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12

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Fighting pay, benefit cuts— Strikers tell American Axle: 'Show us your profits!'

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Detroit

March 4—More than 3,600 UAW workers at four American Axle automotive supplier plants in Michigan and New York entered their second week on strike.

American Axle is attempting to impose a \$10 wage cut on its entire active workforce, from \$24 an hour to \$14. It wants to eliminate future retiree health care and defined benefit pensions for active workers among other outrageous and deadly concessions.

The corporate assault on American Axle workers continues the take backs imposed on autoworkers through the Delphi and Big 3 contracts. However, unlike at Delphi and the Big 3, where the massive wage cuts were primarily aimed at new hires, and current workers either received buyouts or were allowed to continue earning their current wages, at American Axle the 3,600 active workers are actually being threatened with this massive and unprecedented wage cut.

Many of these workers are former GM workers, since much of American Axle was a spinoff from General Motors. But there is no sign that GM will bail out American Axle like it did Delphi. GM is reeling from the losses it has endured, in part from the cost of that bailout.

The outcome of this struggle will have a huge effect on how widespread the \$14-an-hour wage will be in the entire auto workforce, as the Big 3 contracts—at least at GM and Chrysler—never specified how many workers actually will be defined as noncore and subject to the 50 percent reduction in wages. This strike has huge implications for the entire working class, as it once again tests the ability of the workers to fight for and maintain decent wages in this era of globalization.

As of now the strike at American Axle has forced the idling of six GM assembly plants in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Ontario, Canada.

The first week of the strike GM stopped production of its GMC Sierra and Chevrolet Silverado pickup trucks at plants in Pontiac and Flint, Mich., and Fort Wayne, Ind.

Starting the first day of the second week of the strike, GM claims plants in Moraine, Ohio—a plant that assembles SUVs, including the Chevrolet Trailblazer and GMC Envoy—will be shut down due to lack of parts. In addition, GM said it expected a Mishawaka, Indiana, plant run by Humvee maker AM General to run out of parts for its Hummer H2.

Other GM facilities with possible shutdowns forthcoming due to their reliance on American Axle parts include plants devoted to high-profit SUV production in Arlington, Texas; Janesville, Wisconsin; and Silao, Mexico.

At this point various auto industry analysts speculate that GM might be using the strike to reduce their inventories due to over-production and the inability of the workers to buy back those products. (Depending on the type of vehicle, the time to replace inventories is on average two months.)

We all face the same enemy

At the company's world headquarters in Hamtramck, a small city inside of Detroit, members of UAW Local 235, with more than 1,900 members from the production plant, and Local 262, with 300 members from the forge plant, are picketing nine plant gates around the clock.

Despite freezing cold, driving snow and rain during the first week of the strike in Hamtramck, workers—Black, white, Arab, Latin@—and their supporters are still moving strong on the picket lines, hoisting or wearing their "UAW On Strike" placards, staying warm with barrels of blazing firewood and with propane heaters, receiving provisions from other unions and community supporters and keeping their fightback spirit in motion.

Lawrence H. Moore, the Union Label Chairperson and Layout Inspector of UAW Local 898 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, joined the

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Michigan protest opposes siege of Gaza

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Snow could not dampen the spirits of protesters of all ages who came to Dearborn City Hall in Dearborn, Mich. on March 4. They came to express their pain and anger at the U.S. government-supported Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza that killed more than 100 and injured hundreds more, including children, this week alone. More actions to mobilize understanding and support outside the Arab community are planned. On Mar. 6 a day-long picket of the McNamara Federal Building in downtown Detroit will oppose U.S. funding for Israeli terror and a widened war in the Middle East. See page 11. —Cheryl LaBash

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WORKERS WORLD

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Workers World in 1967

The battle of Newark has at last brought to clear visibility the true nature of the Black liberation struggle as having both a national and class character at the same time.

Editor's Note: Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout 2008, we intend to share with our readers some of the paper's content over the past half century. The following article on the historic Newark rebellion was originally published on the front page of WW in the issue dated July 20, 1967. The article was written by the late theoretical leader and chairperson of Workers World Party, Sam Marcy. The news article alongside Marcy's article explains that the rebellion began on July 13, 1967, the day after Newark police arrested a Black cab driver, John William Smith, for driving "too close behind a police car." They beat Smith in the police station and charged him with resisting arrest. During his arraignment Smith shouted into a microphone: "There was absolutely no resistance! That is a cover story. They caved in my ribs, busted a hernia and put a hole in my head. They did the damage."

When word spread about what had happened to Smith, the Black masses came out and pelted the station. Mayor Hugh Addonizio ordered an "investigation" of charges of police brutality to be carried out by the police themselves. The uprising then began and lasted four days. Police stations were attacked and squad cars and stores burned. The ruling class called in hundreds of state troopers and 2,000 national guardsmen who together with the police killed 25 men, women and children and wounded more than a thousand.

The legacy of gross unemployment and police brutality, the root cause of the 1967 rebellion, continues forty-one years later in Newark, with an official poverty rate of nearly one-third of the population.



Long live the Newark Rebellion Glorious answer to master class Armed resistance turning point in struggle

By Sam Marcy

They did not die in vain. Those who were brutally murdered, mercilessly beaten, shot at, wounded and jailed will forever be remembered by the oppressed and exploited everywhere as symbols of glorious resistance to the unendurable oppression of a master class whose arrogance, cruelty, and indifference to human life has few parallels in history.

The embattled people of Newark have written a truly momentous chapter in the history of the liberation struggle. Their deeds are still reverberating throughout the four corners of the earth. It is no exaggeration to say that they have drawn the attention of practically all humankind and demonstrated, by their example, the indomitable will and inflexible determination of the Black People to achieve their freedom at whatever cost.

The ruling class and its servitors, its pious priests, and pliant press, its gunmen and its executioners—all who helped, each in his own way, to subdue the rebellious people—will forever be pilloried by later generations of all humankind.

"Looters," "snipers," "thieves," "rioters on a rampage": these are the ancient epithets hurled at all the oppressed wherever and whenever they seek to unshackle themselves from slavery. Have not these very epithets been hurled at all revolutionary uprisings beginning with the great Peasant Uprisings of the 14th and 15th centuries, through the French Revolution and all the way down

the line up to and including the latest revolutionary convulsions?

In its historic contest for class supremacy with older social formations, the bourgeoisie committed unbelievable crimes and inflicted the most wanton destruction in order to expropriate the land and property of entire social classes, peoples, and vast continents. Invariably the bourgeoisie used the most unmitigated terror: conquest by fire and sword.

By comparison, the so-called "lootings" in Newark, about which the bourgeois press raves so much, are merely individual expropriations incidental to the struggle. They are in reality pitifully small and born out of the depths of simple hunger and deprivation. Yet the bourgeois press squealed like a stuck pig as though these incidents were a death blow to its entire social system.

Newark signifies a crossing of the Rubicon. In a certain sense a turning point in the struggle has been reached. Both the oppressor and the oppressed have for a long time sensed its coming and have long anticipated it. Now it has descended with a suddenness and might that has literally shaken the racist structure to its very foundations. The Newark experience demonstrates that the volcanic character of explosions in the ghettos are of a general and abiding nature and can in no way be attributed to temporary, conjunctural, or accidental factors as the master class would have the world believe.

The Newark rebellion exceeds in social significance, if not in magnitude, the historic upheaval in Watts. Newark came after Watts, after Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo and other cities. By the time the tidal wave of rebellion reached Newark the masses instinctively knew the outcome of the uneven struggle, and the measure of the range of the enemy for vengeance.

The cruel and inhuman vengeance visited on the populace in the rebellious ghettos by the terrorist apparatus of the bourgeoisie could not but leave a marked imprint on the consciousness of the Black people of Newark.

There is deep and profound meaning to a battle where the combatants can gauge fairly well that its immediate outcome will be unfavorable, but nevertheless still are willing to engage the enemy spontaneously, with audacity and determination. It is this element which imparts an entirely new character to the struggle.

While the immediate result may appear unfavorable in the sense that the people were overcome by sheer overwhelming brute force, the battle of Newark can in no way be regarded as a defeat. On the contrary, the very character of the "defeat" lays the basis for ultimate victory. For the true import of Newark lies in the fact that it galvanized as never before the Black masses in an enduring bond which will not succumb to the mere employment of naked violence alone.

The spontaneous character of the ghetto uprisings is both their strength and their weakness. No great modern social revolution has ever taken place without it being preceded by a spontaneous convulsion of the revolutionary masses and their direct intervention in the political arena, often in defiance of their own leaders and always in contravention of the acceptable norms of political behavior set by their oppressors.

Without the masses first taking matters into their own

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Violent Radicalization & Homegrown Terrorism Act

Bill seeks 'to stop dissent at its earliest point'

By Greg Butterfield
New York

With little publicity and overwhelming bipartisan support, the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Act of 2007 passed in the House of Representatives last Oct. 23 by a vote of 404-6. The bill is now before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee.

Budgeted at \$22 million over four years, the legislation would establish a national commission "to examine and report upon the facts and causes of violent radicalization, homegrown terrorism, and ideologically-based violence in the United States." The commission would have the power to convene hearings, issue reports, establish a university-based "center of excellence" and recommend new laws.

Workers World spoke with attorney Kamau Franklin about the real agenda behind the bill. Franklin is the Racial Justice Fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and a leading organizer of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. He's been in the forefront of alerting the people's movement about this legislation.

Workers World: What are some provisions of the Violent Radicalization Act that activists need to be aware of?

Kamau Franklin: The thing that strikes me most is its broad definition of ideology, radicalism and the confluence of force and violence as almost the same thing. This has really strong meaning for activists because it's a way of targeting dissent and radical behavior and potentially scaring people off from participating in activities meant to influence or change the government by putting everything in the box of "terrorism."

Another part of the bill that's scary is its focus on the Internet, which has been labeled a sort of free speech zone. They

are targeting Internet sites that advocate different economic and social structures, or advocate beliefs that differ from the standard paradigms of U.S. democracy and capitalism. If the government and corporate contractors are allowed to start regulating Internet content, that could be extremely troubling for activists.

Finally, although not spelled out in the legislation, the goal of setting up commissions, conducting studies and issuing reports is to lead to enacting laws or extensions of existing laws to criminalize radical action and thought—for example, by attempting to federalize protest laws.

Under existing local laws, if I engage in a protest to advocate for my beliefs, if I engage in civil disobedience action, I might be charged with disorderly conduct or obstruction of governmental administration—relatively minor charges. In a federalized system, you could potentially be labeled with committing terrorist acts for these same activities, because they say you're using force to influence government policy—that's how broad the bill's language is.

WW: Some moderate NGOs and nonprofits have spoken in favor of the legislation, saying that at least now the government is talking about studying the roots of terrorism. How do you respond?

KF: I don't believe that's the function of the government or what it is intending to do. If the Congress wanted to study U.S. foreign policy and what effect it has on making people anti-U.S., then that's what they should do. But they're not looking at that in that framework. They're trying to individualize every action, as though people couldn't possibly be reacting to U.S. policy. "We have no idea where these things are coming from, so let's study these individuals and find out why they're so crazy."

Even if you disagree with the tactics used by groups like the Taliban or so-

called Al-Qaida, you can still trace a historical pattern in which their beliefs and tactics developed. A lot of it came out of joint actions with the CIA to drive the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan.

These calls for looking into things miss the point, because a lot of it is based on U.S. policies in the Middle East, such as their undaunted support for Israeli killings and theft of land from the Palestinians and their support for dictatorial regimes.

WW: It seems like the legislation's focus on "ideologically-based violence" is an extension into the domestic arena of labeling international revolutionary movements as terrorist organizations. Besides protesters, this language could also bring the terrorist label against anyone espousing mass action to overthrow capitalism or Malcolm X's doctrine of "by any means necessary" and armed self-defense.

KF: That's the gist of where they're headed. Make it so that folks are scared of any talk, any ideology, any thinking or theoretical belief system that says capitalism is not the way to benefit the most people over the longest time. They are trying to root out any conversations about the role of the capitalist government and military in other people's countries.

I don't think it has anything to do with stopping terrorism; it has to do with stopping dissent at its earliest point, to muzzle views that could make people think that another world is possible, that if we work collectively, we can make changes.

They want a situation where you can't debate whether Hamas or Hezbollah, for example, are not simply "terrorist organizations" that want to blow everything up, that these organizations have historical roots in their own societies, that they have the backing of millions, that they



PHOTO: CCRJUSTICE.ORG
Kamau Franklin

have an ideology that goes far beyond destroying Israel and is rooted in their belief in self-determination and against the land-grab by people who are not indigenous to the population.

We've been through a period when the U.S. didn't feel militarily restricted. Now, because of the international backlash, the struggle is about what period are we going to go into next. Are they going to continue to dominate the political conversation on terrorism and military intervention, or are other forces going to find a way to create the ideological space again to start talking about the different factors, about the role of U.S. imperialism, and receive attention from the public.

WW: What is CCR doing to oppose the bill?

KF: We've generated a good analysis of why people should oppose it, because it's not just a commission, it's a commission with powers to make recommendations. Because it's based in Congress, those recommendations can easily become laws.

We are now building a coalition to develop strategies to kill the bill by making sure it never leaves the Senate committee. We want to craft actions to target senators who are on the fence or who support it. Even if they don't share a broad view that this is bad for dissent, if they have the view that this is bad because the resources should be directed elsewhere, that's good enough.

For more background, read the fact sheet, "Here Come the Thought Police: The Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007" at ccrjustice.org.

Workers World in 1967: Long live the Newark Rebellion

Continued from page 2

hands it is doubtful if any of the great revolutions of modern times would have been successful. The word revolution itself has practically and almost always been synonymous with direct and spontaneous interventions of the popular masses themselves. Only afterward have the leaders acted and, in the celebrated cases of successful revolutions, shown the path to victory. Naturally, as in the case of Newark and other ghetto uprisings, the masses acted only under continuous provocation and under conditions of insufferable oppression.

The master class has for a long time entertained the notion that it can cultivate and develop whole stratum of officialdom in the Afro-American community which would act as its agent among the masses, hold them in tow, extinguish the fires of rebellion whenever they occur, and stabilize the conditions of exploitation and oppression. But the uprisings in the ghettos and the course they have taken have shown beyond doubt the utter hollowness of any such notions. For the masses followed their own inclinations and instincts and were deaf to any who came with special pleading for surrender.

The frequent failure of established leadership to give voice, direction, and organization to the hopes and aspirations of the popular masses in periods of social crisis has been worldwide in character and has its origins in the great social power of capital over the laboring masses and in the conservatism of the old social order generally. It would be strange if this did not in some measure also apply to the Afro-American community.

In the crucible of prolonged rebellion, revolutionary leadership is sure to develop and measure up to the great historic opportunity for liberation.

The battle of Newark has at last brought to clear visibility the true nature of the Black liberation struggle as having both a national and class character at the same time.

The authoritative organ of U.S. finance capital, the New York Times, on July 16th, makes the extraordinary admission that "the United States is torn by a confrontation between the two nations that inhabit it, the 11 percent the census calls Negroes and the great majority, those who many young Negroes call 'Whitey.'"

"Confrontations between the two nations that inhabit it"! This is a true

sociological generalization which this organ of the ruling class is forced to make in order to bring its own conceptions in harmony with reality so as to be able to better cope with the rising tide of Black liberation. Marxists and Leninists of course should have always known that there are two nations within the framework of one giant imperialist state.

What is of course missing in the Times' admission of the "two nations" is the class character of each of them. Given the imperialist character of the state and the social system which it represents, it has been obligatory to characterize the white nation as the oppressing one and the Black nation as the oppressed. This has often been befogged and clouded by an overgrowth of bourgeois ideology, which denies the independent character of the Afro-American movement and its right to determine its own independent destiny, free from the will of the oppressing nation and the master class which dominates both nations.

More often than not, exponents of bourgeois liberal ideology have sought to make the Afro-American liberation movement an appendage to their politics and in the service of capitalism. They not only deny the independent character of the

movement but hinder its development by trying to obliterate its national and class character. The scope and breadth of the present movement has made their theoretical pretensions ridiculous especially in the light of recent events.

However, clarifying the nature of the Afro-American liberation struggle does not give a prescription for white workers and progressives to preach any kind of separatism whatsoever but merely to redouble their efforts for solidarity with the Black people and against the virulence of racism, and for the right of self-determination for Black people; that is, the right to determine for themselves their own path to freedom and equality with others.

The urgent task for the white workers and progressives generally today is to demonstrate in words and deeds genuine working class solidarity with the Black people in the current unfolding struggle and to stick with them through all their trials and tribulations. This in turn will also help the white workers to free themselves from bondage to "their own" imperialist masters and revive the historical conditions for the common emancipation of both black and white from capitalist slavery. □

Ohio job losses worst in seven decades

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

In the days leading up to the Democratic presidential primary, the media spotlight has been on Ohio. The most critical issues facing Ohio workers, however, aren't necessarily front page news. Stuck on the business pages was the fact that from 2000 to 2007 the net job loss in Ohio was the worst since 1939—the tail end of the Great Depression.

Calculating the number of new jobs created and the number of existing jobs eliminated, a study last month by the American Trade Manufacturing Action Coalition concluded that Ohio had 209,000 fewer jobs now than seven years ago, a decrease of 3.7 percent. Only Michigan suffered more, with a decrease of more than 9 percent.

Not only have jobs left Ohio, but the types of jobs being cut are reducing the income of those still working. Gone are 236,000 manufacturing positions in steel, auto and other industries—a catastrophic drop of 23.3 percent. Metropolitan areas have lost anywhere from 17.5 percent (Akron) to 46.9 percent (Springfield) of their industrial employment. The inner cities are hurting the most; in Cleveland, for example, some African-American neighborhoods have adult unemployment

at well over 50 percent. The massive foreclosure crisis is inseparable from the crisis of jobs.

While the loss of a job is indeed a terrible misfortune for a worker, to say these 236,000 good union jobs simply got “lost” lets the bosses and the economic system off the hook. These facts and figures are symptomatic of a deep, deep crisis of capitalist overproduction, coupled with a two-pronged corporate strategy of slashing employment and driving down wages. The most recent job cuts follow more than two decades of reindustrialization (really deindustrialization) going back to the late 1970s. As Sam Marcy wrote in 1980 in “Reindustrialization, the Menace Behind the Promise”:

“Now that the U.S. has been slowly but surely losing its preponderant position in world trade and commerce as a result of the inroads made by its imperialist rivals, it has awakened to the need to retool and reequip its industrial apparatus. The dimensions that this entails are of such proportions as to be beyond any one industrial giant or industry. They involve a vast outlay by the capitalist government and a huge intensification of the rate of exploitation of the working class on a scale unparalleled in U.S. history. To embark upon such a path will put them on a collision course with the working

class, upon whose back the retooling expenses will ultimately fall.”

What was in an embryonic stage when Marcy first addressed the looming threat has become a full-grown monstrosity. It has destroyed millions of livelihoods with no end in sight.

What does the Democratic Party plan, on the eve of the primary, to do to address the crisis? The candidates are offering band-aid solutions for a gaping wound. They say they will renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement—which was passed by a Democratic Congress and signed by a Democratic president, the spouse of one of the current presidential candidates. They want to raise the minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour—by 2011 or 2012! They will give tax breaks to companies that “keep” jobs here. In other words, we pay those who have created so much destruction to not destroy even more.

There should be an immediate moratorium on layoffs and plant closings, as well as foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs. The minimum wage should be at least doubled, immediately. Fine and jail any CEO who refuses to comply!

“Reindustrialization, the Menace Behind the Promise” can be read at www.workers.org.



WWW.PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

in an incentive/retirement plan, and \$1 million in “other” compensation. Dauch is president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

American Axle smells blood after the UAW International's concessions, particularly the two-tier wage structure first implemented with supplier Delphi, then Dana Corp. and then continuing this trend amid more concessions with the Big 3 in fall 2007. The ideology undergirding these concessions is that labor is responsible for the bosses' mismanagement and the capitalist economic crisis workers are now facing must be crushed. These crises aren't our doing, and it isn't our responsibility to bail them out over and over.

What's the real 'savings'?

“Our labor restructuring thesis for American Axle was not dependent on Big 3 contract breakthroughs, but the historic union concessions increase our confidence in the potential cost savings,” wrote Lehman Brothers to Reuters News Oct. 29, 2007.

If the restructuring process of the auto industry continues it will drive down the standard of living for the entire working class—exactly what the bosses are after. And in Detroit, where the metro area is already in an economic depression as well as having the highest foreclosure rate in the country, and suffering the effects of over \$13 billion in taxpayer money going to the Iraq war, these cuts would be beyond disastrous for tens of thousands of workers, their loved ones and the communities where they live.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Georgia fire kills 13 workers

Airborne sugar dust ignited in the Imperial Sugar Co. refinery in Port Wentworth, Ga., near Savannah on Feb. 7. The blast killed 13 workers, eight immediately, and injured 14, with 11 still listed in critical condition nearly a month later. (www.wltx.com, March 4)

Fifteen months ago, the U.S. Chemical Safety Board recommended new regulations to prevent dust explosions. Their research showed 281 such explosions between 1980 and 2005 that killed 119 workers and injured 718 others. A quarter of those explosions occurred in sugar plants similar to the Imperial site. (Savannah Morning News, March 4)

On March 3, two unions—the Food and Commercial Workers and the Teamsters—filed a petition with the Department of Labor demanding an emergency standard for dust-hazard controls. Also on March 3, legislation mandating safety regulations to prevent combustible-dust explosions was introduced in the House of Representatives. (Morris News Service, March 4)

Blacks, Latin@s win bias suit against NYC Parks Dept.

On Feb. 26, New York City agreed to settle a federal class-action lawsuit brought on behalf of 3,500 current and formerly employed Black and Latin@ workers who charged the Department of Parks and Recreation with systematic discrimination in awarding jobs and setting salaries. In addition to paying the workers more than \$20 million in back pay and compensatory damages, the city also agreed to new pay scales, promotion practices and oversight procedures. (New York Times, Feb. 27)

Though the city did not admit to wrongdoing and long-time Parks commissioner Henry J. Stern denied charges of discrimination, court documents show that 92.9 percent of employees earning less than \$20,000 a year were Black or Latin@ in 2000, while only 14.2 percent of those earning between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year were Black and Latin@.

End modern-day slavery in the fields

The struggle of immigrant tomato pickers in Florida, led by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, launched a new phase of its Campaign for Fair Food on Feb. 27. Its national petition calls on Burger King to join Taco Bell, McDonalds and other fast-food chains to work with the CIW to improve wages and working conditions and end human rights violations that amount to modern-day slavery in Florida fields. The petition also indicates that signers will be willing to boycott Burger King if the company doesn't comply with CIW demands. The petitions will be presented to Burger King at its corporate headquarters in Miami later this spring.

To sign the petition, go to www.ciw-online.org. CIW notes that the petition honors the 200th anniversary of the 1808 U.S. ban against importing slaves and was inspired by strategies used by the abolitionist movement. Meanwhile, the Student/Farmworker Alliance, long-time supporters of CIW's campaign, has called for a national day of action—on campuses, in schools and in communities—against Burger King on March 31.

Collective bargaining for academic workers

Two states are considering legislation that would allow academic workers the right to choose collective bargaining. On Feb. 19, the Wisconsin State Senate voted for legislation that would allow 17,000 faculty and academic staff in the University of Wisconsin system to form unions. On Feb. 20, the Maryland House of Delegates heard testimony from University of Maryland graduate employees on a bill that would give them and adjunct faculty—a total of 10,000 workers—the right to form unions. (American Federation of Teachers press release, Feb. 21) □

American Axle strike

Continued from page 1

workers in Hamtramck on the picket line in a driving rain March 3. Moore is one of many hundreds of labor and community supporters participating in solidarity work for those on strike. This includes numerous local businesses around the plant who have donated food and other provisions to the locals and many local residents dropping by the picket lines at all hours or honking their vehicle horns in support of the strikers.

“All of the strikers let me know for sure that they're in it for the long haul or as long as it takes. And they really appreciate the solidarity and the help from other locals. They invited all locals to come down, even if just to say hi or blow your horn as you drive by,” Moore told Workers World at the Local 235 union hall where workers warmed up together and/or received a hot meal or beverage from the kitchen staff.

Added Moore: “All unions need to work together for solidarity. We all face the same struggle. We all face the same enemy that's trying to destroy union jobs everywhere. Good union jobs are important. If workers in our state and country lose our ability to maintain unions we will fall by the wayside as workers and they'll take everything from us that we've worked so hard and given our blood, sweat and tears to earn.”

The other UAW locals on strike against American Axle are Local 2093 in Three Rivers, Mich., with 800 members, and Local 846 with 600 members at a Tonawanda, N.Y., forging plant and a Cheektowaga, N.Y., machining plant. Local 424 represents workers in Buffalo, N.Y., at a plant that was shutdown before the strike. All five plants are governed by a UAW master

agreement with American Axle.

Open the books!

The workers at American Axle have been on the picket line since 12:01 a.m. Feb. 26 after the UAW International called an unfair labor practice strike over what the union says is the company's refusal to disclose financial information to the UAW for good faith bargaining for the next master agreement.

“American Axle has not provided us with the proper information we need to bargain a fair and adequate contract for our members, which led us up to this point right here. The UAW has filed an unfair labor practice against the company,” Adrian R. King, president of Local 235 in Hamtramck told Workers World the evening of March 3.

Added King, who is African-American: “They don't want to show us the books; they don't want to show us the profits. They don't want to show us how they're allocated, which again takes us back to this ULP strike. And we're going to see it all the way through. If we let them get away with this it's open season.”

American Axle is lying when it says it needs to stay “competitive” with other GM suppliers such as Delphi and Dana Corp. “American Axle can afford to treat workers fairly. The company earned \$37 million in profits last year on sales of \$3.25 billion. American Axle has cut its U.S. workforce in half since 2004, but continues to expand overseas with facilities in 12 countries.” (blog.aflcio.org)

Richard Dauch, president of American Axle, is floating on a golden parachute. His total 2007 compensation is \$9,118,649, which includes a \$1.34 million salary, a \$3.9 million bonus, \$2.56 million in stock awards, \$1.2 million

Border Watch strikes out

Solidarity with immigrants wins the day

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

For more than a year, the racist organization Border Watch has tried to terrorize day laborers in the Houston area. But since the beginning, activists and workers have tracked their moves, educated themselves about their rights, and worked side by side to combat and outmaneuver the racists.

Juan and Noemi Alvarez, with the Latin American Organization for Immigrant Rights, have visited all the day labor sites in Houston regularly for several years, learning from the workers where and when BW would show up.

BW's goal is to intimidate workers and, when they can provoke fights, have them arrested. They get in the workers' faces with video cameras and videotape the cars and license plates of people who pick them up for work.

For a time it seemed like BW was retreating, since every time they showed up to harass the workers, the workers would call the Alvarizes and they and other progressive activists would immediately show up at the site.

But about four months ago BW began a campaign in Spring, Texas, a suburb north of Houston that had once been an all-white neighborhood. They found a large group of mainly Latino workers gathering to find work at a gas station and convenience store owned by a Pakistani immigrant.

Although the BW presence had been declining in Spring for almost two months, about 17 of them came out two weeks ago. Day laborers, local residents and activists were able to hold the area in front of the store and keep most of the racists at a distance. But BW leader Curtis Collier announced that they would move into the area the next week regardless of whether activists were already there.

The progressive organizations that had been working the Spring site since last November called for a large turnout, stressing that they did not want a physical confrontation, but they weren't going to let BW retake the area used in the past to videotape and harass the day laborers.

BW boasted they would retake a grassy

area in front of a store and gas station, where day laborers gather, on March 1. But on that day, activists gathered before sunrise at the site, forcing the two BW members who arrived at 6:00 a.m. to sit across the street all day with their video cameras and flags.

With a strong turnout of community members and activists, BW was not able to carry out their threat. Workers were hired out for the day without incident.

Joining BW that day was a racist Harris County sheriff's lieutenant, Louis Guthrie, who stood there wearing his badge and gun on his belt. Guthrie is a candidate for constable and activists have had picket lines outside the Texas early-voting site in Spring to let people know where he stands on workers' rights.

The demonstrations in solidarity with the workers will continue until BW leaves the area and leaves the workers to do what they gather to do—put in an honest day's work so they can take care of their families.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

The demonstrations are being organized by the Latin American Organization for Immigrant Rights, Mexicanos en Acción, Progressive Workers Organizing

Committee, Houston Anti-Racist Action, Los Patriotas Latinos, Irish Unity Committee, America for All, CRECEN, and the International Socialist Organization. □

Iraq war and the recession

By Gary Wilson

Is the Iraq War the reason the U.S. economy is heading into recession?

That's the reason put forward by Nobel-prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz.

Stiglitz, once the chief economist at the World Bank and now a professor at Columbia University, detailed his view in a full hour interview on Pacifica Radio's Democracy Now Feb. 29. He and Linda Bilmes of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government were on the show to promote their newly released book, "The Three Trillion Dollar War."

Stiglitz and Bilmes estimate that the total cost of the war is \$3.3 trillion, compared with the \$50 billion to \$60 billion the Bush administration said would be the total cost at the time the war was launched. Today, the White House estimates the total cost at \$500 billion.

Stiglitz says that the Iraq War is now the second-most expensive in U.S. history

after World War II and the second-longest after Vietnam. No one disputes this.

His view is that the Iraq War is a hidden cause of the current credit crisis. He says that the Federal Reserve responded to the massive financial drain of the war by flooding the economy with cheap credit. That led to a housing bubble, which is now collapsing and pulling the economy down into a recession.

This view has an appeal for those who are against the war and who know in their bones that the war is not good for Iraq and not good for the people of the U.S. And while it is true that the costs of the war are outrageous—a small fraction of that \$3.3 trillion could have built quality housing for everyone in New Orleans, for example—Stiglitz and Bilmes have exposed only a part of the beast behind the economic downturn while ignoring the whole beast.

Perhaps Professor Stiglitz's other new book is helpful in understanding

his agenda. That book is titled "Making Globalization Work." Globalization is the current codeword used by academics and the media for imperialism, the kind of imperialism that V.I. Lenin described as the ultimate stage of capitalism.

Stiglitz's report on the \$3.3 trillion war isn't meant to expose the core of the problem. It focuses on the failure of the war to advance "globalization." In fact, he deliberately throws up smoke by claiming the one to gain from the war is not Big Oil. Instead he asserts that the war has "moved wealth away from the U.S. and towards places like, say, Abu Dhabi" because the war has driven oil prices from \$25 a barrel when it started to over \$100 a barrel today.

That's a straight coverup. He could more honestly say that Big Oil has been the primary winner of the Iraq War. ExxonMobil reported on Feb. 1 the largest profits ever recorded by a U.S. company, \$40.6 billion in 2007. ExxonMobil is 100 percent U.S. owned and controlled.

As for the current turn toward a recession, the war is certainly a major factor in the downturn. But what about the subprime credit crisis? Karl Marx in "Capital" showed that capitalist crises usually show up first in the credit business or the stock market. This makes it appear that credit or banking or stock market speculation is the reason for the crisis.

To many, the subprime credit crisis and the housing bubble appear to be the cause of the downturn. But it is actually a reflection of a crisis in capitalist production.

The stock market and the credit market are the most sensitive barometers of capitalism and they reflect exactly all the fluctuations and changes that take place in capitalist production. The credit crisis is, in reality, a consequence of a production crisis.

Capitalist production is not for direct use. Capitalist commodities are produced in order to make a profit. Profits are all that matter to the capitalists. The crisis comes when the capitalist fails to make a "normal" profit.

What Stiglitz and Bilmes leave out is that it is a crisis of capitalist production that's turning the economy toward a recession or possibly worse. And the only way to stop it is to get rid of capitalism. □

American Axle strike

Continued from page 4

Although the corporate media have been writing that the American Axle workers are making between \$60-79 an hour, with wages and benefits combined, the actual figures are much lower, according to the strikers. The average wage for a production worker in Hamtramck is \$24 and a skilled trades worker makes \$27 an hour. Therefore, these workers are, on average, making only about \$50-55 thousand a year for a 40-hour week before taxes—not much, as inflation and cost of living expenses steadily increase. Thus if American Axle had their way the workers at the company now would plummet into poverty within days.

American Axle was created in 1994 when GM spun off five U.S. plants making axles and drive line components, employing approximately 6,500 UAW members. Today there are 3,600 members in four plants. Eighty percent of the company's products are sold to GM.

Since 1994 the company's expansion to 29 plants internationally, including recently moving machines to a nonunion plant in Oxford, Mich., has been possible due to the slashing of jobs through buy-

outs, speedups, attrition and a plant closing in Buffalo.

With its move to Oxford, American Axle has brazenly made it clear that its only allegiance is to profit and it will use any weapon in its arsenal, including one of its most potent—attempting to pit workers in the U.S. against workers in other countries. The only allegiance American Axle and other capitalist corporations have is to profit on the backs of workers, whether those workers are in Detroit, Mexico, Indiana, China or India. Thus workers' organizations, in particular unions such as the UAW, must have an internationalist program active on the ground that combats chauvinism in all its forms and works tirelessly to unite workers of all nations.

They would foster protectionism to have us think it is workers in other countries who are "stealing our jobs," when the only true threat to our jobs is the capitalist drive to maximize profits. The exploiting class that circles the globe scours the planet for the cheapest source of labor and materials. The only thing that ever stops them is the might of workers and their allies united to fight back.

A job is a right!

During the Flint sit-down strike of 1937 the workers asserted that their jobs were theirs; in essence that a job is a right! The right to a job is a human right. Our communities have a community property right to these jobs and the tax revenues on which they depend.

As the strike continues at American Axle these thoughts are also on the minds of many workers there.

Local 235 president Bill Alford Jr. remarked: "Our people aren't going to tolerate substandard wages or any type of benefit cuts. You can't sell that to the membership. People are used to a certain way of life and then all of a sudden you're going to uproot them and take their money, take their benefits? The UAW membership isn't going to stand for that type of reduction in their standard of living."

The outcome of this strike rests on the mobilization and organization of the rank and file and their supporters. The Gettelfinger UAW leadership's acceptance of wage cuts to "preserve" auto jobs has led the workers into an unending series of take backs and concessions. The American

Continued on page 10

At U.N. meeting in Geneva

U.S. gov't cited for New Orleans housing crisis

By LeiLani Dowell

In the midst of the ongoing aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a joint statement by two United Nations advisors—one on housing, one on minority rights—has called on the U.S. government to stop the demolition of public housing in New Orleans and defend the human rights of the city's Black residents and internally displaced persons.

The statement was issued by Miloon Kothari, the special rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and Gay McDougall, the independent expert on minority issues, during a meeting of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva.

The declaration cited the lack of consultation with the affected communities regarding the demolition of public hous-

ing developments, the increasing cost of rents and mortgages, and reports showing more than 12,000 homeless in the New Orleans metropolitan area. "These demolitions, therefore, could effectively deny thousands of African-American residents their right to return to housing from which they were displaced by the hurricane," they stated. (UN News Service, Feb. 28)

Although "the authorities claim that the demolition of public housing is not intentionally discriminatory," (Associated Press, Feb. 29) Kothari and McDougall stated, "The disproportionate impact on poorer and predominantly African-American residents and former residents would result in the denial of internationally recognized human rights." (UN News Service, Feb. 28)

A delegation of more than 100 activists, organized by the U.S. Human Rights Network (www.ushrnetwork.org) under

the leadership of Ajamu Baraka had traveled to Geneva to challenge the U.S. government's report to the U.N. monitoring body. The delegation included a group of organizers focused on the rights of Katrina survivors and internally displaced people. Other delegates included Kali Akuno, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and People's Hurricane Relief Fund; Mayaba Liebenthal, Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence; Monique Harden, Advocates from Environmental Human Rights (AEHR); Brenda Stokely, NYC Katrina/Rita Solidarity Committee; and Katie Schwartzmann, ACLU-NO (New Orleans).

Kothari and McDougall's statement was issued two weeks after tests revealed that formaldehyde fumes in FEMA trailers and mobile homes, used to house survivors of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, were at toxic levels. The chemical preservative, which is

commonly used in construction, was classified as a carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 2004.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported on Feb. 14 that tests conducted on 519 trailers and mobile homes revealed fumes that were, on average, five times higher than the exposure in modern homes. More than 35,000 survivors currently reside in these facilities.

According to the Associated Press, "The formaldehyde levels in some trailers were found to be high enough to cause breathing problems in children, the elderly or people who already have respiratory trouble, CDC Director Julie Gerberding said. About 5 percent had levels high enough to cause breathing problems even in people who do not ordinarily have respiratory trouble, she said." (Feb. 15)

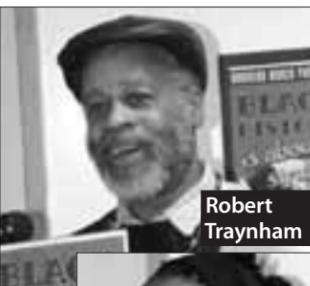
FEMA officials had ignored complaints by trailer occupants—beginning as far back as 2006—of a series of ailments, including nosebleeds, difficulty breathing and headaches. Now it says it is rushing to, once again, find temporary housing for these survivors before the summer makes the fumes worse. □



Larry Holmes



Dorothea Peacock



Robert Traynham

Boston Black History forum

Obama campaign, economic crisis analyzed

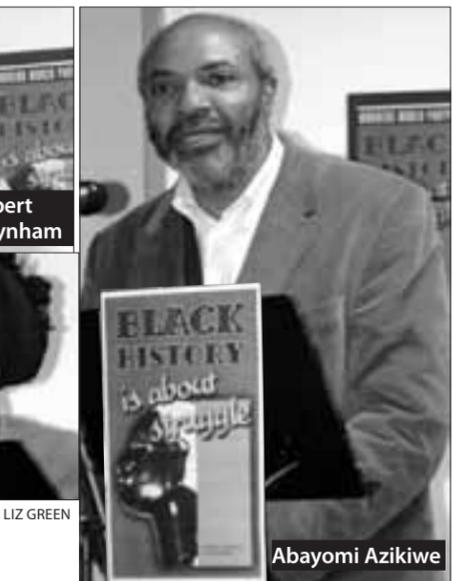
A multinational crowd filled the room at the Cultural Cafe in Boston March 1 for Workers World Party's Black History Month forum. The crowd was warmly welcomed to the space by Clemencia Lee from the Cultural Cafe, a gallery and workspace for African-American artists.

The meeting was co-chaired by Boston school bus driver Robert Traynham and Dorothea Peacock of the Women's Fightback Network. The featured reports were given by Abayomi Azikiwe, a founder of the Michigan Emergency Coalition Against War and Injustice, on the current phase of capitalist globalization and the growing fightback against foreclosures and layoffs;

Larry Holmes, WWP secretariat member and former presidential candidate, on the significance of the Barack Obama campaign; and Miya Campbell of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) on the impact of the war on women at home and abroad. A cultural performance was provided by hip-hop artist Natural Bliss.

Azikiwe's talk included a deep historical view of the Black liberation struggle focusing particularly on the leading role of Black women in fighting back against slavery and racist repression.

Holmes analyzed the Obama phenomenon in relation to the profoundly deep economic crisis. He called on the activists to



Abayomi Azikiwe

grapple with how to establish an independent pole of struggle to fight back against the bosses' drive to dump their economic crisis on the backs of the workers. Holmes also made a call to the activists to stand ready to defend the Obama campaign against racist attacks and backroom deals to block it in order to deprive Black people of the democratic right to representation.

Josué Renaud presented a solidarity message from New England Human Rights for Haiti, celebrating its fourth anniversary on March 29.

—Frank Neisser

—Monica Moorehead

Black History forum in New York City

A standing room only crowd attended a Black History Forum hosted by the New York branch of Workers World Party on Feb. 29 at the Solidarity Center. The two main speakers were Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Detroit-based Pan African News Wire, and Larry Holmes, WWP secretariat member and a national organizer of the Troops Out Now Coalition. The forum was chaired by Tyneisha Bowens, a leader of the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group, who also spoke on the significance of Black history. The forum took up the important topics of the meaning of the Obama campaign and the impact of the economic crisis on the Black community. Podcasts of the three talks can be heard at www.workers.org. Workers World will carry excerpts of the three talks in upcoming printed editions as well as online.

People of color denied pain medication across the U.S.

By Melissa Kleinman

Imagine being in pain, serious pain that debilitates you in your day-to-day life. Once you finally get in to see a doctor, you are asked on a scale of 1 to 10 to rate your pain, 10 being the worst pain you've ever felt. You flat out know this pain is a 10, yet you are sent away from the doctor with no pain medication and no real remedy for the source of your pain—even if you had to sacrifice paying your electric and water bill to afford the visit.

Many people of color are being denied pain medication based on bigoted beliefs and stereotypes that they are addicts, drug hustlers or don't feel pain as acutely as whites. Studies have shown that people of color receive less treatment for pain than the broader population of people in the U.S.

A recent national study found that emergency room doctors are prescribing

strong narcotics more often to patients, but people of color are still less likely to get them. The AP reports: "Even for the severe pain of kidney stones, minorities were prescribed narcotics such as oxycodone and morphine less frequently than whites.

"The analysis of more than 150,000 emergency room visits over 13 years found differences in prescribing by race and ethnicity in both urban and rural hospitals, in all U.S. regions and for every type of pain. ... In the study, opioid narcotics were prescribed in 31 percent of the pain-related visits involving whites, 28 percent for Asians, 24 percent for Hispanics and 23 percent for blacks. Minorities were slightly more likely than whites to get aspirin, ibuprofen and similar drugs for pain." (Jan. 2)

In a 2005 article on racial disparities in pain treatment, the Detroit News profiled Donald Dillard, an African-American

worker who survived having a dump truck roll over his body. His pelvis and thighs were crushed and a large chunk of flesh was cut from his torso.

Dillard had endured 15 years of excruciating pain, unable to get pain medications strong enough to give him even the slightest respite. He had also found getting workers compensation and medical care to be extremely difficult. "It's really depressing when you know there are things out there that can help you, and you can't get them," Dillard said. (Feb. 20, 2005)

The article reported that a national study found that at cancer centers with primarily Latin@ and African-American patients, 62 percent of patients received inadequate pain treatment, compared to 42 percent receiving inadequate pain treatment nationwide. A survey found that African-American cancer patients in nursing homes were 63 percent more likely than whites to receive no pain treatment.

In addition, pharmacies in poor communities of color are less likely to carry strong pain medications, the Detroit News reported.

A 2002 federal study found that even when income, insurance and diagnoses are the same, people of color in general receive lower-quality health care than whites. (Detroit News, Feb. 20, 2005)

The ugly truth stands that people of color are not only denied health care and proper treatment, but also the drugs they need to heal and become well again. This is the result of not only a classist and racist society, but the reflection of the racism passed down from the medical schools to generation after generation of medical students.

Meanwhile, people in socialist Cuba—regardless of their race, gender or sexuality—are, at no cost, provided with the best health care the country is able to provide for its people. □

U.S. prison population explodes

By Larry Hales

On Feb. 28 the Pew Center on the States released a report detailing that 1 in 99.1 adults in the U.S. is locked up. That comes to 2,319,258 prisoners for a population of 230,000,000.

The growth of the prison population has skyrocketed, nearly tripling from 1987 to 2007. The total U.S. prison population is higher than the 26 European nations with the highest prison populations, yet these nations combined have two-and-a-half times the total population of the U.S.

All told there are 750 prisoners per 100,000 people in the U.S.—the highest incarceration rate in the world. This prison population accounts for 25 percent of the world's prison population.

Although crime has dropped 25 percent from 1987 to 2007 (New York Times, Feb. 28), incarceration continues to climb. The lowest level of violent crime was reached in 2005, according to the Bureau of Justice.

The climb in incarceration rates is mostly due to the explosion in arrests attributed to drug offenses. In those same 20 years, arrests for drug offenses have increased by 50 percent. In addition, according to the Bureau of Justice, more than 17 percent of people locked up in local jails and state and federal prisons committed a crime to obtain drugs.

To filter the total number of prisoners through race, ethnicity and class, and to look at the incarceration rates based on the same factors, illuminates the effects of national oppression and the criminalization of poor and dispossessed workers.

Official data on the poverty of individuals who commit crimes are difficult to come by, yet it is easy to infer since the Bureau of Justice reports that depressed urban areas account for the highest percentage of crimes and arrests.

One in nine Black males between the ages of 20 and 34 is behind bars, compared to one in 30 for the general population; one in 100 Black women in their 30s is incarcerated, versus 1 in 265 for all women.

The rate of imprisonment for all men above age 18 is one in 54; for Latinos it is one in 36; and for Blacks it is one in 15.

Since the late 1970s urban centers have been faced with deindustrialization, white flight, underfunded schools, the dismantling of welfare and a general decline in social services. While the needs of people have not been met, the police forces have been bolstered.

Inner city areas are faced with a neoliberal form of ethnic cleansing that has generally become known as gentrification. From San Diego to Los Angeles and San Francisco, to Harlem and New Orleans, inner city areas are being gobbled up by developers. Katrina was the excuse in New Orleans, "blight" in Detroit and other cities.

To pull it off, city administrators beef up police forces in poor, oppressed neighborhoods and institute "zero tolerance" or "broken window" ordinances, such as that in New York under former Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

The theory of "broken windows" was authored by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. Wilson, a right-wing policy advisor under Reagan and the first Bush, also believes in dismantling Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare and further privatizing public schools.

The "broken windows" theory is classic: blame the victim for the ravages of the capitalist system. It postulates that ignoring a broken window invites more windows to be broken; in other words, cracking down on petty offenses "decreases crime" and "cleans up the neighborhood."

In general, most cops placed in

oppressed communities are not people from the community, and many times are white.

The inhabitants of the community do not dictate the conditions of the community; the conditions are forced on the inhabitants. Poverty, joblessness, homelessness, the lack of health care, underfunded public education, the lack of after-school activities, poor housing choices, slum lords and the history of racist oppression in the U.S. are to blame.

It is capitalism and the culture that comes with it that are the culprits when it comes to "broken windows;" in fact the imperialist U.S. ruling class is constantly, actively engaged in breaking windows all over the world.

Prisoners super exploited

As prisons are warehouses for the poor and disposed, they are also depositories of a reserve of superexploitable labor.

Not only does the prison industry provide money and jobs to impoverished areas, but it also provide opportunities for industries to take advantage of the prisoners by putting them to work at superlow wages. In turn, the money prisoners earn is shuffled back into the prison system as prisoners purchase necessities and pay exorbitant fees for telephone usage.

Private prison companies house more than 100,000 U.S. prisoners. According to a Centre for Research on Globalization report in 2001, prisoners make on the average \$.22 per hour and can work up to 40 hours per week.

The growth of prison labor continues, along with growth in the prison industrial complex as a whole, which is more and more privatized. This crime is perpetrated against workers and oppressed nationalities at alarming rates, and in an era of capitalist decline it will only grow worse. □

Alert on LARRY HALES' CASE



WW PHOTO

The pretrial hearing which was to have occurred on Feb. 29 in the Larry Hales' case has been moved forward to April 25, and the trial date has been moved from March 12 to May 21. Hales' home was illegally invaded on the pretext of a "routine parole visit" by 10 Denver cops on Nov. 30. Hales' partner Melissa Kleinman was handcuffed to a chair and Hales was brutalized and arrested on bogus racist frame-up charges of "interfering" with the police. Hales is a well-known Denver activist organizing against police brutality and a leading organizer for protests at the upcoming Democratic Convention in Denver this summer. You can sign on to the online petition demanding all charges be dropped at troopsoutnow.org/larry-hales, the Web page of the National Justice for Larry Hales Committee.

—Frank Neisser

Students stand up to racist police terror

By Mike Martinez
Miami

After a police attack at Miami Edison Sr. High School that resulted in the arrest of 27 students charged with disturbing a school function, resisting arrest with violence and rioting, the campus erupted in protests on March 3. The protests were in response to the incidents of Feb. 29, when school, city of Miami and Miami-Dade County police brutally beat, tasered and sicced K9 dogs on students protesting police brutality on campus.

The students were waging a peaceful sit-in at their cafeteria in solidarity with Wadson Sagaille, a student who was put

in a choke hold by Miami Edison Sr. High School assistant principal, Javier Perez.

They were told to get up and when they didn't the police stormed in using full force. According to the March 3rd issue of the Miami Herald, students used "yogurt and milk cartons" in an attempt to fend off the police attack.

The school principal called for an open meeting on March 2 at the school. She began the meeting by announcing that students would be heard the next day at a school assembly, but not at the public meeting. In addition, the public was not allowed into the school assembly, a clear attempt to prevent the students from publicly relaying the events of Feb. 29.

Students, however, maintained their protest spirit, chanting until the principal agreed to allow students to speak. While she promised the police would be avail-

able to answer questions, neither Chief Darling of Miami-Dade Public Schools or any other police officer answered questions from students, parents or the public.

Student leader Chris Green spoke eloquently about what he witnessed and laid out the student demands, including the arrest of assistant principal Perez for assault on a student; dropping all charges on those arrested; no retaliation against students; and the institution of restorative justice as a problem solving model, instead of arresting more young people in the future.

Green also pointed out the biased media reporting on the story. On March 2, students arrived on time and in full uniform for school, but instead of reporting to school, they gathered at the Range Park across the street. Many students and

parents expressed concern that they were to return to the same school and police force responsible for the violence.

Defying charges of apathy and lack of civic involvement, the youth of Edison saw a wrong and organized to stand up for their rights. Instead of talking to the students and working towards a solution, the administration ordered the police to beat and arrest the mostly Black students. These young people are on the front line of a new wave of student activism and their organized and defiant stance led them to discover that their learning institution and the police would not tolerate them exercising their democratic rights.

The students have not backed down despite being arrested, clubbed, tasered and being issued nighttime curfews. They've gained the solidarity of staff, parents and the community. □



COVER BY SAHU BARRON

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

Racism, national oppression and self-determination by Larry Holmes

Black labor from chattel slavery to wage slavery by Sam Marcy

Harriet Tubman: woman warrior by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Causes of turmoil in Jamaica by Pat Chin

Black youth: repression & resistance by Leilani Dowell

Black & Brown unity: A pillar of struggle for human rights & global justice! by Saladin Muhammad

Are conditions ripe again today? 40th anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion by John Parker

Racism and poverty in the Delta by Larry Hales

Domestic Workers United demand passage of a bill of rights by Imani Henry

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By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

'Fidel's resignation'

From a Feb. 19 audio column. Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear Mumia's columns.

As news flashed of the formal resignation of Cuba's Fidel Castro from the office of the President, morbid celebrations broke out in 'Little Havana' (Miami), Florida, the U.S. capital of the Cuban exiled, anti-Castro movement. Just as they rejoiced at his illness in 2006, they reveled at his resignation.

But, Fidel's almost 50-year run as Cuban head-of-state has had a momentous impact, not just in Cuba, but in Latin America and the vast world beyond.

For as Fidel steps down from power, almost a half dozen of his ideological sons and daughters have come to power throughout Latin America. While nominally socialist, and deeply nationalist, many of them were inspired by the Cuban Revolution. Some, like Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, have embraced a continental and internationalist perspective, one that is overtly opposed to the interventionist policies of the U.S. backed IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank.

Latin America, largely through Cuba's steadfast example, has turned away from the draconian U.S. backed rule of the generals, to the rule of democratic and leftist populists.

In the realm of education, Cuba's performance has been exemplary. In Central and South America, the average literacy rate is 86.4 percent. Cuba's literacy rate is 98 percent.

Under its socialist system all education is free. In fact, Cuba is the educator of choice for thousands of people from around the world, especially in higher and medical education. All of this for free!

Castro didn't inherit a country with such a high literacy rate. Indeed, in 1961 over a million Cubans—mostly folks in the nation's rural areas—were illiterate. Over 100,000 children over 10 years of age volunteered to participate in the "literacy brigadistas," covering the country to teach the poor and the peasants how to read and to write.

One such man, an alfabetizado (or student) named Juan Martínez, wrote, in one of the first sentences of his life, "Nunca me he sentido cubano hasta que aprendí a leer y a escribir." (In English his words meant, "I never really felt Cuban until I learned to read and write.") (Keeble, 54)

In foreign affairs, Cuba put her considerable military power in the front ranks against the racist apartheid system of South Africa. Cuba, supporting the armed force of Angola, fought South Africa at a place called Cuito Cuanavale, inflicting such losses on the apartheid army that it began the long road to negotiation, settlement and dissolution.

Yes, Castro is laying aside his office, a process which, for U.S. presidents usually means the opportunity to accrue obscene amounts of money. But he leaves a proud tradition of Latin American sovereignty, impressive successes in the fields of education and medicine, and revolutionary resistance to the racist apartheid regime of South Africa.

In large part, his efforts paved the way to peace and democracy in South Africa.

His name and his example will be remembered for centuries for the ability of the small to stand up to the mighty.

Source: Keeble, Alexandre, ed., *In the Spirit of Wandering Teachers: Cuban Literacy Campaign, 1961* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2001), p.54; Kozol, Jonathan, *Children of the Revolution: A Yankee*

Teacher in the Cuban Schools (N.Y.: Delacorte Press, 1978.)

Pam Africa and Monica Moorehead watch as Fidel Castro writes a message to Mumia in June 2000.



'Freedom for René, Fernando, Gerardo, Antonio y Ramón!'

The following call was issued by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) on March 1.

Five Cuban heroes remain unjustly imprisoned in the United States since 1998 for fighting against terrorism. Their excessive sentences were the result of a political trial in the city of Miami.

During their ten years of imprisonment, under cruel conditions, the U.S. government has systematically trampled on the rights of the Five and their families, violating the most elemental principles of international and U.S. law.

The families of our compañeros have been victims of unnecessary bureaucracy to travel to the United States, resulting in long waiting periods for completing all the requirements, including waiting for appointments, waiting to obtain and complete forms, waiting until the forms are analyzed, etc. It can take months, and even more than a year, until they are told either yes or no.

As a result, this practice translates into an average of one visit per year for the mothers or wives who have been able to travel. But in the case of Adriana and Olga, they have never been able to visit their husbands, Gerardo and René. This has been a deliberate strategy of the empire to punish the Five and try to break them.

During all these years, the Federation of Cuban Women has carried out a broad and ample international campaign on behalf of the Five and their families. We have worked towards raising awareness of the case amongst our friends around the world to encourage them to take actions to break the silence around the case in the United States.

The National Secretariat of the Federation of Cuban Women has decided to add up its efforts and actions in 2008, to support the initiative launched by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five to create the International Commission for the Right

of Family Visits. This commission's purpose is to organize actions to denounce the issue of family visits, including a call to the U.S. government to immediately grant humanitarian visas to Adriana Pérez and Olga Salanueva.

To that end we will offer all our international ties and we will intensify our actions within the United Nations and the human rights enforcement structures to which we

have access due to our status as a non-governmental organization of advisory nature in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

We call on all of our friends, including personalities, organizations and institutions, to join this call, which represents a strategic battle in our fight to obtain the justice that will ensure the return of the Five Heroes to their homeland. □

A human right

Visas for Cuban Five relatives

By Cheryl LaBash

"They don't have five men in jail. It is the dignity of Cuba, the one they have not been able to destroy. We assure you they will never break it," Irma Schwerert declared at the IV U.S.-Cuba-Venezuela Labor Conference on Dec. 7, 2007 in Tijuana, Mexico.

Schwerert's son, René González—one of the Cuban Five—is denied any visits with his spouse, Olga Salanueva. For nine years the U.S. government has restricted, delayed and outright denied family visits to further punish the Cuban Five—heroes unjustly imprisoned for peacefully monitoring Florida-based paramilitaries planning violent attacks on Cuba. A concerted international campaign supported by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) challenges this violation of international human rights norms and U.S. laws. (See accompanying FMC statement on this page.)

The case of the Cuban Five and the family visit campaign are well known around the world. For example, UNISON, the largest public sector union in Britain with 1.2 million members, is collecting petition signatures for the right of family visits.



WWW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

Irma Schwerert speaks in special "Free the Five" session at 2007 U.S./Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico Labor Conference in Tijuana, Mexico.

But as Irma Schwerert said in Tijuana: "We have to be realistic. Legally, even though we are going to keep trying and fighting with the hope that at some point there is justice in the justice system, we can't have that much confidence in the law. It is public opinion, especially in the United States, that will get them out of jail."

The ultimate family visit for the Cuban Five and their loved ones will come when they are free from the prisons of the U.S. empire to return to their beloved socialist Cuba.

In the words of Fidel: "¡Volverán!" (They shall return!) □

Worldwide protests

Haiti is not forgotten

While the Third International Day of Solidarity with the Haitian People Feb. 29 was indeed international—with at least 56 actions in 47 cities on four continents—the largest demonstration took place in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, where 5,000 people came out to demand the return of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the end of the U.S.-U.N. occupation of Haiti, and the release of political prisoners still in jail even though they were imprisoned during the last coup against Aristide.

The National Cell for Reflection of the Lavalas Family Base Popular Organizations led the march, which began with a rally at St. Jean Bosco, the church where President Aristide used to preach. This grouping is a militant, activist section of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas movement.

In Berkeley, Calif., the demonstration was held in front of a Marine recruiting station to point out the role the Marines played in the occupation of Haiti and the coups against Aristide.

In New York City, a group of protesters gathered in front of the Haitian Consulate and for the next four hours they pointed out to the passers-by on foot and on

the buses that crowd Madison Ave. that the top Haitian diplomats in the United States were appointed because they supported the coup against Aristide.

The New York chapter of the Lavalas Family party, the Haiti Support Network (HSN) and KAKOLA, which organized the New York demonstration,

said in a press release, "We are calling for the firing of all the putschists and Macoutes who still run Haiti's consulates and embassies around the world."

Ryan Mena, a young Dominican activist, said at the New York protest: "The liberation of Haiti would mean the liberation of my country, the Dominican Republic, since we share the island of Hispaniola. We must demand the end of the U.S.-U.N. occupation of Haiti." Another speaker pointed out, "This demonstration and the 50 others throughout the world show that the struggles of the Haitian people have broad, worldwide support."



Feb. 29, New York City.

Haiti's president, Rene Preval, who has the authority to dismiss these diplomats and appoint new ones, saw his prime minister, Jacques Edouard Alexi, survive a vote of no confidence Feb. 29. While the parliamentarians express concern with the lack of progress in improving people's living conditions—hunger, disease, unemployment and poverty are growing rapidly—they don't appear willing to buck the U.S., Canadian and French imperialists strongly backing the Preval/Alexis team.

—Report and photo by G. Dunkel

A rich tradition

International Women's Day

By Kathy Durkin

"A Salute to Women's Resistance" is the perfect slogan for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day (IWD), March 8th. Struggle is what this day signifies and what its traditions are all about. That and solidarity with women in struggle worldwide are at the heart of this special day.

Its origins were in the working-class and socialist movements in New York City and Europe, where the socialist movement was agitating for women's rights, too.

On March 8, 1908, 15,000 women garment workers, including many immigrants, marched through New York City's Lower East Side to rally at Union Square to demand economic and political rights. They honored a similar march by their forebears in 1857 on that date.

Inspired by that march, women immigrant garment workers staged a three-month strike, the "Uprising of the 20,000," from 1909-1910, against Triangle Shirtwaist and other sweatshops. Women as young as 16 years old faced down police in the dead of winter. Sadly, one year later, an estimated 146 immigrant workers, women and girls, perished in the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. Subsequent IWD protests demanded workplace safety regulations and remembered those who lost their lives.

This was a rich period of social protest and working-class and socialist organizing. One-third of the 60,000 people who marched on May Day in 1910 in Union Square were women socialists and unionists.

Women in the European socialist movement were closely watching these developments in the U.S. while waging their own struggles. German socialist Clara Zetkin had agitated for several years for a special day to mark working women's global solidarity.

Further inspired by the New York women garment workers' struggles and the strong role of women socialists, Zetkin proposed designating International Women's Day at an International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen in 1910. Women delegates from 17 countries unanimously concurred.

The following year, this declaration's

impact was shown when one million women poured into the streets throughout Europe on the first IWD to demand their rights. And in 1913 and 1914, European women rallied against the burgeoning imperialist war and in sisterly solidarity on that day.

In 1917, Russian women textile workers went on strike to mark IWD, demanding "peace, land and bread." It sparked the struggle to topple the czar, which then led to the workers' revolution. The Soviet Union officially recognized IWD in 1921; it was the first government to enact laws codifying women's rights.

Since then, socialist countries and liberation movements have commemorated IWD. Revolutionaries, progressive forces and women workers have marked it with creative, militant actions—demonstrations, strikes and sit-ins—aimed at imperialist war, globalization, poverty, exploitation, racism and all forms of oppression and inequality.

Although the U.S. and other capitalist governments conceal IWD's socialist, working-class and struggle origins, its real history and meaning have been demonstrated by women worldwide with displays of solidarity and fight-back.

The courageous struggle of the Vietnamese women against the U.S. war inspired women internationally. Starting in the 1960s, the African-American, Latin@, Chicano and Native liberation movements stirred women's struggles here.

The Women's Caucus of Youth Against War and Fascism revived the militant, class-conscious and struggle traditions of IWD in the U.S. in 1970 by rallying at New York's Union Square. They marched to the Women's House of Detention to protest racism, poverty and political repression, and to express solidarity with the oppressed women inside, including Joan Bird, members of the Panther 21.



Left, above: Dec. 1970 N.Y. rally at Women's House of Detention, where Angela Davis was held.

Some global highlights of IWD are:

► In a stunning action in 1970, the revolutionary Tupamaros freed women prisoners from Uruguay's jails.

► In 1971, Philippine women protested against the Marcos dictatorship and, since 2001, have militantly defied the U.S.-backed Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

► In 1975, socialist Cuba—where women's rights are codified into law—instigated the Family Code, led by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), which was established in 1960 and which has helped women there make great strides.

► Women everywhere in 2003 protested the U.S.-led war in Iraq and in solidarity with their Iraqi sisters. The next year, Palestinian women challenged Israel's apartheid wall and continue to defy U.S.-backed Israeli aggression and occupation.

► In 2006, the South African government launched a campaign to honor the 1956 women's march in Pretoria against the repressive pass laws under the apartheid system. The ANC and COSATU have for years honored women participants in the liberation movement.

► Women garment workers in Bangladesh marched for economic rights in 2006, as their sisters in Mumbai, India,

supported Dalits, considered as social outcasts, and other oppressed women.

► In 2007, women throughout Latin America, including Venezuela, protested U.S.-President Bush's visit and demanded the U.S. end the Iraq war and military intervention and globalization in their countries.

This year, on the 100th anniversary of the historic march of women garment workers, it is very fitting that the New York demonstration begins in Union Square and ends at the Triangle Fire site. The socialist traditions of struggle and solidarity with working and oppressed women here and everywhere and special recognition of women immigrants' role, are vital today.

Other U.S. IWD events taking place on March 8 include Boston, Philadelphia and Buffalo. Go to www.troopsoutnow.org for more information.

A Workers World Forum will be held for IWD in Detroit on March 8.

The writer's grandmother, Sophie Stoller, an immigrant garment worker, marched in 1908, joined the "Uprising of the 20,000," and worked for the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, but was ill and didn't work on the day of the fire.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY A Salute to Women's Resistance

Saturday MARCH 8

NYC 12 Noon Rally Union Sq., 14th St. & Broadway
1 p.m. March • 3:30 p.m. Ceremony; Triangle Shirtwaist
Fire Memorial, Corner of Washington Sq. Place & Greene St.

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BOSTON, 12 Noon Roxbury Crossing T Stop (Orange Line)
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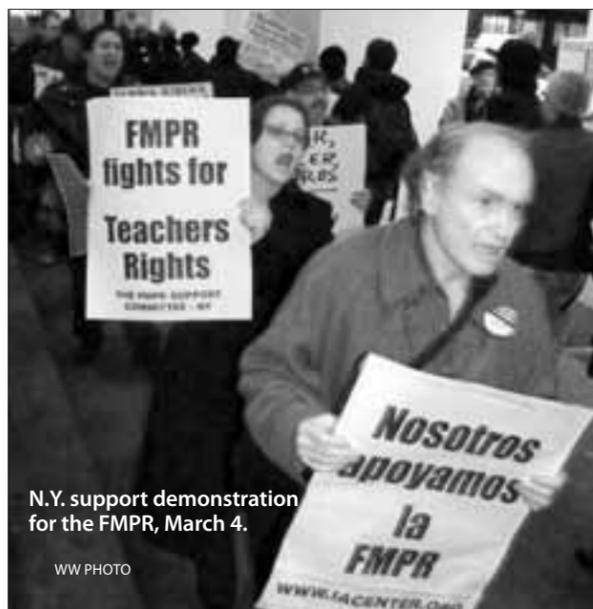
Support the teachers of Puerto Rico who fight for the rights of us all!

The Teachers Federation of Puerto Rico Support Committee-NY issued the following statement on the eve of a March 4 New York City demonstration in support of the teachers and in defense of public education.

A crucial strike for all working people is now taking place in Puerto Rico! The island's biggest labor union is waging a fight for survival, for free public education and against the privatization of schools. At stake are the universal right to unionize, to collective bargaining, to strike and workers' rights and the basic right of freedom of expression.

The Teachers' Federation of Puerto Rico (FMPR) has been on strike since February 21, 2008, in a life-and-death struggle against the anti-labor and repressive crusade of the colonial government.

The colonial administration of Aníbal Acevedo Vilá has been refusing to negotiate for more than 27 months with no



contract. With more than 40,000 members, mainly women, the Federation has refused to be intimidated and is taking a

courageous stand for the rights of all.

The government's contempt for teachers, students and parents, as well as for their input in education, is so extreme that it locked out the teachers throughout the island, as well as hundreds of thousands of students, for two weeks during April-May 2006. The government, facing a fiscal crisis, was forcing the public sectors to endure the brunt of the crisis.

Now SEIU chief Dennis Rivera helped get the Puerto Rico teachers union ousted so he could hijack members. While the clash between the teachers' militant leaders and the government was grabbing the headlines, Rivera

was maneuvering to snatch control of the teachers for his Service Employees International Union.

Puerto Rico Governor Acevedo Vilá's Secretary of Education, Aragunde, has ruled that the federation will not be permitted to run in any new elections for a union to represent the teachers.

More than support statements are needed! As support grows among workers, union members and independent unions in Puerto Rico and internationally, our support NOW will make a difference!! With growing potential for other unions in Puerto Rico to walk out in solidarity, public pressure greatly intensifies on the anti-worker union-busting administration in Puerto Rico. Already, the colonial government faces a social and political crisis, as the school strike affects every part of the island. Solidarity actions by workers everywhere in support of the Puerto Rican teachers are crucial. □



Workers World to FARC-EP: Uribe, Bush are the real criminals

The massacre committed by the Colombian military forces on March 1st in Ecuador where Raúl Reyes, the member of the secretariat of the FARC-EP in charge of international relations and a key figure in the negotiations for the prisoners exchange, was killed, has prompted the rupture of relations of both Ecuador and Venezuela with neighboring Colombia.

The massacre, which was carried out with a high-tech intelligence operation aided by the United States, is a grave violation of international law and a serious blow to the humanitarian exchange that is seen as the road to peace in Colombia. As a consequence, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa recalled the Ecuadorian ambassador in Colombia, ordered the expulsion of the Colombian ambassador in Ecuador, and sent 3,200 troops to the border with Colombia. He has also been calling the presidents of several Latin American countries to plan a strategy in order to avoid the internationalization of the Colombian conflict and the impunity of this massacre.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez in turn, stating that the Colombian government has turned into the biggest threat against the peoples of Latin America, cautioned Colombian President Álvaro Uribe not to invade Venezuelan space. He also broke relations with Colombia, closing down the Venezuelan Embassy in Bogotá and sending 10 battalions with a total of 8,000 troops to the border.

The massacre is an intensification of the U.S. plans of war and destabilization, particularly against Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. President Chávez and others have described the role of Colombia as "the Israel of Latin America." The increasing threat against Venezuela is highlighted by the declarations of the Venezuelan former vice president, José Vicente Rangel. He said that "in the last few weeks there have been important deployments of Colombian military units on the border with Venezuela." (See related article by Miguel Urbano Rodrigues on page 11.)

Workers World sent the following message to the Revolutionary Forces of Colombia—Peoples' Army on March 4:

To the Secretariat and members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—Peoples' Army (FARC-EP):

Please accept our most sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of the heroic Raúl Reyes, the revolutionary musician Julián Conrado and other revolutionaries vilely murdered by the Colombian government which, placing its thirst for blood and paramilitary violence above the cry for peace and the

search for a humanitarian agreement among the Colombian people, invaded the neighboring country of Ecuador, raining bombs and cowardly executing, with the aid of the U.S. government, this group of insurgent forces.

This has been an immense blow against the peace process in the suffering country named Colombia, a process materializing through the humanitarian exchange the FARC-EP was advancing with so much openness and generosity with the diligent assistance of Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, both of whom have been working for true peace and justice in the region.

From inside the monster, the United States, we send the message that we will continue to advance the proposition that the name of the FARC-EP should be eliminated from the terrorist list and that the FARC-EP's character as a belligerent force fighting for peace and social justice be recognized. In Colombia it has been proven—by the extermination of the Patriotic Union (UP) and as the government and the Colombian army and its paramilitary collaborators continue their selective murders and arrests of union leaders, farmers, students and human-rights activists and the forced displacements of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities—that the peaceful social struggle in Colombia has been condemned to death by paramilitary state terrorism.

We will also attempt to expose to public opinion the real international terrorists: the paramilitary administration of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, for its multiple crimes against Colombian civil society, and the administration of George W. Bush, for the criminal wars waged, like those carried out against the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq, and its warlike intervention all over the world at the price of thousands of innocent lives and global destabilization. And in Colombia in particular, where the U.S. applies its Plan Colombia, the armed wing of the "Free" Trade Agreements, designed not to combat drug trafficking but to repress and massacre the Colombian people for the benefit of criminal transnational corporations like Occidental Petroleum, Coca Cola, Drummond and Chiquita, that attack their workers, stealing the wealth of the Colombian people.

For a new world with social justice!
Raúl Reyes, Julián Conrado and all guerrilla fighters murdered on March 1, ¡Presentes!

**In solidarity,
The Secretariat & National Committee
of Workers World Party/Mundo Obrero
(WW/MO), United States.**

Buckley's big words masked a bigger racism

By Stephen Millies

William F. Buckley Jr. was evil. He equated Dr. Martin Luther King with Nazi leader George Lincoln Rockwell. He gay-baited author Gore Vidal on national television. "The literature of women's liberation is so stupefyingly awful," he wrote.

Yet the corporate media, "liberal" and "conservative," have been gushing out praise for this racist, sexist bigot since he died this February.

Buckley supported the dirty war against Vietnam that killed millions. He called the Spanish fascist dictator Franco "a national hero." Buckley was an enthusiastic press agent for Pinochet in Chile and the Argentine generals who tortured to death thousands.

This bigot supported segregation in the United States and apartheid in South Africa. "Where Mandela belongs, in his current frame of mind, is precisely where he is: in jail," Buckley wrote in 1985.

He founded the National Review as a magazine of white supremacy. Buckley called for denying voting rights to Black people in a 1957 editorial, "Why the South Must Prevail."

Two years earlier 14-year-old Emmet Till was tortured to death by white fiends in Mississippi. Yet Buckley claimed there was "a median cultural superiority of White over Negro ... that cannot be hidden by ever-so-busy egalitarians and anthropologists."

When Buckley ran for mayor of New York in 1965, his platform included rounding up people on welfare and dropping them outside the city.

In 1986 Buckley called for tattooing gay men who were HIV positive, an idea straight out of Hitler's Third Reich with its pink triangles. He repeated this obscene proposal in 2005.

The New York Times has printed at least eight articles about Buckley since he died. When the great African-American intellectual leader W.E.B. Du Bois died the Times printed only one. Du Bois helped found the NAACP and edited its magazine "The Crisis" for decades. He wrote a series of classic works, including "Black Reconstruction."

In contrast, which of Buckley's 50 or so books will he be remembered for? Most of them are collections of his newspaper columns or a series of tawdry spy novels. His best known book is "Joe McCarthy and his Enemies," a defense of the vicious witch hunter, which Buckley co-authored.

Buckley was also considered a great debater. But when former Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver appeared on "Firing Line," he mopped the floor with Buckley.

Filthy rich

Buckley was born into his daddy's oil fortune, which was stolen from Mexico and Venezuela. He grew up at the family's Connecticut estate. In 1937 four of Buckley's brothers and sisters joined a gang that burned a cross in front of a nearby Jewish resort. "I wept tears of frustration at being forbidden by senior siblings to go out on that adventure, on the grounds that (at age 11) I was considered too young," Buckley later wrote.

After graduating from Yale in 1950, Buckley joined the CIA and was a spy in Mexico. Later as a "former" CIA agent, he took every opportunity—including a movie review of "The Day of the Jackal"—to advocate torture.

Buckley founded the National Review in 1955 with \$100,000 from his dad as well

as other handouts from wealthy friends.

The National Review featured interviews with die-hard segregationists like Georgia's Sen. Robert Russell, who railed against "miscegenation," that is, relationships between Blacks and whites. Today the National Review fights lesbian and gay marriage.

A special target of Buckley was Harlem's congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. The National Review sought to get Powell framed up on tax charges and was outraged when the Eisenhower administration dropped the matter.

According to someone who worked briefly at the magazine, the editors were eager for a nuclear war to begin during the Cuban missile crisis. "Better dead than red" was written on every toilet seat cover in the joint.

The youthful anti-Semite Buckley hated Palestinians so much he called for Israel to be made the 51st state.

Mocking martyrs

Four little girls—Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley—were murdered when Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed on Sept. 15, 1963. Everybody knew the Ku Klux Klan was responsible for this atrocity.

The National Review was so awful that it claimed the bombing could have been the work of "a communist ... or a crazed Negro"! No wonder the magazine was favored reading material of the White Citizens Councils.

Buckley's 1965 campaign to be New York's mayor on the Conservative Party ticket was a racist cop mobilization. During his campaign, Buckley stood before an audience of 5,000 cops and mocked Viola Liuzzo, who was shot to death by Klansmen in Alabama.

None of this prevented Buckley from being a favorite of New York's high society.

Buckley's life was filled with disappointments. The people destroyed McCarthyism and the anti-communist witch hunt. Black people overthrew apartheid in the United States and South Africa. The Cuban Revolution lives. □

American Axle strike

Continued from page 5

Axle strike presents an opportunity for the membership to draw the line and assert that every worker has the right to a job at a living wage. This struggle can set the tone for the battles to come to reverse the bosses' offensive and reignite the militant class struggle perspective needed to fight back in the current epoch.

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UAW LOCAL 2093, 15802 Hoffman Three Rivers, MI 49093, (269) 279-5201

Tonawanda (forge) and Cheektowaga (machining) plant (same local with about 500 plus members total for both plants)

UAW Local 846 811 Tonawanda St. Buffalo, NY 14207, (716) 876-1016

The writer's grandfather and great uncle participated as rank-and-file members in the 1954-1962 UAW Kohler strike in Kohler, Wis.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

By John Catalinotto

RAÚL REYES

A hero murdered by Colombian fascism

By Miguel Urbano Rodrigues

The author is a former editor of the weekly newspaper Avante in Lisbon, Portugal, a former senator in the European Parliament and a current editor of the Portuguese language Web magazine, odiario.info, who met Raúl Reyes in 2001 in Colombia. Read this entire article on www.workers.org.

March 2: The government of Álvaro Uribe murdered Comandante Raúl Reyes of the FARC at dawn on March 1 in an operation conceived and executed with U.S. support.

Colombian President Álvaro Uribe's defense minister first announced this news in a triumphant official statement that greatly distorted the facts of the events so as to hide the criminal nature of the terrorist act.

According to Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos, Raúl Reyes was killed in a camp in Ecuador one mile inside the border during a bombardment his country's air force carried out from Colombian territory in order to "not violate the sovereignty" of neighboring countries.

But soon he clarified that troops of the Colombian army later crossed the border to collect the body of Raúl Reyes and bring it to Bogotá to prevent FARC guerrillas from burying it.

The minister's note is thus nonsense, even somewhat surrealist. It is unthinkable that any airplane can rain bombs on a camp hitting the target at a horizontal mile distance. This grotesque lie was followed by the confession that forces of the Colombian army had, after all, shortly afterward violated Ecuadorian sovereignty.

In reality, things happened differently.

Informed by U.S. satellite surveillance, Uribe knew of the presence of a group of FARC guerrillas on the Ecuadorian side of

the Colombian Department of Putumayo in the Amazon region.

Bogotá knew that Raúl Reyes was there. The revolutionary leader had a price on his head, dead or alive, of \$2.7 million. The informant was paid and Super Tucan airplanes of the most powerful and well-equipped air force in Latin America rained bombs on the FARC camp.

Besides Reyes, the revolutionary singer Julián Conrado—the great artist of the clandestine Voice of Resistance Radio—and 16 guerrillas died in the aerial pirates' criminal attack. They had been massacred as they slept, in conditions still only poorly known.

When he received the news, Uribe congratulated the Air Force. Reyes' body, mutilated by shrapnel, was taken to Bogotá. Soon photographs of the hero's bloody corpse appeared on television and in newspapers of dozens of countries. The publicity followed almost the same macabre ritual as that accompanying the murder of Che Guevara in October 1967 in Bolivia.

The terrorist act occurred at a moment when the campaign for the release of the French-Colombian Ingrid Betancourt had inspired headlines in the so-called great international press. Never have there been more lies about Colombian reality than in these days when, using as an excuse the suffering of the former presidential candidate, the FARC has been a target of a mountain of slander.

One day it will be evident that in the discussion regarding the humanitarian exchange, the FARC always acted with openness and revolutionary authenticity in moving toward a humanitarian goal, while Uribe acted with hypocrisy, cloak-ing hidden intentions. ...

Translated by WW from Portuguese. The entire article can be found at www.workers.org.

Thousands march in NYC to say: 'Kosovo is Serbia'

By John Catalinotto
New York

A march more than five blocks long went from Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, near the United Nations, through Times Square and past Madison Square Garden to protest the U.S. theft of Serbia's Kosovo. Many New Yorkers and tourists watched with interest as the marchers went on their way to the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church on 25th Street near Broadway.

The province of Kosovo and Metohija, ruled by the same people now who took over the province under cover of a NATO war and occupation in 1999, declared its "independence" from Serbia on Feb. 17. The new entity, however, is administered by European Union officials and policed by U.S.-NATO troops. The Pentagon maintains a major military base, Camp Bondsteel, in Kosovo, with 7,000 U.S. troops. Speakers at the rally preceding the march ridiculed the idea that this mini-state could be called "independent."

The demonstrators carried a huge Serbian flag along with the flags of the 170 countries that had not recognized the new Kosovo entity. The many flags fluttering in the wind gave an international feeling to the protesters, who also carried many posters with the major slogans of the march: "U.S. hands off Serbia; Kosovo is Serbia" and "No to the U.S. colony."

At a rally starting at 2 p.m. in Dag

Hammarskjöld Plaza, speakers represented organizations in the local Serb and Yugoslav community and the Greek community as well as many others. Among the speakers were Father Djokan Majstorovic from St. Sava, who led an opening prayer; human rights leader Ramsey Clark, who visited Yugoslavia in solidarity as the U.S. was bombing that country in 1999; and former Serbian Information Minister Radmila Milentijevic, a professor emerita at the City University of New York.

Russian composer Lara Krietskaya, Serb-American author Nadja Tesich, Puerto Rican activist Arturo Pérez-Saad, Serb-American composer Milos Raickovich and professor Barry Lituchy were among the other speakers and working-class organizations. The action was called jointly by the STOP Coalition and the International Action Center. The rally was chaired by IAC co-director Sara Flounders and John Bosnitch from STOP.

Every reference to anyone having to do with either the Bill Clinton administration or the George W. Bush administration was soundly booed by the audience. Every statement that "Kosovo is Serbia" was repeated and chanted by the people there.

The march was accompanied by the voices of the St. Sava children's choir.

Catalinotto—who co-edited "Hidden Agenda—the U.S.-NATO takeover of Yugoslavia," spoke at the rally as an editor of Workers World newspaper.

Israeli forces commit war crimes in Gaza

Israeli air power and heavily armed troops extended the settler state's collective punishment on March 2-3 against the Palestinian people by invading northern Gaza. In the five days ending March 3, Israeli troops had killed at least 118 Palestinians. Gazan medical officials said that there were 22 children among the 118 Palestinians killed since Feb. 27 and that half of the overall total were civilians (Houston Chronicle, March 4). Hundreds more were wounded.

The massacres, carried out by bombs, rockets fired from helicopters and even drone planes as well as by an invading army, aroused revulsion among people all over the world, and especially in the Middle East itself. Videos of bloodied children left to die in front of their parents were broadcast throughout the region.

Israeli forces also arrested 80 people in northern Gaza, mostly young men and all civilians, and took them to the Ashkelon prison. It was reported that they were interrogated by their captors, who attempted to recruit them.

The Israeli regime claims its goal is to eliminate rocket fire on settler villages near Gaza and that it is attacking only armed fighters, an obvious lie. The Israelis won't even accept the discussions offered by Hamas to end such attacks should the Israelis end their murderous siege of Gaza. The Israeli siege has cut off food, medicine and electric power to Gaza.

Hamas is the political party that won the last elections in Gaza and which now runs the territory.

Israel's Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai threatened Gaza's 1.5 million people with a "Shoah" if rocket fire continues. Shoah is the Hebrew word also used to describe what European Jews suffered under the Nazi occupation of Europe during World War II. Even making such a threat is a war crime—carrying it out is genocide.

If the Israeli regime thought its criminal activity would intimidate the Palestinian people, it found out otherwise. Hamas declared victory (Reuters, March 4). Fawzi Barhoum, speaking for Hamas in Gaza, said that like the Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, Hamas had "gone from the stone to the rocket."

"What we learned from Hezbollah," Barhoum said, "is that resistance is a choice that can work." According to some reports, more than 200 rockets were fired into Israel in retaliation for the siege and the slaughter.

"We are very concerned," said Mark Regev, a spokesperson for Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, "that the role model for Hamas in Gaza is the Lebanese Hezbollah."

Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar told people at a rally on March 3 after the Israeli troops left that his organization would rebuild homes destroyed by the Israeli attacks.

U.S. warships threaten Lebanon

The U.S. Navy announced on Feb. 28 that it was sending the USS Cole from Malta to the eastern Mediterranean waters just off the coast of Lebanon as "a show of support for regional stability." The Navy also said that two additional ships will follow, including one amphibious assault vessel.

The last time the United States sent

forces into Lebanon, in 1982, they were only able to stay until a truck bomb was set off that killed 241 U.S. troops in October of 1983. The USS Cole, while a powerful warship, itself was blown up by two people on a small boat that sailed into the Cole and exploded in 2000.

The reaction from Hezbollah, the organization that led the resistance against the Israeli invasion in 2006 that drove the invaders out, was angry. At a demonstration of thousands on March 3 in the suburbs south of Beirut, Lebanese and Palestinians joined to pledge support to the struggles in Gaza and in Lebanon.

Meanwhile parliament member Hussein Hajj Hasan said, "We don't succumb to threats and military intimidation practiced by the United States to implement its hegemony over Lebanon."

Even Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who is supposed to be a U.S. ally, was forced to distance himself from the U.S. war maneuvers, claiming he made no request for the warships.

Communist elected president in Cyprus

For the first time a member state of the European Union has elected a communist president. In Cyprus, with 53.36 percent of the vote, speaker of the Cypriot house of representatives and leader of the left-wing AKEL party Demetris Christofias won the election on Feb. 24, the date for a runoff election.

Cyprus is an island in the eastern Mediterranean with about 800,000 inhabitants, divided between Greek and Turkish communities. A little more than one-third of the island has been occupied by the Turkish army since 1974. At that time a pro-fascist coup engineered from Athens—there was a military regime in Greece then—created a threat, especially to the Turkish community. The government of colonels in Athens was ousted later that year.

Christofias was elected in the Greek part of the island, but he is reported to have friendly relations with the Turkish community. He has promised to work to unify the island and end foreign occupation.

U.S. launches missile attack on Somalia

The Pentagon, which is having a hard time convincing African nations to host the home base for its AFRICOM strike force in the region, gave another example of what increased U.S. attention to Africa really means. On March 3, U.S. forces launched two rockets aimed at alleged "Al-Qaida leaders" that instead killed six Somalis in Doble, a remote town in southern Somalia. A group of demonstrators in Doble, near the Kenyan border, chanted anti-U.S. slogans on March 4.

The district commissioner, Ali Hussein Nur, demanded compensation for the damages caused by the U.S. attack that Washington admitted to.

At the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, Ethiopian forces with U.S. prodding invaded Somalia and dislodged the Islamic Courts government that was beginning to consolidate power at that time. With Ethiopian troops remaining in Somalia, those who supported the courts have begun a resistance movement in parts of the country. Washington's rocket strikes are aimed at this movement.

In 1993, when U.S. troops were directly involved in Somalia, some 18 U.S. troops were killed when their helicopter was shot down. Washington decided at that time to pull out. □

Refutando las mentiras de EEUU Elecciones en Cuba revelan la democracia del pueblo

Las mujeres conforman el 43% de la nueva legislatura

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

El 24 de febrero Raúl Castro Ruz fue elegido presidente del Consejo de Estado y Consejo de Ministros. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada fue reelecto presidente de la Asamblea Nacional y José Ramón Machado Ventura fue elegido primer vice presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros.

El 18 de febrero, días antes de las elecciones, el compañero Fidel Castro anunció que no aceptaría la nominación para presidente.

El anuncio por Fidel creó disturbios en los Estados Unidos. De nuevo la prensa capitalista y oficiales del gobierno distorsionaron las noticias e incluso mintieron sobre la realidad de Cuba.

El presidente de Estados Unidos, George W. Bush dijo que estaba listo para ayudar a los cubanos a realizar sus "bendiciones de libertad. Eventualmente esta transición deberá llevar a unas elecciones libres y justas, y énfasis libre y énfasis justas, no esas...elecciones falsas que los hermanos Castro tratan de pasar como una verdadera democracia."

L@s candidat@s para la presidencia de Estados Unidos también tuvieron algo que decir. De hecho, el anuncio de Fidel fue la primera pregunta que el periodista Jorge Ramos de Univisión preguntó a l@s candidat@s demócratas en el debate del 21 de febrero en Austin, Texas.

Aunque con matices diferentes, los comentarios de Barack Obama y Hillary Rodham Clinton y los del republicano John McCain eran similares, pintando a Cuba como una sociedad dirigida por dictadores donde el pueblo no tiene libertad para dar su opinión. Sonaron igual que Bush.

Todo@s ell@s exigieron que Cuba cambie su curso y abra su sociedad. Ningun@ optó por terminar con el bloqueo cruel e ilegal contra Cuba que Estados Unidos ha impuesto por casi 50 años.

Sus comentarios expusieron claramente su posición de clase. ¿Se está con el pueblo cubano que ha ganado su independencia y dignidad contra el imperialismo estadounidense y está construyendo una sociedad donde el cuidado de la salud y la educación son gratis y están garantizados? ¿Ó se está del lado del imperialismo y simplemente se disculpa y se utilizan parches para los muchos males creados por este sistema hambriento de lucro y sediento de guerras?

Aunque uno/a no crea en el socialismo, el pueblo cubano tiene el derecho a determinar su propio curso libre de bloqueos y de ataques terroristas por los Estados Unidos.

Palabrerías presidenciales

John McCain dijo sobre el anuncio de Fidel: "Fidel Castro anunció que no permanecería como presidente—sea lo que esto signifique" y como presidente, McCain no dará ninguna ayuda a Cuba hasta que haya una liberación política más amplia.

McCain incluso agregó de forma repugnante que esperaba que "Fidel tuviera la oportunidad de reunirse con Karl Marx

muy pronto".

La senadora Clinton declaró: "El nuevo liderazgo en Cuba tendrá que escoger entre dos opciones—continuar con las políticas fallidas del pasado que han estancado la libertad democrática y el crecimiento económico, o decidirse a llevar a Cuba hacia la comunidad de naciones democráticas. El pueblo de Cuba ansía la oportunidad de quitarse del peso de éste régimen autoritario, el cual ha retrasado a 11 millones de ciudadanos talentosos y trabajadores. El nuevo gobierno debe liberar... a los prisioneros políticos y tomar serios pasos hacia la democracia."

El Senador Obama comentó "Hoy debe marcar el fin de una era oscura en la historia de Cuba. El futuro de Cuba debe estar determinado por el pueblo cubano y no por un régimen sucesor anti democrático. La libertad de los prisioneros de conciencia erróneamente encarcelados por luchar por las libertades básicas que han sido negadas al pueblo cubano marcaría una ruptura importante con el pasado. Es hora de que esos héroes sean liberados."

Cuán refrescante y hasta revolucionario hubiera sido si Dolores Huerta, que estuvo sentada al lado de Chelsea Clinton durante los debates en Austin, hubiera levantado la mano y dijera: "Esperen un momento. ¿Y qué con los Cinco Héroes Cubanos inocentes languideciendo en cárceles de los EEUU? Su único crimen fue el de defender a su país contra ataques terroristas de los EEUU". Huerta en el pasado ha hablado a favor de los Cinco Cubanos.

Proceso electoral cubano: democracia obrera en acción

El hecho es que la sociedad cubana es enteramente más democrática que los EEUU. El pueblo cubano es uno de los que más opiniones exponen en el mundo y tienen la libertad de expresarlas. Pero no son libres de llevar a cabo actividades contrarrevolucionarias en colaboración con el gobierno de los EEUU —lo que han hecho los llamados "disidentes" Cuba, después de todo, ha estado defendiéndose del sabotaje, la intervención y la invasión de los EEUU por casi 50 años.

Cuando la Senadora Clinton dice que la Revolución ha detenido a sus ciudadan@s, es una prueba de que ella no sabe nada de Cuba. Los niveles de educación y cultura de l@s cuban@s están entre los más altos del mundo. El gobierno cubano enseña inglés ampliamente en el país. Un gobierno que teme a su pueblo no enseñaría el idioma de su principal adversario.

El proceso electoral cubano es un proceso completamente efectuado desde las bases de la población. Ningún/a candidato/a tiene que gastar millones de dólares para ser elegido/a. De hecho, no tienen que gastar ningún dinero. Ningún multimillonario, como en el caso del alcalde de Nueva York Michael Bloomberg, puede ser elegido sólo por la capacidad de pagar su campaña electoral. Por supuesto, Cuba no cuenta con multimillonarios.

En enero, Cuba celebró elecciones generales para las Asambleas Nacional y

Provinciales. Más de 8 millones de personas votaron en esa elección, lo que representa un 95 por ciento de las personas elegibles para votar, —una de las tasas de participación más altas en el mundo. Esto es un contraste agudo con los EEUU, donde aproximadamente un 30 por ciento de los elegibles para votar participan.

Según Arnold August, un canadiense que ha estado estudiando las elecciones cubanas, "1,2 millones de ciudadan@s fueron consultad@s para establecer un bloque de más de 55.000 pre-candidatos".

El voto concluyó un proceso que había comenzado en septiembre de 2007. El tono de las campañas es relajado pero l@s candidat@s pasan muchas horas visitando lugares de trabajo y comunidades y hablando con la gente. El voto es secreto y no obligatorio y el conteo de votos es público.

No hay tal cosa como la obligación de "registrarse" para poder votar. Uno/a simplemente se identifica y vota. A nadie se le niega el derecho a votar —como en los EEUU donde 5,3 millones de personas en 2006 no pudieron votar por estar en la cárcel o tener un récord penal. (Datos del 'Sentencing Project') La edad mínima para votar en Cuba es de 16 años de edad, más baja que en los EEUU.

El presidente de la Asamblea Nacional de Cuba, Ricardo Alarcón, dijo sobre el proceso electoral, "El requisito principal para l@s candidat@s es que sean propuest@s por otr@s y aprobad@s por el colectivo".

La elección de este año fue un acontecimiento histórico. Las mujeres constituirán un 43 por ciento de la Asamblea Nacional y casi un 42 por ciento de las Asambleas Municipales. Esto coloca a Cuba en el tercer lugar en el mundo con tal porcentaje de representantes femeninas. EEUU está en el lugar número 71 de esa lista, con sólo un 16 por ciento de la membresía en el Congreso.

L@s cuban@s negr@s conforman un 36 por ciento de la asamblea. Otros sectores sociales están representados allí como por ejemplo l@s trabajador@es y artistas. Por ejemplo, Jorge Gómez Barranco, el coordinador del conocido grupo Moncada, es miembro del parlamento.

Habla Raúl Castro

Como el nuevo presidente electo del Consejo de Estado y de Ministros, Raúl Castro dio el discurso principal al fin de la primera sesión de la séptima legislatura de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular. Tod@s l@s que quieren a Cuba deben leer su discurso.

L@s enemig@s de Cuba no pueden apreciar este discurso y mucho menos las dificultades de construir y mantener una sociedad socialista revolucionaria. El camarada Raúl habló honesta y sobriamente sobre la Revolución, incluyendo la necesidad de subir los sueldos.

Aquí están algunos extractos:

"Es claro el mandato del pueblo a esta Legislatura: continuar fortaleciendo la Revolución en un momento histórico que exige ser dialécticos y creadores, como nos

alertó el compañero Fidel en su medular Reflexión del pasado 14 de enero".

"Muchas expectativas se generaron, tanto en Cuba como en el extranjero, en torno a la integración del Consejo de Estado que acaba de elegir la Asamblea. La fundamental fue despejada por el compañero Fidel en su Mensaje del 18 de febrero. Poco puedo agregar a lo expresado por él, salvo reconocerle a nuestro pueblo, en nombre de la Dirección de la Revolución, las innumerables muestras de serenidad, madurez, confianza en sí mismo y la combinación de genuinos sentimientos de tristeza y firmeza revolucionaria.

"Asumo la responsabilidad que se me encomienda con la convicción de que, como he afirmado muchas veces, el Comandante en Jefe de la Revolución Cubana es uno solo."

"Sólo el Partido Comunista, garantía segura de la unidad de la nación cubana, puede ser digno heredero de la confianza depositada por el pueblo en su líder. Es la fuerza dirigente superior de la sociedad y el Estado y así lo establece el Artículo 5 de nuestra Constitución..."

"Esa convicción tendrá particular importancia cuando por ley natural de la vida, haya desaparecido la generación fundadora y forjadora de la Revolución."

"Afortunadamente no es ese el momento que hoy vivimos. Fidel está ahí, como siempre, con la mente bien clara y la capacidad de análisis y previsión, más que intacta, fortalecida, ahora que puede dedicar al estudio y el análisis las incontables horas que antes empleaba en el enfrentamiento a los problemas cotidianos."

"Por tanto, seguro de expresar el sentir de nuestro pueblo, solicito a esta Asamblea, como órgano supremo del poder del Estado, que las decisiones de especial trascendencia para el futuro de la nación, sobre todo las vinculadas a la defensa, la política exterior y el desarrollo socio-económico del país, me permita continuar consultándolas al líder de la Revolución, el compañero Fidel Castro Ruz."

Este discurso puede ser leído en su totalidad en www.workers.org.

Cuando el Presidente Bush, los medios de difusión, o cualquier/a de l@s candidat@s estadounidenses hablan sobre Cuba, es desde otra posición de clase. En su visión del mundo, la realidad de Cuba está casi en otro planeta.

Quienes conocen y aman a Cuba, saben que el anuncio de Fidel de no participar en las elecciones para presidente marcó un triste día. Pero tenemos confianza en que la Revolución prevalecerá en cada fase de su largo camino.

Fidel es un líder revolucionario que ahora el mundo sólo ve de vez en cuando, un pensador marxista profundo que ha abrazado la liberación de l@s trabajador@s y l@s oprimid@s. Por eso él es tan querido y respetado.

Como el compañero Raúl nos recordó, "Fidel oye la hierba crecer y ve lo que está pasando al doblar de la esquina".

Por eso, por ahora, su presencia visible será profundamente extrañada.