

MUNDO OBRERO

Lucha unida
en Smithfield 12

PHILLY RALLY

Strong support
for Mumia 3

Danny Glover



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Tyneisha Bowens and Laura Bickford
of Raleigh FIST

DURHAM MARCH

'End rape culture!' 3

CHRYSLER CLIFFHANGER

What workers can do 5

THE IRAQ BILL

What did Bush veto? 8

NEUTRON BOMB

Did Pentagon use it? 8

IRAN'S GAINS

Why it's a target 9

Defying gov't terror Immigrants rally in scores of cities

May Day lives as workers demand rights and dignity

Hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers, mostly from Latin America, protested for their rights on May Day in cities and towns across the United States. For the second year in a row, the immigrant rights movement chose May 1, International Workers' Day, to raise their demands.

Almost all the protests demanded full legalization and a halt to the raids and deportations. They also denounced the repressive "STRIVE Act" and George W. Bush's proposed immigration "reforms."

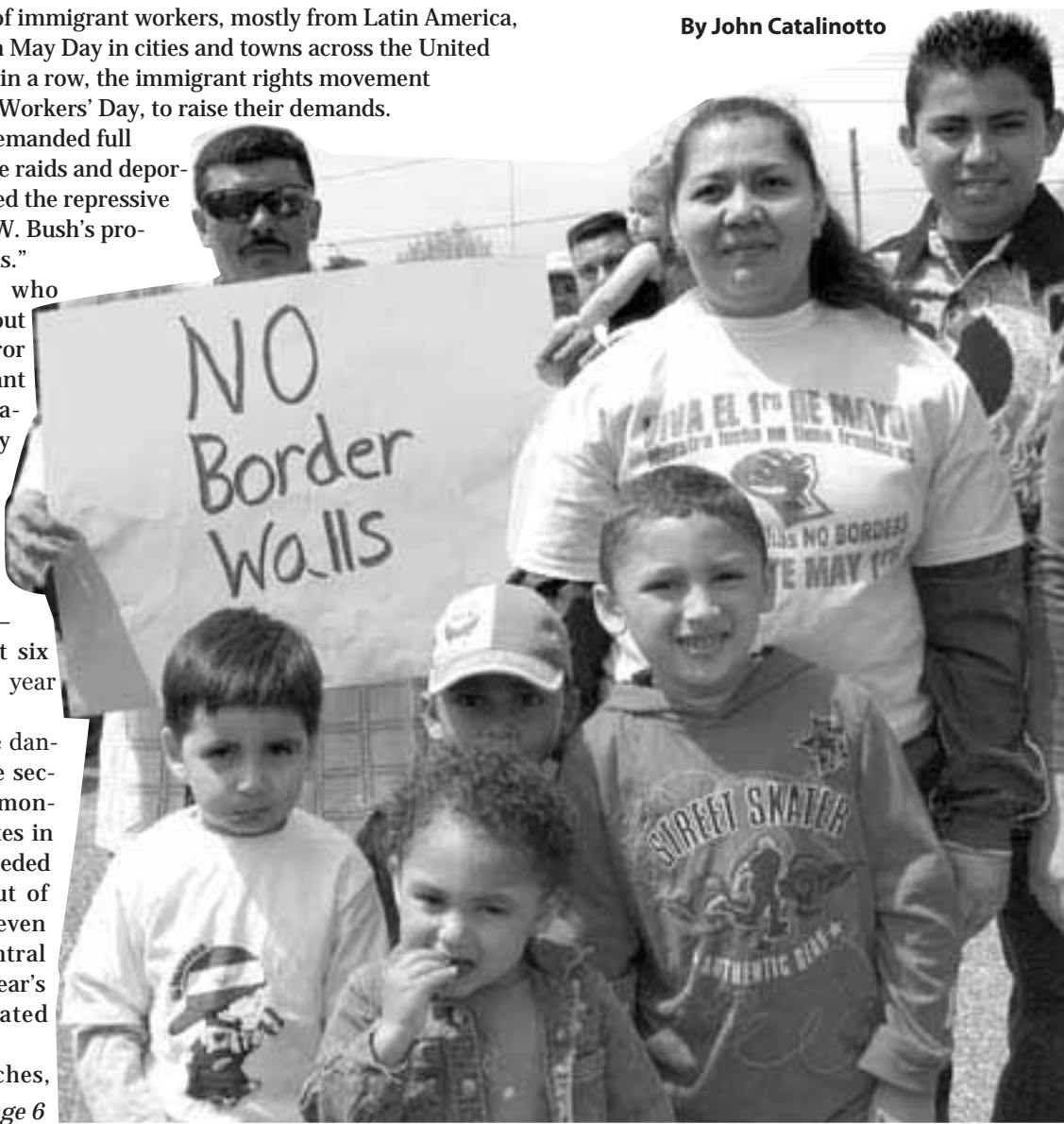
Many demonstrators who were undocumented came out despite the climate of terror generated by anti-immigrant raids and forcible separation and detention of family members by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). From New Bedford, Mass., to the San Fernando Valley in Calif., 125,405 people—a record number—were deported in the first six months of the 2007 fiscal year (ICE report).

Immigrants defied these dangers to build what was the second-largest May Day demonstration in the United States in at least half a century—exceeded only by last year's turnout of millions. This happened even though there was no central unifying theme, like last year's revulsion toward the hated Sensenbrenner bill.

In many of the marches,

Continued to page 6

By John Catalinotto



Whole families turned out, as here in Hempstead, L.I.

WW PHOTOS: HEATHER COTTIN, ABOVE. LOU PAULSEN, BELOW



Disabled immigrants in Chicago.
Many suffer serious injuries on the job.

Subscribe to Workers World

- ☐ 4 weeks trial subscription \$1
- ☐ One year subscription: \$25

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Workers World Newspaper
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011
212-627-2994 www.workers.org

Why reparations are essential to class struggle

By Greg Butterfield

Reactionaries of all political stripes have ridiculed the idea of reparations for African Americans, just as they ridicule the struggle for socialism. So it’s fitting that these two great historical movements for social justice should meet in the pages of a new book, “Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle,” published by World View Forum.

The book—which includes speeches, eyewitness accounts, news reports and historical analysis from the pages of Workers World newspaper—seeks to elevate the call for reparations by showing its centrality to the class struggle and self-determination in the United States and around the globe.

A diverse group of writers demolish the ruling-class myth that white workers are the ones being asked to pay for the crimes of slavery. A victory for African-American reparations against Big Business and the U.S. government, they argue, would elevate the whole multi-national working class and strike a blow against the bosses’ downward pressure on wages and benefits.

In the words of a Workers World Party statement reprinted here, “Every worker can understand that unpaid labor is theft—whether slave or wage-slave labor.”

An historic demand

Reparations for the descendants of African slaves is a demand that has been raised over and over, in many forms, since the U.S. government abandoned its pledge of “40 acres and a mule” after the Civil War. Disdain, violence and silence have all failed to bury this historic demand because the lords of U.S. capital continue to grow fabulously wealthy off institutionalized racism, while Black people pay the price of criminalization, police brutality, discrimination and unequal pay.

The modern reparations movement emerged at the 2001 United Nations Conference on Racism and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, where African-American forces took up the call. Next came class-action lawsuits against Fleet Boston Financial, Aetna, CSX and other corporate beneficiaries of the slave trade. The December 12th Movement, National Black United Front, N’COBRA and other groups initiated the Millions for Reparations Movement rally in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 17, 2002.

Monica Moorehead, the new book’s editor, writes: “The U.S. government has a despicable history of down-playing or outright dismissing the issue of reparations. To grant compensation to millions of descendants of African slaves would expose the institutionalized racism that African Americans and other people of color still suffer today.”

Reparations in context

Moorehead has assembled a unique volume that places the reparations movement in a broad global, historical and theoretical context. Articles put today’s efforts in the context of the historic struggle for Black liberation, from Reconstruction and Jim Crow through the Civil Rights Movement, Million Worker March Movement and beyond.

Originally published as a pamphlet in 2002, this greatly-expanded and updated book encompasses recent political developments, from the war in Iraq and the genocidal



Edited by Monica Moorehead
World View Forum, 2007 \$19.95

aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita to the explosion of the immigrant rights movement in 2006.

It breaks the illusion of isolation created by the corporate media and political establishment, showing how reparations is a demand with widespread appeal for oppressed peoples and nations around the world as redress for centuries of colonialism, imperialist exploitation and war crimes, from Jamaica to Iraq, Zimbabwe to the Black Belt South.

An overview of section titles give a sense of the book’s scope: “Black liberation and the working-class struggle”; “The material basis for reparations in the U.S.”; “Brief overview of racist oppression and heroic resistance”; “What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world”; “Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty”; “Justice for the Caribbean”; “A salute to women revolutionaries”; “Why fight-back is inevitable”; and “Black labor and class solidarity.” This book is a must read in libraries, class rooms and for those activists mobilizing in the streets.

Black-Brown unity

Given pride of place in the book is the need to build solidarity between workers, with a special focus on unity between African Americans, including those in communities devastated by Katrina and Rita, and immigrant workers, who are under fierce attack but fighting back for their rights.

In his article “Black and Brown Unity,” Saladin Muhammad of the Black Workers League writes: “Building the convergence of these movements demands respect for their independence and diversity. A strategic alliance ... must be concretized and built around real struggles that enable both to see the power in unity to make radical changes in the interests of democracy and revolutionary transformation. ... This is why it is so important to focus this alliance today on the struggles for Reconstruction in the Gulf Coast and the struggle for immigrant rights.”

Other contributors include Mumia Abu-Jamal, Pat Chin, Sam Marcy, Larry Holmes, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Clarence Thomas and Chris Silvera, Tony Van Der Meer, John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez, LeiLani Dowell and many more. The book features a stunning cover graphic by Sahu Barron and is illustrated with photos and graphics throughout.

Available at www.leftbooks.com

This week ...



| | |
|---|---|
| ★ In the U.S. | |
| Immigrants rally in scores of cities | 1 |
| Why reparations are essential to class struggle | 2 |
| ‘Free Mumia’ rally overcomes police intimidation | 3 |
| Day of Truthtelling demands: ‘End rape culture’ | 3 |
| Sallie Mae buyout spells trouble for students | 4 |
| On the picket line | 4 |
| Chrysler: ESOPs or workers’ control? | 5 |
| How airline workers’ savings were hijacked by ESOPs | 5 |
| Bush vetoes an already weak Democratic bill | 8 |

| | |
|---|----|
| ★ Around the world | |
| Did U.S. use neutron bomb in Battle of Baghdad? | 8 |
| Why U.S. is targeting Iran | 9 |
| Lavender and red, part 96 | 10 |
| The real reason Wolfowitz is under fire | 11 |

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| ★ Editorials | |
| Duke and Tobias | 10 |
| ★ Noticias En Español | |
| Lucha unida en Smithfield | 12 |

SUBSCRIBE TO WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER

- ☐ 4 weeks trial subscription \$1
☐ One year subscription: \$25

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
Vol. 49, No. 18 • May 10, 2007
Closing date: May 2, 2007

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, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Minnie Bruce Pratt
Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas
Internet: Janet Mayes
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2007 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.

Send an e-mail message to WWnews-subscribe@workersworld.net.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor,

JOIN US.

Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, NY 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org
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
chicago@workers.org
Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
(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
Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org
Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, PA 19139
(610) 453-0490
phila@workers.org
Raleigh, N.C.
raleigh@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
Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

‘Free Mumia’ rally overcomes police intimidation

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Try as they might, intimidation and terror tactics by the Philadelphia police, including death threats, could not stop an important solidarity and informational rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal on April 24. Hundreds came out to demand justice, due process and freedom for this political prisoner and death row resident.

Each year at this time has seen a rally marking Abu-Jamal’s birthday. The one this year was particularly significant, however, because his case is finally going to be taken up by the U.S. Third District Court of Appeals on May 17. As a result, police intensified their campaign to frighten supporters away. But they did not succeed.

Police first targeted the Clef Club—an African-American jazz club that receives public funding—and forced it to cancel its contract to host the Mumia event. However, the Third World Coalition at the American Friends Service Center stepped up and provided an alternative meeting space.

The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) put pressure on invited speakers, including actor/activist Danny Glover and Delacy Davis, founder of Black Cops Against Police Brutality, who told the rally he had received over 20 death threats from Philadelphia police officers in the last few weeks. Glover and Davis also spoke at a press conference prior to the evening rally.

Pam Africa, head of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, says that when all this couldn’t stop the rally from taking place, she was informed by the head of the police Civil Affairs Unit that “400 plain-clothed police carrying weapons” would march on the Friends Center to “confront” the rally.

Africa then called on the progressive community to unite and stand against what Michael Coard, an attorney for Abu-Jamal, aptly described to the rally as “creeping fascism.” The movement answered her call in one of the most unit-



Actor Danny Glover speaks at ‘Free Mumia’ rally.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

ed and spirited rallies Philadelphia has seen for some time.

Meanwhile, outside the hall the police mob—which turned out to be a little more than 100 nearly all-white, all-male cops—met a strong showing of Mumia supporters, including Delacy Davis. The police were unable to disrupt the event.

‘The place to be’

Danny Glover opened the press conference with a quote from the late Ossie Davis who, when asked why he was at an event for righting an injustice said, “This is where I am supposed to be.”

Glover continued: “This is a critical moment in the fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Every moment has been critical, but at some place we have to let due process take its course.

“Over the past 25 years that process has been subverted, not only in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, but wherever people are not empowered. The basic intent of denying people their rights has been to create a climate of fear. They don’t want us to ask the right questions. How do we define the truth that’s been denied in this case and consistently denied to people of color?”

Later, at the solidarity rally, Glover chal-

lenged the police to take responsibility for their brutality against oppressed communities. “When I walk outside, I see a fraternity of policemen gather to attempt to desecrate what we do here to hold up justice. When will these same police walk out to the community and apologize for what they have done to African Americans? When will they confess to all that they have done?”

“Mumia talked about education. We need to know the history of this movement. People who stood up around justice, civil rights, we saw it dismantled through the murder of our leaders; then through the drugs when the system decided it would no longer provide the bread to sustain our communities. We saw our brothers be turned around by the viciousness of this profit system. We’ve watched it happen. I am a child of the civil rights movement. We know the history of lies, of torture. Now we demand a new history—that we make our own history—you are a testament to that. Free Mumia!”

Death threats

Delacy Davis of the Black police organization described the climate of racism, sexism and homophobia within the police

force that led him to retire after 20 years of service in New Jersey: “I had to stand up and say to white America, ‘No, we don’t accept this.’ We know everything about the workings of this system to see the writing on the wall in Mumia’s case. We call for his right to a new trial.

“I had to show up today. They can try to kill me if that’s what they want—it’s a climate of intimidation. It is so painful for me to return to Philadelphia today with this case because of what our staff has gone through in the past four weeks with threats like ‘We’re going to pinch him tonight if they show up.’ But we are the police; we will shoot back. If I must die, I will stand up as a man. If dissenting voices are not going to be allowed, you can’t call yourself a democracy.

“I witnessed the Ku Klux Klan in the South growing up and what I just saw was reminiscent. The few Black police out there tonight ‘go along to get along,’ but I challenge my colleagues. We are not going to go along with Black people who support white supremacy.”

Temple professor and journalist Linn Washington Jr. addressed the climate of racism that is a key factor in the FOP’s efforts to deny justice and due process to Abu-Jamal. Washington compared the virulent nature of the police intimidation campaign against the Clef Club to the racist commentary that got shock-jock Don Imus fired.

“The struggle today around Mumia is not new. In the 1850s Frederick Douglass said that tyrants hate free speech. We are here today in this venue because there are those who tried to suppress free speech. But the question that needs to be asked is, if Mumia is as guilty as they claim him to be, if the evidence is so overwhelming, if it’s ‘an open-and-shut case,’ why are they protesting outside? Officers involved in the arrest of Mumia in 1981 were later fired and indicted for corruption in cases involving suppression of evidence.”

Abu-Jamal was charged with the kill-
Continued on page 4

Day of Truthtelling demands: ‘End rape culture’

By Monica Moorehead
Durham, N.C.

An important march and rally took place here April 28 against sexual violence and assault. The protest was called Creating a World Without Sexual Violence—National Day of Truthtelling (DOT), and it deserved national and international attention.

The organizing DOT coalition was made up of Black Workers For Justice (BWFJ), Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Independent Voices, Men Against Rape Culture (MARC), North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA), Raleigh Fight Imperialism—Stand Together (FIST), Spirit House, Southerners On New Ground (SONG) and UBUNTU. Fifty other organizations endorsed the event.

Those who came out on this beautiful sunny day were mainly young women of all nationalities—African-American, Latina, East Asian, South Asian, Arab and white—along with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender variance communities, as well as male supporters. Despite the diverse social, political and cultural backgrounds, the protesters, numbering in the hundreds, spoke on this day in one voice with the resounding demand to “End rape culture.”

The vast majority of those who came out were either survivors of sexual assault themselves or knew someone who was.



Police blocks woman trying to put protest sign at Buchanan house, site of Duke sexual assault.



WW PHOTOS: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Lead banner at April 28 march.

The main idea of the protest was to break the silence on the issue of sexual violence and help give a voice and sense of empowerment to the survivors.

In North Carolina from 2005-2006, local rape crisis centers received almost 26,000 calls and came to the assistance of over 8,700 people who were sexually assaulted. It is estimated that millions of incidences of rape and sexual assault go unreported around the country.

One of the main highlights of the more than two-mile march was a stop in front of 610 Buchanan St. This house, located on the campus of Duke University, was the place where a young Black single mother, college student and exotic dancer reported to authorities that she was sexually

assaulted by three white Duke lacrosse players at a fraternity party back in March 2006. The district attorney recently dropped the charges against the players before a trial could allow her to give her account of what happened.

Alexis Gumbs, a Black graduate student at Duke, read a moving open letter to the crowd in front of the Buchanan house. Called “Wishful Thinking,” the letter focused on what it means to be a survivor of sexual assault. Many in the crowd were moved to cry and hug each other as she read the letter.

The main rally was held on the steps of the Durham County Courthouse. Speakers there included Serena Sebring, UBUNTU; Monika Johnson Hostler, NCCASA;

Paulina Hernández, SONG; Tyneisha Bowens and Laura Bickford, Raleigh FIST; Shafeah M’Bali, Women’s Commission of BWFJ, and Phoenix Brangman, Dasan Ahanu and Bryan Proffit of MARC. A number of the speakers linked the issue of sexual violence to the struggle for immigrant rights and against racism, homophobia, capitalism, militarism and imperialism.

The march ended up in the Black community at the W.D. Recreation Center, where workshops, film showings and cultural performances were held. A June 9 town hall meeting will be held on “What will it take to end sexual violence in our communities?” E-mail dayoftruthtelling@gmail.com or call 919-870-8881 for more information. □

Sallie Mae buyout spells trouble for students

By Jaimeson Champion

On April 15, Sallie Mae, the largest student loan provider in the U.S., was bought out for \$25 billion by a group of investors from Bank of America, Goldman Sachs and two private equity firms.

The buyout was met with rave reviews on Wall Street. Sallie Mae's share prices had shot up 15 percent on April 13 after information about the impending deal was leaked to the media. Investors were chomping at the bit to get a piece of Sallie Mae's lucrative loan portfolio, which is estimated at \$142 billion.

While the buyout has been heralded on Wall Street, the reaction on campuses across the country has been decidedly different. Today's students, who represent the most heavily indebted generation of young people in this country's history, decried the latest development in what has been a long series of retreats from government-supported education.

Sallie Mae was originally founded in 1972 as a way to provide government-backed student loans at below market rates. Its stated purpose was

to enable greater access to higher education for students from low-income families. Sallie Mae's Web site proclaims its mission as "Helping millions of Americans achieve the dream of higher education."

While Sallie Mae was supposedly conceived as a company meant to serve the public good, it has in fact served private interests much more faithfully over its 35-year history. The recent buyout is just the culmination of a process that began almost immediately after the 1972 legislation creating Sallie Mae passed Congress. This process has enabled Wall Street to squeeze super-profits out of the student loan industry—not surprising, considering how the U.S. capitalist government itself is so totally under the domination of the banks, the oil giants and the military/industrial complex.

Indeed, the student loan industry has generated enormous amounts of wealth for the ruling elite. According to a recent CNN Money article, former CEO and current chairman of Sallie Mae, Albert Lord, raked in an astronomical \$200 million in pay packages between 1999 and 2004. Tom Fitzpatrick, the current CEO of

Sallie Mae, took home \$16.6 million in salary, bonuses and stock options in 2006 alone. (CNNmoney.com, April 16)

The news of the Sallie Mae buyout comes on the heels of headlines around the country pertaining to preferred lender scandals, and investigations by various states' attorneys general into the proliferation of "unethical" business practices among a number of student lenders, including Sallie Mae.

As a company now held by investment banks and private equity firms, Sallie Mae will be subject to much less outside scrutiny and oversight, which was obviously lax to begin with. At a time when the student lending industry is embroiled in controversy, the largest student lender has taken a major step towards becoming less transparent.

A generation of students with average debt loads of \$20,000 or more after graduation cannot help but wonder if they are being purposefully exploited and shackled by debt. The need to intensify the struggle for free and universal access to higher education has never been greater. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Boeing machinists authorize strike

On April 22 machinists at Boeing plants in suburban St. Louis voted to strike if negotiations for a decent contract don't materialize by May 20. Although the nearly 2,600 members of Machinists' District 837 are concerned about wages and health care benefits, they're more worried about seniority rights. Boeing wants to exempt less-experienced workers from layoffs if they have skills needed to produce missiles and fighter jets like the F-18 Super Hornet. The workers "see it as a definite attack on the seniority rights we've had here basically since 1941, when they organized the old McDonnell Aircraft Company," said union spokesperson Tom Pinski. (Belle-villenewsdemocrat.com, April 23) Boeing purchased the McDonnell Douglas facilities in 1997. The machinists walked the picket line for 99 days in 1996.

Support flight attendants!

Flight attendants are co-sponsoring a Transportation Day of Action on May 17 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to tell Congress they've had enough of pension terminations, working without health care and job cuts, according to Pat Friend, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA. (AFA-CWA press release, April 26) Other co-sponsors include the Machinists, Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, the International Transport Workers Federation and progressive groups. For more information, go to www.afanet.org.

Law introduced to end LGBT discrimination

Did you know it's legal in 33 states to fire or discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers because of their sexual orientation? Did you know it's legal in 42 states to discriminate against workers because of their gender identity and expression?

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act introduced in Congress on April 24 is designed to end all that. This law bars discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Pride at Work, the LGBT arm of the AFL-CIO, has been pushing for this legislation for years with the support of the entire organized labor movement. The bill will come up for a vote in late summer or early fall, allowing time to rally support for this sorely needed legislation. For union endorsement forms, action postcards, sample op-eds and more, visit www.prideatwork.org.

Workers Memorial Day

Activities honoring workers killed and injured on the job were held on April 28, Workers Memorial Day. Although workers have fought for centuries for safe, healthy working conditions, the latest U.S. statistics, which show that conditions have worsened during the Bush administration, are shocking: An estimated 152 workers are killed and 11,507 are injured on the job each day.

The most recent data compiled show that in 2005 4.2 million workers were injured and 5,734 workers were killed because of on-the-job hazards. Another 50,000 to 60,000 died due to occupational diseases. Also in 2005, the number of fatalities among immigrant workers increased by an alarming 63 percent over 1992, amounting to 1,035 deaths.

Unionists all over the country commemorated Workers Memorial Day by vowing to continue the fight for improved workplace safety and healthy working conditions.

AFSCME says bring troops home now

The National Executive Board of the State, County and Municipal Employees union approved an anti-war resolution during its March 14-15 meeting. It urged the Bush administration to stop cutting veterans' benefits and called for "a timetable for the quickest possible withdrawal of U.S. troops, consistent with their safety." The resolution concluded, "The best way to support our troops is to bring them home now." □

'Free Mumia' rally overcomes police intimidation

Continued from page 3

ing of a white police officer named Daniel Faulkner. Washington asked why there have been no similar FOP campaigns around the murders of Black police officers in 1981, the year Mumia was arrested. "In May 1981 a drug dealer ripped off the car of an off-duty police officer, shot him in the head and went joy riding. If anyone deserved the death penalty for premeditated murder, this one did, but he had a competent attorney. That officer was Black—that's why you don't hear about it.

"They have fought to keep Mumia from having a fair trial, an impartial jury," Washington concluded. "The jury has never heard the evidence because the prosecutor suppressed the evidence."

Other speakers included Ramona Africa, survivor of the May 13, 1985, State Police fire bombing of a house belonging to the MOVE organization; Harold Wilson, the 123rd death row resident to be exonerated; and attorney/activist Lynne Stewart, who described the upcoming appeal as "Mumia's last, best shot." Stewart noted that Mumia's chances before the U.S. Supreme Court, given last week's abortion ruling, would be nil. "As a lawyer I know that what happens outside the courtroom is as

important as what happens inside. Because Mumia was an outspoken critic of the corrupt Philadelphia police department, when they got him near a murder, boy their cups overflowed.

"Let's get him a new trial, but let's never forget that Mumia is innocent," she concluded.

Sundiata Sadiq, leader of the Ossining, N.Y., NAACP, noted that Philadelphia area radio host Michael Smerconish is scheduled to be simulcast on MSNBC in place of Don Imus. Smerconish served as a lawyer and fund raiser for the FOP and has been a leader in its public campaigns against Abu-Jamal.

Appeals to be heard May 17

Michael Coard, a Philadelphia-based attorney for the case, reviewed key pieces of evidence that point to Abu-Jamal's innocence: inconclusive ballistics tests; Abu-Jamal's weapon was a 38-caliber gun but a 44-caliber bullet was found in Faulkner; claims by the police that Abu-Jamal confessed right after the shooting were made months later and contradicted statements from witnesses that he never said anything; and the state's failure to provide evidence of a paraffin test. "Police and the district attorney

claimed they did not do this test," Coard said. "They did it, but it came back negative. That's why they never introduced it as evidence."

Coard also reviewed key issues to be raised in the May 17 appeal regarding prosecutorial misconduct and racism in the case. One involves the use of peremptory challenges in jury selection. Coard explained that while both the defense and prosecution are allowed to challenge 15 prospective jury members without explanation, race cannot be a factor. However, in Abu-Jamal's case 11 of the prosecution's 15 challenges were used to get rid of Black jurors.

Another issue is the legality of the prosecutor's instructions to the jury minimizing the seriousness of a guilty verdict by stating that Abu-Jamal would have "appeal after appeal." The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled against this same prosecutor in a similar case in 1986. A third appeal concerns racist statements made by Judge Albert Sabo during hearings after Abu-Jamal's conviction.

The meeting concluded with a standing ovation and a round of applause for the AFSC's Third World Coalition members, whose courageous stand against police terror made this meeting possible. □



Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Sat • May 12 Writers for Mumia For information call 212-633-6646. 1 to 5 pm at the Community Church of NY, 40 East 35th St., between Madison & Park.

Thurs • May 17 • 9:00 am All Out for Philadelphia in front of U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, 6th & Market St. **Support the right for a new trial! Mumia has always fought for people's rights! A united, broad movement can save Mumia from a legal lynching!**

Go to www.Millions4Mumia.org for more background information on this significant case that epitomizes the struggle against racism, repression and injustice inside the U.S. For bus information from New York City and Jersey City on May 17, call 212-633-6646.

Chrysler workers must choose: ESOPs or workers' control?

By Martha Grevatt

Ten weeks have passed since the “St. Valentine’s Day Massacre”—the day in February that DaimlerChrysler (DCX) announced plans to eliminate 13,000 Chrysler jobs in the U.S. and Canada. Ten weeks since DCX CEO Dieter Zetsche, when asked about the possible sale of Chrysler, made the now-famous statement that all options were on the table.

Yet Chrysler workers are no closer to knowing their future.

Workers read every news article they can find on the Internet but there is nothing definite, only speculation by “industry insiders.”

Most ominous is the possible sale of Chrysler to a private equity firm, such as Blackstone or Cerberus, that will “strip and flip” the company. These vultures would buy it on the cheap, force mega-concessions on the union, slash employment, and then sell what’s left to some other investor at a huge profit.

Another possible scenario is that Canadian auto parts supplier Magna will join forces with an equity firm to buy Chrysler. Chrysler already depends on Magna for numerous parts, including stampings for the high-end vehicles assembled in Brampton, Ont. Magna operates a former Chrysler assembly plant in Graz, Austria, building Chrysler vehicles for the European market. Workers anticipate that Magna would demand huge wage and benefit concessions from the unionized Chrysler workforce.

ESOPs fables

In the midst of all this turmoil, a group of employees in Toledo has offered an alternative. They have proposed an Employee Stock Ownership Plan—ESOP—in which Chrysler workers would trade concessions in health benefits for a 70-percent “ownership” of company stock. This proposal has been sent to DaimlerChrysler and the UAW leadership. It has not been rejected.

Daimler bought Chrysler for \$36 billion in 1998. Its current market value is estimated at less than \$8 billion. Tracinda, a private equity fund owned by Kirk Kerkorian, a buyout Las Vegas speculator, is offering \$4.5 billion along with a form of ESOP. Other buyout suitors are contemplating their own form of ESOP to maximize their profit, reduce risk, and offer pseudo ownership to the union.

It’s not hard to understand why workers might find an ESOP attractive. Workers are very scared about their future. Many fearful union members have taken the Voluntary Termination Employment Program buyout—a one-time payment of \$100,000, with six months of health care coverage but no unemployment benefits and a stipulation that the worker can never reapply for employment at Chrysler.

Others are retiring with a \$70,000 lump sum on top of their negotiated pensions. They have been forced to make these irrevocable decisions by April 16, in the dark, with no concrete information on their future.

For the company to put workers in this position is criminal.

Only under much pressure and the cloud of uncertainty would workers consider gambling away their health care for a dubious “piece of the rock.” However, a careful examination of the historical and current impact of ESOPs should convince Chrysler workers to reject pseudo-ownership.

The ESOP concept actually goes back to the 1920s, with the setting up of “labor banks.” The formulation died out when the 1929 stock market crash wiped out any stake, real or imagined, that workers had in the companies they worked for.

In the 1980s recession these failed investment schemes were repackaged as ESOPs. Workers World Party Chairperson Sam Marcy exposed the flaws inherent in ESOPs in his book “High Tech, Low Pay”:

“The purpose of any and all stockholding schemes is to tie the workers down to management’s fundamental interests, to win loyalty to the company as against their own interests ...

“The way these things work is as follows: A company suddenly demands huge concessions from the workers, claiming bad business conditions. Layoffs are threatened and finally management seemingly throws up its hands and says the company is on the brink of failure. It suggests that the workers should now become the owners of the plant as a result of accepting an Employee Stock Ownership Plan. ...

“What happens then? The company often claims that it’s got a cash-flow crisis



and proceeds to get a bank loan. Banks, which are usually reluctant to advance money to companies in danger, are eager in the case of ESOPs. That’s because they get special privileges and can write off as much as 50 percent of the interest as well as the loan, and other complicated privileges. The bank passes the money to ESOP. Then ESOP passes the loan to the company.

“The company in return issues the stock to ESOP and it is then held in trust for the workers, but is not given to them directly. It is held in their account.

“There are cases where, as a result of threats of shutdown and bankruptcy, union or non-union workers have accepted very far-reaching concessions resulting in steep cuts in wages and benefits in exchange for two or three directors. This happened in the airline industry at Eastern and TWA, which used the strike-breaking pushed through by Continental Airlines as a weapon of intimidation. ...

“The entire experience of ESOPs, and there are a great many varieties of them, is that they not only leave the workers with a lowered income but are attempts to tie the workers securely to the chariot wheels of class collaboration.”

Decades later, the experience of workers at United Airlines confirmed the accuracy and foresight of Marcy’s analysis. (See accompanying United Airlines article.)

Workers’ control is the answer

On the recently approved ESOP for the Tribune Co., Sam Zell, a billionaire real estate speculator/investor, will claim ownership (40 percent) putting up only \$315 million for the \$8.2 billion buyout from the Chandler family. The \$8.2 billion buyout will be run through an ESOP (60 percent), using borrowed money, including Tribune debt of \$13 billion.

The company will be called the “New

Tribune” and “management will have ‘phantom’ stock, not real stock. It will get the economic benefit of ownership, but not actual ownership, and thus will avoid tax liability on New Tribune’s income. Zell’s warrant ... gives him 40 percent of New Tribune, but he won’t owe taxes on his 40 percent of the company’s income because he will not own any of its stock.” (Washington Post, May 1)

Through financial manipulations, Zell will own the company without owning stock. But the workers through ESOP own 60 percent of the stock and should be entitled to run the company under workers’ control. This would enable them to make all decisions regarding operations and control.

“It should be stated that workers’ control in the present state of the working-class movement is merely a demand within the capitalist system, but it has the possibility of overturning the capital-labor relationship at a time when strikes are more difficult to carry out. Unlike ESOPs, workers’ control does not place financial control in the hands of a bogus group of management-appointed or bank-controlled supervisors, who in effect, make decisions without any vote by the workers.” (Marcy, “High Tech, Low Pay”)

These comments ought to be seen by class-conscious workers as further proof, if any was needed, that workers’ control as a transitional demand, will guarantee benefits.

Labor leaders representing U.S., Canadian and German DCX workers who sit on the DCX Board of Supervisors have all spoken out against the sale of Chrysler. Officially they favor Chrysler remaining under the DaimlerChrysler umbrella.

The UAW has yet to come out with a clear position rejecting ESOPs. Could this disastrous proposal be redirected, toward workers’ control? It will be up to the rank and file to develop this strategy for UAW negotiations with the Big Three this year.

Now is the time to make a clean break with the failed concept of labor-management cooperation and launch a struggle for workers’ control in an industry-wide fightback to save jobs, benefits, pay and pensions.

Grevatt is a Chrysler worker. E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org.

How airline workers’ savings were hijacked by ESOPs

By Michelle Quintus

In Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), there are two winners: the banks and the corporations. As employees facing layoffs, our goals of saving our jobs and investing in our futures may lead us to accept all kinds of schemes to help “save the company,” and we may end up achieving neither goal.

Take United Airlines, for example. In July 1994, the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), the International Association of Machinists (IAM), and non-union employees at United “purchased” 55 percent of the company in the largest ESOP in history. They gave the company concessions valued at \$5 billion over six years, including wage cuts of 12 to 15 percent. The stock itself could not be sold, and

workers who quit prior to retirement paid heavy penalties and taxes.

And what did United’s “employee-owners” receive for these concessions? In the late 1990s, some workers received a few dividend payouts, ranging from a few pennies to a few hundred dollars. But what’s worse, the workers did not gain a majority voice in the company decision-making for their so-called majority ownership from 1994 to 2000.

Two things happened that underscored the fallacy of the ESOP. First, United Airlines made \$8 billion in net profit during the economic boom of the late 1990s while employees struggled to survive under concessions. And second, overcapacity in the airlines industry left workers carrying the burden when the industry collapsed. In fact, 20,000 jobs had been

cut at United by the end of 2001.

On Feb. 1, United emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, under which it had operated as a debtor in possession since Dec. 9, 2002. It was the largest and longest airline bankruptcy in history. In bankruptcy the legal ownership of the corporation is up for grabs. That’s what a debtor in possession means.

The workers’ legal right as principal creditors should entitle them to assert their rights to run the company.

This may strike some as a novel idea, but a number of flight attendants brought this to the attention of the UAL unions. It never received a hearing and by 2003 the company was using the bankruptcy courts to get as much as 23 percent more in wage concessions. Of course, the workers’ stock was worth nothing. The company also

demanded work rule changes, including workdays of up to 14.5 hours, for less pay. It then terminated our defined benefit pension plan.

Even under threat of losing everything, it’s still a bad idea for workers to trade wages, healthcare or any other benefits for stock options. At United Airlines we learned the truth about ESOPs by losing billions.

It didn’t have to be that way. The lesson we learned at United is that class-conscious workers in positions of leadership have to be educated on the question of workers’ control. It’s an idea that is right for the current crisis.

Michelle Quintus has been a flight attendant at United Airlines since 1995. She is also a New York City representative and organizer for the Association of Flight Attendants- CWA.



BOSTON

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN



RALEIGH

WW PHOTO: PETER GILBERT

Immigrants rally in scores of cities

Continued from page 1

speakers from African American organizations expressed solidarity with the immigrants, and so did some labor unionists.

Large outpouring in Midwest

In **Chicago**, some 150,000 people marched, far surpassing expectations of the broad March 10 Movement coalition that organized it. Two feeder marches from the Latin@ communities of West Town and Pilsen met for a rally at Union Park that filled its 10 acres.

A military-style ICE raid in the heart of Chicago's Mexican community on April 24 added impetus to community outrage. More than 60 immigration police armed with high-powered rifles descended on the Little Village Discount Mall, kicked open bathroom doors with guns drawn, forced everybody "who looked Latino" to sit on the floor, and detained at least 150 customers and workers inside. In response, a spontaneous protest quickly erupted. Protesters with signs and megaphones closed the intersection of 26th and Albany for hours.

"This is our Sensenbrenner this year," a May 1 protest organizer told media. Radio host Rafael Pulido stated, "I think this showed us that this is exactly what will happen if we don't go out there and march."

In nearby **Milwaukee**, more than 80,000 immigrants and their allies marched and then rallied at Veterans Park. According to the event's sponsor, Voces de la Frontera—a leading member of the Wisconsin Legalization Coalition—this is the largest progressive march in Wisconsin history. Other actions took place in **Madison** and **Racine**.

"The people are sending a strong message that we need and want a law passed this year that will address an outdated and

discriminatory immigration system that is hurting and terrorizing working-class families through raids and the politics of hate," said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Voces director.

More than 120 businesses in Wisconsin, most in the metropolitan Milwaukee area, either shut their doors for the day or acceded to the right of workers to take the day off to march and rally.

Nearly 10,000 marched in **Detroit**—more than last May Day. Many restaurants and stores in the Latin@ business district closed for the day. Supportive shop owners and community organizations donated water and sweet coffee spiced with cinnamon to refresh those who marched the three-mile route. The City Council held a hearing after the rally to declare Detroit a sanctuary city.

A contingent of children and youth were at the front of the march. Many people came with small children and babies in strollers. The radio station "La Explosiva" reported that 200 businesses closed so the workers could attend the march. The Michigan Emergency Committee Against the War in Iraq (MECAWI) provided organizational support.

Across South and Southwest

In **Raleigh**, N.C.—the state with arguably the fastest-growing Latin@ immigrant population and the lowest unionization rate—several hundred immigrant workers and supporters gathered at the State Capitol after work to add their energy to the hundreds who had earlier walked out of work and school to participate in a day of political action at the State Legislature.

Several immigrant rights organizations and unions took part in the rally, including UFCW—which has been engaged in a long battle for a union and justice at the

giant Smithfield hog-processing plant. Members of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee flew their black flags to seek support for their on-going efforts to organize migrant field workers.

This event took place within the context of an intense anti-immigrant atmosphere in which ICE raids are constantly threatened at work places and organizing centers and where police checkpoints are now frequently set up in immigrant neighborhoods.

North Carolina rallies also took place in **Asheville, Burlington, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro, Hickory, Lumberton, Siler City, Wilmington and Charlotte**, where 500 people, mostly Latin@, rallied for "fair immigration laws." Charlotte's streets stayed noticeably empty.

In **Washington, D.C.**, two actions drew hundreds of people. A rally in Malcolm X Park drew support from the progressive movement. SEIU organized a march.

May Day demonstrators in **Houston** gathered at the Federal Building demanding an end to repression against immigrants. For several hours hundreds of people chanted "Stop the raids!" and "Free the detainees!" Despite a heavy police presence, protesters remained militant and spirited.

Also on May 1, the Coalition in Defense of the Community began a May 1st "Justice for Immigrants Fast" to demand respect for the dignity and rights of immigrants.

On April 28, more than 500 people—including those separated from their family because of raids and deportations—marched in Houston's East Side despite information that ICE would have uniformed and undercover agents at the rally.

In downtown **Tucson**, Ariz., 10,000 people marched demanding an immedi-

ate end to the raids and deportations, and to say "No!" to the 2007 STRIVE Act. The marchers descended on the Federal Courthouse, where every day countless undocumented workers are prosecuted and deported. Demonstrators demanded an end to the militarization of the border and an end to La Migra (ICE) terror in the community. Many students walked out of school to participate.

Jobs With Justice, representing Tucson's labor unions, had a large contingent.

Rally speakers from the Tucson May 1st Coalition reminded those gathered that the U.S. stole sections of Mexico which are today Arizona and New Mexico.

Almost every shop along the march route closed for the day and many provided food and water for the marchers. Although the temperature in Tucson was hot, it was nothing compared to the desert temperatures that immigrants in search of work in the U.S. are forced to endure. Last year there were over 200 migrant deaths in the Arizona desert.

California: Police brutality

Following a march of tens of thousands in **Los Angeles** during the day, police aggressively attacked a peaceful gathering at MacArthur Park in the evening. A crowd of thousands, including many children and elders, was trapped inside the park, while police yelled at everyone to disperse. Without provocation, according to eye witnesses who included a KPFFK reporter, police started using tear gas on the crowd. At Alvarado and 6th Street cops fired rubber bullets into the crowd, that included mostly families.

Hundreds of LAPD officers and Los Angeles County Sheriffs arrived on the scene on bike and car. Driving recklessly, two LAPD patrol cars almost hit each other. Another cop on bike patrol chased down and grabbed an individual who would not follow his command, only to discover the man was Deaf. Cops in full riot gear blocked off the entire park and adjacent city blocks, needlessly creating a serious transportation nightmare.

The corporate media tried to downplay the march. But Javier Rodriguez, political and media strategist of the March 25th Coalition and member of the National May 1 Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights, said he was "motivated by the turnout of ten of thousands of people who were able to shut down droves of downtown businesses and other parts of the economy."

John Parker, program co-coordinator of the Los Angeles event and member of the national committee of the May 1 Movement, said, "This was the largest demonstration in L.A. since last year's May Day marches, in spite of immigrant communities being threatened on a daily basis with deportations and terror raids.



NEW YORK PRESS CONFERENCE
Women of May 1 Coalition hold news conference in New York, April 26, to build for May Day protests.

WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO



MILWAUKEE

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER



NEW YORK



LOS ANGELES

WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA, ABOVE
ALEX MAJUMDER, LEFT



It bodes very well for the future of this movement. There was also broader representation from the anti-war movement, with a statement from author and Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic. And keynote speakers included former Congressmember Cynthia McKinney and the national assistant minister to Hon. Minister Louis Farrakhan.”

In **San Francisco**, up to 10,000 people marched for “Unconditional Amnesty.” The event was grassroots organized. Demonstrators gathered at noon at Dolores Park, in the mostly Latin@ Mission neighborhood. Whole families took part. Students came to march instead of attending school. Many workers came in solidarity. Labor unionists stayed away from work to march, including workers from the ILWU, SEIU, UFW, Sign Display, United Educators of S.F., Teamsters and Building Trades.

Many, many community organizations took part that represent immigrants, Latin@s, day laborers, Filipinos, Chinese, Native American/Indigenous, African-American, Arab, Palestinian and lesbian/gay/bi/trans groups, and other progressive groups and revolutionary parties.

A Latina worker from Oakland told how workers disrupted the ICE raid on the paper products factory where she worked by quickly warning those who were still at home. Unsatisfied with the 18 people rounded up during their “audit” at the factory, ICE raided some 34 homes looking for workers and swept up other family members, too.

Clarence Thomas, speaking from ILWU Local 10, told the May Day rally that the longshore workers’ own founder, Harry Bridges was an immigrant who was prosecuted four times in deportation attempts.

Global solidarity in New York

Some 25,000 people, from every inhabited continent on the globe and every country in Latin America, gathered in **New York’s** historic Union Square at 4 p.m. for a two-hour rally and then marched downtown to Foley Square along Broadway.

Teresa Gutierrez, one of the coordi-

nators of the May 1 Coalition that called the action and a co-chair of the rally, told Workers World: “It was a successful day. There were lots of young people there. New York continues to show the unique character of our coalition. We represent a completely multi-national group: Latin@, Caribbean, East and South Asian and Pacific Islander, European, African American, African. The crowd cheered every time someone mentioned Africa or when speakers denounced the war in Iraq. When attorney Lynne Stewart spoke, the crowd cheered to see a white woman activist supporting them. It was wonderful that the Filipin@ representative spoke in Spanish.”

Union participation included President Chris Silvera of Teamsters Local 808 and contingents from the Restaurant Workers Association, the Professional Staff Congress and Laborers Local 78—predominantly Polish asbestos workers.

In **Buffalo**, N.Y., high school students in revolt against their repressive school administration led a militant May Day march and a raucous rally. They chanted for their right to organize, their opposition to military recruiters and their support for immigrant rights. They drew the support of students and teachers from other high schools, as well as anti-war activist groups—including a student contingent from the University at Buffalo (SUNY). After the rally, students followed a car caravan to City Hall and to the ICE office to protest the criminalization of students and immigrants.

On Long Island, N.Y., 1,000 people rallied in **Hempstead**.

In **Western Massachusetts**, over 100 people attended a noon rally on the Amherst Commons to demand: “Stop the raids and deportations!” Over 50 students from Amherst High School walked out of their classes to attend. Many students from UMASS-Amherst also walked out to voice opposition to the brutal ICE raids, and to support New Bedford families torn apart in March raids.

Despite the recent high-profile ICE

raid in nearby New Bedford, 2,000 immigrants—predominantly Latin@s—rallied in Central Square **East Boston** after marching two miles from downtown **Everett** and **Chelsea**, two relatively small communities. Chelsea Collaborative, a coalition of grassroots community groups, organized the loud, militant rally.

The Everett/Chelsea march was led by a USWA 8751 sound truck carrying President Franz Mendes and the union’s chief stewards. An SEIU 615 delegation also marched. Speakers included Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo and Minister Vladimir X from Rhode Island, who electrified the crowd when he charged, in Spanish, that the real criminals are in Washington, D.C.

Another 500 people rallied on Boston Common in a demonstration organized by the Boston May Day Coalition.

Contributing news for this article were Lou Paulsen from Chicago, Bryan Pfeifer from Milwaukee, Cheryl LaBash from Detroit, Dante Strobino from Raleigh FIST, David Dixon from Charlotte, N.C., Pam Parker from Washington, D.C., Gloria Rubac from

Houston, Paul Teitelbaum from Tucson, Ariz., Julia La Riva from Los Angeles, Joan Marquardt from San Francisco, G. Dunkel from New York, Ellie Dorritie from Buffalo, N.Y., Heather Cottin from Long Island, N.Y., Catherine Donaghy from Western Massachusetts and Liz Green from Boston.



BUFFALO

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

War goes on as

Bush vetoes an already weak Democratic bill

By Leslie Feinberg

Are the leaders of the Democratic Party really battling the Bush administration to end the war in Iraq and Afghanistan? Many people in the U.S. fervently hope they are, as the agony of the war reaches into more and more communities.

But the Democratic bill that President George W. Bush just vetoed fell far short of requiring an end to the wars and occupations.

The House and Senate had voted for a war spending bill that would give the Pentagon another cash infusion—this time another \$95.5 billion—to continue the military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill gave the White House \$4 billion more for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan than the president had asked for. (International Herald Tribune, April 24)

Democratic Party leaders presented the bill as an anti-war struggle with the White House because of a rider attached calling for troop withdrawal.

Section 1904(b) of H.R. 1591, the supplemental appropriations bill for the Pentagon that Bush just killed, stated that the secretary of defense should “commence the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq not later than Oct. 1, 2007, with a goal of completing such redeployment within 180 days.”

Republicans reportedly didn’t hunker down to shoot down the bill, because a White House veto was a certainty. Democrats lack the two-thirds majority required to override the president’s veto.

“With the veto coming,” Carl Hulse wrote in the April 27 International Herald Tribune, “some Democrats argue that the bill should simply be stripped of the time-lines that have drawn Bush’s ire and sent it back with the benchmarks and troop readiness rules intact. Others contend that Congress has made its anti-war statement and should now give the president

the money he has been demanding without conditions.”

The Democrats were “hoping to shape public sentiment for the 2008 elections,” reported the April 29 Philadelphia Inquirer.

“In the months ahead, they’re going to force House and Senate Republicans to vote repeatedly on the war—GOP members will have to decide, again and again, whether to stand with their unpopular president,” the Inquirer explained.

By standing firm, the article concluded, George W. Bush “clearly hopes to split the Democrats. “ It predicted that some Democratic lawmakers would “cave on the pullout timetable.”

Ruling-class concerns

Two springs ago—on May 10, 2005—the Senate voted 100 to 0 to appropriate \$76 billion in supplementary war spending for the Pentagon occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The congressional Republican majority and Democratic minority had already approved \$300 billion in spending on the so-called war on terror since the U.S. began preparing to invade Afghanistan after 9/11.

But since then, the devastation of Iraq has continued, the toll of U.S. troops killed and wounded also keeps rising, the Iraqi opposition to occupation has only grown, and even U.S. military commanders began openly criticizing Bush’s conduct of the war. Today, the Democrats hold the majority on Capitol Hill, elected by voters who hoped that a change in parties would bring the troops home.

At the same time, sectors of the capitalist ruling class in the U.S. have lost confidence in the Bush administration’s promises of an easy victory that would secure them lucrative profits.

In other words, finance capital doesn’t want “peace” in the Middle East, but it doesn’t want to continue losing in Iraq,

either. It wants a winning strategy for re-colonization of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the freedom to redeploy troops to menace Iran, Syria and other countries in the Middle East and in Central Asia. Ending the \$5 million spent each day to bankroll the Israeli colonial occupation of Palestine wasn’t even up for debate.

Having taken a stand that they hope makes them popular with the voters, the Democrats are now talking about compromise.

The April 29 Associated Press reported, “Democratic leaders may scrap the timetable but work with Republican lawmakers on benchmarks: ordering the Iraqi government to fulfill promises on allocating oil resources, amending its constitution and expanding democratic participation.” This language, “ordering the Iraqi government,” betrays the totally undemocratic character of the relationship between the U.S. and what it falsely claims to be a sovereign Iraqi state.

The incoming Democratic chairs of the Senate and House budget committees had stated last December, after their party won the congressional majority, that they would insist on more “accountability of war’s cost and move to integrate spending into regular federal budget.” (New York Times, Dec. 14, 2006)

Waging war by other means

Even the April 1, 2008, timetable in the bill for troop withdrawal exempted troops that are “protecting U.S. interests,” carrying out “counter-terrorism missions” and training Iraqi forces.

The wording of the House bill said, “[N]o military units could be sent to Iraq unless they are properly trained, equipped and rested, although Bush could waive such requirements.” (SFgate.com)

These are loopholes you could drive an armored Humvee through. Presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Clinton already stated

in mid-March, “I think we have remaining vital national security interests in Iraq” which require continued presence of U.S. troops. (CBS News, March 15)

In their April 30 online article, “A Democratic Sellout on Bush’s Mercenaries,” journalists Jeremy Scahill and Tom Engelhardt analyzed the wiggle room in the congressional bill.

U.S. forces would still be deployed to guard the new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad—the largest embassy on the planet—plus the “Green Zone” in Baghdad, other facilities and air bases like Balad—whose air traffic volume rivals Chicago’s O’Hare airport.

The Pentagon would retain some 10,000 to 20,000 trainers and advisers in Iraq.

“Counter-terrorism” combat operations against “al-Qaeda” would continue. Gen. David Petraeus already paved that road when he told lawmakers on April 25 that, “Al-Qaeda is a primary source of violence in Iraq.” (IHT online, April 27)

“Another way of thinking about the Democratic withdrawal proposals,” Scahill and Engelhardt explained, “is that they represent a program to remove only U.S. ‘combat brigades,’ adding up to perhaps half of all U.S. forces, with a giant al-Qaeda loophole for their return.”

The Democrats’ bill also didn’t mention the 126,000-strong private mercenary army currently in Iraq.

By the way, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tied a minimum wage raise—the first boost for low-paid workers in a decade—to this war spending bill, which everyone knew would be vetoed.

Bush’s veto should of course be condemned, but the anti-war movement must have no illusions about the Democratic Party, either. It will take many more masses in the streets and in militant actions against these wars to really stop them and bring the troops home. □

Did U.S. use neutron bomb in Battle of Baghdad?

By Gary Wilson

The U.S. military used neutron weapons in the Battle of Baghdad, says a former commander of Iraq’s Republican Guard. And at least one retired U.S. Army officer is backing up his charge.

In an April 9 interview reported by Al Jazeera, Saifeddin Fulayh Hassan Taha al-Rawi says that, “U.S. forces used neutron and phosphorus bombs during their assault on Baghdad airport before the April 9, 2003, capture of the Iraqi capital.”

The bombs incinerated about 2,000 elite Republican Guard troops but left the buildings and infrastructure at the airport intact, he added. (aljazeera.net)

The neutron bomb is designed to produce a minimal blast while releasing a massive wave of neutron and gamma radiation, which can penetrate armor or several feet of earth. This radiation is extremely destructive to living tissue. (britannica.com) The bomb has been in the U.S. arsenal for decades but has never been used in combat before.

While no major U.S. media have reported on the neutron bomb charge, David Hambling, author of “Weapons Grade: How Modern Warfare Gave Birth to Our High-Tech World,” says there’s something to it. Hambling notes that the U.S. has already admitted to the use of phosphorus weapons in the Iraq invasion.

Writing on April 13 for the Danger Room blog at Wired, Hambling says that from the description al-Rawi gives in the Al Jazeera interview of a series of explosions that killed the occupants of buildings without destroying the structures, “Interestingly, there is a weapon in the U.S. arsenal designed to do exactly that. ... The AGM-114N.”

Hambling continues, “On May 15th, 2003, just a few weeks after the action at Baghdad airport, Donald Rumsfeld praised the new weapon. ... Although officially described as ‘metal augmented’ or even ‘hyperbaric,’ the new warhead is not distinguishable from thermobaric weapons which produce the same sort of enhanced blast with a lower overpressure and longer duration for more destructive effects. Like many thermobarics, the AGM-114N used finely powdered aluminum. The military are generally quiet about thermobarics because they have received such bad press. Human Rights Watch criticized them because they ‘kill and injure in a particularly brutal manner over a wide area.’ “

Weapons that have been described as thermobaric include flame-throwers and napalm. A BBC News article on March 4, 2002, said the U.S. was using thermobaric weapons in Afghanistan, and described how they employ a combination of heat and pressure, “distributing a very fine cloud of explosive material throughout

the target which is then ignited. The heat and pressure effects are formidable—soldiers caught in the blast could have the air sucked from their bodies and even their internal organs catastrophically destroyed.”

Too bloody to report

Retired U.S. Army Captain Eric May, a former intelligence and public affairs officer, believes that the U.S. military did use neutron weapons in the Battle of Baghdad. May was one of the participants in Cindy Sheehan’s original encampment outside George Bush’s Crawford, Texas, villa.

In an interview published by the Crawford, Texas, Lone Star Iconoclast (lonestaricon.com), May says, “The biggest story of the war became a non-event when the truth of the matter was that it was simply too bloody an event to report.

“The bogus rescue of Private Lynch was merely a distraction from the truth,” said May. “And the staged photo-op of the pulling down of Saddam Hussein’s statue was nothing more than a way to cement into people’s minds that it was an easy victory.”

Congressional hearings on April 24 heard testimony on “the histories of Pfc. Jessica D. Lynch and Cpl. Pat Tillman ... as egregious examples of officials’ twisting the truth for public relations in wartime.” (“Government Challenged on Lynch and Tillman,” New York Times, April 24)

Captain May says, “I think the Battle of Baghdad was emblematic of the whole misadventure in the Middle East. There is nothing that I thought then that I don’t think now has been validated by time. The American public still doesn’t know that there was a Battle of Baghdad because the media-military apparatus constructed the Private Jessica Lynch mess to hold attention.”

May continues: “The best evidence that I have from international sources, scientific sources, is that our position was becoming untenable at the Baghdad airport and we used a neutron warhead, at least one. That is the big secret of Baghdad airport.

“If one looks into international data, there are reportings of enhanced radiation of some livestock, and of human metabolic effects—death and disease. It explains why, after the Battle of Baghdad, we got fragmentary stories of things like truckloads of dirt being moved out and moved in. It made no particular sense at the time, until one puts it into perspective, as a decontamination operation. Again, that part of the Battle of Baghdad, the fact that we went nuclear, explains a lot of things that came out afterwards and also explains why it is that it had to be covered up.”

Whether it was a neutron bomb or the AGM-114N, the Pentagon used some sort of Weapon of Mass Destruction on Baghdad airport. □

Oil and social gains

Why the U.S. is targeting Iran

By Sara Flounders

Why is Iran increasingly a target of U.S. threats? Who in Iran will be affected if the Pentagon implements plans, already drawn up, to strike more than 10,000 targets in the first hours of a U.S. air barrage on Iran?

What changes in policy is Washington demanding of the Iranian government?

In the face of the debacle U.S. imperialism is facing in Iraq, U.S. threats against Iran are discussed daily. This is not a secret operation. They can't be considered idle threats.

Two aircraft carriers—USS Eisenhower and USS Stennis—are still off the coast of Iran, each one accompanied by a carrier strike group containing Hornet and Superhornet fighter-bombers, electronic warfare aircraft, anti-submarine and refueler planes, and airborne command-and-control planes. Six guided-missile destroyers are also part of the armada.

Besides this vast array of firepower, the Pentagon has bases throughout the Middle East able to attack Iran with cruise missiles and hundreds of warplanes.

In fact, the U.S. is already engaged in a war on Iran. Ever-tightening sanctions, from both the U.S. and U.N., restrict trade and the ordering of equipment, spare parts and supplies.

Seymour Hersh reported in the New Yorker magazine a year ago that U.S. special operations forces were already operating inside Iran in preparation for a possible attack. U.S.-backed covert operatives had entered Iran to organize sabotage, car bombings, kidnappings and attacks on civilians, to collect targeting data and to foment anti-government ethnic-minority groups.

News articles have reported in recent months that the Pentagon has drawn up plans for a military blitz that would strike 10,000 targets in the first day of attacks. The aim is to destroy not just military targets but also airports, rail lines, highways, bridges, ports, communication centers, power grids, industrial centers, hospitals and public buildings.

It is important to understand internal developments in Iran today in order to understand why this country is the focus of such continued hatred by U.S. corporate power.

Every leading U.S. political figure has weighed in on the issue, from George W. Bush, who has the power to order strikes, to Hillary Clinton, who has made her support for an attack on Iran clear, to John McCain, who answered a reporter's question on policy toward Iran by chanting "Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" to the tune of the Beach Boys' song, "Barbara Ann." The media—from the New York Times to the Washington Post to banner headlines in the tabloid press to right-wing radio talk shows—are playing a role in preparing the public for an attack.

The significance of oil production and oil reserves in Iran is well known. Every news article, analysis or politician's threat makes mention of Iran's oil. But the impact of Iran's nationalization of its oil resources is not well known.

The corporate owners in the U.S. want to keep it a secret from the people here. They use all the power of their media to demonize the Iranian leadership and caricature and ridicule the entire population, their culture and religion.

What's been achieved?

The focus of media coverage here is to describe Iran as medieval, backward and

feudal while somehow becoming a nuclear power.

It is never mentioned that more than half the university students in Iran are women, or that more than a third of the doctors, 60 percent of civil servants and 80 percent of all teachers in Iran are women. At the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, 90 percent of rural women were illiterate; in towns the figure was over 45 percent.

Also ignored is the stunning achievement of full literacy for Iranian youth.

Even the World Bank, now headed by Bush's neocon appointee Paul Wolfowitz, in its development report on countries admits that Iran has exceeded the social gains of other countries in the Middle East.

According to that report, Iran has made the most progress in eliminating gender disparities in education. Large numbers of increasingly well-educated women have entered the work force.

Iran's comprehensive social protection system includes the highest level of pensions, disability insurance, job training programs, unemployment insurance and disaster-relief programs. National subsidies make basic food, housing and energy affordable to all.

An extensive national network going from primary health and preventive care to sophisticated hospital care covers the entire population, both urban and rural. More than 16,000 "health houses" are the cornerstone of the health care system. Using simple technology, they provide vaccines, preventive care, care for respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, family planning and contraceptive information, and pre-natal care. And they monitor children's nutrition and general health.

Since 1990, Iran nearly halved the infant mortality rate and increased life expectancy by 10 years.

Iran sets record in family planning

A national family planning program, delivered through the primary health care facilities and accompanied by a dramatic increase in contraceptive use, which is approved by Islamic law, has led to a world record demographic change in family size and maternal and child health. All forms of contraception are now available for free.

In addition, promoting women's education and employment while extending social security and retirement benefits has alleviated the pressure to have many children to protect security as parents grow older. The fertility rate between 1976 and 2000 declined from 8.1 births per woman to 2.4 births in rural areas and 1.8 births in urban areas.

These social programs, which cover the entire population of almost 70 million people, should be compared to conditions in countries in the region that remain under U.S. military and economic domination.

In Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, only a tiny part of the population has benefited from the vast profits generated by oil and gas resources. In each of these countries the bulk of the people are not even considered citizens. Millions are immigrant workers, usually the overwhelming majority of the population, who have no rights to any representation, participation or any social, health or educational programs or union protection.

Women in these countries face much more than religious restrictions on cloth-

ing. They are barred from jobs, equal education and the right to control their own bodies or their own funds. They cannot vote or even drive a car.

In Iraq, which before U.S. attacks began in 1991 had some of the best conditions in the region for women, plus a high level of education, health, nutrition and social services, the conditions of life have now deteriorated to the level of the very poorest countries in the world. Legislation passed by the U.S.-installed puppet government has stripped women of rights that were guaranteed earlier.

Revolution made it all possible

The social gains of millions of Iranians are based on the upsurge of the Iranian masses in the 1979 revolution. The overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty broke the hold of U.S. corporate power in Iran.

The Iranian Revolution was not a socialist revolution. Bourgeois rights to own businesses, land, wealth and inheritance are still protected by law and by the state apparatus.

But the greatest source of wealth—Iran's oil and gas—was nationalized. Nationalization means the transfer of privately owned assets and operations into public ownership. The exploration, drilling, maintenance, transport, refining and shipping of oil and gas became the national property of the Iranian people. Formerly this entire process was controlled at every step by Western imperialists, particularly U.S. and British corporations.

Most of the administrators, executives, technicians and engineers who controlled the process used to be from the West. Through hundreds of thousands of contracts and sub-contracts, U.S. and British firms extracted a profit not just through the sale of oil on the world markets but at every step of its extraction and refining. The small portion of profit the Shah's government received, as in the Gulf States today, was spent on luxury items imported from Western corporations for the small ruling elite and on infrastructure and weapons systems purchased from U.S. military corporations, again at an enormous profit.

The 1979 Iranian revolution, even though it brought a religious group to power, was a profoundly radical and anti-imperialist revolution. Demonstrations of millions openly confronted the brutally repressive police apparatus called the Savak, who protected the small handful of corrupt U.S. collaborators. Religious fervor, demands for social justice and militant anti-imperialism were bound together in opposition to the U.S.-imposed Shah and the Pahlavi royal family, which was hated for its program of a glitzy modernization of the urban infrastructure alongside the growing impoverishment of both urban and rural workers, farmers and much of the middle class.

All classes of society were profoundly shaken as millions of revolutionary workers took to the streets. This was reflected not only in laws passed in Parliament but in the Iranian constitution itself. The constitution states that the government is required to provide every citizen with access to social security for retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, accidents, health and medical treatment—out of public revenue.

Prior to the revolution Iran had a shortage of medical staff and of trained personnel of every kind. During the upheaval of the revolution and the years of the Iran-Iraq war, many physicians, scientific and

skilled personnel emigrated.

Having broken free of U.S. corporate domination and control of its resources, Iran was able to develop education, industry and infrastructure with unprecedented speed. By 2004 the number of university students had increased by six times over 1979. There are currently 2.2 million college students. The largest and most prestigious programs encompass 54 state universities and 42 state medical schools where tuition, room and board are totally free. In addition, 289 major private universities also receive substantial funding.

Millions of scientists, engineers, technicians, administrators, military officers, teachers, civil servants and doctors have been trained.

Today Iran boasts modern cities, a large auto industry, and miles of new roads, railroads and subways. Currently 55 Iranian pharmaceutical companies produce 96 percent of the medicines on the market in Iran. This allows a national insurance system to reimburse drug expenses.

Soon to become operational is the largest pharmaceutical complex in southwest Asia, which will produce compound drugs, making Iran a pioneer in biotechnology.

Years of U.S. sanctions and pressure on international financial institutions have had an unexpected result: Iran is free of the crippling debt that has strangled so many developing countries. According to World Bank figures, Iran's external debt is one of the lowest for its size: \$11.9 billion, or 8.8 percent of the GDP. From the point of view of the imperialist world bankers, this means the loss of many billions each year in interest payments to them.

Different approaches

Since 1979 there have been deep struggles inside Iran over how to deal with the unrelenting pressure of the imperialist powers. There are differing approaches on developments plans and who is favored or benefits most from these plans. But all of the present forces are committed to maintaining Iran's control of its resources.

Iran is not a monolithic state. No state is or could be. There are contending groups even within the Muslim clergy that reflect different economic interests and class forces. This is true also in the Iranian Parliament and among various political parties and leaders.

Under President Mohammed Khatami, from 1997 to 2005, a "Reform Movement" eased religious and social restrictions. But it also allowed the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies, structural reforms and the de-nationalizing or privatizing of some social programs along with the cutting of subsidies. More joint ventures were initiated with European and Japanese capital. Programs that benefited the "private sector" or the wealthy and the middle class grew. This was the core of Khatami's base.

The current leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's first non-cleric president in 24 years, was elected in 2005 in a landslide victory after promising to extend social security and pensions, improve the subsidies for food and housing, deal with rising unemployment and guarantee a monthly stipend.

The Iranian people are determined to protect the substantial gains they have made since the revolution. They are not interested in any effort that turns the clock back.

A Wall Street Journal Commentary by Francis Fukuyama on Feb. 1 was unusually frank in explaining the growing prob-

Continued on page 11



Duke and Tobias

Getting to the truth about what social relations are really like in this country is sometimes a matter of connecting the dots. Don't expect the corporate media to do it for you.

Here's a case in point. As we point out elsewhere in this paper (see page 3 article on a Durham, N.C., protest against "rape culture"), there is great anger and distress among women, young African-American women in particular, over the sexual violence that is perpetrated daily against them. The protest we report on marched past a frat house used by the Duke University lacrosse team, which had hired an exotic dancer for a party and then, according to the young woman, sexually abused her.

After enormous pressure from the mostly male, white establishment in this country, the district attorney dropped the rape charges against the students. Tabloid papers like the Murdoch-owned New York Post had a field day, running the woman's photo large on its front page with an accusing headline. Right-wing talk shows also ran with the story, lamenting how the fine young athletes (all white) of Duke had been maligned by the woman (African American).

Not long after, the news broke that Randall L. Tobias, the top foreign aid adviser in the State Department, who had been nominated to his cushy job by President Bush, was named publicly as a regular customer of an escort service that is being charged with providing prostitutes to elite clients. Tobias then resigned. It's likely that the Bush administration, already on the defensive over so many horrible crimes like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, didn't want any more bad news that could alienate its sup-

posedly "family values" base.

The owner of the escort service, Deborah Palfrey, had announced after being hauled into court that she would post online names and phone numbers from her large client list. "The tentacles of this matter reach far, wide and high into the echelons of power in the United States," she wrote in a court filing last month. This caused panic in official Washington. She named former Clinton adviser Dick Morris as one of her regular customers, along with an "adviser to the Pentagon" and Tobias. (New York Times, April 29)

Now is the time to connect the dots, since none of the commercial media are doing so.

Tobias, besides being a former chair and CEO of both the giant pharmaceutical Eli Lilly Co. and AT&T International, and besides also being a former administrator of the Agency for International Development, which is notorious for its CIA-connected work abroad, was—have you guessed?—chairman of the board of Duke University from 1997 to 2000.

All this speaks to the fact that Corporate America and its political henchmen are the main purveyors of the violence against women that was being protested in Durham. The lacrosse students were just imitating the rich and powerful when they hired a young woman of color to dance for them and then demanded more for their money. Their cynicism, racism and contempt for women comes from this vicious economic system and its elites, who think anything and anyone can be bought for their pleasure.

The passion and disgust this is arousing among those they have abused and exploited will be their undoing. □

1980: Homosexuality

'A visible feature of Cuban society'

By Leslie Feinberg

The thunderous, monopolized voice of the U.S. media machine dwelled on homosexuals who left Cuba from the port of Mariel in 1980, omitting the role of the CIA in instigating migration. At the same time, the U.S.-led political blockade of Cuba silenced the voices of Cubans who chose to stay, working together to actively defend their workers' state against the most powerful imperialist empire in history.

Researchers Lourdes Arguelles and B. Ruby Rich stated, with the clarity of courage, "For all the gay men and the few lesbians who left, there were many more who chose to stay. Their lives had been constantly improving. The revolution might not yet speak to the homosexual in them, but it continued to address other vital aspects of their being." These Cubans, they reported, "steadfastly refused to fulfill their gay identity at the cost of their national and political identities."

Few lesbians left from Mariel, Arguelles and Rich found. "Their small number by comparison with that of gay men points, again, to the fuller integration of women into Cuban society and the increased status and freedom enjoyed by lesbians, as women, under the revolution."

Ada, a lesbian Cuban rural nurse, said that everything in Cuba wasn't "perfect." But, she said, "I remember how it was before [the revolution] and for the first time, I feel I'm a human being."

Arguelles and Rich reported that in this period of their research—1979 to 1984—the homosexual population was "a visible feature of the Cuban social landscape"—part of every sphere of economic, social and governmental organization, as well as at the point of production of art and other forms of culture.

Arguelles and Rich observed, "They are no longer confined to an underworld economy or alienated from the mainstream of social life as they were in the pre-revolutionary era. Particular individuals are well known and pointed to with pride as evidence of revolutionary non-discrimination."

Arguelles and Rich reported finding "a flourishing homosexual social scene centered around private parties and particular homes." They described this social networking at parties and beaches as "a feature of Havana life in general."

Arguelles and Rich added, "While their sexuality may be an open secret inside Cuba, many lesbians and gay males who participate in cultural and academic exchanges with the United States become more guarded when abroad, fearful of how homosexual issues are utilized in the war against the Cuban revolution."

"But many still take the opportunity to visit lesbian and gay bars and bath houses in New York or San Francisco," Arguelles and Rich pointed out in the mid-1980s. "Ironically, their own adjustment to a greater social integration in Cuba causes them increasingly to feel out of place in these sites, viewing their sexual consumerism as bizarre."

Jorge, a Cuban artist, concluded that "there is more true sexuality for gays in Cuba." (Arguelles and Rich)

Arguelles and Rich returned to the island after their research had been published in Spanish in the Mexican newspaper La Jornada. The response they got from lesbian and gay Cubans was that "Overwhelmingly, they felt that progress was more marked than we suggested and that conditions of daily life had significantly improved during this decade."

A gay Cuban named Roberto who said he had left from Mariel "for the adventure"

went back to Cuba to visit. Roberto's subsequent experiences in the U.S. drew him to the Antonio Maceo Brigade—pro-revolutionary Cubans in Miami and New Jersey. (Jon Hillson, "The Sexual Politics of Reinaldo Arenas")

When Roberto returned to the island, he visited the factory in which he used to work. His co-workers had known he was homosexual. As Roberto got up to speak to an assembly of 700 of his former factory co-workers, they all rose to give him a standing ovation.

Lift the blockade!

Cubans who are homosexual, transgender and transsexual did not need imperialism to "liberate" them from their own people, their own revolution. They needed and deserved support from the revolutionary and progressive movements in the U.S.—the citadel of anti-Cuban finance capital—and around the world to help defeat imperialism.

Cubans of all sexualities, genders and sexes were suffering, and are still suffering, under the economic warfare of the U.S. blockade.

In addition, the blockade impacted on sexual and gender expression on the island. For example, it put enormous strain on housing, which in turn determines literally how much room and privacy people have to explore their sexual curiosity and desire.

The constant state of military alert demanded a mass mobilization of Cuban women, as well as men, in a collective effort for national defense. Revolutionary military preparedness values courage and strength, dignity and discipline. For half a millennium, colonialism and imperialism had extolled these virtues as birth traits of masculine males.

Colonial ideology, backed up by the ruling church and state, enforced masculine gender expression in males. The Spanish military and church brought anti-homosexual epithets that seared like branding irons, as its state cruelly punished same-sex love and gender variance.

The most common slur hurled at male homosexuals, which has endured from the medieval Inquisition in Europe, translates into English as "stick of wood." It refers to the feudal European punishment of burning alive at the stake males who had sex with other males, or those deemed inappropriately gendered. Colonialism brought the fire of the Inquisition with its armadas. In the mid-1600s, for example, the Spanish captain general who ruled over the rural and urban enslaved population of Cuba sentenced 20 "effeminate sodomites" to be burned alive.

The anti-gay epithet—hurled at those not considered "manly" enough—has another meaning: coward. It's an accusation that those who fled Cuba in the Mariel boatlift faced.

All women, together with the overlapping populations of those battling oppression based on their sexuality, gender expression and sex, have a common interest in debunking the gender prejudice that femininity is innately "cowardly" or "weak," as well as confronting prejudice against same-sex love.

Cuban community defense and military ranks, however, were organizing and mobilizing the entire population as a popular army to defend the collective gains of the Cuban Revolution, not inculcating the kind of Rambo-masculinity indoctrination that the Pentagon drills into its ranks of the foot soldiers of an imperialist empire. Cuba's foreign policy, by contrast, was the export of revolutionary solidarity.

Next: Sex education created basis for scientific approach to AIDS.

E-mail: lfeinberg@workers.org



May Day 2007, New York City.

WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Become a Workers World supporter

Workers World is able to publish anti-war, anti-racist news because we are truly independent. You can't get anything like it in any of the big business controlled media. We have no corporate backers or advertisers. We rely completely on your donations.

Become a member of the Workers World Supporter Program and help build the newspaper year round. Sponsors who contribute \$100 a year or more receive a year's subscription to the print edition of the newspaper, a monthly letter, five free trial subscriptions to the print edition, and a book from WW Publishers.

Send a check or money order using the form below. To contribute using a credit card, use our secure online Web site at www.workers.org

Choose a Supporter Program option: ☐ \$75 Enclosed to become a WW Supporter. ☐ \$100 Enclosed to become a WW Sponsor. ☐ \$300 Enclosed to become a WW Sustainer. ☐ One time donation of \$ _____.

Clip & return to Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10011 212.627.2994 fax: 212.675.7869 www.workers.org email: ww@workers.org

Shakeup at World Bank?

The real reason Wolfowitz is under fire

By Bob Dobrow

From the bloody ground battles in Iraq to the lush board rooms of the World Bank, U.S. imperialism’s “New American Century” is in trouble these days.

Former deputy Pentagon chief and now World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz, prince of the neocons and architect of the Iraq invasion, is knee-deep in scandal. The man who began his tenure two years ago as head of the world’s largest so-called public financial institution with calls to battle “global corruption” stands charged with peddling favors to a woman friend at the bank.

Let’s not waste any ink on this tenth-rate issue. We’ll leave it to the right-wing enablers in the mass media who have turned objective political commentary into scandal-ridden drivel to spin the Wolfowitz story as a titillating tale of sex, lies and payola.

The real story is how the Bush administration has tried to shape the World Bank into a tool of its war agenda, and the limits of its ability to force the rest of the world to bend to its will.

When Wolfowitz was appointed by George W. Bush two years ago to head the World Bank, the European business journal *The Economist*, staunchly right-wing and conservative, editorialized that, “His appointment tells the world that Mr. Bush wants to capture the World Bank and make it an arm of American foreign policy.”

It should be added, however, that *The Economist* has no problem with the World Bank as an arm of European imperialist foreign policy.

Aid as a political weapon

Wolfowitz, next to Bush, has been one of the most visible and hated figures around the world for his role in Iraq, for the lies that justified the invasion, for the torture policies of the occupation, for the arrogance and the ruthless conduct of the war.

And now as head of the World Bank, Wolfowitz has imposed a brazen pro-U.S. agenda there as well. A feature story in the April 9 *New Yorker* magazine by John Cassidy titled “The Next Crusade” cites numerous instances to support this view.

For instance, in July 2005, the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan ordered the U.S. to remove its troops and aircraft from an Uzbek base it had been using to support the war against Afghanistan. Two months later, Wolfowitz cut off an aid package to the country which was mostly going to rural water and health projects. No cutoff of monies was suggested for neighboring Tajikistan, a brutally repressive but pro-U.S. regime that gets millions in World Bank loans.

Wolfowitz has selectively used the “corruption” charge to deny loans to countries that try to exert a measure of independence from U.S. influence, like Congo-Brazzaville and Chad, poor African nations with rich natural resources. Both countries were denied development aid in the past year by the World Bank.

With Iraq, however, Wolfowitz has been most active in placing the World Bank at the service of the Pentagon.

First Wolfowitz made a series of top-level appointments at the bank to political cronies of right-wing governments that had been some of the strongest backers of U.S. policy in Iraq, such as El Salvador, Spain and Jordan. “He used his tenure in part to reward those governments and individuals who were particularly helpful to the U.S. in the Iraq war,” says Steven Clemmens of the New America Foundation.

World Bank and Big Oil

Then, last fall, Wolfowitz set up a permanent World Bank office in Baghdad. According to the Bank Information Center, a liberal nongovernmental organization that monitors the bank’s policies: “The institution is advising the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the development of the oil sector strategy. More broadly, the Bank is advising Iraq on attracting foreign direct investment through quickly developing investor friendly laws and also advising on reforming [privatizing—BD] state-owned enterprises. In addition, the Bank is participating in meetings with the IMF, Iraq Minister of Finance, and the International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC) on Iraq’s oil sector. The ITIC is a business lobby group comprised of BP, Chevron, Eni, ExxonMobil, Shell and Total.”

“Wolfowitz’s apparent determination to use the World Bank to further questionable American military goals in the Middle East is a ... violation of its founding Articles of Agreement, and a reckless waste of donor resources,” said Bea Edwards, International Program Director of the Government Accountability Project, a nonprofit public interest group and whistleblower protection organization.

“In fact, the Bank is prohibited from operating in a conflict like this,” added Edwards. “In the simplest financial terms, there is no functioning banking

system, the government does not control its territory.”

The World Bank and the IMF are leaning on the Iraqi Parliament to establish a Federal Oil and Gas Council, staffed by Big Oil executives. “The new law would grant the council virtually all power to develop policies and plans for undeveloped oil fields and to review and change all exploration and production contracts,” Juan Gonzalez reported in the *Daily News* on Feb. 21. The Iraqi National Oil Co. would be defenseless against these foreign companies.

“Since most of Iraq’s 73 proven petroleum fields have yet to be developed, the new council would instantly become a world energy powerhouse,” Gonzalez wrote. Contracts with international companies will likely be similar to controversial production-sharing agreements, which sign away the lion’s share of oil profits to foreign investors.

The World Bank was formed in 1945 with the specific intent of projecting U.S. power in the post-war era. The bank’s president is always from the U.S., the bank’s headquarters are in Washington, and the U.S. has a permanent veto. It is under fire in many countries around the world for the severe austerity measures that it forces upon developing nations, including demands for privatizing industries and looting national resources and native industries for the sake of foreign capital.

But the World Bank in the past has also been a coalition effort by U.S., European and Japanese capital, with significant bank funds provided by non-U.S. sources.

Today, however, the Bush administration and its big business masters are not interested in coalitions. They demand total control. This is nowhere better revealed than in the infamous document co-authored by Wolfowitz himself seven years ago titled “Rebuilding American’s Defenses.” This manifesto of the so-called Project for the New American Century has been called the “Mein Kampf” of the neocon movement. It projects a world of U.S. global domination, calling for massive increases in military spending, for covering the planet with Pentagon bases, for a near-permanent state of military readiness, and for regime change wherever U.S. capitalism’s political and economic interests are threatened.

But this reactionary utopia is collapsing on the ground in Iraq, where popular resistance to U.S. aggression continues to grow. And while we would much rather see Wolfowitz brought up on charges of war crimes than on a two-bit misdemeanor or for influence peddling, the fact is that his woes at the World Bank are yet another sign that the Bush administration is on the defensive and unable to impose its will on an unwilling world. □

Why U.S. is targeting Iran

Continued from page 9

lem faced by U.S. corporate power on a global scale:

“What is it that leaders like Iran’s Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hezbollah’s Hassan Nasrallah and Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez have in common that vastly increases their local appeal? A foreign policy built around anti-Americanism is, of course, a core component. But what has allowed them to win elections and build support in their societies is less their foreign-policy stances than their ability to promise, and to a certain extent deliver on, social policy—things like education, health and other social services, particularly for the poor....

“The U.S. and the political groups that it tends to support around the world, by contrast, have relatively little to offer in this regard.”

Past and new threats

Iran’s program for nuclear power was actually initiated by the U.S. when the Shah held dictatorial power. Nuclear energy is an important part of modern industrial development. It is important in science, medicine and research. Only after the overthrow of the Shah was Iran’s continued development of the same program branded a threat by Washington.

The U.S. government has made every effort to sabotage all Iranian infrastructure and industrial development, not only nuclear energy. Modern technology—from elevators to cars, ships, jet aircraft and oil refineries—needs constant upkeep. Parts for the re-supply and maintenance of equipment the Iranians had purchased over decades from U.S. corporations were halted.

The most onerous sanctions were imposed in 1995 during the Clinton administration.

The Iranian people, despite many different political currents, are united in their determination not to lose their national sovereignty again. Washington’s past use of sanctions, economic sabotage, political destabilization and regime change is well remembered in Iran today.

Sanctions, the freezing of assets and an embargo on the export of Iranian oil

and all trade with Iran were first imposed in March 1951, after Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Iran was the first country in the Middle East to take the bold step of reclaiming its national wealth in the post-colonial era.

In 1953 using internal destabilization and massive external pressure, the CIA orchestrated the overthrow of Mossadegh’s popularly elected government and placed the Shah on the Peacock Throne. Oil was back under the control of the U.S. and Britain, and 26 years of brutal repression followed.

Ever since the 1979 revolution and the decisive overthrow of the U.S.-supported military dictatorship, Iran has had not a moment of peace from the Pentagon or Wall Street.

As Iran continues to grow and develop, U.S. imperialism is becoming increasingly desperate to reverse this revolutionary process, whether through sanctions, sabotage or bombing. But today it faces a population that is stronger, more conscious and more skilled. On a world scale U.S. imperialism is more isolated. Its hated occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has left it overextended.

But the Pentagon is still capable of massive destruction. Its bases surround Iran and it has sent an armada of ships to the Gulf. U.S. government threats against Iran today must be taken as seriously as their devastating occupation of Iraq.

The forces opposing Washington’s policy of endless war—whether waged through sanctions, coups, invasions, bombings or sabotage—should stand with Iran, recognize its accomplishments, defend its gains and oppose imperialism’s efforts to re-colonize the country.

Sources of information about Iran’s social development include: “Iran’s Family Planning Program: Responding to a Nation’s Needs,” by Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., June 2002; “Tehran University Official Describes Iran Health Care System to Harvard School of Public Health,” HSPH NOW, Jan. 24, 2003; World Bank.org—Iran—Country Brief; UNICEF—Info by Country; Food & Agriculture Organization of UN—Nutrition—Country Profiles; “Biggest Pharmaceutical Plant to Open Soon,” Iran Daily, Feb. 4.

MUNDO OBRERO

La lucha unida en Smithfield Packing

Continúa de página 12

TLCNA que impulsa al movimiento de trabajador@s latin@s a cruzar las fronteras nacionales para encontrar trabajo y dar de comer a sus familias.

Ejemplos de solidaridad y respeto recíprocos también incluyen la inclusión de FLOC en el Concilio Laboral de Wilson/Down East, el apoyo y la asistencia a las manifestaciones del sindicato FLOC por miembros del Concilio Laboral, y los hon-

ores dado a Dr. King por trabajador@s latin@s que se negaron a asistir al trabajo el 15 de enero.

Shafeah M’Bali es co-redactora de La Justicia Habla (Justice Speaks), la publicación de los Black Workers for Justice (Trabajador@s Negr@s por la Justicia), basado en Raleigh. Peter Gilbert es un líder de Raleigh FIST — Luchar contra el Imperialismo, Unámonos — y era un organizador sindical en Smithfield.

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

La lucha unida en Smithfield Packing

Unidad de latin@s y afroamerican@s, el medio ambiente y los derechos de l@s obrer@s

Por Shafeah M'Bali y Peter Gilbert

La planta empacadora Smithfield es un brillante ejemplo de cómo el capitalismo crea todo tipo de víctimas de la opresión, pero quienes una vez ven todo en una perspectiva más amplia, pueden forzar al débil punto estratégico del sistema y abrir un camino para que much@s otr@s puedan lograr victorias.

La lucha contra Smithfield ha dado vida a tres diferentes movimientos: uno exigiendo el derecho de l@s trabajador@s a organizarse en sindicatos y negociar colectivamente con la compañía, otro es la lucha de resistencia al envenenamiento ambiental y un tercero compuesto por l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes y sus aliad@s que luchan contra la represión basada en su estatus nacional.

La compañía Smithfield Packing es la segunda en tamaño en la industria de empacamiento de carne en los Estados Unidos y tiene la planta procesadora de carne de cerdo más grande del mundo en la ciudad de Tar Heel en Carolina del Norte. L@s trabajador@s de Smithfield, primordialmente latin@s y africanoamerican@s, cortan y empacan 176.000 cerdos por semana bajo arduas condiciones de salud y seguridad. Est@s trabajador@s han estado luchando por establecer un sindicato por 14 años.

La compañía ha incrementado su nivel de crueldad para rechazar los esfuerzos de l@s trabajador@s. Ha tratado de enfrentar a l@s trabajador@s mexican@s contra l@s africano-american@s, a las mujeres contra los hombres y a l@s jóvenes contra l@s más viej@s. Ha intentado intimidar a l@s trabajador@s latin@s con amenazas de dejar que el gobierno les deporté.

Suciedad, peligro y discriminación

Aunque fuera de Carolina del Norte sus fuerza trabajadora está sindicalizada, en este estado sureño Smithfield ha luchado vigorosamente para prevenir que sus emplead@s formen un sindicato. Las elecciones que se dieron en 1994 y en 1997 para sindicalizarse, se perdieron inicialmente. Pero un juez de la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales (JNRL), dictó una decisión que revocaba los resultados. La decisión acusó a Smithfield con múltiples violaciones de las leyes laborales federales, violaciones que destruyeron las condiciones para la celebración de unas elecciones libres y justas.

Desde la apertura de la planta, l@s trabajador@s han estado luchando por el derecho a organizarse y a negociar colectivamente enfrentando criminales y algunas veces violentas represiones por la compañía que a veces ha tenido la ayuda del estado.

Además de las dificultades al organizar un sindicato en el sur, especialmente con una fuerza laboral multinacional, l@s trabajadores se han enfrentado a espías, deportaciones y las amenazas de cierre de la planta, arrestos falsos, ataques de la policía e insultos racistas.

En el año 2006, después de haberse encontrado culpable de una larga lista de

políticas ilegales contra los sindicatos en previas elecciones, Smithfield ahora está pidiendo nuevas elecciones. Habiendo experimentado amenazas, despidos ilegales y ataques físicos en elecciones anteriores, l@s trabajador@s ahora están exigiendo el reconocimiento inmediato del sindicato.

Como dijo Ronnie Simmons, un trabajador: “Si la compañía tiene otras elecciones, de nuevo tratará de intimidarnos y violar nuestros derechos y tendremos que esperar otros diez años para que el caso se resuelva en las cortes. Necesitamos ayuda ahora y necesitamos que nuestras voces se escuchen y sean respetadas ahora. Hemos estado luchando por demasiado tiempo. Nuestr@s trabajador@s quieren un sindicato ahora. Ya ha pasado demasiado tiempo.”

El Acta de Libre Opción para los Empleados, que el senado discutirá la próxima semana, permitiría a la fuerza laboral organizar un sindicato sin verse sujeta a elecciones antidemocráticas, como en Smithfield donde l@s trabajador@s son objeto de ataques y hostigamiento por la gerencia. Algunos senadores han amenazado con prolongar las discusiones para prevenir el voto y Bush ha prometido vetarlo.

Para forzar a que la compañía reconozca al sindicato, l@s trabajador@s están forjando un movimiento más permanente en vez de seguir las estrategias sindicales más tradicionales. Simultáneamente están aplicando presión política y de la comunidad en la compañía, mientras están luchando para obtener avances asequibles dentro de la planta.

El 15 de enero, cuando l@s trabajador@s rehusaron presentarse en sus puestos para honrar la memoria del Dr. Martin Luther King y a la vez demandar el día como feriado, la producción disminuyó en 9000 cerdos. El noviembre pasado, como respuesta al despido de trabajador@s inmigrantes, cientos de trabajador@s cesaron por dos días, y ganaron concesiones de la compañía incluyendo el reempleo de l@s obrer@s despedid@s.

Luchando contra el racismo ambiental

Esta enorme fábrica de Smithfield tiene un gran impacto en la calidad del aire y del agua de la parte este de Carolina del Norte. Y aunque Smithfield sigue intentando intimidar por su tamaño, el movimiento en pro de la justicia ambiental del estado de Carolina del Norte está resistiendo fuertemente. La planta succiona 2 millones de galones de agua a diario del acuífero y devuelve alrededor de 3 millones de agua residual en el Río Cape Fear. Actualmente está presionando al estado para que le permita usar más agua.

Lisa Sorg escribió, “En los años 90, el Departamento del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de Carolina del Norte (DENR por las siglas en inglés) multó a Smithfield, basada en Virginia, con \$60.000 por violaciones ambientales, incluso altos niveles de bacteria fecal coliforme y cloruros en los desperdicios; en 2002, el DENR multó

a la compañía por una suma de más de \$10.000 por haber comprado cerdos en fincas prohibidas.

“Sin embargo, a la misma vez que Smithfield ha comenzado a mejorar en este aspecto, está pidiendo al DENR que elimine protecciones ambientales esenciales del permiso para los desperdicios de agua en su fábrica en Tar Heel que está por renovar. En el matadero de cerdos más grande del mundo, Smithfield quiere que el DENR levante los límites contra el retiro de agua del acuífero, elimine requisitos para el sistema de manejo ambiental (controles internos que monitorean el funcionamiento ambiental) y revoque la prohibición contra la compra de cerdos de fincas establecidas después del 1 de diciembre de 2002, que todavía utilicen lagunas de aguas residuales”. (Weekly Independent)

Los contratos de Smithfield controlan un 90 por ciento de las instalaciones de la producción industrial de cerdos, noventa por ciento de las cuales están ubicadas en la parte este de Carolina del Norte, una región que virtualmente es el área más subdesarrollada del estado con los porcentajes más altos de población de gente negra.

Los puercos producen cuatro veces más desperdicios que los seres humanos. Con 10 millones de puercos, y un alcantarillado construido sólo de huecos en la tierra forrados de barro (conocidos eufemísticamente como lagunas), la pestilencia en el aire y en el agua se ha vuelto en una cuestión de mayor importancia contra la cual está luchando el movimiento por la justicia ambiental en Carolina del Norte.

Ese movimiento, basado principalmente en la comunidad africana-americana, ha estado trabajando con legisladores del estado para producir una propuesta de ley que prohíba todas las lagunas y campos de rociar; establecer un fondo de \$50 millones para ayudar a los agricultores a obtener tecnología limpia para poder reemplazar el antiguo sistema de lagunas y campos de rociar; crear un fondo de \$10 millones para ayudar a las comunidades que han sido afectadas por la industria para que reparen sus pozos; y elegir una comisión de justicia ambiental que incluyera a miembros de la comunidad para monitorear los problemas relativos a los puercos.

La representante Carolyn Justice del Condado Pender se ha reunido con el movimiento de justicia ambiental, activistas tradicionales para el ambiente, y los agricultores, para escribir esta ley, H1115. De todas las legislaciones presentadas hasta la fecha sobre esta cuestión, es la más abarcadora en la consideración que da a esta comunidad. Esta es la primera vez en 10 años que el movimiento para justicia ambiental, los grupos ambientalistas tradicionales y los agricultores han hablado en unísono.

Afroamerica@s y latin@s: debemos estar juntos

Smithfield ha colaborado con la agencia estadounidense de inmigración cono-

cido como ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement) desde junio a través del programa IMAGE donde, según el sindicato, “la compañía le dio los nombres de l@s organizador@s como una táctica para intimidar a algun@s trabajador@s y despedir a otr@s.” (Washington Post, 29 enero, 2007)

El 24 de enero, ICE detuvo y deportó a 21 trabajador@s incluyendo activistas del sindicato y líderes del paro de trabajo que tuvo lugar en noviembre del año pasado encabezado por trabajador@s latin@s. Much@s otr@s trabajador@s han sido obligado@s a dejar su trabajo por miedo a ser deportad@s.

Smithfield ha usado la amenaza de deportación para dividir a l@s trabajador@s e impedir al éxito del sindicato, pero la lucha para los derechos de l@s inmigrantes ha unido y empoderado a l@s trabajador@s de Smithfield. El Primero de Mayo del año pasado, 5.000 trabajador@s, much@s de ell@s de Smithfield, se manifestaron en Lumberton, NC, un pueblo cercano. Este año l@s trabajador@s planean marchar de nuevo. (<http://www.maydaymovement.blogspot.com>)

Después de que Smithfield despidió a decenas de trabajador@s por alegados problemas con sus números de seguro social, unos mil trabajador@s cesaron de trabajar por dos días en una muestra de fuerza y solidaridad.

A pesar de los ataques repetidos por la compañía en conjunto con ICE, l@s trabajador@s en Smithfield siguen mostrando su fuerza. Cada viernes, cientos de trabajador@s — much@s de ell@s latin@s — llevan sus camisetas amarillas del sindicato para mostrar su solidaridad un@s con otr@s y su compromiso con la lucha por la justicia.

En el pasado, la compañía ha podido debilitar las esfuerzos de l@s trabajador@s a organizarse en sindicato al oponer a trabajador@s afro-american@s y latin@s unos contra otros. Ha diseminado mentiras, rumores, y estereotipos a cada grupo para fomentar el odio entre los grupos. En el pasado, la compañía convocaba reuniones separadas para l@s trabajador@s latin@s y negr@s e un intento de dividirl@s y había segregado la planta según el tipo de trabajo.

En el pasado, grupos como el Comité para Organizar los Trabajador@s Agrícolas (FLOC) y l@s Trabajador@s Negr@s por Justicia han auspiciado programas educativos juntos para permitir que trabajador@s afro-american@s y latin@s de varios lugares de trabajo aprendan sobre sus comunidades, historias y luchas.

En Juneteenth, una celebración de la comunidad afro-americana para conmemorar el fin de la esclavitud en los Estados Unidos, l@s trabajador@s latin@s aprendieron sobre la herencia de la esclavitud, la segregación y las leyes que la sostuvieron, y cuestiones actuales en la comunidad negra.

En la misma ocasión, trabajador@s afro-american@s aprendieron sobre los efectos nocivos económicos y políticos del

Continúa a pagina 11