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NO BUSINESS AS USUAL

Millions demand immigrant rights

Super-exploited workers revive May Day in the U.S.

By Leilani Dowell

On May 1, a "day without immigrants," May Day—International Workers Day—was revived in the United States.

In every state, businesses closed, workers took the day off, students walked out of schools, and a multinational sea of humanity marched and rallied to demand full rights for all.

The impact of the boycott was felt in the streets as well as in the pocketbooks of businesses that profit from super-exploited immigrant labor.

The demonstration in Chicago was the biggest protest in the city's history. Organizers estimated the turnout at 700,000.

Tens of thousands marched from schools. One high school organized transportation to the march as a "field trip."

There were two feeder marches, one from Benito Juarez High School, and another organized by the Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois, and others. Colorful T-shirts distinguished union members from UNITE-HERE and the Service Employees.

New York

Organizers estimated that between half a million and a million people throughout New York City overflowed Union Square in Manhattan and then marched down to Federal Plaza. New

York's diverse immigrant communities were reflected, with contingents from virtually every Latin American and Caribbean country; from China, Korea and the Philippines; from Senegal and other African countries; from Pakistan—whose shopkeepers based in NYC closed their doors for an hour—and other South Asian countries; from Poland and Ireland. Celebrities like Susan Sarandon joined speakers representing Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands.

The Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton and New York City Councilmember Charles Barron made clear that the Black struggle is in solidarity with immigrants, and would have no part of the attempt to "divide and rule" Blacks and Latin@s. "It's the big corporations that take jobs away," said Jackson, "not the immigrants."

Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Roger Toussaint, who is from Trinidad—released from jail on April 28 after serving five days of a 10-day sentence for leading the December transit strike—and Teamsters Black National Caucus leader Chris Silvera, who offered his union's office as the New York May Day Coalition headquarters, both applauded the immigrant struggle. Community and anti-war organizers like Larry Holmes of the Troops Out Now Coalition, Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March, Berna Ellorin of Bayan USA, Nellie

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May 1 in New York City, top; Paris, below
WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO AND LAL ROOJK

Calif. resistance pre-dated 1969 Stonewall Rebellion

By Leslie Feinberg

The 1969 Stonewall Rebellion in Greenwich Village in Manhattan was not the first time in history that gay and lesbian (and most certainly some bisexual), transgender and transsexual people physically fought back against brutal treatment at the hands of police and other reactionary forces.

Wherever same-sex love was criminalized under capitalism, trysting spots which offered relative anonymity developed in secluded public places in urban areas. Such meeting places often drew those who were not easily "read" as being gay socially, who may not have necessarily thought of themselves as "gay" or who feared being seen going in or out of a gay/trans bar. Signals—from a glance to a color-coded handkerchief—acted as a semaphore to indicate sexual interest. But men looking for other men in those locations faced the danger of "sting" operations—entrapment by "vice" cops.

The bars, on the other hand, tended to draw into social networks those who were considered "too obvious," as well as those who were, or wanted to be, their lovers. Since sexuality is only obvious when desire is communicated, being considered "obviously gay" referred to gender expression—lesbian and gay-cross-dressers, and those considered "inappropriately" gendered because of the way they spoke or gestured or walked.

Historically, police raids on these gathering places were systematic, relentless and brutal. So why did individuals go to places where they would be in such danger? Because danger also followed them wherever they went alone. In the bars and other gathering places, they could form networks—social and personal. They forged communities.

The composition of bar crowds varied based on region, economic classes, nationalities, ethnicities and sexes.

Many bars catered to those from the working class who were economically and socially marginalized.

In some cities in which Jim Crow segregation enforced apartheid conditions, the lesbian and gay bars were some of the only integrated social gathering places. Historians Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk wrote in their book "Gay by the Bay" that "racial segregation of many public places made bar culture more important for white lesbians and gays than it did for African Americans and other people of color."

"Wilma Johnson" described a network of private house parties in San Francisco in the early 1960s: "When we got there they had all these women that were dressed up in men's clothes. ... This group that I acquainted with really didn't go to gay bars. ... In San Francisco I don't ever recall a bar that had a majority of women that were Black. ... The majority of the women were always white. ... But in the bars there was (mostly) one color and not the other. We all got along, but the house parties were mainly Black. There were a few Caucasians, but not a lot, just a few." (Nan Alamilla Boyd, Oral History Project of the Gay & Lesbian Historical Society)

In blue-collar Buffalo, N.Y., historians Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Kennedy wrote, "By the mid-1950s groups of Black lesbians began to patronize Bingo's and the street bars in the downtown section, and soon after, whites went to the bars which opened in the Black section of town,

thereby ending the racial homogeneity of the lesbian bar community." (Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold)

Fighting back, hand-to-hand

There were many police raids on house parties and bars, and there were many acts of resistance—courageous, whether large or small—which have gone unrecorded in written history. Some episodes passed on as oral history only lived as long as those who retold them.

However there is one early historical example, from almost three centuries ago, which proves the truth that sustained acts of repression inevitably lead to outbreaks of open struggle: In 1707 and 1730 in England, the repressive "Societies for the Reformation of Manners" waged a campaign against "effeminate sodomites among the London poor." After more than 20 raids on clubs that drew what would today be referred to as feminine gay males—"mollies" in the vernacular of that time and place—some patrons were hanged or publicly pilloried as a result. But when a Covent Garden molly house was raided in 1725, the crowd, "many of them in drag, met the raid with determined and violent resistance."

And two-and-a-half centuries later, in California, people gathered in gay/trans bars and other establishments met police attacks with resistance—the social temperature was heating up.

In 1961, police in San Francisco carried out the largest vice raid in the city's history, arresting 89 men and 14 women at an after-hours club called the Tay-Bush Inn. Stryker and Van Buskirk note, "After first allowing 'respectable looking' and politically well-connected customers to depart without incident, the police booked the largely queer, working-class, and dark-skinned remainder. Charges were dropped against all but two of the defendants, and the blatant prejudice manifested by the arrests helped shift public sympathies toward greater civil rights protection for homosexuals."

In 1966, "Compton's Cafeteria Riot" erupted in the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin district, when a group described as transgender women and gay street hustlers fought back against police harassment. Rebellion broke out after a trans customer in the all-night cafe reportedly threw a cup of hot coffee in the face of a cop who was roughing her up. Transgenders and transsexuals threw sugar shakers through windows, overturned tables and torched a police cruiser. (San Francisco Bay Times, March 23, 2006)

On the 40th anniversary of the rebellion this year, community-organized events in San Francisco will commemorate this important milestone uprising. The 1966 events are brought to new generations in the recent film documentary "Screaming Queens"—written, directed and produced by Victor Silverman, an associate professor of history at Pomona College, and Susan Stryker, former executive director of the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco.

In another response to a police raid on two Los Angeles' bars in 1967, political organizers took their struggle to the streets. That year, as the stroke of midnight ushered in the New Year at The Black Cat bar in Los Angeles's Silverlake neighborhood, the "The Rhythm Queens" were singing Auld Lang Syne. Plainclothes cops who had infiltrated the festivities began viciously beating and arresting patrons. Several people tried to escape to the New

Continued on page 3



PART 62

Lavender & Red focuses on the relationship over more than a century between the liberation of oppressed sexualities, genders and sexes, and the communist movement. You can read the entire, ongoing Workers World newspaper series by Leslie Feinberg online at www.workers.org. Stop and get a subscription while you're there!

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WW CALENDAR

DETROIT

Sat., May 6

Workers World Party public meeting on "Reviving Marx & Lenin." Talks and discussion in preparation for the Workers World Party national conference on the struggle to revive socialism. Dinner served. 5 p.m. At 5920 Second Ave. For info (313) 831-0750.

Sat., May 6

Women's right to choose is under attack like never before and it's time to once again organize ourselves to fight back! Come to an organizing meeting to help launch a Detroit-area committee of activists to defend women's right to reproductive choices, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. At 5920 Second Ave., Detroit (just north of Wayne State University). For info (313) 837-2369 or email detroitaction@netscape.net.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas

Internet: Janet Mayes

Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, GA 30301
(404) 627-0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Armory St.,
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 983-3835
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.,
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 566-1115
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago

27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
(773) 381-5839
Fax (773) 761-9330
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 130322,
Houston, TX 77219
(713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles

5274 West Pico Blvd.,
Suite 203
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 936-1416
la@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
(610) 453-0490
phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, VA 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
(585) 436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St.,
Suite 230
San Diego, CA 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 561-9752
sf@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College, PA 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org



In honor of martyred Panther leader Struggle continues to rename street

By Eric Struch
Chicago

The Prisoners of Conscience Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Fred Hampton Jr., has been waging a struggle over the past three months to have the 2300 block of West Monroe named in honor of his father, the chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. Chairman Fred Hampton, Sr. along with BPP member Mark Clark were assassinated by a paramilitary squad of Chicago cops in collusion with the late Mayor Richard J. Daley and State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan on Dec. 4, 1969 in an incident that came to be known as the "Massacre on Monroe."

Alderwoman Madeline Haithcock had sponsored an ordinance in City Council to officially designate the 2300 block of Monroe as "Honorary Chairman Fred Hampton Way." Chairman Fred Jr. kept the heat on the street by organizing more than 125 people to march on City Hall March 29 in support of the ordinance.

Representatives of many organizations, including the New Black Panther Party, the Moorish Science Temple and Workers World Party attended the march. Chairman Fred Jr. and his mother, Akua Njeri, a longtime revolutionary activist, tried to force a vote on the ordinance by attempting to enter the City Council chambers while the council was in session. They were prevented from doing so by a wall of cops.

Verbal altercations between Chairman Fred Jr. and several councilmembers and

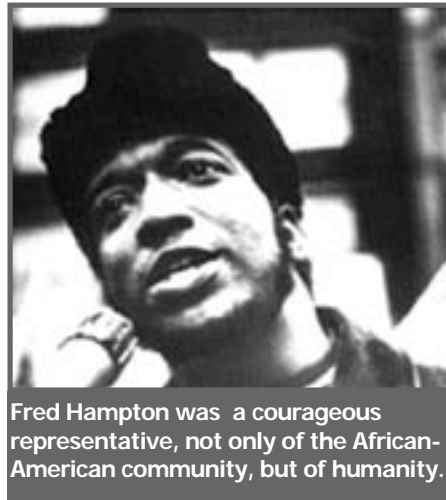
cops followed while the demonstrators shouted, "Bring the vote to the floor!" and "Black power!" The demonstration then spilled out into the street, where Chairman Fred Jr. led a militant march to the federal detention facility where POCC Minister of Defense Aaron Patterson is being held captive. The POCC later held a block party in front of the former BPP headquarters.

Alderman Tom Allen of the 38th Ward refused to call for a vote even though the ordinance had already passed in his transportation committee. The ordinance again came before the City Council floor on April 26.

Haithcock needed at least 26 votes to discharge a piece of legislation from committee over Allen's objections. She was unable to come up with the needed votes, saying, "Certain interest groups have successfully conspired to confuse and intimidate the public on this issue."

A smear campaign has been waged by Chicago Police Superintendent Phil Cline, the Chicago Police Department and their cop "union," the Fraternal Order of Police, against the memory of Fred Hampton Sr. and the historical legacy of the BPP.

Chairman Fred Jr. reacted to these events by saying, "Chairman Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were courageous representatives, not only of the African community, but of humanity. Their legacies—people are trying to wipe it out. Why are people scared to talk about Fred Hampton Sr.? Why have there been threats on my life?" Chairman Fred Jr.



Fred Hampton was a courageous representative, not only of the African-American community, but of humanity.

narrowly survived two assassination attempts several years ago.

Commenting on Mayor Richard Daley Jr.'s role in smothering the vote on the street name, Chairman Fred said, "Is this a democracy or a Daley dictatorship? All shots come from the fifth floor. [The city hall location of the mayor's office.] 'I know that much about Chicago history. Once you start talking about Chairman Fred Hampton, you've got to start making some concrete connections about who was mayor and under whose tenure he was assassinated. There's a Pandora's Box that a lot of people don't want to open in this city.' Daley, of course, is trying to play the victim since being confronted with his role in sinking the street name ordinance. He says, 'Who else are they going to blame? Everybody blames me!'"

Both Chairman Fred and Alderwoman Haithcock vow to continue the struggle despite the temporary setback. Haithcock said, "I will put the sign up in some kind of way. I will honor him in some manner. If it's not the sign, it'll be something." □

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

JOHN BLACK PRESENTE!

From an April 9
audio commen-
tary.



With the passing of John Black of State College, Pa., passes more than a remarkable man. It is the passing of an era. Black was a anti-fascist, anti-racist, anti-Nazi, anti-death penalty, anti-ignorance activist and worked for the

working class since his youth in Germany.

During the rise of the Nazis, Black, as a teenager, worked with young anti-fascists and communists in Berlin to oppose the (emerging-WW) dictator. He posted anti-Nazi slogans at a time when it could have earned him a death sentence. He passed secret communications against the Nazis among anti-fascists throughout the region. When he came to the U.S., he worked tirelessly to help build Local 1199, the progressive hospital workers union and got tossed into jail frequently for defending the rights of workers.

He was a member of Workers World Party and contributed to the Workers World newspaper, especially when it came to historical research and to revolutions and popular struggles.

He was fascinated with the life of people like François-Noël Babeuf, the French revolutionary who helped form the "Conspiracy of Equals" which opposed the authoritarian nature of the five-man Directory in the later stages of the revolution. John, despite failing health, continued his reading and research into revolutionary figures and struggles from France, from Indonesia and beyond.

He drew immense inspiration from his brilliant wife, the scholar Dr. Bernice Black and their children. On our visits whenever he mentioned her, I never failed to see a twinkle in his eye, of love and pride.

From his earliest days to his last ones, he was a revolutionary who never forgot, as the theme of his radio show use to go, which side he was on. John's weekly talk show on Penn State's WPSU was one of the first places to air my pieces from death row. When university big-wigs demanded that he stop airing them, he refused and his show was canceled.

John Black never forgot which side he was on. He was on the workers side, he was on the oppressed side, he was on the revolutionary side, he was on the peoples' side.

John Black présente. From death row, this is Mumia Abu Jamal.

Go to prisonradio.org to hear Mumia's audio commentaries.

Workers, comrades pay tribute to JOHN BLACK

Special
to Workers World

A large meeting hall full of John Black's co-workers, family, comrades and friends paid tribute to this many-sided revolutionary on May Day in State College, Pa. While still a teenager, Black was in the anti-fascist resistance in Germany. He was a member of Workers World Party from its founding in 1959 until his death this March 7. And this self-described "trouble-maker" organized many health-care workers into the health and hospital workers' union, becoming president of its Pennsylvania division, 1199P.

All these aspects of his life were celebrated. A delegation from 1199P that included its entire executive board helped with food, displays and the program. They announced the dedication of a "John Black Memorial" conference room in the union's headquarters.

Andy McInerney and Jeff Martin, former students at Penn State, told how Black inspired them to form Students and Youth Against Racism. McInerney is now editor of Socialism and Liberation magazine.

Deirdre Griswold, editor of Workers World newspaper, described how Black joined the group of Marxist revolutionar-



WW PHOTO
John Black, seated in center, with healthcare workers.

ies who later founded Workers World Party and how their leadership of many great union struggles in New York City and Buffalo in the 1940s fit his concept of turning theory into practice.

His spouse, Bernice Black, had chosen May Day for the memorial because of John's intense interest in the international struggle of the workers and oppressed, which blossomed this year in the United States in the form of the immigrant rights struggle.

A high point of the tribute was the playing of a tape from death row Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. [See accompanying article.] An obituary on John Black's life appeared in the March 30, 2006, issue of WW. □

California resistance

Continued from page 2

Faces bar across street, where a drag contest was taking place. Cops followed and raided that club also, assaulting one of the workers so violently that his spleen ruptured. (The Gay & Lesbian Review, March-April 2006)

In response, more than 200 gay activists and human rights supporters from all walks of life rallied on Feb. 11 at Sanborn and Sunset to protest police brutality and arbitrary arrests, and to demand homosexual rights. The rally swelled the membership ranks of a newly and quickly formed, more militant gay group called "PRIDE." (Stephen O. Murray, lgbtq.com)

And within two short years, the collec-

tive anger that was bubbling up would break into a furious boil: Stonewall!

Next: *Stonewall means fight back!*
lfeinberg@workers.org

DRAG KING DREAMS

The next transgender classic from Leslie Feinberg. Her 1993 novel, **Stone Butch Blues**, won the American Library Association Award for Gay and Lesbian Literature and the LAMBDA Small Press Literary Award. Her non-fiction work, **Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman**, is the first analysis of the historical roots of transgender oppression.

Autographed copies available only at www.Leftbooks.com.

The new battle for reproductive rights

By Kris Hamel

During the 1950s and 1960s perhaps up to 1.2 million women obtained illegal "back alley" abortions annually in the U.S. According to Planned Parenthood, "In 1965, abortion was so unsafe that 17 percent of all deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth were the result of illegal abortion"—an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 women each year.

But the militant, mass struggles of women in the late 1960s and early 1970s for the right to abortion as part of reproductive freedom forced a reactionary U.S. Supreme Court to strike down, on Jan. 22, 1973, the criminal abortion laws of the state of Texas. The court, in a 7-2 decision in the *Roe v. Wade* case, found that the right to decide whether or not to bear a child is a fundamental right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Since 1973, many states, as well as the federal government, have enacted laws to curtail this right to free access to abortion.

President Jimmy Carter eliminated Medicaid funding for abortions for 23 million poor women in 1977, when he signed into law the Hyde Amendment. Asked if this was fair to poor women, Carter, a Democrat and millionaire peanut plantation owner, answered: "There are many things in life that are not fair."

Other laws passed to restrict abortion rights include requiring counseling and/or a 24-hour "cooling off period" before an abortion is performed, and requiring women under 18 to notify or obtain permission from a parent, guardian or the court.

As these legal struggles continue, violent, direct attacks on women's right to choose have gone on relentlessly. According to the Abortion Access Project: "There have been 15,087 reported instances of violence and/or harassment against abortion providers since 1977, including seven

murders and 17 attempted murders (actual instances are most likely much higher.)"

The Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project, which helps women obtain abortions, gives other grim statistics on the accessibility of services: "Only 17 states provide financial assistance to poor women seeking abortions; 14 of them do so under court order. Over 87 percent of U.S. counties do not have services even though 34 percent of all women ages 15 to 44 reside in those counties. Over 31 percent of U.S. metropolitan areas have no providers. Eight of 10 residency programs do not require doctors to learn abortion procedures."

The Abortion Access Project states: "Since 1982, the number of abortion providers has decreased by 37 percent.... From 1982 to 2000, the number of hospitals providing abortions has decreased by 57 percent."

In the new millennium the right-wing backlash against women and the right to choose has continued unabated.

A heavy setback occurred recently in the state of South Dakota, where on March 6 Republican Gov. Mike Rounds signed into law HB1215, the so-called "Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act."

This law effectively bans abortions in that state except if the life of the pregnant woman is in jeopardy. If that is the case, doctors are required under the new law to try to save the life of the fetus as well as the woman. There are no exceptions for pregnancies occurring as a result of rape or incest, which is rape by a family member. Doctors performing an abortion could receive a \$5,000 fine and five years in prison.

A review by the U.S. Supreme Court was the openly stated goal for the South Dakota law. Anti-choice forces look to the current Supreme Court majority of reactionaries to end *Roe* and set women back decades in the struggle for equality and

reproductive choices. If *Roe* is overturned, it is likely a majority of states will outlaw abortion almost immediately. Ballot drives to ban or severely curtail the right to abortion are already taking place in at least a dozen states.

The abortion ban will take effect in South Dakota on July 1. About 800 abortions are performed annually in this state of only 770,000 residents.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research report on the status of women in South Dakota, median annual earnings for women rank last in the nation. Ten percent of white women in the state live in poverty compared to 50 percent of Native American women. Because of extreme poverty caused by centuries of genocide and racism, life expectancy for Native Americans in South Dakota is only 55 years for women, and a mere 46 years for men.

The prohibition of abortions will affect women within the oppressed nations and working-class, low-income women far more heavily than white women with income and resources to seek an abortion outside the state.

Oglala nation leads fight for women

Activists for reproductive rights in South Dakota stepped up their efforts after HB1215 was enacted, and on March 24 announced the formation of the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families and the launching of a petition drive to put HR1215 before voters in the state's November elections.

Cecelia Fire Thunder of the Oglala Sioux nation, leader of the Pine Ridge Reservation, is co-chair of the campaign. Not only has Fire Thunder taken the lead in organizing the statewide petition drive, but at the end of March she announced that she plans to build a clinic that will provide abortions on the Pine Ridge Reser-

vation, effectively circumventing the state law banning abortions. Even South Dakota Attorney General Larry Long has conceded that such a clinic could operate lawfully at Pine Ridge even with the state ban in place. (msnbc.msn.com)

President Fire Thunder has stated, "An Indian reservation is a sovereign nation and we're going to take it as far as we can to exercise our sovereignty. As Indian women, we fight many battles. This is... another battle we have to fight.... In our culture, children are sacred, but women are sacred, too...." (WorldNetDaily.com)

In an interview with Rose Aguilar of AlterNet, Fire Thunder also declared: "The proposed clinic would be for all women.... This clinic would go beyond abortion and contraception. We're missing out on teaching our boys and men about what they need to do to avoid pregnancies. Ultimately, this is a much bigger issue than just abortion. The women of America should be outraged that policies and decisions about their bodies are being made by male politicians and clergy. It's time for women to reclaim their bodies.... This is a call to arms by women in the United States. Women of color and poor women have always known that regardless of what happens, women with money will have access to abortion. Women with money will have access to contraception. No matter which way you cut it, it's always on the backs of poor women."

It is time to take inspiration for action from the courageous words and acts of Cecelia Fire Thunder. It is time for militant struggle by millions of women and their male allies

Whether a mass march on the Supreme Court or thousands of local actions, whether a convergence in Sioux Falls, S.D., to keep the clinic open and operating come July 1, or picketing pharmacies that refuse to sell contraceptives, the time for action is now. □

For those who need it most Pataki deepens cuts in education



Special to Workers World
New York

George Pataki, the governor of New York, is making plans to run for U.S. president, hoping to replace George W. Bush. Pataki can't point to more executions than Bush since the state of New York hasn't executed anyone for over 40 years.

But Pataki wants to cut social services, like education and health, that poor and working people rely on. Since New York state is currently running a budget surplus, his cuts will make the budget bigger and give his candidacy a boasting point among his corporate supporters.

He applied 202 vetoes to the state budget passed by the legislature in April and told the legislature if they overrode his vetoes he would impound the money; that is, he would not let the state spend it.

Pataki cut \$500 million from the SUNY (State University of New York) budget and \$414.4 million in aid to CUNY (City University of New York), which is primarily supported by the state, despite its name. The city of New York only gives money to CUNY's junior colleges.

Pataki also vetoed \$119.5 million for the Tuition Assistance Program. He is seeking to require TAP recipients to take at least 15 credits to maintain their grants, instead of the current 12. This doesn't sound like much, but according to student and faculty groups at CUNY, it will make it much more difficult for working stu-

dents—a majority of CUNY's undergraduates have a full-time job—to get the aid they need to survive and continue their education.

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC), an American Federation of Teachers local that represents 20,000 faculty and staff members at CUNY, released a statement immediately after Pataki's vetoes and is urging the state legislature to override them and defend their overrides in court.

The PSC pointed out, "The governor's vetoes to higher education compound a 15-year history of under-funding. While the overall state budget rose by more than 50 percent between 1990 and 2004, state funding for CUNY during the same period fell by 31 percent (in inflation-adjusted dollars)." CUNY responded by slashing programs, turning full-time teachers into part-time, contingent teachers and raising tuition and fees by 98 percent.

CUNY students are the sons and daughters and members of the working class, who cannot afford the \$40,000 to \$50,000 tuition that private universities like NYU and Columbia charge. A majority of them were born outside the United States and two-thirds are people of color.

This latest attack of Pataki on public higher education is just a continuation of a decades-long program to make public higher education more and more expensive. Workers have a right to a job and they have the right to an education that will let them get a better one. □

This N.Y. student will face Pataki's cuts.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Labor's great opportunity

Solidarity with immigrants can rekindle the fire

By Milt Neidenberg

The organized labor movement in the United States is facing a colossal challenge.

After decades of setbacks, retreats, concessions and a split in the AFL-CIO, an extraordinary movement of immigrants has erupted and is spreading like wildfire across the country. It comprises documented and undocumented immigrants from many countries, a majority of them Spanish-speaking. Overwhelmingly from the working class, they have taken to the streets in the millions to demand full rights, including legalization and decent wages, benefits and working conditions.

They deserve the all-out, unconditional support of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. This has not as yet materialized—although many local unions that have immigrant worker members have joined the marches and rallies with their union banners. Both labor federations have responded with measured support to the explosive protests against HR 4437, the Sensenbrenner-King bill, which would impose criminal penalties on the undocumented and their supporters.

In a Jan. 11 letter to Arlen Specter, Republican chairperson of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the AFL-CIO said it “strongly opposed the Border and Immigration Enforcement Act of 2005 (HR 4437).” It concluded that “The current population of undocumented workers who have paid taxes and made positive contributions to their communities must have a path to legalization.” The letter fails to call for ending all repression of immigrants, however.

Neither does Chairperson Anna Burger of the Change to Win federation. At a March 7 rally in Washington, Burger stated, “Our union was founded by immigrant workers. ... Unfortunately ... some politicians are trying to turn all of us into criminals. They are trying to divide us, to scare us—they are even trying to waste billions of dollars to build a 700-mile wall. ... We applaud Senators McCain and Kennedy for introducing comprehensive reform. It's time for the Senate to follow their lead.” This McCain-Kennedy bill, however, is essentially a “guest worker”

bill designed to send immigrant workers back to their home countries after six years—and earlier if they lose their jobs.

The leaders of both federations appear not to have recognized the exceptional significance of the fightback mood among millions of immigrants who are an integral sector of the organized labor movement, nor do they appeal to the U.S.-born rank-and-file unionists to join forces with the immigrants. The organized labor movement needs to provide union resources and power and march shoulder to shoulder with immigrants, who are facing great risk to themselves and their loved ones. Such a response would go a long way to inhibit those in and out of government who are mobilizing and financing the racist, immigrant-bashing riffraff.

The two federations are positioning for the mid-term elections in hope of getting a Democratic majority in Congress. They are conserving resources and preparing members to get out the vote in November. Their strategy is to channel the power of millions of marching immigrants into the fall election.

The issues impacting on the immigrant struggle will not dissipate, nor will their movement give up the streets. These issues are integral to the entire working class and the oppressed nationalities, which have suffered economic, political and social betrayals under the two capitalist parties. Sooner than later, the multinational rank and file of the organized labor movement will have to join this struggle and develop an independent, class-wide perspective.

NAFTA and labor

The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the economic havoc it wrought in Mexico caused a massive increase in the influx of immigrants across the southern border. At the same time, U.S. bosses shut down factories and moved abroad, eliminating full-time, well-paying jobs and threatening the bargaining power of the organized labor movement. This trend has been exacerbated over the last 14 years.

Fourteen years ago, the first President George Bush signed NAFTA. By the time of the election in November 1992, it still

had to be approved by Congress. Bill Clinton became the new president. His top priority was to get NAFTA through Congress. He used every political and legislative trick, including deceit, demagoguery and bribes, to get it passed by both houses of Congress.

It was reported by opponents of NAFTA, including the then united AFL-CIO, that the Clinton administration added to the bill some 37 special “quid pro quo” side deals and pork-barrel projects to win over undecided Congress members. Among Clinton's banker/billionaire allies were David Rockefeller and his puppet/messenger, Henry Kissinger.

The AFL-CIO leaders fought against NAFTA by focusing their resources and membership on lobbying Congress. They never considered organizing massive demonstrations and marches with labor's allies to defeat this imperialist bill, nor did they recognize the plight of Mexican workers. NAFTA passed by 234 to 200 in the House and 61 to 38 in the Senate. The ruling-class victory exposed once again that the Democratic Party and Clinton were no friends of labor.

NAFTA was no “free trade” agreement. It was a bonanza for U.S. imperialism. U.S. bankers inundated Mexico with excess capital. The corporations shifted factories across the border. They set up maquiladora (free enterprise) zones on the Mexican side of the border where cheap labor was exploited in the assembly of finished goods from parts. The goods were then shipped back across the border, free of tariffs and quotas. The corporations, transnational banks and financial institutions had a field day.

They also bought up state property at bargain prices and land that peasants had lived on for centuries. They made a neo-colony out of Mexico and called it free trade among sovereign nations. NAFTA destroyed the economic fabric of Mexico by integrating it into the imperial colossus.

It drowned the Mexican workers and landless peasants in a sea of poverty, misery and despair. Thus began the explosive exodus of immigrant workers northward. They faced death, repression, racism and immigrant-bashing to find jobs and

escape the scourge inflicted by NAFTA.

Millions of immigrants have taken to the streets this May Day to reaffirm their rights, supported by workers around the world who have traditionally marched and rallied on May 1. They have swept aside the rhetoric of politicians, media and academia with their numbers, chants, slogans and marching feet.

Two days before the magnificent turnout on May 1, a New York Times editorial headlined “The Sleeping Giant” reflected the fearful reaction of this mouthpiece of bourgeois liberalism to the extraordinary immigrant movement. It tried to undermine the growing support for those who walked off their jobs, left schools and boycotted shopping plazas. The editorial cautioned the movement to avoid damaging its “worthy cause” by declaring May 1 to be A Day Without Immigrants.

Despite these and other pundits, the shutdown of economic activity on May Day was impressive. It encompassed laundries, restaurants, small businesses and construction sites. Tyson, Perdue, Cargill and Armour, all giant meat or poultry packers, had to shut down many of their plants. Stalls at wholesale food and flower markets were empty. Seventy percent of West Coast truckers did not drive that day.

Many of these industries are ripe for union organizing, if the labor movement links its own struggle to the immigrant movement. Independent workers' centers have arisen around the immigration struggle and May Day will give them a big lift.

The Times was right about one thing. The “sleeping giant” has awakened and this day will go down in history. Frederick Engels, co-thinker and collaborator of Karl Marx, wrote in a preface to the fourth German edition of the Communist Manifesto about a massive display of working class power on May 1, 1890, over a century ago: “Europe and America is holding a review of its forces. If only Marx were with me to see it with his own eyes.”

All profound social, political and economic change is ignited from below. The immigrant movement lit the fire on May 1. □

More unions, veterans bolster anti-war march

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

This year's anti-war march called by United for Peace and Justice on April 29 saw a larger than usual participation of unions and military veterans along with the more familiar faces from peace groups, some of which originated during the Vietnam War.

The large crowd marched down Broadway from 22nd Street to Foley Square in lower Manhattan, where organizers had set up tents for a “grassroots action festival.” It took two and a half hours before the end of the march had passed its starting point. Organizers estimated the crowd at 350,000. The corporate media, which projected a neutral tone in its reporting, gave it tens of thousands.

Notables like Cindy Sheehan, Jesse Jackson, Susan Sarandon, Daniel Ellsberg and the Rev. Al Sharpton spoke at a warm-up rally before the march. But the location

of the speakers' platform—a side street—meant that only a small part of the protesters could hear the talks.

Speeches, banners and slogans focused on ending the war in Iraq and bringing the troops home; protecting civil liberties and immigrant rights, rebuilding communities in the U.S., especially the Gulf Coast; and addressing climate change and the destruction of the environment.

Many banners and signs also called for no war on Iran. There were satirical costumes and street theater that mocked the war-mongering of the Bush administration. One group called for shutting down the U.S. torture center at Guantanamo as they wheeled a large cage with a hooded man inside guarded by a person in a U.S. uniform.

Several different veterans' groups and military families organized contingents. Iraq war veterans marched in their uniforms. Some families carried photographs of loved ones killed in the war.

U.S. Labor Against the War sent dele-

gations from several different cities. The Professional Staff Congress, the Transport Workers Union, UNITE HERE, 1199-SEIU and other public sector unions drew attention to the siphoning off of tax money from social programs to pay for the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, with slogans like “Health care, not warfare” and “Health care and education, not war and occupation.”

The delegations of service workers had the most people of color, although some Black, Latin@, Middle Eastern and Asian people were dispersed through the large demonstration.

Many marchers carried signs identifying themselves as coming from New England, Long Island, Westchester and other areas outside the city. Their slogans



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

often expressed dismay at being betrayed by the government and longing for what they believed to have been a more democratic era.

While some signs threatened to vote out the Republicans, there was clearly disappointment among many who have voted Democratic that even the significant popular swing against the war and the administration has failed to produce any strong anti-war voice in the so-called “opposition” party. □



NEW YORK



WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Super-exploited workers revive May Day in the U.S

Continued from page 1

Bailey of the Harlem Tenants Council and International Action Center's Teresa Gutierrez also spoke.

Before imposing court buildings, thousands gathered to listen to the closing rally at Federal Plaza. Along with demanding legalization of immigrants, speakers explained how neoliberalism had driven so many from their homelands to seek work at the center of world imperialism.

A sea of protesters, tens of thousands, continued marching in well after the rally ended. Traffic was forced to a standstill on the Brooklyn Bridge until police violently attacked the crowd.

Lauren Giaccone reports: "The cops then started pushing. We pushed back. A cop then punched a girl, she went down and that started a huge fight between the cops and the people. The people fought back against the brutality. The cops threw people to the ground, so hard that a metal post fastened to the ground outside of the subway station went flying. As people were on the ground, cops still beat them. ...

"We continued to march ... when scooter cops hooked around us and jumped on the sidewalk, cornering us. We had no choice but to run across the street into oncoming traffic, to avoid the brutality we just witnessed. We were at the other side ... when the [y] drove across the street and rode up onto the sidewalk yet again. This time, however, they revved their engines and pinned several of us against the wall." (nyc.indymedia.org)

When Workplace Project organizer Carlos Canales asked the mayor of Hempstead, on Long Island, for a rally permit for 800 people, he never expected that 5,000 would show. "Labor and immigrants on Long Island changed history today," he said. "Immigrants have brought back May Day."

Organizers convinced more than 60 Long Island businesses to close. And they sent five busloads of people to the New York City rally. Participants cheered when organizers called for "Primer de Mayo 2007."

The West

In the San Francisco Bay area, despite last-minute attempts by the big-business media to downplay May 1, businesses stood idle

as more than 1 million people took to the streets.

The day began with an East Oakland march to the Federal Building. Later, contingents of community organizations, unions, churches and student groups gathered for a "grand march" through San Francisco's financial district.

More than a thousand people rallied at the University of California, Berkeley. Demonstrators blocked the on-ramp to Route 80, a major thoroughfare. In San Jose, tens of thousands marched.

In Los Angeles the May 1 boycott and march was initiated by the Mexican American Political Association and Hermandad Mexicana Latino American. Organizers estimate the City Hall demonstration at up to one million marchers. Reportedly 72,000 students missed school. Ninety percent of Los Angeles and Long Beach port truckers did not work. Boycott participants bolstered the numbers at a later demonstration in downtown McArthur Park.

The City Hall march showed more unity than ever. The Nation of Islam provided security. Speakers included Minister Tony Muhammad of the NOI, and Pastor Louis Logan of the large AME Bethel Baptist church, as well as leaders of the Southern California District Council of Laborers, Grupo Parlamentario PRI and other Mexican-American organizations.

The streets of south San Diego overflowed. There was no business as usual. Events were held in downtown San Diego as well as San Ysidro, Escondido and Vista.

In a never-before-seen show of solidarity, protesters in Tijuana shut down the U.S./Mexico border on the Mexican side. After a 500-person march in San Ysidro, youths were able to shut down the border again—this time on the U.S. side.

By evening, crowds had more than doubled as people gathered in Balboa Park, where a candlelight vigil and rally was

scheduled. However, instead of standing still, folks broke police barriers and took to the streets in an impromptu march that shut down main streets, surrounded the mall and flabbergasted tourists.

In Denver, over 75,000 began their march across the street from Escuela Tlatelolco, the school founded by the great Chicano activist Corky Gonzales.

The Latin@ working class shut down the agriculture and service industries across Washington state. Sixty-five thousand workers poured into downtown Seattle. Marchers carried flags of countries from Somalia to Honduras. In the agricultural town of Yakima, Wash., 15,000 marchers paraded. Thousands more demonstrated in Wenatchee, which is apple country.

The country's biggest beef processor was forced to give workers the day off in seven plants in Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Texas and Nebraska.

The South

Tens of thousands honored the boycott in Georgia. Not one worker showed up at the Vidalia onion farms in southern Georgia.

Thousands, including whole families with small children and babies, rallied in Atlanta. A common theme of speeches was that immigrants are workers struggling for their children to have education, health care and opportunity.

In Athens, Ga., some 2,000 grade-school and high-school students, young workers and a number of white supporters assembled near the University of Georgia campus. One activist said it "was the biggest protest Athens had ever seen."

During the rally, the emcee, Pedro, discussed the origin of May Day and how immigrant workers struggled for the eight-hour day in Chicago. He said it was historic that immigrants are again taking to the streets for justice in the United States.

Some 10,000 people marched in uptown Charlotte, N.C., and over 800 students were absent from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. Student Amanda Medina said, "It made me feel proud of who I am and where I come from, and there are so many people out here to support us." (wncn.com)

African-American high school student Nigel Hood said, "I just couldn't help thinking back to my ancestors and predecessors who were in the civil-rights movement. It made me feel very special." (wncn.com)

Protesters also marched through downtown Lumberton, N.C. They were joined by workers from Smithfield Foods Inc.'s plant in Tar Heel. Gene Bruskin, with the Food and Commercial Workers union, said, "We're in the middle of absolutely nowhere, pig farms, and you've got 5,000 workers marching." (wbt.com)

In Raleigh, N.C., some 3,000 people surrounded the State Capitol. (wbt.com)

The North and East

Thousands rallied in Washington, D.C. They demanded an end to government attacks on undocumented workers, and carried signs saying, "There are no borders in the workers' struggle."

More than half of the 1,147 construction workers at Dulles International Airport boycotted work. (AP) Businesses from

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Thousands of immigrants march on May 1 in New Orleans.



LOS ANGELES

WW PHOTOS: JULIA LA RIVA



BOSTON



WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN



CHICAGO

WW PHOTO: LOU PAULSEN





BASRA, IRAQ



NEPAL



SOUTH AFRICA

Fighting spirit of May Day lives

By Greg Butterfield

For the first time in generations, the United States was gripped with the fighting spirit of International Workers Day—May Day—as protests and boycotts focusing on the rights of immigrant workers and their families swept the country.

And the revival of May Day's spirit wasn't confined to the U.S. Worldwide this year, May 1 actions led to genuine class battles and outpourings of worker solidarity.

There were vibrant celebrations of people's power in countries where the struggle is marching to new heights, like Nepal and Venezuela; militant fight-back actions where the labor movement is waging important defensive battles, like Indonesia and Turkey; and mass expressions of the heroic determination to persevere where workers have seized power and held it, like Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

Latin America and Caribbean

In Mexico, workers' energy focused not only on their own struggles, but those of their sisters and brothers living in the U.S. Unions, immigrants' organizations and community groups called on Mexicans to boycott U.S. products and stores on May 1, in solidarity with the Great American

Boycott for immigrant rights in the U.S.

Word of the boycott spread throughout Mexico and Central America via e-mail and word-of-mouth. Teresa Garcia Hernandez, a nurse from Mexico City, told the April 30 Los Angeles Times how she heard the news from her children. "They're really excited about it, and they're telling all their friends, cousins and uncles.

"They told me, 'Mama, since your friends don't have this thing called the Internet, you tell them in person not to buy anything gringo that day.'"

Led by Zapatista rebel-leader Subcomandante Marcos, a coalition of unions and anti-capitalist groups marched in the Mexican capital, starting at the U.S. Embassy. "We will create a clearly anti-capitalist May Day," Marcos told unionists April 29, reminding them that the day's purpose is ultimately to "take the property from the owners of the means of production." (Reuters, April 30)

Protesters in Tijuana sent a contingent to the U.S. consulate, where respect for maquiladora workers and their right to self determination were stressed.

Demonstrators in Mexico blocked the bridge connecting Ciudad Juarez and El Paso, Texas, KWTX-TV reported.

Youths battled cops in the midst of a large labor march in Santiago, Chile, while locked out Puerto Rican public service workers protested by going to their jobs in defiance of government orders. (WBAI/Pacifica, May 1)

An estimated 7 million people in Cuba marked May Day with militant marches in towns and cities across the island, including a million in Havana who marched under the slogan, "United in Defense of

the Socialist Homeland."

"Workers, students and farmers are gathered in [Revolution] Plaza, reaffirming their support for the revolution, demanding the immediate release of the five Cuban political prisoners incarcerated in the U.S., and condemning Washington's continued aggressions against Cuba," reported Ahora.cu.

Cuban Workers Confederation General Secretary Pedro Ross Leal said that Cuba had the highest increase in Gross Domestic Product of any Latin American country in 2005—11.8 percent—while preserving and expanding free, quality health care and education for all.

President Fidel Castro denounced President George W. Bush for falsely accusing his government of terrorism while the U.S. harbors admitted anti-Cuba terrorists like Luis Posada Carriles.

Cuban workers were also celebrating the expansion of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), which focuses on mutual aid for economic development and Latin American unity as an alternative to U.S.-sponsored "free trade" agreements like NAFTA. Bolivia has officially joined Cuba and Venezuela in the agreement. Castro and Presidents Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and Evo Morales of Bolivia made the announcement in Havana April 30. (Prensa Latina)

Morales returned to Bolivia May 1 to declare that his government was nationalizing the oil and gas industry. The Bolivian armed forces occupied 53 installations. "The pillage of our natural resources by foreign companies is over... The time has come, the awaited day, a historic day in which Bolivia retakes absolute control of our natural resources," Morales said. (Reuters, May 1) Tens of thousands of workers rallying in La Paz cheered his televised announcement.

Meanwhile, in Venezuela, workers and farmers joined mass marches against imperialism in Caracas and other cities. They called for strengthening the Bolivarian Revolution and its social programs, Prensa Latina reported.

At an April 28 program honoring workers, Chávez announced an increase in the country's minimum wage effective Sept. 1, along with an end to wage discrimination between rural and urban workers, increased maternity leave and vacation pay. Teachers will receive a 40-percent pay raise this year.

Asia and Pacific

More than 100,000 workers flooded the streets of Jakarta, Indonesia, demanding an end to government/business plans to undo progressive labor legislation won in 2003—an outcome of years of militant struggles that included the ouster of the bloody U.S.-backed Suharto dictatorship. Under pressure from U.S. and other foreign investors, the government wants to roll back job security measures, including a law that requires bosses to pay a fired worker two months pay for every year on the job.

The Jakarta Post reported that workers draped in the red, green and yellow colors of their unions began gathering in the capital before dawn. The march targeted the House of Representatives, the Presidential Palace, and City Hall, disrupting traffic and shutting down businesses along the route.

Demonstrators pointed out that today's labor protections are rarely enforced. Siti Mariam, an 18-year-old factory worker, told the French Press Agency how she was recruited from her home village to work at a snack food factory outside Jakarta and paid just \$20 per month for three months. She was fired after she joined others demanding the legal minimum wage of \$69 per month.

In the Philippines, the May 1st Movement (KMU) and Bayan Muna marchers went head to head with heavily armed cops. The government had tried to ban protests in much of Manila, but 10,000 workers calling for the ouster of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made it partway to the Mendiola Bridge near the Presidential Palace. They faced off with

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INDONESIA



BANGLADESH



BOLIVIA



SOUTH KOREA



Fidel Castro speaks in Cuba



LONDON



MOSCOW

Fighting spirit of May Day lives

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police in riot gear for several hours in sweltering heat. (Reuters and New York Times, May 1)

In Nepal, the combined efforts of Maoist rebels, workers' organizations and opposition political parties, including several communist groups, has just forced the king to restore parliament after more than a decade. There, May 1 was a day of celebration as well as determination to continue the struggle for people's power.

Sunil Manandhar, president of the Nepalese Federation of Trade Unions, told NepalNews.com that only 3.6 percent of Nepal's 11 million workers are employed in formal sectors of the economy that the labor law protects. The overwhelming numbers employed in agriculture and construction have no protections, he said.

In neighboring India, the Socialist Unity Center (SUCI), Communist Party of India (Marxist)-Liberation, and others declared May 1 "Nepal Solidarity Day." They staged actions in support of the people's movement and demanded an end to U.S. and Indian intervention there. Communist-affiliated unions also held large demonstrations throughout the subcontinent.

South Korean workers battled police wielding water cannons outside the Hyundai Hysco factory in Sunchon. They demanded equal rights for non-regular or casual employees. (Reuters) May Day marches in Seoul and Bangladesh rejected U.S.-backed free trade agreements, along with demanding higher wages and job security.

Australia saw some of the largest May Day marches ever in response to reactionary laws targeting job security, passed under John Howard's government. Some

marchers also raised demands for Aboriginal rights and Papuan independence.

Some 35,000 union members marched in Queensland, up from 12,000 last year. "Even though the laws have been passed, people are not losing hope," said Public Sector Union Secretary Alex Scott. (The Australian, May 1)

Middle East and Africa

Even under occupation, 1,000 Iraqi workers came out in Basra, the country's second-largest city, as did thousands of Palestinians in Ramallah and other towns on the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian public-sector workers have been hit hard by U.S. and Israeli financial sanctions targeting the new Hamas-led government.

More than 80 leftist and Kurdish activists were arrested at May Day actions in Turkey, and 34 people swept up in Istanbul when truncheon-wielding cops attacked a communist-led march on an avenue the government declared off-limits. In Izmir, on the western coast, Kurdish demonstrators were forced to defend themselves after they refused to let cops search them. (TurkishPress.com)

Banners bearing pictures of Che Guevara and protesting the U.S. occupation of Iraq and threats against Iran were prominent at May 1 marches in Bahrain and Pakistan. (AFP)

Thousands of workers in Maputo, Mozambique, defied heavy rain to protest a plan being pushed by business groups to make it easier to fire workers. Banners at the march read, "We want to keep the current labor law. Stop deceiving the people!" and "We demand fair wages compatible with the cost of living."

Rallies sponsored by the Congress of South African Trade Unions focused on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the pending World Trade Organization trade agreement. (IOL.com) COSATU also announced plans for rolling strike actions throughout May in several sectors of the economy as part of its Jobs and Poverty Campaign. Almost two-thirds of Black South Africans under age 30 are unable to find work. (Mail and Guardian, April 29)

COSATU spokesperson Patrick Craven also emphasized support for an ongoing strike by security guards, saying they are ruthlessly exploited and underpaid.

Europe

Germany, Sweden and Switzerland both saw violent police attacks on youthful May Day protesters. More than 500,000 German unionists joined rallies opposing Chancellor Angela Merkel's plans to dismantle the public health system and other social services.

Michael Sommer, head of the German Federation of Trade Unions, told 10,000 at a rally at Volkswagen headquarters in Wolfsburg, "We don't want American conditions." (AFP) He denounced Bonn's attempt to impose youth job laws that would make it easier to fire people under 26. A similar bill in France led to massive demonstrations of youths and workers and was withdrawn abruptly.

London, England cops suppressed a youth protest targeting the Tesco grocery chain. But they couldn't stop tens of thousands of British workers who gathered to march and protest to Trafalgar Square, including workers facing layoffs at a Peugeot auto plant near Coventry. (BBC)

Major demonstrations were held throughout Spain, France, Portugal and Italy. Some 140,000 marched in Vienna, the Austrian capital, while marchers in Greece targeted the U.S. Embassy with demands to get the troops out of Iraq. All told, well over a million demonstrated in Western Europe.

Smaller but militant demonstrations were held in the formerly socialist countries of Eastern Europe, where government and far-right attacks frequently target communists. Up to 9,000 communists marched in Prague, Czech Republic. Party Deputy Chair Jiri Dolejs, who was recently attacked and beaten by rightist goons, received a hero's welcome. (Ceske Noviny)

Across Russia more than 1.5 million people joined May Day marches, along with many more in other republics of the former Soviet Union. Two large demonstrations of about 25,000 each were held in Moscow—one sponsored by the official trade unions, another by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and other left groups.

Communist supporters marched from the Lenin monument on October Square to the bust of Karl Marx near Red Square. They chanted, "Putin resign!" and "Our homeland is the USSR," and carried red flags and banners reading, "Stop the arbitrary laws of the oligarchs and the workers."

Protesters put special attention on the impending housing crisis. President Vladimir Putin's government is poised to repeal housing guarantees left over from the Soviet era, threatening homelessness for millions impoverished by the country's counter-revolutionary transition to a capitalist market economy.

Ivan Klyuchenko, a 17-year-old student, said: "Our industry is in ruins and wages are pitiful. A lifetime of work is not enough to buy a room in a Moscow suburb." (AFP)

Twenty-thousand-strong marches were also held in Leningrad ("St. Petersburg") and the Far Eastern city of Vladivostok. (MosNews) □

Workers revive May Day in U.S.

Continued from page 6

downtown D.C. to the affluent Georgetown shopping area closed because of absent workers.

Hundreds of residents, workers, students and professors rallied at the University at Buffalo, N.Y. They demanded an end to anti-immigrant racism and U.S.-sponsored apartheid. Police attacked and beat two students, one a Bolivian, while protesters shouted, "Let them go!" and "Shame on you!" The community continued the march despite the police presence.

Across Massachusetts, tens of thousands demonstrated in over 30 cities. In Boston, a delegation from Steel Workers Local 8751, the Boston school bus drivers' union, followed a banner hoisted by mostly youths of color.

Service Employees union leaders led chants with Local 8571 members, including all of the local's chief stewards, its newly elected Haitian President Frantz Mendes, and Vice President Steve Gillis, as well as rank-and-file members.

The militant protesters filed past the Federal Building to the statehouse for a mostly anti-imperialist speak-out and to support a pro-immigrant news conference taking place inside, where Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee member Bishop Filipe Teixeira was speaking. They then marched on Boston Common for a mass rally.

Speaking from the Common stage, Cassandra Clark Mazariegos of the Young Revolutionaries, the youth contingent of the RPHRDC, said: "The young people are here to support our parents. They left their countries because of economic hardships due to the things this country did."

Fight Imperialism Stand Together—FIST—organizer Ruth Vela summed up the historic May Day activities: "Today showed that the so-called 'sleeping giant' was not asleep, but rather busy working. If workers are not given the respect, dignity and justice demanded, then they will take it."

Bill Bowers, John Catalinotto, Heather Cottin, David Dixon, Judy Greenspan, Larry Hales, Imani Henry, David Hoskins, Jim M., Dianne Mathiowetz, John Parker, Lou Paulsen, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Matthew L. Schwartz, Eric Struch, and Ruth Vela contributed to this report.



DENVER



SOUTH CENTRAL L.A.

Black community supports May 1 boycott at April 29 press conference. WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH



SAN FRANCISCO

PHOTO: JOHANNA GREENSPAN-JOHNSTON



ATLANTA

WW PHOTO: TOM DORAN



NEW YORK

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL



SAN DIEGO

PHOTO: MANUEL MANTILLA

Tens of thousands protest as Puerto Rico gov't lays off 100,000

By Tom Soto
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Social unrest is reaching a boiling point on the island of Puerto Rico due to a deepening financial crisis.

In September 2004, Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's, which do the dirty work for Wall Street's bond market investors, announced they were downgrading the credit-worthiness of Puerto Rico's bonds.

Moody's pointed to a PR government debt of \$39 billion and a budget deficit in fiscal year 2004 of \$1 billion. The current fiscal year, which ends June 30, has a budget deficit of \$750 million, which will bring the total debt close to \$45 billion. When calculated per capita (\$9,958), the external debt of Puerto Rico is the largest in all of Latin America.

For the last year, Gov. Anibal Acevedo Vilá, of the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), and the PR legislature, dominated by the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (NPP), have been imposing austerity measures as demanded by the Wall Street investors: cutting public services, forcing the early retirement of public employees, increasing the rates charged for electricity, water, highway tolls and public transportation, increasing tuition fees at the University of PR and more. (See Workers World Sept. 10 and Nov. 18, 2005, issues.)

Consumer sales tax and the external debt

The central theme being pursued by the Wall Street investors in their "restructuring plan" for the Puerto Rican economy is the imposition of a consumer sales tax. In 2004 the amount being floated was 9 percent. Interlocked within this web of massive external debt and a financial crisis is the fact that, since 1898, Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States. Its economy is foreign-owned, primarily by U.S. corporations and investors.

For the last three months, the two rival bourgeois parties (the PDP and NPP) have been trying to persuade the public to view the current crisis narrowly, in terms of a mere budget deficit dispute. The pro-statehood NPP has proposed a 4 percent consumer sales tax, while the PDP proposes a 7 percent sales tax. Both ignore the broader issue of the strangling external debt, which requires a yearly (and unending) debt service of \$1 billion.

In April, the governor announced that if the PR Legislature did not approve the 7 percent sales tax, providing new revenues, the government would not be able to get an emergency loan of \$531 million to avoid shutting down as of May 1. Both bourgeois parties have been intransigent, holding the public and government employees hostage to the possibility of a partial government shutdown and proposing mass layoffs and further cutbacks, supposedly due to the lack of money.

At the end of the month, Gov. Acevedo Vilá announced that the government was out of money and would partially shut down 45 government departments and agencies, starting May 1. This includes the closing of schools, affecting 560,000 students, and laying off all the personnel in the Department of Education—more than 70,000 workers. The governor sent notices of the mass layoff plan to all government agencies and halted all money transfers to Puerto Rico's 78 municipalities.

Moody's ordered cuts in education

It is noteworthy that in the latest evaluation of Puerto Rico's economy, carried



Teachers protest on May Day in San Juan.

WWW PHOTO: TOM SOTO

out last month by Moody's Investor Services, the Education Department of Puerto Rico is singled out as a target for cutbacks.

Among public employees and the working class generally, the announcement by the government created shock, uncertainty and anger. The unions who represent the 95,000 public employees to be dismissed began to mobilize forces. The entire union movement has denounced the imposition of a sales tax and the impending layoffs.

On April 28 the Association of Mayors, which is tied to the PDP, based in several thousand municipal employees from cities throughout the island to pressure the legislature to come to an agreement with the governor on the budget.

On the morning of April 29, a demonstration billed as "Puerto Rico Grita" (Puerto Rico Screams), initiated by radio show hosts Antonio Sánchez and Funky Joe, drew 40,000 marchers, who went to the legislature demanding, again, that it and the governor come to an agreement.

That same afternoon Servidores Públicos (Public Servants), which represents office workers, held a demonstration in the banking and financial district of San Juan. The workers stopped in front of Banco Popular and sat down in the street, demanding that the crisis be averted by taxing the banks and corporations.

Some union leaders attempted to dramatize the moment by entering the bank to withdraw their deposits, but police moved in. Clashes with the police prevented the workers from entering.

Later that afternoon, some 5,000 members of the Federation of Teachers, the Puerto Rican Workers Union, the Association of Lunchroom Workers and others marched to the legislature under the slogan, "Not 4 percent or 7 percent, make the rich pay."

At the rally in front of the legislature, Teachers Federation head Rafael Feliciano warned the government that if the schools closed on May 1, the federation and other unions representing the 70,000 Education Department employees would call for a general strike. He blamed the current crisis on "big business, which is holding the country hostage."

From 1999 to 2005, the assets of the commercial banks operating in Puerto Rico increased from \$44 billion to \$83 billion. They include Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, Banco Popular, Banco Santander, Bank & Trust of Puerto Rico, Citibank, Doral Bank, Eurobank, FirstBank, R-G Premier Bank, Scotiabank and Westernbank.

On May 1, the government went ahead with its plans and 95,000 public employees found themselves without jobs. The president of Puerto Rico's Development Bank, Alfredo Salazar, who represents the

island in negotiations with Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's, explained to the press that the government shutdown would be viewed as a good thing by the credit rating houses and by bondholders on Wall Street because "they will see it as a demonstration that the financial problems are being confronted."

May Day protest trashes banks

A May Day protest, organized by the Coordinadora Sindical (Union Coordination), drew 4,000 in the pouring rain. The demonstration gathered at the Labor Department and marched to the financial and banking district.

Marchers chanted in Spanish: "The government of Puerto Rico is an instrument of the rich," "If 7 percent is so good, let the bankers pay it," "Struggle yes—Surrender no," "We say no to the layoffs," and "Workers and students united and

moving forward."

As the demonstration passed the banks, militant, hooded young people sprayed the walls of the banks with the slogan in Spanish: "Not 4 percent or 7 percent—Let the rich pay."

The police moved in to stop the youth. In the ensuing struggle, the demonstration's security squad, made up of men and women unionists, held the police at bay. As crowds grew to protest the police intervention, more young people gathered and pelted the bank windows with rocks. Several large window structures at Scotiabank, McDonald's and other businesses were damaged.

According to Puerto Rico's Development Bank, last year the island's gross domestic product was \$79 billion; of that, \$30 billion went straight into the pockets of U.S. investors. In that same year, per-capita income was reported at \$12,947.

If one adds up the profits that Wall Street and other foreign investors have taken out of Puerto Rico in the 107 years of its domination by the U.S., it becomes clear that most of the wealth produced by the workers of Puerto Rico has been robbed.

The current struggle is a reflection of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—that while the working class collectively produces all the wealth of society, this wealth is appropriated by a handful of private corporations and banks. In the case of a colony like Puerto Rico, it means that an even greater portion of what the workers produce is stolen. □



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PARTY CONFERENCE GUEST SPEAKERS

Along with representatives from Workers World Party and Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST), invited guest speakers for the May 13-14 conference include:

Alejandro Ahumada, Association

Joaquin Murieta, Los Angeles;

Brenda Stokely, Million Worker March Movement, NYC;

Prof. Tony Van Der Meer, Rosa Parks Day Human Rights Coalition, Boston;

Berna Ellorin, BAYAN USA;

Carlos Canales, Workplace Project, Long Island, NY;

John Choe, Korea Truth Commission;

Saladin Muhammad, Black Workers for Justice, Raleigh;

Frantz Mendes, President, Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston and others.





Africa and China

The attitude in the imperialist establishments of Europe and the U.S. toward Black Africa is so dripping with racism that almost every mention in the mass media of this rich and vibrant continent takes it for granted that the people will be perpetually poor and their societies woefully underdeveloped. We always hear of "aid" for Africa—which amounts to little more than a pittance—but never of the great wealth produced by African workers that continues to be taken out by imperialist corporations, which feast off its minerals, its rubber, its lumber, its diamonds, and more and more, its oil.

For example, after years of terrible civil war in which millions have died, the state mining company of Congo, Gecamines, has had to sign agreements with foreign mining companies that let it keep only 12.5 percent of the wealth ripped out of its subsoil. Under the dictator Mobutu, that figure was much greater—about 40 percent! But when he first took power, with CIA support, there were liberation movements all over Africa, many receiving help from socialist countries. The imperialists knew they had to let military figures like Mobutu keep enough wealth to stay in power or they could lose everything.

Africa won't be able to develop until it regains some control over its own resources. Everything the imperialist banks and corporations do is designed to prevent that from happening. And behind them are the mercenary armies and the open military intervention of U.S., British and French troops. The Pentagon is now spending hundreds of millions of dollars on new bases in West Africa, most around the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea.

In this difficult situation, African governments are expressing guarded optimism about developing economic relations with a country that has never oppressed them, never stolen their people or their resources, but is willing to invest in their infrastructure in exchange for raw materials. That country is China.

Chinese President Hu Jintao just spent a week in Africa, most of it in Nigeria and Kenya. Before he left Nigeria, the two heads of state signed an agreement that will allow China to drill for oil at four locations and to buy a controlling stake in Nigeria's 110,000 barrel-a-day Kaduna oil refinery, which it will upgrade. In exchange China will invest \$4 billion in oil and infrastructure projects in Nigeria, including a railroad system and power stations.

The deal struck with Kenya also involves exploring for oil, which is believed to lie offshore. It was welcomed not only by the government of Kenya but by business interests in other African countries as well.

An editorial in East African Business Week of Kampala, Uganda, on May 1 was entitled "Let's Embrace China for True Partnerships." It said that "one significant thing that President Jintao stated all through his sojourn in Africa was China's desire to forge a new style of relation with Africa—a relation based on an equal footing while respecting the sovereignty of African nations. What Africa needs today are not imported programs conceptualized in foreign capitals and dropped into Africa to be adopted or mimicked. What the continent needs urgently are homegrown approaches into solving African problems.

"This is the path China took and the path most of the successful Tiger economies adopted. And it is here that we in East Africa stand best to benefit in the relation with China.

"If, as President Jintao indicated in Nairobi, China is willing to help Africa grow, and if the price of that is a little bit of our natural resources, we say it is worthwhile.

"Worthwhile because China offers assistance without strings attached, assistance that does not demand a host of expatriates from a donating country."

This is the African bourgeoisie talking. One can feel how bruised and battered even they feel at the way the imperialists arrogantly come in and tell them what to do. But it probably also reflects the mood of the masses, who are tired of hearing the World Bank and the IMF pose as champions of human rights in their countries as they front for the thieving corporations. And it reflects the belief that China will share its newly developed technology with Africa in a way that the imperialists never would.

China has its own national interests in this growing relationship, of course. But these national interests contain within them many aspects inherited from its own anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution.

For now, the imperialists are expressing alarm over this development purely on the basis that China is muscling in to markets that they want to control—especially the oil. If the African countries can get a better deal from China than they can from the U.S. and Europe, then progressives should of course support them and spurn the anti-China campaign that is sure to come. □

Morales nationalizes Bolivia's gas and oil

By Rebeca Toledo

At a May Day speech at the San Alberto gas field in southern Bolivia, President Evo Morales announced the nationalization of Bolivia's oil and natural gas industry. "The time has come, the awaited day, a historic day in which Bolivia retakes absolute control of our natural resources," he stated. (Business Week)

After he spoke, a soldier unfurled a Bolivian flag atop the facility, which is operated by Repsol YPF, a Spanish-Argentine company in association with Petrobras of Brazil. The main oil companies operating in Bolivia today are British Petroleum, British Gas, Total of France, Repsol YPF and Petrobras.

Morales ordered all foreign energy companies to turn their production over to the state-run oil company, Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos. The companies will have to apply for new contracts within 180 days. At the end of this period, those who do not sign new contracts will be unable to operate in Bolivia. Morales said the YPFB will be responsible for all oil production and sales, as well as prices.

Bolivian troops immediately took control of oil fields. According to an army statement, the deployment of troops "seeks to ensure the functioning of oil facilities to guarantee the normal supply of energy in accordance with international agreements as well as to fulfill domestic needs."

The nationalization falls short of calling for the expropriation of foreign companies, that is, of taking control of the oil fields without compensation to those that have exploited the country for decades.

But this action by Morales, coming on the heels of Bolivia joining Cuba and Venezuela in the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), sends a clear message to the world that Morales is serious about shifting the wealth of Bolivia from the rich to the poor and breaking the chokehold of imperialism on his country.

ALBA, as it is known by its Spanish acronym, is an initiative of Presidents Fidel Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. It answers the U.S. attempt at the so-called Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), successfully killed at the Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005. Since then, the U.S. has been try-

ing to coerce countries into signing individual trade agreements that have unfair trading conditions.

The agreements between the three ALBA countries were signed in Cuba on April 28. To date all the details have not been released, but the Cuban media reported the agreements are similar to those signed last year between Cuba and Venezuela.

In those accords, Cuba and Venezuela agreed to mutually beneficial plans of development. For example, Venezuela now sells 90,000 barrels of crude oil to Cuba at international market prices in exchange for Cuban services and agricultural products instead of cash. (AP)

Cuba has provided doctors, teachers, videos and its literacy program to Venezuela, which has now joined Cuba in being an illiteracy-free zone. Cuba-Venezuela trade is expected to reach more than \$3.5 billion this year, about 40 percent higher than in 2005.

Under the ALBA agreements, Cuba has promised to send doctors and teachers to Bolivia, while Venezuela has promised to send gasoline. Venezuela will also set up a \$100 million fund for development programs and a \$30 million fund for social projects in Bolivia. Both countries have agreed to buy all of Bolivia's soybeans, recently left without a market after Colombia signed a free-trade pact with the U.S. (USA Today)

"These new leaders have emerged and they make me the happiest man in the world," said Castro. "Now, for the first time, there are three of us," he added. (BBC)

Chavez stated, "ALBA is moving forward, and facing the aggression of the imperial projects of the free trade agreement, all we can do is attack."

Morales added that the agreements would help Bolivia emerge from an economic crisis. "Only in Cuba and Venezuela can we get unconditional solidarity. They are the best allies for changing Bolivia."

Morales' moves to the left will not go unnoticed or unchallenged by U.S. imperialism. It remains to be seen how thoroughgoing these changes can be. The masses of Bolivia, the Indigenous especially, expect real change and have been clamoring for it for years. They will be decisive in the struggles yet to come. □

March on Washington, D.C. SAT • MAY 20

The Bush Administration, with bipartisan support in Congress, has stepped up its hostile, interventionist policies against the governments and peoples of Cuba and Venezuela.

Washington instigated and supported the April 2002 military coup in Venezuela, which was defeated after massive mobilizations of working people.

The White House has expanded already onerous restrictions on the right to travel to Cuba and arrogantly assumed Washington's right to determine Cuba's social, political, and economic system.

Washington and its big-business media echo chamber has spearheaded a propaganda campaign of lies and deceit against Venezuela and Cuba.

U.S. attacks on Venezuela and Cuba are the leading wedge in an attempt to counter the mounting popular struggles in Latin America and the Caribbean against U.S.-backed social and economic policies that have devastated working people.

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- Extradite the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela; Free the Cuban Five anti-terrorist prisoners; Close the U.S. Guantanamo Torture Camp; Return Guantanamo to Cuba
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Thousands of Greek youths protest Rice visit

By David Hoskins

Thousands of people massed in the streets of Athens on April 25 to protest an official visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Greek Communist Party (KKE) and anti-globalization groups organized the protest.

Crowds attempted to break through a police barricade thrown up around the U.S. Embassy where Rice was meeting with Greek officials. As Greek riot police sprayed teargas, demonstrators defended themselves against random police attacks by hurling homemade gasoline bombs and throwing stones. (New York Times)

Most were youth and students who hailed the call of leftist parties, anti-war groups and mass organizations to protest Rice's visit.

Streams of protestors marched under red flags and carried signs denouncing Rice and U.S. foreign policy objectives. Protestors chanted against the war in Iraq, the U.S. embargo against Cuba and potential sanctions against Iran for its development of a nuclear energy program.

A statement issued by the KKE described Secretary Rice as a "messenger of war" whose closed door meetings with the Greek Foreign Ministry would not be tolerated without protest.

The KKE shocked Greek police forces the day before the protests by unfurling a large banner reading "Condoleezza Rice Go Home" over the Athens Music Hall, across from the embassy.

The KKE and other groups feared that Rice's visit was designed to earn support for U.S. threats against Iran. Costas

Kazakos, a senior member of KKE, said that the protests were against "Rice who is here seeking allies for a new war against Iran." (Reuters)

Stop the War, an anti-war group that earlier endorsed the demonstrations, issued a statement saying, "We will not let this war hawk visit Greece. We will fight to cancel the visit." (Infoshop)

Many of the demonstrators remember the CIA-sponsored military dictatorship that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974. That military junta, known as the "reign of colonels," implemented a regime of torture, disappearance and murder against its political opponents—many of whom were communists.

While Greece has officially been a NATO ally for decades, the Greek people have consistently mounted struggles



against U.S. imperialist aggressions in the Mediterranean region and around the world.

The youthful militants in Greece share much in common with their counterparts in France, where in April a two-month rebellion by French student groups, supported by the trade unions, brought down a French anti-youth law that would have allowed big corporations to exploit young workers and then fire them at will. Both France and Greece have youth unemployment rates that exceed 22 percent.

The writer is a Fight Imperialism-Stand Together (FIST) organizer in Washington, D.C. Contact fist@workers.org

IN PORTUGAL

Solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela

By John Catalinotto
Oporto, Portugal

People filled an auditorium in downtown Oporto April 27 to applaud the release of two new books—an occasion that enabled them to express solidarity with two countries under attack by U.S. imperialism: Venezuela and Cuba.

The two books, translated into Portuguese and just published, are "Hugo Chávez: A Man, a People," by the progressive journalist Martha Harnecker, and "The Admirable Campaign of Bolivar," by Juvenal Herrera Torres, a Colombian historian from Medellín.

The Cuban ambassador to Portugal, Jorge Castro Benítez, and the Venezuelan ambassador to Portugal, Manuel Quijada, addressed the meeting, as did the meeting's organizer, Portuguese journalist and author Miguel Urbano Rodrigues. The presence of the two ambassadors and a speech by Urbano attacking the U.S. government as the "Fourth Reich" made it clear that to honor the two books meant also to oppose U.S. threats against these

two revolutionary countries in Latin America.

Urbano said that the threat from U.S. militarism is "the main menace to humanity today. It threatens not only war and economic dislocation, but also the destruction of the environment." He also mentioned the exemplary role of Cuba—only 90 miles from its greatest enemy—and Venezuela in "mobilizing the people of Latin America against neoliberal, privatizing economic policies pushed by the U.S."

Quijada, who worked together with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez long before the charismatic Latin American leader was elected to office, discussed the progressive role of Simon Bolivar in the 19th-century anti-colonial struggles that liberated much of Latin America from direct European rule, and also the current threat to Venezuela from the U.S.

The Cuban ambassador noted that the Cuban Revolution, despite 47 years of hostility from U.S. imperialism, had a major advantage in contrast to the situation in Venezuela: "Our bourgeoisie all fled to Miami. Venezuela still has a relatively pow-



Ellen Catalinotto reads solidarity message April 27.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

erful capitalist class living in the country and capable of threatening the revolution."

"If you want to show solidarity with Cuba," he added, "then help defend Venezuela's revolution."

The gathering heard a message from Berta Joubert-Ceci of the May 20 Hands off Cuba and Venezuela Coalition in the United States, a broad group organizing a Washington, D.C. demonstration on May 20 in solidarity with the two countries.

Anti-war U.S. activist Ellen Catalinotto read the statement.

Joubert-Ceci wrote that even "in the belly of the beast" there was solidarity with the two revolutions, and that it was especially important to build that solidarity at a time when immigrants were rising up in the millions inside the U.S. "This," she wrote, "is the echo of the uprisings in Latin America that the U.S. rulers were unable to stop at the border." □

Marchers in Spain protest the monarchy

By John Catalinotto
Madrid

Tens of thousands of people marched down a main Madrid avenue from Cibeles Plaza to Puerta del Sol on April 22 to recognize the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Second Republic in Spain in 1931.

The demonstration was directed against the current king, Juan Carlos I, and also closely tied to the struggle against fascism and the remaining wounds of the 1936-1939 civil war in Spain. In that war, over 2 million people in Spain died, another 1.5 million were driven into exile and tens of thousands spent long terms in prison following the victory of Generalissimo Francisco Franco's Fascists. Franco ruled as head of state from 1939 until his death in 1975.

An upsurge of popular struggle had ended the monarchy in 1931. While Franco did not immediately restore the monarchy in 1939, he named Juan Carlos his successor and brought the future king into consultations with the fascist regime. Juan Carlos is himself a billionaire and close to Spain's big capitalists.



April 22 protest.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

While the demonstration harkened back to events of the 1930s and 1940s, most of the people attending were far too young to have any personal memories of the civil war. But their connection to

Spain's Republican past appeared in chants like, "Tomorrow Spain will be republican," opposing the monarchy. People also held placards reading, "A democracy with kings is like a Porsche

with oxen."

Most of the Spanish left parties and organizations took part in the demonstration, including the United Left, the Young Communists and the Red Current. □

Lo que los imperialistas no dicen

El petróleo es lo que está detrás de la lucha en Darfur

Por G. Dunkel

La prensa capitalista en los Estados Unidos, Francia y Bretaña está hablando mucho sobre el sufrimiento en la región de Darfur al oeste de Sudán y de las tensiones entre el gobierno sudanés y el de Chad. No es de sorprender que no hayan escrito mucho sobre los intereses económicos que estos tres países imperialistas tienen sobre el petróleo recientemente descubierto en esa parte de África.

Chad, que una vez fue colonia francesa y aún está ocupada por tropas francesas, está acusando a Sudán de apoyar e instigar el ataque del 14 de abril en su capital Ndjamena. Está amenazando con expulsar a 200.000 sudaneses que viven en Chad, quienes reciben apoyo de la oficina de la Alta Comisión para Refugiados de las Naciones Unidas (ACRNU).

Sudán—que en un tiempo fue colonia británica, pero que ahora usa su petróleo para desarrollar una economía independiente—culpa a Chad de apoyar la rebelión en Darfur. Sudán quiere que la ACRNU respalde económicamente a los 15.000 ciudadanos del Chad que han huido hacia el Sudán para escapar de las batallas en el este de Chad.

La fiera batalla en el este del Chad a finales de marzo resultó en la muerte del comandante brigadier, General Abaka Youssouf Mahamat Itno, acentuando el declive del ejército.

China juega un papel diferente

Se sabe que Darfur tiene reservas petroleras sin explotar, que representa un gran potencial de riqueza en un momento en que el precio del petróleo ha subido a casi \$75 dólares por barril.

Mientras que Francia y los Estados Unidos son los únicos dos países imperialistas con fuerzas militares considerables en África, Bretaña todavía juega un papel importante diplomática y políticamente allí, generalmente en coordinación con Washington.

China juega un papel diferente. Los imperialistas occidentales ven a China como su creciente competidor por el petróleo de Sudán.

China realmente ha ayudado al desarrollo económico de Sudán a la vez que satisface sus propios intereses petroleros.

Según un reporte del Washington Post del 23 de diciembre del 2004, la Corporación Petrolera Nacional de China (CPNC), perteneciente al gobierno chino, invirtió \$300 millones en una expansión de la refinería más grande de Sudán, duplicando así su producción. La refinería ahora suple la mayoría de las necesidades del Sudán.

La CPNC también comenzó la producción de petróleo en un campo en el sur de Darfur en el 2004 y tiene el 41% de las acciones petroleras de un campo en Melut Basin. Otra firma china, Sinopec Corp, construyó un oleoducto de 1000 millas desde allí al Puerto Sudán en el Mar Rojo, donde el Grupo de Construcción de Ingeniería Petrolera de China ha construido un muelle para los buques cisterna.

En general, China compra aproximadamente dos terceras partes del petróleo de Sudán.

Política de los EEUU: dividir para dominar

Luego de que Sudán ganara formalmente su independencia de Bretaña en 1956, el país pasó por un período de luchas internas. Sudán comenzó en los años 1970 a tomar una dirección radical islámica, rechazando las relaciones neocoloniales que EEUU y los poderes de Europa querían imponer.

Una rebelión bien organizada y bien financiada en el sur de Sudán comenzó poco después. EEUU apoyó la parte sureña económica, militar y políticamente para dividir y conquistar. Al aumentar el embargo económico contra el gobierno de Sudán, EEUU también podría aplicar presión económica.

Washington llegó hasta atacar militarmente, como el ataque con misiles de crucero en 1998 que estalló en la única fábrica farmacéutica de Sudán. Ninguna prueba fue ofrecida para justificar el pretexto imperialista de que la planta estaba fabricando armas químicas, o que Sudán estaba de alguna manera vinculado con los intentos terroristas en Kenya o Tanzania.

Una delegación encabezada por el ex fiscal general de los EEUU, Ramsey Clark del Centro de Acción Internacional visitó los escombros de la planta y confirmó que era simplemente una fábrica de medicinas.

En 2005, el gobierno central y el Movimiento Popular de Liberación de Sudán —el grupo que encabezó la lucha en el sur— ratificaron un acuerdo. El acuerdo otorgó una autonomía sustancial al sur, el 50% de las ganancias de la venta del petróleo y un referéndum sobre la independencia total dentro de seis años. China jugó un papel clave en las negociaciones para este acuerdo de paz.

Una vez que los sudaneses habían resuelto este conflicto, los imperialistas necesitaban otro para poder mantener las amenazas y presiones contra Sudán.

Washington promueve las divisiones

Una sequía y la posterior extensión del desierto como consecuencia, han con-

ducido a una lucha sobre los derechos al agua y al pasto en Darfur, lo cual en 2003 se convirtió en un conflicto mayor. Los combates se han intensificado tanto que según los reportes, decenas de miles de personas han muerto y 200.000 han huido a través de la frontera hacia Chad.

Dos movimientos armados en competencia entre sí — el Ejército de Liberación de Sudán y el Movimiento por la Justicia y la Igualdad — inicialmente ganaron unas victorias contra el Ejército de Sudán. Estos dos movimientos armados mantuvieron sus bases logísticas y de entrenamiento en la parte oriental de Chad, cerca de la frontera con Darfur.

Una vez comenzó la rebelión en Darfur, el gobierno de Sudán estableció contra milicias conocidas como Jinjawid, reclutadas de los grupos étnicos nómadas en Darfur que principalmente hablan árabe. El Ejército de Liberación de Sudán y el Movimiento por la Justicia y la Igualdad reclutan de los grupos étnicos en Darfur que no hablan árabe.

El gobierno estadounidense, entre otros, está tratando de exacerbar estas diferencias al definir este conflicto como uno entre "árabes contra negros". Washington ha acusado a Sudán de "genocidio" y "limpieza étnica". Sin embargo, Paul Moorcraft, un experto británico sobre el Sudán, señala, "Los árabes del Darfur son musulmanes africanos negros nativos — al igual que los no árabes de Darfur."

La Unión Africana tiene 7.000 tropas en Darfur tratando de mantener la paz. Pero los poderes imperialistas desean más control directo, lo cual quieren obtener reemplazando a las fuerzas de la Unión Africana con tropas de la OTAN o de la ONU para promover los intereses imperialistas en la región y negar a los sudaneses el control sobre su propio territorio.

La propaganda para la intervención de la OTAN

El periódico The New York Times, cuyo columnista derechista Nicholas D. Kristof acaba de ganar un premio Pulitzer por demandar la intervención estadounidense en Darfur, provee la cubierta liberal para el despliegue de tropas imperialistas.

Dos grupos sionistas, el Servicio

Mundial Judío Americano y el Concilio Judío para Asuntos Públicos, han desempeñado un papel muy activo en organizar una concentración nacional en Washington el 30 de abril, cuya demanda principal es la intervención directa estadounidense en Darfur "para parar el genocidio". El SMJA está presionando el reemplazo de los soldados de la Unión Africana en Darfur con 20.000 tropas de la ONU o de la OTAN.

Pero esto requeriría la aprobación del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU. Es muy probable que China veto cualquier resolución como ésta. Así que los Estados Unidos y Bretaña están aumentando su propaganda contra el Sudán y contra el importante apoyo de China y su inversión allí.

Francia, el poder imperialista más importante en competencia en África, está preocupada por Sudán. Pero su preocupación verdadera es Chad y su petróleo, el cual está siendo extraído ahora por un consorcio dirigido por ExxonMobil. Francia está preocupada porque una parte clave de su esfera de influencia en África se está reduciendo.

El Banco Mundial ha forzado un trato sobre Chad que limita cómo ese país puede gastar sus ingresos petroleros y esto limita sus ingresos del petróleo a \$10 - \$15 menos por barril que los precios del mercado mundial. (Jeune Afrique, 16-22 de abril)

La oposición al trato petrolero del Banco Mundial está creciendo en Chad. Y much@s chadian@s también se sienten agravad@s por el hecho de que hay soldados franceses todavía vigilando edificios gubernamentales 45 años después de la independencia.

Estados Unidos quiere sacar al Presidente Déby de su puesto e imponer a un presidente nuevo en lo cual confía, no Francia. El mismo día del ataque en Ndjamena, el Secretario de Estado asistente de los Estados Unidos Robert Zoellick exigió que Chad adoptara "un proceso político diferente" y que llegara a un "acuerdo satisfactorio" con la oposición política. El Subsecretario de Estado para Asuntos Africanos Donald Yamamoto empezó allí una visita de dos días el 24 de abril. □

Marcha en Washington SÁBADO 20 DE MAYO

Un amplio grupo de organizaciones locales y nacionales de los EEUU han hecho un llamado para una Marcha en Washington para demandar el cese de las campañas de mentiras, amenazas y sanciones contra Cuba y Venezuela.

DEMANDAREMOS:

¡Alto a la intervención y campañas hostiles de los EEUU contra Venezuela; Defendamos la soberanía de Venezuela!

¡Alto a la guerra económica y política de Washington contra Cuba; Que cese el bloqueo de Cuba!

¡Que se permita a los ciudadanos y residentes legales de los EEUU viajar libremente a Cuba; Normalización de las relaciones EEUU-Cuba!



¡Que se extradite al terrorista Luis Posada Carriles a Venezuela; Y se liberen los Cinco Anti-terroristas Cubanos presos! Cierre del campo de tortura de Guantánamo; Devolución de Guantánamo a Cuba!

¡Alto a la intervención de EEUU

El 20 de mayo miles de personas en las calles responderán a estas políticas demandando:

¡MANOS FUERA DE VENEZUELA Y CUBA!

Inicio: 10AM
PARQUE MALCOLM X
(calles 15 y Euclid NW) Se marchará hacia el Parque Lafayette, frente a la Casa Blanca para concentración principal a las 2

www.may20coalition.org/spn