Speak up, say how you feel. Don't just sit in the back and let somebody else take it.'"

Randolph said he survived because "I grabbed any job I could and I fought the whole time against blacklisting and so did my wife." By the 60s, TV commercials opened up to him when the TV union (AFTRA) stood against blacklisting.

Dozens of TV roles would follow, including in recent years as Roseanne's father on the long-running sitcom "Roseanne." In the 70s and on, after the Screen Actors Guild finally dropped its anti-Communist clause, he was back in film: *King Kong* (1976), *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), *Prizzi's Honor* (1985), *You've Got Mail* (1998) and many others.

His long comeback was capped by a Tony Award in 1986 for his work in Neil Simon's "Broadway Bound."

Accepting the Tony, Randolph joked, "I didn't get into acting to win awards; it's just that I couldn't do anything else."

On March 21, 1999, the Academy Award for lifetime achievement was given to director Elia Kazan, who cooperated with HUAC in 1952 and destroyed the careers of friends and fellow workers by naming them.

That tense night at the Academy Awards set the stage for a vindicating encore by Randolph. With millions



(L to R) Philip Sterling, Jason Alexander ("Seinfeld"), John Randolph, Jonathan Silverman and Linda Lavin star with Phyllis Newman in Neil Simon's play "Broadway Bound," for which Randolph won a Tony in 1986.

"If you're talking about Dad, you're also talking about Mom, because they were both members of the Party. They were very much a team."

-Martha Randolph



John Randolph and Sarah Cunningham sharing the stage in "Eulogy."

pleasant uncomfortable truth. This was also part of his lifetime achievement."

Kazan, without apology, saying few thanks, took the award and exited stage right. The deafening orchestra couldn't mask the loud jeers and the cameras couldn't avoid the many who stayed in their seats in protest. Randolph remembered that night, "To see so many people not applauding ... was an example of the world not accepting rotten and stinking and hurtful people ... When nobody's afraid, that's a good feeling."

Looking back on his own career and life, Randolph said, "You know you can't act if you're afraid. So I became a better actor because of my politics. It was a tough fight, but there's no answer to anything except you fight together. I have not given up my political convictions to this day and I didn't give in to anybody, and neither did my wife."

Looking forward to the

tough road ahead, Randolph reminded us that German Communist playwright Berthold Brecht said, "When you see them rising up, the ones who hate the Jews, hate the Blacks, they are bringing back the lie and the lie will support them to a certain extent. And we have to fight against that lie. If you just talk and you don't fight back, what good are you?"

If measured by fightback, Randolph was damned good.

Throughout his life, he lent his name, energy, resources and love to the cause of workers, equality and socialism. In today's atmosphere of fear and suspicion, of secret military tribunals, and corporate, right-wing media control and film censorship, we can help see our way through with light from Randolph's smile and his example.

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John Randolph 1915 - 2004

NYC memorial

Sunday, June 20 at 5 p.m.

Winston Unity Hall,

235 W. 23 Street, Manhattan

RSVP (646) 437-3590



watching news of the Kazan controversy on TV, Randolph spoke at a press conference of protesting actors.

He said that by Kazan's

"choice and by his words, people's careers were virtually eliminated and lives shattered. No amount of filmmaking can change the un-

Voices from the LA memorial



Martha Randolph, daughter

"Are you now, or have you ever been?... My parents refused in 1955 to answer HUAC, using the 5th Amendment, so as not to implicate others. It is my great privilege to answer tonight ... Yes, they were members of the Communist Party."



Hal Randolph, son

"Dad, thanks for your politics, the civil rights marches, the Vietnam War protests. You marched for or against just about everything. You took me with you, even if it was raining to remind me rain is only water and the causes and our voices are more important."



Mike Farrell, actor, Screen Actors Guild VP

"I think of myself as a craftsman, but there are some artists among us, like John Randolph. He 'filled the unforgiving minute with 60 seconds worth of distance run.' He would holler at me if I referred to him as a saint, but wherever he went, John shed the light."



Lee Grant, producer, director, actress

"You never saw John fight without a smile, a smile which said, 'Watch out, I'm gonna getcha.' ... In this period of corruption, confusion, and danger, I hope John Randolph converts will continue to honor him, fighting for justice and a decent world."



Actor Brock Peters reads condolence from Sydney Poitier.

"You will be remembered for kindness and courage ... like the day you stood on the floor of our Actors Equity and fought for the rights of African American actors to job opportunities."

- from Sydney Poitier



Jerry Stiller ("King of Queens") and Anne Mearns

"John's unwillingness to squeal to the Committee still sticks with me. He never was down. The smile was always there, and he was always steadfast."

The following is from an interview with daughter Martha Randolph.

Q: What did being in the Party mean to your parents?

They read a wide range of opinions and views, including the Daily World, on many subjects and shared their honest opinions without forcing it down anyone's throat.

The CP is where they got their political education. The knowledge of how to cause political change was part of the instruction manual, if you will ... and the concept of linking small steps to larger ones.

All of this is what the government called a conspiracy to overthrow the government. It certainly was a discussion for revolution, but not a violent one. It was a revolution of thinking. They did call for the uprising of the workers, but it wasn't "rise up and make war." It was "rise and demand your rights, go march and protest and strike." All that definitely came from the Party.

Q: Is McCarthyism repeating itself?

McCarthyism was an all-out attack on one way of thinking. It's more subtle today as right-wing thinking is respun to appear far more reasonable. I don't know if we've been in such a dangerous time, in part because the majority of the media so actively supports the right-wing view.

- Noel Rabinowitz



Roscoe Lee Brown, actor, reading poem for Randolph by Ruby Dee

"Sarah and John. We think of them together. As it was, in the past so be it now. Sarah and John together. Struggle in human form, the living beating heart, the conscience of the cause ... Strength to fight and fall and rise to fight again. Against race hate and anti-Semitism and McCarthyism, and lynchings, and children hurt, and not enough bread on some working body's table, and people with no names and no jobs ... Sarah and John. We think of them together. We always will. So, don't break rank. Join hands. And keep the line moving."

- from poem by Ruby Dee

EDITORIALS

A recovery in profits, not wages

The Bush administration must be thinking the U.S. is a nation of ingrates. The economy is humming along so nicely, they say. Why then has George W. Bush's approval rating plummeted to only 41 percent? And 65 percent believe the nation is on the "wrong track."

Maybe the people interviewed in those polls have just taken out a second mortgage to gas up the family car. Maybe they are struggling with an 11 percent increase in their children's college tuition, or double digit inflation in health care and prescription drugs.

Millions remain in the ranks of the long-term unemployed and many of the newly employed have been forced to accept a low-wage job with meager benefits. The polls show a deep worry that this Bush "recovery" might be sunk by rising inflation and vanishing purchasing power.

A report by the Economic Policy Institute released May 27 points out that corporate profits skyrocketed 62.2 percent since the recovery began but wages are up a pitiful 2.8 percent, less than the increased cost of living.

"This is the fastest rate of profit growth in a recovery since World War II," the report states. "(T)he growth in profits combined with a drop in wages and salary income suggest that the recovery has a narrow

base with most American consumers only able to increase their purchasing power through debt. Wage growth is not just fair, it is also necessary for a more sustainable recovery."

But you will never convince Bush of that. His so-called economic recovery is fueled by a huge transfer of income from the pockets of working people to the coffers of corporations and the super-rich.

Recent strikes by grocery workers and SBC telephone workers prove that working people are ready to fight for jobs, living wages, pensions and health care. They are fighting with one hand tied behind their back as long as Bush is in the White House.

Victory for women and reproductive freedom

Federal District Court Judge Phyllis Hamilton ruled June 1 that the so-called Partial Birth Abortion Ban is unconstitutional and cannot be enforced. In her ruling, Hamilton wrote that the "act poses an undue burden on a woman's right to choose an abortion," a point that women's groups and civil liberties advocates had made from the beginning.

On March 29 three federal courts began hearing legal challenges to the ban, which Congress passed in October 2003 and President Bush signed in November.

The law defines the term "partial-birth abortion" so broadly that it would prohibit a wide range of abortions performed in the second trimester. It fails to safeguard women because it does not contain an exception to protect their health.

This law is not about abortions performed late in pregnancy. Supporters of the law used misleading rhetoric to mask the fact that the law bans safe and medically-appropriate abortions as early as 12 to 15 weeks and is part of the Bush administration's larger agenda to outlaw all abortions. In fact, Hamilton, in her strongly worded opinion, accused Congress of having done just that - misrepresenting scientific facts in order to ramrod this first-ever federal ban on abortion.

"Judge Hamilton's decision reaffirms a woman's right to choose and a doctor's right to practice medicine," said to Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood, one of the plaintiffs in the suit.

However, the fight against the ban is not over. Two more cases are pending in U.S. district courts. Those rulings are expected later this summer. Judge Hamilton's ruling gives women reason to be hopeful but as we've seen over and over again, the Bush administration will stop at nothing to push through its agenda.

It's important to remember this ruling comes after the historic women's march, where over 1 million people turned out to support reproductive freedom. With unity and struggle, victories are possible.

LETTERS

A billion here, a billion there

The title to this little verse was borrowed from an excellent leaflet that was distributed at a recent demonstration. I owe a debt of gratitude to them and the demonstration.

A billion here, a billion there,
Each a thousand times a millionaire!
And now, the trillions
Loudly resound from the press and air.
When will we stop this robbery
That is imposed ... on you and me?
Stand up, Stand up, Stand up!
Speak out, Speak out, Speak out!

Norm Roth
Northlake IL

Hi-tech jobloss

Regarding "Jobs report not so rosy" (PWW 4/10-16), up here in Massachusetts and New Hampshire a lot of us have been laid off from high tech software jobs. I was a software engineer and graduated from Northeastern University in 1994 with about \$50,000 in debt. I worked in high tech until I got laid off in 2001. Since then I have not found permanent employment in my field or any other field and now I'm quickly losing any experience in my line of work.

Since being laid off I took the H&R Block tax course and worked for them for

one season for \$7.50 an hour and only got to work at most 6-12 hours a week.

This year I went back to school to study Linux. I also got a job as a math and computer science tutor making \$8.50 an hour but can't seem to get more than 8-10 hours a week. Friends of mine who also had degrees in hardware, networking, mathematics and software now are lucky if they can find work at Home Depot.

Where are these jobs that the Bush administration keeps hyping about? I'm afraid with all the offshoring and outsourcing we'll never recover. We'll just get pretty good at not working, which is not my choice.

Thanks for letting me rant a bit.

Jeanne
Derry NH

Saludos compañero

I was very pleased to read about the meeting held and issues discussed at the "Boricua Roundtable" in the Bronx, N.Y. ("Puerto Ricans chart progressive agenda" by Jose A. Cruz, PWW 5/29-6/4). In particular I embrace the idea to start "Encuentro eMag," and N.Y. Rep. Nydia Velazquez' motion to move John Kerry to embrace the Puerto Rican agenda as well as placing a Puerto Rican or Latino as deputy.

I look forward to continued information concerning the movement of Puertorriqueños making a difference in the political arena.

Lil DeConsuelo
Quebradillas, Puerto Rico

Letter from Africa

Rwanda is a beautiful country - it boasts to be the most beautiful country in Africa - and according to all the folks I've talked to so far this is true. Rwanda is in

the process of reconciling and facilitating peace ten years after the genocide. The stories of the folks here are intense, emotional and inspiring because from all of the pain and hate many are finding love as the only vehicle for healing.

We have a lot to learn from the model of justice and reconciliation used here on the continent. The young revolutionary leaders, who are challenging the colonial past and the globalized-imperialized present, are inspiring and unique. I am learning so much about the value of life, love and organizing.

The land and air are unbelievable. I am staying on a vast lake that mimics an endless ocean with clear blue waters. Lush green islands jut out of the lake offering a palette of thick green and blue bliss that is undeveloped and organic. The stars are thick and the sky is black at night - no need for blankets because the warmth of the air is comforting. The plants and creatures that inhabit the area are free and we have a mutual respect and understanding that space and the earth are to be shared not conquered.

Anita Wheeler
Via e-mail

At last

On Memorial Day I was pleased to watch on TV the dedication of the World War II memorial in Washington. It came almost 60 years late but it signified a change in the political climate.

World War II was the largest war in the history of the world. It absorbed the attention and activity of our country completely. A grand alliance of all the freedom-loving people of the world was formed to defeat fascism. It was the last war that was justifiable.

There was no memorial dedicated to our troops when the war ended. Instead our government set about destroying the

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"What kind of message does it send when we're asking other countries not to develop nuclear weapons but developing new ones ourselves?"

Sen. John Kerry
Democratic presidential hopeful, promising to cancel Bush administration research on a new generation of nuclear weapons, including nuclear "bunker-busters,"
June 1.

coalition that had saved the world. The Cold War was started. It cost many times what was spent on WW II. It was directed not only against the Soviet Union but also against the FDR economic reforms.

I have not yet seen the new WW II memorial, and I assume that it minimizes the role of our allies, especially the USSR. Nevertheless I think we should welcome the change in the political climate that has reminded people of another day when the world was on a progressive track and our government led the world into the United Nations.

It is especially encouraging that a new coalition is emerging in our country that promises to reverse the ultra-right policies of our government.

George Edwards
Pittsburgh PA

The author is a World War II veteran.

We want to hear from you! Send letters or articles to *People's Weekly World*, 3339 S. Halsted St., Chicago IL 60608, or e-mail to: pww@pww.org. Letters should be limited to 200 words. We reserve the right to edit stories and letters. Only signed letters with the return address of the sender will be considered for publication, but the name of the sender will be withheld on request.

What America stands for

By Barbara Jean Hope

“That isn’t what America stands for” has been the refrain of Bush, Rumsfeld, Cheney, et al., as the horrifying Abu Ghraib prison atrocities hit the eyes of the world. Maybe it isn’t what America should stand for, but it is very often standard practice in the U.S. prison system to deny human rights to its “own” prisoners. Capitalists are unable to control struggling human beings without the tools of murder, torture, lies, misinformation, racism, exploitation, railroading, and all-out war. As well, capitalist America does stand quite often for torture in its own prisons.

There is a link between Abu Ghraib prison and the State Correctional Institution at Greene (SCI-Greene), a super-maximum-security prison in western Pennsylvania. On May 6, Pennsylvania Abolitionists United Against the Death Penalty (PAUADP) issued a press release revealing that Army Specialist Charles Graner, Jr., of Uniontown, Pa. – displayed to the world in photos (along with Pfc. Lynndie England) of piles of naked, dehumanized Iraqi men – is in civilian life a prison guard at SCI-Greene. It is the prison in which Mumia Abu-Jamal is being held (wrongly convicted of the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner). It holds most of Pennsylvania’s death row prisoners. Complaints of abuse have been reported repeatedly at SCI-Greene.

According to The New York Times, the 35-year-old reservist was called for active duty in Iraq on May 4, 2003. At that time, he was chosen by the U.S. military to work at Abu Ghraib because of his experience in the Pennsylvania prison system. Graner had worked at the state prison since 1996.

The PAUADP press release states, “Reports of prisoner abuse have plagued SCI-Greene since it opened less than a decade ago as a ‘shining jewel in the crown’ of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

[DOC].” It was in 1998 that a DOC investigation discovered “many instances of abuse of prisoners.” Internal videotapes showed instances of the abuse. The Greene County district attorney refused to prosecute the guards involved in some cases. Other alleged perpetrators received slaps on the wrist. According to a May 12 Associated Press story, Graner was accused in two separate 1999 lawsuits of abusing prisoners. The state attorney general’s office succeeded in getting one of the lawsuits dismissed.

Nicholas Yarris was housed on death row at SCI-Greene for 22 years. He had been convicted of the 1981 kidnap, rape and murder of Boothwyn, Pa., resident Linda Mae Craig. He was released Jan. 16, the first

death row inmate to be exonerated by DNA evidence in Pennsylvania. After Graner was charged with torturing Iraqi prisoners, Yarris told reporters that he had been routinely stripped naked for cavity searches by Graner and other officers while at SCI-Green.

Yarris said, “We all learned if Charlie [Graner] was working in your cell block that day, you were in for a bad day. Seeing those photographs in Iraq with those prisoners was a tough reminder on how he used to torment, humiliate and abuse us, and then turn around to other guards and just laugh about it.” Indicating the problem at SCI-Greene, as at Abu-Ghraib, came from the top down, Yarris told the Uniontown, Pa., Herald-Standard, “It isn’t

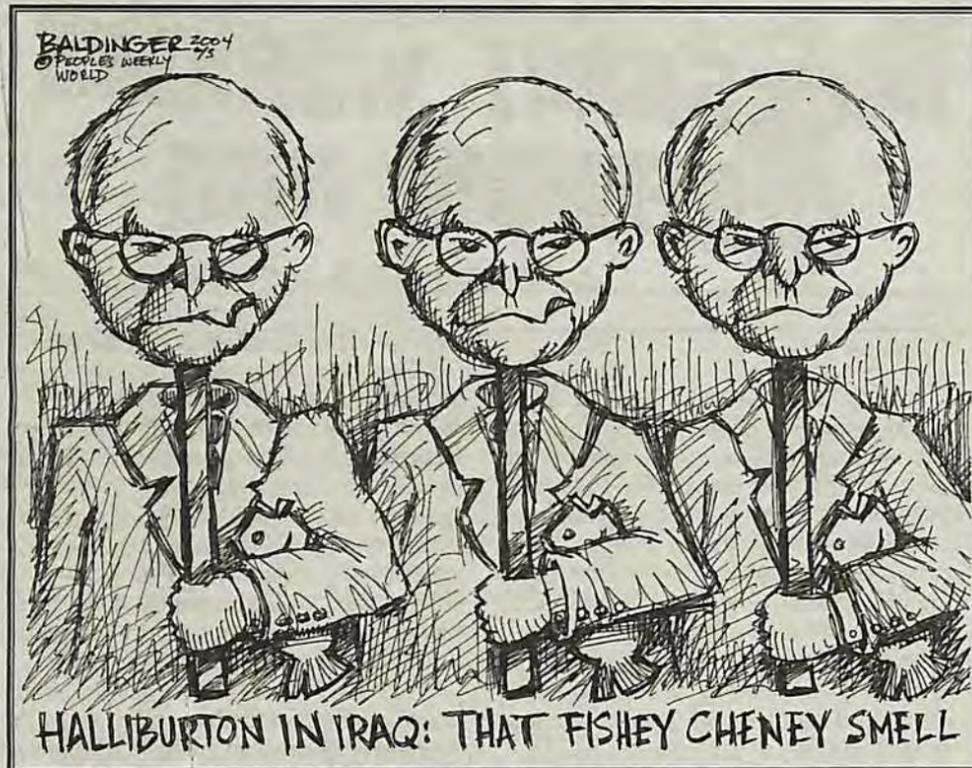
Charles [Graner]; it’s the people producing Charles ... they think abuse is acceptable.”

PAUADP said in its press release, “Inmates and advocates for prisoner rights asserted in 1998 that guards at the prison routinely beat and humiliated prisoners, including through a sadistic game of Simon Says in which guards struck prisoners who failed to comply with barked instructions.” The group wonders if more aggressive investigation and a “zero-tolerance for abuse” policy by Pennsylvania DOC administrators might have prevented some of the inexcusable human rights abuses in Iraq that have “further disgraced the U.S. and increased the likelihood of future terrorist acts.”

Abu-Jamal wrote about abuse against prisoners at SCI-Greene from his death row cell there on May 4, 1998: “SCI-Greene was, and is, a creation of the state’s political will, with terrorism merely a tool of state policy.” He may as well have been talking about Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo Bay today. The fault lies at the feet of those who crafted an illegal preemptive war and who craft conditions in which people in the U.S. are railroaded into prison hell-holes and then tormented day after day.

Graner and the other U.S. soldiers being court-martialed, if found guilty, must pay for their criminality. Those who sanctioned the criminality must pay as well. As we watch the happenings around the trials, we must remember that the best way in the short term to show the world that the U.S. working class is against prisoner abuse both in the U.S. and all over the world is to vote out of office those who set up the conditions for abuse in Iraq and in U.S. prisons. Let’s really mean it when we say what America doesn’t stand for.

Barbara Jean Hope is a reader in Philadelphia. She can be reached at bjhope215@yahoo.com.



Vernon Jarrett: a partisan journalistic giant

By Dee Myles

Readers like me can be extremely selective of the journalists we read habitually. We do not have to agree with every word or be humored by diversionary jokes and meaningless anecdotes. We want simplicity that unravels complexity in one swoop. We want to be invigorated and learn something from a passion that is real and irrepressible. We want anecdotes that elucidate and inspire. We do not read your stuff just because you write it. We are selective about the journalists to whom we become insatiably addicted, and once hooked we develop a constructive love affair without the romance.

The love affair thrives on the partisan knowledge of the writer, which is captured and freely shared through the skillful development of the craft and then directed with personal passionate affinity toward the reader. The affair becomes addictive: they write, we read; it’s as simple as that. Every day we want more, curious as to their take on this or that issue whether we agree with their point of view or not. Such was my experience with Vernon Jarrett, an African American journalist in Chicago who died at the age of 86 on May 23. I became a Vernon Jarrett addict, and I am proud of it!

Vernon Jarrett’s career as a journalist in Chicago began and ended at the Chicago Defender, the African American daily paper. In between, he was the first Black

journalist at the Chicago Tribune, and I first began to read his articles during his tenure at the Chicago Sun-Times

Jarrett’s claim to fame is that he was a partisan of the cause of African Americans in the broad democratic tradition of Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois. Through his articles, he often lectured fondly on the contributions and sacrifices of Robeson and DuBois as well as Frederick Douglass and others. Vernon Jarrett would not let up; he would always try to produce an angle of analysis that had some relationship to the African American experience. His persona was that of an ordinary man who became extraordinary because of a passionate partisanship to the struggles of his people. He exuded a love and caring for Black people, Black Chicagoans in particular, that was tangible through his activity. I was a humble witness of his profoundness.

He was a southerner from Paris, Tenn., and always told stories of his learning to love Negro history and culture under the tutelage of his proud Black teachers in their humble surroundings. He promoted race consciousness, pride, dignity, and responsibility.

He also promoted an aspiration toward academic excellence in African American youth, and he hammered adults about the need to remember the gems of the ocean,

as August Wilson would say. That is a reference to the history of struggle of Black people beginning with the torturous passage over from Africa.

Jarrett was fanatical about African Americans registering and voting in mass for socially conscious candidates. He championed Harold Washington like a great warrior, and this March, from his hospital bed, wrote an article appealing to Black Chicago to turn out to vote for Barack Obama in the Illinois primaries. Obama astounded everyone with an incredible landslide victory as the progressive, Black candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for the U.S. Senate seat from Illinois. From his sickbed, Vernon Jarrett issued a clarion call, and the people responded.

I think Black Chicago was passionately in love with Vernon Jarrett. He talked the talk and walked the walk. We wallowed in the joy of his being through reading his articles. His unrelenting drive kept us reminded of a sense of purpose and helped to instill the courage of our convictions in struggle as a people. We will forever be indebted; we will never forget.

Dee Myles is a Chicago activist and chair of the education commission of the Communist Party USA. She can be reached at pww@pww.org.

'It's time to veto Vito'

By Dan Margolis

BROOKLYN – New York City labor, civil rights, and other democratic organizations have vowed to deliver a blow to the Bush administration and their Republican ultra-right allies in Congress this November. They are waging a campaign to take the seat of the only Republican member of New York City's Congressional delegation, Rep. Vito Fossella (R-N.Y.).

Widely viewed as working hand-in-glove with the Bush administration, Fossella has consistently voted against union and workers' rights. He voted against increasing the federal minimum wage, voted for cuts in workers' overtime pay, voted to weaken worker safety laws, and voted to deny union rights to workers in the newly created Department of Homeland Security.

Though the district covers a small section of the city – parts of Brooklyn and Staten Island – it is becoming a major battleground. A citywide focus on defeating Fossella has emerged, as the city's labor movement, the Working Families Party and many others have prioritized this campaign.

Running against Fossella is Frank Barbaro, a former State Assemblyman and state Supreme Court justice with a strong record on labor and issues that matter to working people. Barbaro will give New Yorkers an opportunity to change the face of Congressional politics. In the current Congress, the Republicans rule with only a 12-seat majority. A Barbaro win could help weaken – or end – the right-wing domination of Congress.

Barbaro, who began working in a factory at age ten, was elected to the State Assembly in 1972, and became the chair of the Assembly's Labor Committee in 1980. While in office, he established himself firmly as a friend of labor, and continued the same record in the state's Supreme Court. While assemblyman, Barbaro's rating from the state AFL-CIO was in the upper 90s.

His campaign platform includes protections for workers, creating jobs, better care for the environment, better health care, and rebuilding the economy, as well as defending civil rights. During his time as a state assemblyman, Barbaro led a march against racist attacks and the murder of Yousef Hawkins, a young African American man in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn – a part of his assembly district.

"I'm going to work to elect Frank Barbaro who has been a pillar of our community and deserves to be in Congress,"

Victoria DiSanto, a United Federation of Teachers retiree, told her union's publication. The UFT, like most NYC unions, voted to endorse Barbaro.

The 13th district had been considered a stronghold for Republicans. Fossella has trounced his Democratic opponents in the past three elections. However, many have observed that the political situation is changing. Through grassroots and labor support, Barbaro has

been able to raise more money than the three previous Democratic candidates – \$90,000 – and expects to raise \$500,000 by June 30.

Fossella has also alienated himself from people living in Staten Island, which has one of the highest per-capita union densities in the country, by voting consistently against

workers' interests.

The AFL-CIO gave Fossella a 4 percent lifetime rating; only 15 other congresspersons nationwide received a lower grade. On war and peace, he is a vehe-

ment supporter of the war in Iraq and Bush's unilateral, foreign policy. On the environment, the League of Conservation Voters gave him a score of 10 percent – the lowest they have ever given. On health care, Fossella voted against the Patient's Bill of Rights and for Bush's unpopular Medicare "reform."

According to an article in the Staten Island Advance, Barbaro's campaign has attracted the attention of the Democratic Party's national leadership, which is considering whether to mobilize national party resources behind Barbaro.

"It's time," said Barbaro in his candidacy announcement speech, "to veto Vito."

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Freedom Rides continue to roll



By Elena Mora

NEW YORK CITY – In the fall of 2003, busloads of people crossed the U.S. with the message that a broad coalition has emerged demanding rights and justice for immigrants. The culmination of the historic Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, a rally of over 100,000 immigrants and their allies, took place here in Flushing Meadows Park, an appropriate place for such a gathering, since the city is home to millions of immigrant workers and the children and grandchildren of immigrants.

Over the winter and spring, the issues of the Freedom Ride – civil liberties, dignity and language rights, path to citizenship, family reunification, union rights and pro-

tections – have continued to top the agenda for many organizations and communities, including the labor movement here.

In December, the mainly immigrant workers at Grand Central Station's famous Oyster Bar restaurant went on strike against a greedy employer, and finally won a contract with HERE Local 100.

The city's daycare workers, many of whom are also immigrants, have been without a contract for almost four years, and have threatened a strike in June.

In March, hundreds of people, organized by NYC's Central Labor Council's immigration subcommittee, lobbied the state legislature on a range of issues: urging reversal of the policy of revoking drivers' licenses of immigrant New Yorkers who cannot verify their Social

Security numbers; language access and interpreters in hospitals and schools; and increasing funding for English as a Second Language programs.

In May, hundreds of farm workers and their allies marched across the state demanding passage of legislation to improve the outrageous working and living conditions of the thousands who harvest New York's crops. The state's farm workers have no health care or workers compensation, no days off, and no overtime pay.

There is also key federal legislation that coalitions are working on. The DREAM Act, (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, S. 1545), introduced in July 2003, which has a counterpart in the House (Student Adjustment Act, HR 1684), is one such piece of legislation. The DREAM act would eliminate the federal provision that discourages states from providing in-state rates tuition rates without regard to immigration status; and permit some immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. to apply for legal status.

All of these issues are part of the election year debate and mobilization to defeat the ultra right. Voter registration and education are high on the immigrant rights movement's agenda.

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NYC unions face tough contract struggles

By Gary Bono

NEW YORK CITY – The latest news on the labor scene here was the April 21 announcement of a contract settlement between government workers represented by AFSCME, DC 37 and the city of New York. The 121,000 DC 37 workers had been without a contract for two years.

DC 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts said she believed union negotiators had hammered out the best possible agreement. However there is dissatisfaction with aspects of the deal. The most troubling aspect is that raises the contract provides are to be funded by a 15 percent cut in pay for new hires, along with the loss of some sick time, holidays and night differential during their first two years of employment.

A budget deficit was alleged during the negotiations, but once they concluded a surplus was announced. There was no material basis for the give-backs.

Despite misgivings, it is likely that the DC 37 rank and file will approve the contract, which provides for a \$1,000 flat payment in the first year, a 3 percent raise in the second year and 2 percent in the third year.

NYC Mayor Bloomberg and NYC Labor Relations Commissioner James Hanley have stated their intention to use the DC 37 agreement as a model for other settlements. They are insisting that wage increases be funded by give-backs. Indeed, the effect of the deal on other city workers has already been seen. Several unions representing NYC workers have, reluctantly, accepted deals that mirror the DC 37 pact.

However, teachers, police, and firefighters have made it clear that they will not be bound by the pattern of the DC 37 contract. United Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said the DC 37 settlement was unique to DC 37's own members and would in no way meet the needs of teachers or students. Patrolmen's Benevolent Association President Pat Lynch and Uniformed Firefighters Association President Stephen Cassidy have said that a two-tier wage structure would be unacceptable.

Why did the DC 37 negotiations produce a less than satisfactory outcome? Some trade unionists suggest the

lack of labor unity – in bargaining strategy and contract demands, coupled with a lack of mass mobilization, was a big part of the reason. Unions representing city workers should have agreed to hold out together to put pressure on the city to settle. Unfortunately the lack of inter-union coordination precluded any such grand strategy.

DC 37 members, rank-and-filers and leaders alike, were desperate and isolated after working without a contract for two years and felt that any settlement was better than nothing. It is also likely that a recent divisive union election had some effect.

The overriding conclusion is whatever threatens unity weakens the position of workers relative to management.

A very encouraging development is what the UFT is calling a "massive show of solidarity." Teachers will be joining police and firefighters for a joint mass rally for fair contracts in front of City Hall on June 8. The PBA has also reiterated its intention to rally with other unions at the site of the Republican National Convention, despite Bloomberg's expressions of disapproval.

Gary Bono is a trade union activist in New York City. He can be reached at gamoo@compuserve.com.

News Analysis

PEOPLE'S CULTURE

Lessons from NAFTA:

Workers pay the price for free trade

By Tim Pelzer

Lessons from NAFTA: The High Cost of Free Trade
 Edited by Kareb Hansen-Kuhn and Steve Hellinger
 133 pp., 2003
 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
 (75 Albert Street, Suite 410; Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E7, Canada)

Neo-conservatives nowadays are promoting free trade as a key component of economic development. To advance their case, they use the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) as supposed models of free trade.

However, according to "Lessons from NAFTA: The High Cost of Free Trade," NAFTA and CUFTA have been economic disasters for North America. This well documented work persuasively argues that not only have they failed to meet the lofty goals of those who championed the agreements, but they have contributed to a falling standard of living.

Proponents of NAFTA argued that the agreement would lead to economic growth, more employment, greater productivity and higher wages for Mexicans, Americans and Canadians. According to Mexican researcher

Alberto Picard, NAFTA has not led to a high growth economy nor development in Mexico. The huge trade surplus with the U.S., the large number of new jobs created and the economic diversification that has taken place cannot be attributed to NAFTA, as supporters of the trade deal allege. The trade surplus is largely due to increased petroleum, maquiladora exports and intra-firm trade among US companies. He also notes that Mexico has run trade surpluses in the past before NAFTA existed.

Furthermore, Mexico's large maquiladora manufacturing sector that existed before NAFTA is an island in the Mexican econo-

my, not much linked to the national economy. Firms import most components and raw materials, assemble them and then ship them to the United States.

The large volume of new investments that poured into the country was used mainly to buy existing businesses and enlarge the maquiladora sector. It has also led to lower levels of job creation in comparison to pre-NAFTA days, since many national suppliers went out of business after NAFTA. Real wages fell.

Moreover, Picard states that NAFTA restricts the power of democratically elected governments to determine economic policy. For instance, under NAFTA governments cannot impose performance requirements in which manufactures must use domestically produced components or favor nationally owned firms when contracts are dispensed.

Rather than enhancing food security, Mexico now imports more food than it exports. Picard notes that Mexican farmers are unable to compete with more capital intensive, heavily subsidized U.S. farmers.

As a result, 2 million jobs have been lost in agriculture leading to increased rural poverty, higher food costs and declining prices paid to producers.

Despite the fact that direct foreign investment and exports grew, the nation experienced a lower rate of economic growth in comparison to pre-NAFTA periods.

Picard also discusses free trade in a larger context. As Picard correctly states, the "Asian Tigers" in South East Asia did not de-



File photo
 These Ohio steelworkers take part in a protest against NAFTA in front of the capitol in Washington, D.C.

velop through free trade. In fact, they rejected neo-liberal free market development and opted for state measures to protect and nurture their firms until they were able to compete on the world stage, a point that Picard fails to explore.

This was also the case with the U.S., England, France and the other developed Capitalist countries. He also states that free trade has to be seen as yet another instrument by the developed capitalist countries to ensure that the Third World adheres to neo-liberal economics.

In the U.S., according to David Ranney, NAFTA has led to massive job losses in the manufacturing sector and a shift of work towards the low paying service sector.

Canada has experienced the same insidious effects under NAFTA and CUFTA. According to Ranney, John Foster and John Dhillon, 17 percent of jobs have disappeared in the manufacturing sector under free trade and new job growth has produced many low-wage, part time jobs.

The new jobs generated were half of the number created before free trade. Wages have stagnated despite increases in productivity. Furthermore, social spending was cut because government and business leaders argued that Canadian conditions had to be harmonized to U.S. levels.

Despite claims made by proponents, free trade has not led to greater access to U.S. markets as Canada remains subject to arbitrary U.S. actions such as punitive duties on lumber and wheat exports.

The authors are especially critical of NAFTA trade tribunals in charge of resolving disputes. Not only do they have more authority than national courts and government bodies, these tribunals operate secretly, do not have to provide information to the public and their decisions cannot be appealed. They permit companies to bypass local judicial and government bodies and sue governments for actions that reduce profits.

The Mexican, U.S. and Canadian governments have failed to revise these harmful investor state provisions. More disturbing, Mexico and the U.S. have signed trade deals with other nations that have these same provisions.

"Lessons From NAFTA" is a compelling critique of free trade. The book's one defect is the its failure to define some of the economic terms they use, but despite this, the book is accessible to the average reader.

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Telling her story

Former Cherokee Chief Wilma Mankiller talks during a May 4 interview, in Stilwell, Okla. Mankiller, the first female elected principal chief of an American Indian tribe, says she's no different than any other. She just returned from South Africa and now is preparing for the release of her third book cataloguing powerful native women.

Will there be a Day After Tomorrow?

By Carolyn Rummel

"The Day After Tomorrow" has one of the most absurd and implausible plot turns I've seen in a movie, ever," writes David Edelstein in his review for Slate magazine. "Global warming melts the polar ice caps, which makes the oceans rise and disrupts the Gulf Stream ... and after New York City is flooded by seawater, the temperature plunges at a rate of 10 degrees per second, so that people are transformed into ice statues where they stand ... Now here's the implausible part. The vice president - closely modeled on Dick Cheney - who has pooh-poohed all evidence of global warming, goes on TV and says, 'I was wrong.'"

While "The Day After Tomorrow" might be just another cheesy disaster film, it's one with an anti-Bush message that is all too real. Global warming is a fact and its impact can be seen now. Some scientists have linked the extreme weather the world has been experiencing recently - from devastating floods in Central America to the incredibly high number of tornadoes in this country - to the long-term problem we face.

"The Day After Tomorrow" uses wild dramatic license and special effects to dramatize a very real problem. Global warming isn't just something happening in movie theatres. It's happening

all around us, and will keep happening until we get greenhouse gas pollution under control," said Fred Krupp, president of Environmental Defense. Environmental Defense, a leading national non-profit organization, represents more than 400,000 members.

The danger, of course, is that the movie's plot, with helicopters freezing in midair, is so ridiculous that no one will take the threat seriously. Scientists from the University of Washington, who saw the film with a Seattle Times reporter, laughed at the absurdity of many of the scenes. Nevertheless, they agree that climate change is real and will distort the planet as we know it.

For scientists, abrupt climate change usually means over a few decades, not a full-blown ice age within just a few days.

"This movie distorts global warming, obviously," Maureen Drouin, northeast regional representative of the Sierra Club, told the Associated Press. "It's a disaster movie. But we also feel that the Bush administration is distorting the science on global warming."

"The Day After Tomorrow" exaggerates the impacts of global warming, but it's no exaggeration to say that global warming is happening now," said Dr. Michael Oppenheimer, Environmental Defense science advisor and a Princeton professor, "and that our children and grandchildren will have to live with the consequences."

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists meets

Continued from page 1

wealth from workers and the poor to the rich and the corporations in history that hasn't resulted in a revolution." Laughing, he said, "I'm not advocating that now, but I may not be far from it the way things are going."

Roberts, too, deplored the war in Iraq, calling it an elective war by George Bush, "not one we had to fight."

"But who are the 19- and 20-year-olds who are in harm's way?"

Roberts asked. "It is the poor, the Black and Hispanic, forced into the military by a bad economy and lack of opportunity."

The five-day convention was packed with workshops, mini-conferences, cultural events and stirring speakers. As is CBTU's usual practice, one whole day was set aside for a National CBTU Women's Conference, followed by an evening "town hall meeting," open to the public. The women's conference featured a distin-

guished panel in an interactive exchange on mobilization, issues and strategies in the November 2004 elections.

One of the most interesting convention innovations came on Friday morning, in an activity organized with Voices for Working Families, an election committee concentrating on working with labor to get out the vote in African American, Latino, and Asian American communities and among women. Teaming up with

Voices, over 90 CBTU delegates took a bus to a local African American neighborhood and registered 111 new voters in just a couple of hours. The experience electrified the convention with its success and the possibilities it demonstrated.

The convention made time on several days for workshops dealing with a range of critical issues including racism, health care, public education, Social Security and labor law, and several on the nuts and bolts of election work.

The convention also passed a series of progressive resolutions on a broad range of social, political and economic issues. These included full support for the Conyers single-payer, universal

health care bill (HR 676), opposition to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and a call for an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq.

In a rousing speech near the end of the convention on Sunday morning, Rev. Jesse Jackson captured the militancy and determination of the delegates when he called on CBTU to help lead labor to victory.

To ringing cheers Jackson declared, "We must be a minority with a majority vision." He pointed to the example of Martin Luther King as a leader with a majority vision that transformed the country and the world.

The authors can be reached at pww@pww.org.

'End Iraq war'

Continued from page 1

Medina told the World, "My message is that this war has a human side to it. Somebody's brother, son, or sister is dying. I want the American people to know what a wonderful person my brother was. He wanted to study, to be an accountant. He wanted to make a difference for the Iraqi people."

Ivan Medina, too, is an Iraq combat veteran.

"I was with the Third Infantry Division and went into Iraq on the first wave," he said. "I never was in favor of this war. The death of my brother has only gotten me more involved, speaking out. Many soldiers are not happy with the president and I'm here to speak on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves. Bring our soldiers home alive."

Mary Ellen McNish, general secretary of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), told the World, "The human cost of this war is rising every day. There is no military solution, only political solutions. The U.S. occupation of Iraq has become the problem, not the solution."

Asked about the widespread demands that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld be fired for the atrocities at the Abu Ghraib prison, McNish replied, "AFSC has not taken a formal position. But my personal opinion is Rumsfeld should go." This unique AFSC vigil has traveled across the country to Los Angeles since the group displayed 500 pairs of boots in Chicago's Federal Plaza in January. The roster of U.S. war dead passed a grim milestone, 800, just before Memorial Day. At least 4,750 Americans have been wounded. Bush and his minions have toiled to divert attention from the rising casualties as Bush's approval ratings plunge.

The boots vigil, titled "Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of War in Iraq," will travel to Boston, Madison and LaCrosse, Wis., Indianapolis, Philadelphia, Providence, RI, and three cities in

Ohio. It opened here the day after Bush delivered his "stay the course" speech at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. "It was more platitudes," McNish said. "Our hope is that this exhibit will give the American people a picture of the true cost of this war, that they will hold the politicians accountable."

Fernando Suarez del Solar of Escondido, Calif., whose son Jesus, a Marine, died in Iraq, knelt beside a pair of boots with his son's name tied to them. He had just come from Georgia, where he attended the court martial of Florida National Guardsman Camilo Mejia, who was sentenced to one year in prison for refusing to return to Iraq.

Suarez told the World, "Camilo saw the abuse of Iraqis with his own eyes. He refused to participate in torture and he gets the same prison sentence as the soldier who admitted he abused Iraqi detainees. It's ridiculous! Camilo told me his opposition to this war is based on two principled reasons. First, it is a war for petroleum. And second, he would not participate in the abuse of the Iraqi people. It is impossible that they will put in jail someone who said no to this abuse but leave free the big commanders who ordered the torture."

Suarez noted that Amnesty International has designated Camilo Mejia a "prisoner of conscience" and Veterans for Peace is campaigning for his release. Suarez said he is crisscrossing the country speaking out against the war and demanding freedom for Mejia.

Asked about Bush's War College speech, Suarez retorted, "It's only lies. He says he will restore Iraqi sovereignty. Yet the U.S. will remain in control. What kind of democracy is that?"

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Mine disaster in Pakistan

A mine worker sits by his injured colleague, May 26, in Sanjibid, 30 miles east of Quetta, Pakistan. A powerful gas explosion in a coal mine killed 15 miners.

In loving memory

Murray Brall

March 1910 - April 1978

Esther Brall

Nov. 1908 - May 2001

"You are always in our hearts"

Martha and Sheila



In memory of Donna Schultz

An avid reader of the PWW
and fighter for peace and social justice
You'll be missed

Illinois Bureau PWW

A contribution of \$500 has been made
to the People's Weekly World
to celebrate the life and the work of
Arnold Becchetti
by friends in Denver, Colorado

•• WHAT'S ON ••

NEW YORK CITY

■ June 6, Sun., 4 - 7 p.m.: Remembering the life of tenant activist Jane Wood, Memorial Service at St. Columba Auditorium, 331 W. 25 St. (between 8th and 9th). Info: (212) 243-0544.

CHICAGO

■ June 4 - 17, 3rd annual Chicago Palestine Film Festival, Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St. Includes 20 films by Palestinian, Israeli, American and European filmmakers; features, documentaries, & shorts in English or Arabic, Hebrew, German or French with English subtitles. Numerous North American premieres and one world premiere film. Tickets \$9 for each screening. Info: www.palestinefilmfest.com

June 18 - 20, screenings at Southwest Youth Collaborative, 6400 S. Kedzie Ave. No admission price for events at this venue. Info: festival hotline

(312) 873-4401.

■ June 17, Thurs., 6 p.m., let's talk about socialism! With Sam Webb, Natl. Chair CPUSA. Reception & food followed by discussion about the crossroads facing the US and humanity. At Ruiz Belvis Cultural Ctr., 1632 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Near Damen & North). Hosted by: PWW, CP of Ill. & Young Communist League. Info & RSVP: (773) 991-7930.

LOS ANGELES

■ June 5, Sat., 12 noon. March to bring the troops home and end the occupation of Iraq! Step off at Olympic and Broadway streets, downtown, and march to the Federal Building. To march with the Southern California CPUSA contingent, or to find out other ways to help (including at peace actions in nearby counties), call (323) 734-6404. Look for our banner at the march!

What's On listings are 10 lines for \$20, e-mail: brussum@pww.org

India: Votantes rechazan la derecha

Por M.K.N. Moorthy
y Terrie Albano

NUEVA DELHI - Los votantes de la India echaron del poder a las fuerzas derechistas nacionalistas hindúes en las elecciones nacionales recientes. Una sorprendente rebelión de trabajadores, campesinos, mujeres, juventud, académicos, gente pobre, minorías religiosas y nacionales tuvo lugar contra la política de la Alianza Nacional Democrática (NDA, por sus siglas en inglés), bajo el liderato del Partido Bharatiya Janata (BJP por sus siglas en inglés) y el primer ministro A. B. Vajpayee. El terremoto político llevó al poder al Partido Congreso de la India y a sus aliados seculares.

Congreso ganó 145 escaños entre los 545 miembros de la cámara baja del Parlamento, que se llama "Lok Sabha". La izquierda, incluyendo a los dos Partidos Comunistas más grandes, el Partido Comunista de India (Marxista) y el Partido Comunista de India, sacó 62 escaños, el número más grande desde 1952. Los partidos izquierdistas prometieron apoyar al gobierno del Partido Congreso, pero no a unirse formalmente con el mismo. Con los otros partidos en la alianza seclar, el Partido Congreso sobrepasará fácilmente el mínimo de 272 escaños que hacen falta para una mayoría.

Al fondo de las elecciones hubo cuestiones que llegan hasta el mismo corazón y alma de la democracia en la India: o un gobierno seclar, o un gobierno de línea dura, fundamentalista, hindú; una política económica que beneficia a los trabajadores y a los pobres, contra una política

que beneficia a las corporaciones y a los súperricos; una política externa independiente contra una política alineada con el imperialismo norteamericano.

Decenas de millones en este país de poco más de mil millones de habitantes se encontraron aún más empobrecidos y marginados durante el período de gobierno derechista. Hay hambre en todas partes, aún mientras las bodegas quedan repletas de comestibles, porque el BJP casi destruyó por completo al sistema de abastecimientos del gobierno. Millones de jóvenes quedan sin trabajo. La privatización ha aumentado la pobreza y el sufrimiento.

Un ejemplo de la rebelión desde abajo ocurrió en el estado de Andra Pradesh (AP), en el sur de India. En las elecciones provinciales, el Partido Telugu Desam gobernante, aliado del BJP, fue derrotado. El actual ministro, Naidu, fue favorito de Wall Street y de los empresarios nacionales por haber iniciado la llamada "economía de alta tecnología". Sin embargo, sufrieron las necesidades del pueblo, desde la falta de agua, de electricidad, y educación. Por lo menos unos 3.000 agricultores murieron en AP por sus condiciones.

"El pueblo ha rechazado la política sectaria-fascista promovida por el BJP-NDA y han sostenido el carácter seclar y democrático del país", dijo el Partido Comunista de la India en una declaración de agradecimiento a los votantes del país. Los votantes "han rechazado el modelo económico seguido hasta ahora, que consistió en ataques contra los trabajadores, contra el bi-

enestar de las masas, contra los pobres en general, y que solo sirvió a los intereses de las multinacionales extranjeras y de los monopolistas nacionales.

"Este nivel de descontento no fue esperado por nosotros. Ahora, la cuestión que enfrentamos es como reunir a todas las fuerzas que trabajaron en contra del BJP", dijo Markishan Singh Surjeet, secretario general del Partido Comunista de la India (Marxista).

Poco después de la victoria del Partido Congreso, su dirigente Sonia Gandhi, nacida en

Italia, rehusó inesperadamente el puesto del primer ministro, quitándole fuerza al BJP, que había prometido una amarga campaña contra ella. El Partido Congreso eligió a Manmohan Singh, un sij, como primer ministro, primera vez para un primer ministro no hindú.

Aunque el Partido Congreso comenzó con los programas económicos neoliberales en 1991, abriendo la India a más inversiones extranjeras y privatizando a entidades del sector público (con Singh como su arquitecto), la influencia de la izquierda sobre

el nuevo gobierno será un factor determinante. Se espera que el nuevo gobierno disminuya la desinversión del sector público, jurando no privatizar unidades del sector público que rinden ganancias.

"El mercado no puede resolver todos los problemas del mundo", dijo Eduardo Faleiro, miembro respetado del Partido Congreso. "Hace falta alguna estructura estatal para los propósitos de la educación, la salud, para aliviar al desempleo".

Se puede comunicar con los autores al pww@pww.org.



Una familia pobre pasa por los detectores de metal en las urnas de los arrabales de Yumana Pushta en Nueva Delhi.

Comunistas exigen renuncia de Rumsfeld

Declaración de la directiva del Partido Comunista de EEUU del 23 de mayo 2004.

La tortura de detenidos iraquíes por la inteligencia militar estadounidense en la infame cárcel Abu Ghraib en Irak es motivo de indignación aquí y en el extranjero. Fotos de la tortura y la humillación de detenidos siguen saliendo a la luz pública.

El escándalo ha crecido para incluir otras instalaciones estadounidenses de detención militar. El Pentágono clasificó como "homicidios" las muertes de ocho prisioneros en custodia estadounidense. Este escándalo ha desenmascarado el engaño cruel de Bush quien ordenó la invasión para "liberar" al pueblo iraquí.

La administración Bush trató desesperadamente de esconder los crímenes que fueron reportados por primera vez por la Cruz Roja Internacional el pasado febrero. Oficiales de inteligencia militar estadounidense le dijeron a la Cruz Roja que entre 70 por ciento y 90 por ciento de los detenidos iraquíes fueron arrestados "equivocadamente".

Ahora quieren echarle la culpa a un puñal de policías militares de las reservas. Mientras que el juicio de un mecánico del Ejército de bajo rango empezó, aviones de guerra estadounidense dispararon contra una boda, matando a 41 iraquíes. Esto comprueba que el baño de sangre de Bush continúa dentro y afuera de Abu Ghraib. Esta salvajada proviene de la misma ocupación y es el resultado inevitable de la "guerra contra el terror" de Bush, que esconde los planes Bush-Cheney de dominación mundial. Esa política ha hecho al mundo un sitio más peligroso, un sitio menos seguro.

El número de muertos solo seguirá subiendo si las tropas

estadounidenses siguen en Irak. Estas deben ser regresadas a casa ahora. Fuerzas de paz de la ONU deben tomar su lugar y la independencia genuina iraquí debe ser restaurada.

George W. Bush tiene que ser considerado responsable, junto con Donald Rumsfeld por estas violaciones flagrantes de las Convenciones de Ginebra. Nosotros nos unimos a la creciente demanda que despidan inmediatamente a Rumsfeld. Nosotros instamos inundar al Congreso con exigencias de bloquear la petición Bush-Cheney por \$25 mil millones más, sin tener que darle cuentas a nadie, para pagar por la ocupación.

No será fácil para Bush y Rumsfeld alejarse de su culpabilidad. No se puede permitir que el Pentágono "se investigue a sí mismo". El Congreso debe escoger un comité especial al estilo Watergate para investigar estos crímenes de guerra. Rumsfeld ordenó el uso de la tortura para "ablandar" a los detenidos para sacar "inteligencia cuestionable". Él ordenó a los comandantes del centro de detención en Guán-tanamo que fueran a Irak y les enseñaran los métodos de tortura que él usó contra 600 "combatientes enemigos" en la instalación estadounidense en Cuba.

La administración está tratando de "cambiar el tema", regresar a sus planes malvados de establecer un régimen títere en Irak y apretar su control del petróleo iraquí y del Medio Oriente entero. Pero el mismo Rumsfeld admitió en testimonio ante la Comisión del Senado sobre los Servicios Armados que él era responsable. Él admitió que él sabía de los crímenes hace meses y no hizo nada para pararlos. Él ni le informó a los líderes del Congreso. La justicia reclama por su despido.

La administración tomó pasos, poco después de 11 de

septiembre, para inmunizarse contra acusaciones por crímenes de guerras mientras seguían su "guerra contra el terror" unilateral y preventiva. Ellos escribieron memorandos legales concluyendo que "ni las Convenciones de Ginebra, ni ninguna ley de guerra aplican al conflicto en Afganistán" y otros conflictos similares.

Bush entonces firmó una orden secreta dándole nuevos poderes a la CIA para establecer centros secretos de detención, algunos administrados por contratistas privados, afuera de EEUU, para interrogar a los detenidos con métodos severos sin precedencia. Acciones subsecuentes de tortura y matanzas evadieron cualquier revisión judicial sea doméstica o extranjera.

Este fue el marco legal para las detenciones y torturas masivas, una ofensiva llena de racismo e intolerancia antimusulmana.

El pueblo norteamericano no aprobó la política de Bush de eximirse y sus agentes de las reglas bajo las leyes estadounidense o internacionales. Una mayoría clara del pueblo ahora piensa que la guerra preventiva de Bush contra una nación que no nos atacó era un error. Las encuestas muestran que el apoyo para Bush están más bajo que nunca. Se han abierto profundas divisiones dentro de las filas republicanas. Las razones dadas por Bush sobre las inexistentes armas de destrucción masiva iraquíes y de los inexistentes lazos iraquíes con Al Qaeda, están desenmascaradas como mentiras.

¡Ahora vienen estos crímenes de guerra atroz! Esta es una administración criminal, un peligro profundo a la paz mundial y a los derechos humanos. Tenemos que sacarlos del poder el próximo 2 de noviembre.

NUESTRO Mundo

SEMANA DEL 5 DE JUNIO DE 2004

**India: Votantes
rechazan derecha**

p 15

**Comunistas exigen
renuncia Rumsfeld**

p 15

Sindicalistas negros movilizan contra derecha

Por Scott Marshall
y Jim Wilkerson

ATLANTA, Georgia – Bajo un banderín proclamando "En camino a las urnas: Construyendo una coalición para la victoria. Vote", sindicalistas afroamericanos hicieron planes para inmovilizar gente para derrotar a la presidencia de George Bush este fin de semana pasado en la 33 Convención Anual de la Coalición de Sindicalistas (CBTU) Negros aquí.

Bill Lucy, presidente de la CBTU, dijo, en su discurso de tono, que la política económica de Bush son las peores para la gente trabajadora desde la época de la gran depresión. Él examinó la historia de la política económica de los republicanos que dicen que si uno ayuda a los ricos, los pobres se benefician. También habló de los ataques contra los programas sociales y contra los sindicatos durante las administraciones de Nixon y después Reagan y el primer Bush. Llaman-

do a George W. Bush el "comandante en robo", él dijo que la política de este Bush son las más desastrosas de todas. Él citó los ataques actuales contra el Seguro Social, pago extra por horas extra, servicios médicos, educación pública y el afán de la administración Bush de ayudar a las corporaciones a enviar empleo a países donde pagan poco.

Recordando la "solución" del presidente durante la Gran Depresión, Herbert Hoover, que los desempleados podían vender manzanas en las calles, Lucy dijo, "Nuestra gente no tienen la intención de vivir en la pobreza en el medio de tanta riqueza no desafiada". Él apuntó que siempre es la clase trabajadora la que reconstruye la riqueza de la sociedad y la nación después de que la avaricia de las corporaciones han arruinado todo.

Lucy dijo que Bush mintió sobre las razones para la guerra en Irak y ensució el nombre de Estados Unidos a través del

mundo. Él dijo que la gente está cansada de la hipocresía de la política extranjera que parece atacar y discriminar contra países poblados por gente de color.

Cecil Roberts, presidente de sindicato Mineros Unidos, denunció la política económica de Bush diciendo que era la "desviación más grande de riqueza de los trabajadores y los pobres a los ricos y las corporaciones en la historia, que no ha resultado en una revolución". Riéndose, él dijo, "Yo no estoy abogando por eso ahora, pero puede ser que no esté muy lejos de eso por la manera como van las cosas".

Él también deploró la guerra en Irak, diciendo era un escogida por Bush y "no una que teníamos que pelear", agregando, "son los pobres, los negros y los hispanos, que están forzados a entrar en los servicios militares por una economía mala y la falta de oportunidades".

El reverendo Jesse Jackson, hijo, habló

a los delegados. Él dijo que los afroamericanos tienen "que ser una minoría con una visión de mayoría" y dio como ejemplo de eso a Martin Luther King, que tuvo una visión que transformó al país. Jackson había trabajado con King antes de su asesinato.

Uno de los días fue dedicado a la Conferencia Nacional de la Mujer del CBTU. La Convención del CBTU que duró cinco días tuvo muchas actividades, incluyendo un día donde los delegados salieron a inscribir votantes. Conquistaron inscribir a 111 nuevos votantes. La CBTU tiene un comité llamado Voces para las Familias Trabajadoras que se concentra en trabajar con los sindicatos para movilizar el voto en las comunidades de afroamericanos, latino y asiáticas y entre el de la mujer. Los organizadores de la convención programaron talleres en como movilizar a los votantes.

Botas vacías para el fin de la guerra

Por Tim Wheeler

WASHINGTON – George W. Bush alabó el valor de los soldados estadounidenses mientras ponía una corona de flores en la Tumba del Soldado Desconocido el Día de Conmemoración. El mismo fin de semana él dedicó un monumento a los muertos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, haciendo el papel del "presidente guerrero" en campaña para un segundo turno en la presidencia. A la misma vez los Amigos Americanos (cuáqueros) hicieron una vigilia y exhibición cerca del Capitolio de cientos de botas militares vacías, simbolizando a los 813 soldados que murieron en una guerra innecesaria e inmoral en Irak y la demanda de que regresen las tropas a casa vivas.

Las botas en fila tenían el nombre, rango, edad y estado de cada uno de los soldados. Cerca en una "muralla" de papel estaban los nombres de los 10 mil civiles iraquíes muertos hasta el momento.

De rodilla al lado de un par de botas estaba Iván Medina de Middletown, Nueva York, cuyo hermano gemelo, Irving, murió el 14 de noviembre 2003 en Irak. Una bomba al lado de la carretera explotó cuando su unidad militar pasaba. Medina le dijo a Nuestro Mundo, "Mi mensaje es que esta guerra tiene un lado humano. El hermano, hijo, o hermana de alguien está muriendo. Yo quiero que el pueblo norteamericano sepa lo maravilloso que era mi hermano como persona. Él quería estudiar, ser un contable. Él quería hacer la diferencia para el pueblo iraquí".

Medina también es un veterano de combate. "Estuve en la Tercera División de Infantería y entré a Irak en la primera ola", él dijo. "Yo nunca estaba en favor de esta guerra. La muerte de mi hermano solo me hizo involucrarme más, hablando claro. Muchos soldados no están contentos con el

presidente y yo estoy aquí para hablar por los que no pueden hablar por ellos mismos. Traigan a los soldados a casa vivos".

Mary Ellen McNish, secretaria general del Comité de Servicio de Amigos Americanos, le dijo a Nuestro Mundo, "El costo humano de esta guerra sube cada día. No hay solución militar, solo soluciones políticas. La ocupación estadounidense de Irak se ha convertido en un problema, no una solución".

Cuando se le preguntó sobre las crecientes exigencias de que el secretario de Defensa Donald Rumsfeld sea despedido por las atrocidades cometidas en la cárcel Abu Ghraib, McNish dijo que su grupo no había tomado una "posición formal", agregando, "Pero mi opinión personal es que Rumsfeld debe irse".

Esta exhibición empezó en la Plaza Federal en Chicago en enero y cruzó el país hasta Los Ángeles donde el grupo exhibió 500 pares de botas. Los muertos en la guerra ahora pasaron los 800 poco antes del Día de Conmemoración. Por lo menos 4.752 se encuentran heridos. Bush y sus compinches han trabajado para quitar la atención a las crecientes bajas mientras su popularidad cae.



La vigilia titulada "Ojos Bien Abiertos: El Costo Humano de la Guerra en Irak" viajará a Boston, Massachusetts; Madison y Lacrosse en Wisconsin; Indianapolis, Indiana; Filadelfia, Pennsylvania; Providence, Rhode Island; y tres ciudades en Ohio.

La exhibición abrió aquí el día después de Bush hablar ante el Colegio de Guerra del Ejército Estadounidense en Carlisle, Pennsylvania. McNish dijo, "Él no ofreció ningún plan para poner fin a esta parodia. Nuestra esperanza es que esta exhibición le dará al pueblo norteamericano una imagen de costo verdadero de esta guerra, que ellos hagan responsable a los políticos".

Fernando Suárez del Solar, de Escondido, California, cuyo hijo Jesús, un infante de marina, murió en Irak, se arrodilló al lado de un par de botas con el nombre de su hijo. Él acabó de regresar de Georgia donde asistió al juicio en corte marcial de Camilo Mejía, soldado con la Guardia Nacional de Florida, que rehusó regresar a Irak. Mejía fue condenado a un año en cárcel militar.

Suárez del Solar le dijo a Nuestro Mundo, "Camilo vio los abusos contra los iraquíes con sus propios ojos. Él rehusó participar en la tortura y le dan la misma sentencia en cárcel que le dieron al soldado que admite que abusó a los detenidos iraquíes. ¡Esto es ridículo! Camilo me dijo que se oponía a la guerra basado en dos razones de principios. Primero, es una guerra por el petróleo. Y segundo, él no participaría en el abuso del pueblo iraquí. ¿Es posible que pongan alguien en la cárcel que le dijo no al abuso mientras dejan en libertad a los grandes comandantes que ordenaron la tortura?".

Suárez del Solar apuntó que Amnistía Internacional designó a Camilo Mejía como un "prisionero por conciencia".