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MAY 1, 1997

*Si  
Se  
Puede!*



Marchers in Fresno April 6 (above and left) honor and celebrate Cesar Chavez' life and the newly revitalized labor movement. For the Watsonville story see page 4.

A PROJECT OF THE LABOR PARTY (FRANK LITTLE CHAPTER) AND OUR MANY FRIENDS



## THE PURPOSE

*of Labor/Community Alliance is to strengthen and unite the labor movement and the progressive community in the Central San Joaquin Valley through information sharing. This publication is printed monthly and includes a calendar of events. In addition to providing the basis for mutual support between labor and community groups, this newsletter will be used to promote dialog on the subject of creating an independent political party for the U.S. working class.*

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## 'Keepers' -- Promise or Threat?

The Promise Keepers are coming! To Fresno! In June!

They will likely be enthusiastically embraced by our fair city--what higher ideal than a stadium full of men of all races pledging themselves to support their wives and children, to treat each other as brethren, to live upright lives in the name of Jesus?

This vision chills me in spite (or because) of my hunger for such connectedness and shared purpose. I feel the seductive call of male bonding; yet the prospect of this gathering of men elicits more terror than hope. Why, I ask myself, why do I feel such fear? Don't I myself call for unity among races, civic responsibility and more probity?

I cannot give clearly articulated reasons, but I know from deep within that the Promise Keepers are a threat not a promise. Some fragmentary thoughts:

**Such a bath of emotion!** It is different for an individual to give over to emotion in the presence of supportive colleagues; or even for a small congregation to briefly share a moment of profound feeling. But a group of thousands giving over to prolonged emotion--to "group mind"--is the basis of an army. And who is the commander? Jesus, they will say. But whose Jesus? Where is the intelligence guiding this emotion? Out of sight...hidden...but at work.

**In this revel of togetherness, where is there room for otherness?** Where is there acknowledgment of difference and disagreement? What is to be done with those who stand apart--who don't, for example, embrace Jesus as their savior, or whose lives include other allegiances beside job and faith and nuclear family?

**Where are the voices of women?** Here again it is men deciding--deciding even how they've sinned and how they should repent. They demand humility of themselves, but only in yielding to the will of this Jesus (interpreted again by who?), not in asking those they've sinned against what form repentance should take. Men are still (as ever) in charge, with their guilt neatly absolved.

**Where is there even a clue that the world we live in has social forces** larger than individual-family-congregation? Where is there a word about the ecological disaster we are creating? About economic and political forces that are defining lives as expendable? About the disparity between the rich (getting richer) and the ever-increasing poor?

**In the midst of all this "spiritual striving," where is "soul"?** Where is pain and fear and death? Where is particularity, oddness, originality? Where are the songs in minor keys, the off-color jokes?

Have you ever felt like a blade of grass facing a buffalo stampede? The Promise Keepers are coming!

- Richard Stone

# Subscribe!

*Your subscription to LABOR/COMMUNITY ALLIANCE is free when you join the Frank Little Chapter of the Labor Party (see form on page 8). Or you can get on our mailing list by writing to the Labor Party, P.O. Box 5077, Fresno, CA, 93755. Donation: \$50, \$35, \$10/yr, or what you can afford. We also gladly accept donations of self-adhesive stamps. Call John at 226-2078 with questions/comments.*



# May Day: The Real Labor Day

May 1st, International Workers' Day, commemorates the historic struggle of working people throughout the world, and is recognized in every country except the United States, Canada, and South Africa.

This despite the fact that the holiday began in the 1880s in the United States, with the fight for an eight-hour work day.

In 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions passed a resolution stating that eight hours would constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886.

The resolution called for a general strike to achieve the goal; since legislative methods had already failed.

## Rank and file support

With workers being forced to work ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day, rank-and-file support for the eight-hour movement grew rapidly, despite the indifference and hostility of many union leaders.

By April 1886, 250,000 workers were involved in the May Day movement.

The heart of the movement was in Chicago, organized primarily by the International Working People's Association.

Businesses and the state were terrified by the increasingly revolutionary character of the movement and prepared accordingly.

The police and militia were increased in size and received new and powerful weapons financed by local business leaders.

Chicago's Commercial Club purchased a \$2000 machine gun for the Illinois National Guard to be used against strikers.

Nevertheless, by May 1st, the movement had already won gains for many Chicago clothing cutters, shoemakers, and packing-house workers.

## Police fire on strikers

But on May 3, 1886, police fired into a crowd of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works Factory, killing four and wounding many.

A mass meeting was called for on the next day in Haymarket Square to protest the brutality.

The meeting proceeded without incident, and by the time the last speaker was on the

platform, the rainy gathering was already breaking up, with only a few hundred people remaining.

It was then that 180 cops marched into the square and ordered the meeting to disperse.

As the speakers climbed down from the platform, a bomb was thrown at the police, killing one and injuring seventy.

Police responded by firing into the crowd, killing one worker and injuring many others.

Although it was never determined who threw the bomb, the incident was used as an excuse to attack the entire Left and labor movement.

Police ransacked the homes and offices of suspected radicals, and hundreds were arrested without charge.

## Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons

Nevertheless, rather than suppressing labor and radical movements, the events of 1886 actually mobilized many generations of radicals.

Emma Goldman, a young immigrant at the time, later pointed to the Haymarket affair as her political birth.

Lucy Parsons called upon the poor to direct their anger toward those responsible--the rich.

Instead of disappearing, the radical movement only grew in the wake of Haymarket, spawning other movements and organizations, including the Industrial Workers of the World.

It is not surprising that the state, business leaders, and the media would want to hide the true history of May Day, portraying it as a holiday celebrated only in Moscow's Red Square.

In its attempt to erase the history and significance of May Day, the United States government declared May 1st to be "Law Day."

## Historical cover-up

By covering up the history of May Day, the state, business, some unions and the media have covered up an entire legacy of dissent in this country.

They are terrified of what a similarly militant and organized movement could accomplish today, and they suppress the seeds of such organization whenever and wherever they can.

As workers, we must recognize and commemorate May Day not only for its historical significance, but also as a time to organize around issues of vital importance to working-class people today.

—Mike Rhodes  
Workers' Education  
Local 189  
CWA.

## Unions sue over daily overtime pay

SAN FRANCISCO--The state AFL-CIO is suing to preserve mandatory overtime pay for workers working more than eight hours a day, saying a state commission exceeded its authority in voting to repeal the requirement.

The California Labor Federation said a 1980 state law requires premium pay, 50 percent above the normal hourly rate, after the eighth hour in a day unless two-thirds of the employer's work force agree to a different arrangement.

The state Industrial Welfare Commission cannot override that law, the labor group said in a Superior Court suit. [Fresno Bee, 4/97]



# Strawberry march blooms to 30,000



**WATSONVILLE** - In one of the biggest workers' marches in recent years, more than 30,000 union members, strawberry workers, community activists and religious leaders formed a 2.5-mile long march and rallied through the heart of California's strawberry country, Watsonville, April 13.

The singing, chanting and cheering crowd waved flags and carried signs and banners calling on growers to respect workers's basic right to living wages, clean drinking water, decent working conditions and an end to sexual harassment.

Delegations from 26 unions, 25 central labor councils and 18 state feds marched.

## Reaching for the dream

Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez said the deplorable working conditions and the treatment of workers "like second-class citizens" means "it's time to take on the agri-giants and bring about change..."

"We're in solidarity and will do whatever is necessary to bring about changes to bring about Cesar Chavez's dream. Decent people of good conscience cannot tolerate these injustices. The times demand actions.

"We must all become angry and hungry for justice. Unless you become involved, these conditions will live on for strawberry workers."

## Who are the workers?

Here's what some strawberry workers had to say -

"I work stooped over eight to ten hours a day. We often have to work in mud and can't take simple breaks," said Delfina Garcia, a 43-year-old mother of eight who earns \$8,000 to \$9,000 a year.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm a donkey. The company says if they raise wages, they will go broke. Every year, they say they are too poor, but every year they plant more acres," said Isabel Rendon, a picker for eight years.

In seven years, Jose Rojas said, he has not had a raise than bosses "steal"

from workers by forcing them to work off the clock. "I want to tell all the strawberry workers, this is enough. We are uniting for all the workers and their families."

## The fight continues

With the dust from the march settled, more than 100 rank-and-file members and organizers from more than a dozen unions launched a two-week organizing blitz in the strawberry fields.

## Labor/Community Alliance unites union and social justice groups

### Locally produced TV program to begin airing Sunday

By Lisa Dorman-Stubbs  
Neighbors

When a national Labor Party was formed last June, Fresno wasn't far behind with the creation of the Frank Little Chapter of the Labor Party.

The chapter is named for men who came to Fresno with the Industrial Workers of the World, or the "Wobblies," who were unskilled laborers who organized the first union in the valley.

crisis a connection between the labor movement and the community."

Members of the alliance were among the 60 hundreds of demonstrators from Fresno County that traveled to Watsonville last weekend, joining the AFL-CIO, United Farm Workers and community and religious leaders from across the nation, to support better working conditions for those who work the strawberry fields.

"The labor movement is everybody," said Pam Valenzuela, a member of the Labor Party.

program that will air this week.

"Valley Labor Forum," scheduled to air at 6 p.m. Sunday on KKAG Channel 41.

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**Labor/Community Alliance and Valley Labor Forum (TV Show) were the subjects of an April 17 Neighbors column written by Lisa Dorman-Stubbs.**



# Alliance Calender of Events

## Monday-Friday

The Living Room, support and referral resource center for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. 12 noon to 5 p.m. at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 485-3667.

## Every Saturday

Food Not Bombs feeds the hungry 1-2 p.m. near the Olive Avenue entrance to Roeding Park. Needed: volunteers to help cook food Saturday mornings, 9:30, Sierra Vista United Methodist Church, corner of Maple & Illinois. Every

## Every Sunday

Valley Labor Forum (locally produced Labor TV program), 6 p.m., KKAG TV-61.

## Thursday, May 1

The real "Labor Day." See article on page 2.

## Friday, May 2

Bluestein Family Reunion Concert, with Joel, Evo, Jemmy, Frayda. 8 p.m., Tower Theater. Tickets: The Laser's Edge; Valley Women Books & Gifts.

## Saturday, May 3

Fresno Center for Nonviolence board meeting, 9:30 a.m., 985 N. Van Ness. Guests welcome.

## Sunday, May 4

Orientation for The Institute for Peace, Justice and Attitudinal Healing (a project of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence in affiliation with The Fellowship of Reconciliation), between 2 and 4 p.m., 985 N. Van Ness. For information call 237-3225.

## Sunday, May 4

Arte Maya: Indigenous Artists from Guatemala (opening reception), Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness Ave., 266-2623.

## Monday, May 5

Cinco de Mayo.

## Tuesday, May 6

Video Night, Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Two videos: *Not in Our Town* and *Racism and the Ideology of Slavery*. 7 p.m. See program information page 7.

## Thursday, May 8

Caravan for the Children of Cuba (IFCO/Pastors for Peace), 6 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. program, Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness.

## Saturday, May 10

Corporate Power and the American Dream: Basic Economics for Workers and Students. Free workshop, free lunch, free workbook. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Fresno City College. Call 226-2078 to register.

## Monday, May 12

*An African-American in Cuba: Race, Culture and Art*. Part of the Institute for Peace, Justice & Attitudinal Healing. 7-9 p.m. Call 237-3225 for information.

## Thursday, May 15

Death Penalty Focus, 7:30 p.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness.

## Saturday, May 17

Stylish Seconds II, Fashion Show and Silent Auction, benefit for the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 2-4 p.m. at the Second Space Theater, 928 E. Olive. Tickets: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door.

## Saturday, May 17

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 10 a.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness.

## Saturday, May 17

"Welcome Home Cruz Bustamante" reception for the new Speaker of the California Assembly. Sponsored by Concerned Citizens for Representative Government. 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Fresno County Fair Grounds Industrial Education Building, \$10 per person. Call 439-8140

## Sunday, May 18

World Meditation Day observed 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Call 435-2212.

## Sunday, May 18

*Does He Want Cream In His Coffee? - The disabled facing societal barriers*. Part of the Institute for Peace, Justice & Attitudinal Healing. 3-5 p.m. Call 237-3225 for information.

## Monday, May 19

Amnesty International, 7:30 p.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 224-0924.

## Tuesday, May 20

Health Care For All, single-payer advocates of California, 7:15 p.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 255-6473.

## Wednesday, May 21

*The Sun Mountain Experience, Part I. The power of the shamanic journey*. Part of the Institute for Peace, Justice & Attitudinal Healing. 7-10 p.m. Call 237-3225 for information.

## Thursday, May 22

*Death Penalty Politics & Prison Conditions*. Part of the Institute for Peace, Justice & Attitudinal Healing. 7-9 p.m. Call 237-3225 for information

## Saturday, May 24

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Northern California Cluster Meeting. Call 229-9661.

## Monday, May 26

Labor Party, Frank Little Chapter, meets at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness (between Belmont and Olive), 5:30 p.m. Call 226-29078 for information. Everyone is welcome.

## Tuesday, May 27

*Restorative Justice: for the well-being of the victim, the offender, and the community*. Part of the Institute for Peace, Justice & Attitudinal Healing. Call 237-3225 for information.



# WORK IN PROGRESS

## LABOR NEWS

### FRESNO COUNTY & SEIU

As this newsletter goes to press, *FRESNO COUNTY EMPLOYEES* are on the verge of a strike at several county facilities. Two bargaining units have already authorized a strike, and a strike vote is pending in a third bargaining unit.

The workers, who are *SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION (SEIU)* members, are resisting contract concessions in the areas of overtime, annual leave, and union security. They are also unhappy with the county's wage offer which at 1½ percent is considerably below the 3.3 percent inflation rate. This would result in a 2 percent pay cut for these workers.

Union members are incensed by the county's position. The Boards of Supervisors have voted themselves annual salary increases of about 5 percent and they recently gave the County Administrative Officer, Will Randolph, a 5 percent increase.

There are also some 2,000 current County employees that are receiving welfare assistance because they do not earn a living wage.

SEIU has been in negotiations with Fresno County since November of 1996.

The Union is asking for a cost of living increase, bilingual pay, flex work schedules, safety retirement for peace officers, and no take away in the contract.

These workers need community support to win their just demands. Please call the Board of Supervisors and tell them to negotiate a fair contract with their employees.

District 1 Deran Koligian.....488-3531  
District 2 Sharon Levy.....488-3531  
District 3 Juan Arambula.....488-3531  
District 4 Tom Perch.....488-3531  
District 5 Stan Oken.....488-3531  
If you are calling from out of town: (800) 742-1011

If you would like to find out more about the Strike or what you can do to help call Pam Whalen, 277-6700.

### UFCW LOCAL 1288

*UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 1288* is gearing up for a challenging year.

Over the next 12 months, all their poultry division and wholesale meat division contracts expire.

The Zackey Turkey plant will be the site of the first contract negotiations.

According to President Don Hunsucker, local 1288 is in a very strong bargaining position, with a healthy strike and assistance "war chest" to back them up.

## CSEA

More than a decade ago, the *CALIFORNIA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION* sponsored legislation that created *CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE WEEK*. Since then, California has taken the third full week in May to recognize the outstanding efforts of its school workers. This year it will be held May 18-24.

Members should be particularly proud of their current political achievements. Their work on grassroots campaigns helped elect several pro-labor candidates to the state Senate, the Assembly, city councils and local school boards.

However, the greatest achievement for classified employees is the vital work they do every day. Bus drivers, food service workers, secretaries, clerical staff, maintenance personnel, paraeducators, custodians are just some of the people who make public education work. They all deserve our thanks.

\* \* \*

A member of the California School Employee's Association, *DAVID PAULSON*, is making a bid for a seat on the PERS board — that's the *PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM*.

The PERS board is made up of 13 members, five of whom are appointed. Paulson is running for one of two at-large seats.

### MARTINEZ BILL

The Jobs Creation and Infrastructure Restoration Act, also known as the *MARTINEZ PUBLIC WORKS JOBS BILL*, has been reintroduced to Congress.

Unions and other activist organizations nationwide have begun mobilizing around this crucial bill. It's being called "the emergency solution" to the welfare crisis because it provides living wage jobs to welfare recipients, long term unemployed, downsizing victims, unemployed youth as well as unemployed building trades workers.

The bill would provide \$250 billion for union wage jobs to rebuild and restore schools, hospitals, highways, bridges, parks, libraries, child care centers, sewer systems and other public facilities.

For information contact Jerry Acosta or Art Rodriguez, (310) 806-9928.

### ACTION! MOTOWN '97

An international show of labor solidarity will bring thousands of trade union activists to *DETROIT* this June for two days of rallies and mass demonstrations.

Union members from across the country will pour into the Motor City on June 20 and 21 for *ACTION! MOTOWN '97*, a mass mobilization against the actions of The Detroit News and Free Press during the 19-month strike.

"We have been dancing in the streets," said Kate DeSmet, who was the News' religion writer before the strike. "Not only does this tell the community that our struggle is not over in Detroit, it tells Gannett, Knight-Ridder and all union busters in the country that the national labor unions are alive, strong and coming to Detroit."



## "NO SWEAT" CLOTHING?

The *CAMPAIGN FOR LABOR RIGHTS* reports that President Clinton's Task Force charged with producing *STANDARDS FOR A "NO SWEAT" CLOTHING LABEL* within 6 months took nearly 8 ½ months to produce a very disappointing report. This was due to intransigence by industry representatives... Among the horrors of this agreement are the following points:

- \* Companies shall pay the local minimum wage or prevailing industry wage. (It is widely acknowledged that third world countries tend to set the minimum wage well below what workers need to meet even their most basic needs).

- \* The agreement accepts a 60-hour work week (48 hours plus 12 hours mandatory overtime) as the norm and then says, "Except in extraordinary business circumstances," workers will not be forced to work more than that. (Anything could qualify as an "extraordinary circumstance").

- \* Employees shall be compensated for overtime hours at the legal rate or, where none exists, at a rate at least equal to their regular hourly compensation rate. (Labor unions the world over call for overtime to be paid at a higher rate than the regular hourly wage).

The result of this agreement is that apparel companies can continue to pay their workers 20 cents an hour for "regular" 60-hour work weeks, push them to do unlimited hours of "voluntary" overtime beyond that, monitor conditions via accounting firms which have no connections to the workers AND be rewarded for this behavior with a "no sweatshop" seal of approval.

*Campaign for Labor Rights, 1247 "E" Street SE, Washington, DC 20003. clr@igc.apc.org or (541)344-5410.*

## **LABOR CREATES\$ ALL WEALTH**

## **Anti-racism videos at the Center for Nonviolence**

Two videos about racism will be shown Tuesday, May 6, at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness (between Belmont and Olive). Starting time: 7 p.m.

The first video will be *Not In Our Town* (27 mins), an inspiring story of the people of Billings, Montana who took a stand against a series of hate crimes in their community.

The second video will be a talk by Michael Parenti, *Racism and the Ideology of Slavery: From Aristotle to Today*.

## **PEACE REPORT**

*From Fellowship of Reconciliation's "Facts for Action" March, 1997:*

In September, 1977, President Carter and the president of Panama signed a treaty transferring the Panama Canal to Panama at the end of 1999, and with it the closing of US military bases in the Canal Zone. Now there is a renewed push by the Pentagon to violate this treaty by keeping Howard Air Force Base as the international "counter drug center," which would include military troops and equipment.

Republicans, including Defense Secretary Wm. Cohen, want increased money for the Pentagon in 1998. The new US Budget would include \$265 billion for defense. Also, the Senate majority leader, Trent Lott "has promised a fight to deploy a national missile-defense system" (Star Wars), which many believe is a very expensive and infeasible idea.

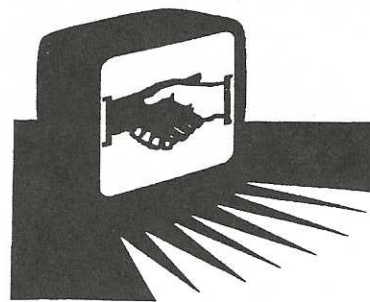
A vigil and lobby action to close the Army School of the Americas, Ft. Benning, GA, is planned at the US Capitol steps at the end of April. This school has trained 60,000 Latin American soldiers; its graduates, trained in methods of torture, have left a trail of blood and suffering in every Latin American country to which they have returned.

We can urge our Representative (House) to co-sponsor Rep. Joe Kennedy's bill (HR 611) to close this school, which they NY Times has said is "so clearly out of tune with American values it should be shut down without delay."

*From the San Jose Peace Center's "Peace Times":*

Sen. Jesse Helms, chair of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is withholding US approval of the international treaty banning chemical weapons until the UN meets certain standards.

Tell the Senator that the US needs to be part of this treaty, and also that the US must pay its large UN dues in arrears. — Jack Welch



### **VALLEY LABOR FORUM**

**"Union News and Views  
Valleywide--Nationwide!"  
Sundays, 6 p.m., KKAG TV-61**

## **LABOR/COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

Labor Party (Frank Little Chapter)

PO Box 5077, Fresno, CA 93755

--Address Correction Requested--



## **PLEASE SUPPORT THESE ORGANIZATIONS!**

**Coalition Of Organized Labor  
(COOL)**

*California Nurses Association*

*Health Care For All*

*Fresno Metro Ministry*

*Valley Labor Forum*

*(Labor TV)*

*Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
Service Employees Internat'l Union*

*Locals 535, 752, 250*

*Fresno Free College Foundation  
(KFCF Radio 88.1)*

*California School Employees  
Association*

*Women's Internat'l League for  
Peace & Freedom (WILPF)*

*Fresno City Employees Assoc. &*

*Madera City Employees Assoc.*

*Central Labor Council*

*United Food & Commercial Workers*

*Local 1288*

**Join the Labor Party Today!**

\_\_\_ \$20 regular

Name

\_\_\_ \$10 low income

Street Address

\_\_\_ \$50 sustaining

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Union (if applicable)

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