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VOL. 48, NO. 15

#### MUNDO OBRERO

Inmigrantes siguen marchando

Ceremonia para derechista perturbada 12

12



### Can you own your job? 4

#### CYNTHIA MCKINNEY

Target of racism 10

#### STOP WAR ON IRAN

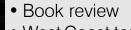
**EDITORIAL 10** 

3

### HOW'S BUSH DOIN'?

Shaky, still swaggering

### DRAG KING DREAMS



West Coast tour 8

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WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994

# Immigrants come out 2,000,000 strong

Say: 'We are workers, not criminals'

By Betsey Piette and LeiLani Dowell

Like a giant tidal wave sweeping across the country, documented and undocumented immigrants and their supporters turned out over 2 million strong in rallies in more than 140 cities on April 10, called a National Day of Action on Immigrant Rights. Their impact was felt on the streets and in the workplaces.

The main demands were for legalization of the 11-12 million undocumented workers living in the United States, a path to citizenship, protection of workers' rights and the ability to bring families together. The demonstrators shouted, "No turning back!" This new massive movement now plans a boycott and strike action for May 1.

The depth of this historic movement was especially evident in the number of rallies in places with no previous demonstrations and that most took place on a work day.

Speakers at the many rallies included more trade unionists and Black community leaders than previously, along with elected politicians, religious leaders and representatives of the undocumented workers themselves.

An April 11 Wall Street Journal article noted the protests' impact on the economy: "Meatpacking, construction and retail—especially in the South and Midwest—were among industries

affected by absenteeism as workers attended protests.... The demonstrations, and their effect on businesses, could foreshadow what may be a bigger national boycott planned for May 1."

Major demonstrations were also held on April 9 in several cities. As many as half-a-million people marched that day in the largest civil rights demonstration in **Dallas** history. "This is the first real social movement,

Boston, April 10. Immigrants carry signs honoring Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

bottom-up, grass-roots movement of the 21st century," said Jose Angel Gutierrez, a longtime Latino activist. "Mexicans and other Latino immigrants are outing themselves and saying, 'You're not inviting me to the table, so I'm taking to the streets."

Like many others who participated in Sunday's march, Gutierrez said he would not be going to work on Monday.

Another 30,000 marched in nearby **Fort Worth**. In Dallas and in North Carolina, immigrant groups called for an economic boycott the next day to show their financial impact.

In **Houston** on April 10, groups of workers still wearing their uniforms simply left work at noon to participate in a march of 10,000. A group of Halliburton workers marched alongside workers from a bottled-water company. Behind them was the Pakistan American Council of Texas. There were flags from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and Palestine, along with the U.S. flag, and banners and t-shirts quoting Emiliano Zapata, a leader of the 1910 Mexican Revolution: "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees."

"San Diego has never seen anything like this," said Workers World organizer Bob McCubbin. The rally there consisted of families, youth, students, workers' organizations, community

Continued on page 6



#### New Orleans march for justice

Thousands march on April 1 across the Crescent Connection, the bridge where African Americans trying to escape Hurricane Katrina were forced back by gun-wielding racist police. 5



PHOTO: DELORES THOMAS

### **Protest hits** Texas death row

By Gloria Rubac Livingston, Texas

A spirited protest against illegal and inhumane living conditions on death row April 8 drew a favorable response from passing cars as well as shoppers in the rural east Texas town of Livingston. Activists from Houston and Austin met in downtown Livingston for a demonstration support of prisoners' rights, the first ever at the Polk County Courthouse.



PHOTO: ART BROWNING Angie Agapetus, Gloria Rubac and Njeri Shakur in Lewiston, Texas.

> prison. People carried balloons and colorful signs encouraging motorists to honk. Many did honk their horns and

"Tropic Blue," a world beat band from Houston, pro-

vided live political music and the demonstration created

a lively and spirited sight across from the super max

prison housing over 2,000 men, 400 of them awaiting

execution. As families entered and left the prison for vis-

Speakers from the Campaign to End the Death Penalty

and the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement took

the microphone between songs to agitate and educate the

crowd and the families in passing cars. They saluted the

men on the row with the D.R.I.V.E. Movement who are

protesting inside the prison by refusing to move from

their cells for showers or visits, thereby causing guards

to have to summon higher officials. Then these men enu-

In a closing ceremony, protesters released six bright

purple helium-filled balloons, calling out for each one.

The first balloon was for the total abolition of the death

penalty. The second was for those men with the

The third was for Harvey "Tee" Earvin, a founder of the

P.U.R.E. organization on death row, Panthers United for

Revolutionary Education, whose birthday was that day.

The next balloon was for abolitionist Njeri Shakur, who

has fought against the death penalty for over a decade and

was also celebrating her birthday. The fifth balloon was

for all the activists from Houston and Austin who had

given up their Saturday to stand in solidarity with the

The last balloon was released for all the families who

joined in the protest and those who support their loved

ones living on the most active death row in the country.

Families of Louis Perez, Joseph Nichols-Bey, and Ramon

Hernandez and a friend of prisoner Sam Bustamante

attended the protest and then went into the prison to visit.

Also participating in the demonstration were members

The prison board can change death row conditions if

they so choose. But for the last five years the board has

chosen to allow these men to be tortured and develop

serious mental illnesses. The April 8 demonstrators

vowed to have another protest outside death row in the

fall and to also protest at the July meeting of the Texas

merate their grievances and ask for a change.

D.R.I.V.E. (See www.drivemovement.org)

brothers on death row.

itation, they honked, smiled and shouted approval.

some even stopped to speak with protesters.

Carrying signs that read, "Honk to stop prison torture!" and "Isolation is cruel and unusual punishment!" the demonstrators were pleasantly surprised when passersby honked and shouted in support. "East Texas is Klan country. I never expected so many people supporting us in a town where many are employed by the prison system," said Njeri Shakur of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston.

Local residents have told activists that the only group remembered for demonstrating in the town square is the Ku Klux Klan, which holds recruiting rallies wearing their hoods and robes.

Buoyed by the positive response, the activists then went to the office of the Polk County Enterprise, the local newspaper. When the publisher, Alvin Holley, was asked if the newspaper could give some coverage to the torture going on in the prison, he responded, "They deserve it!"

"We told him that people in his city supported the idea of stopping the torture, but he told us he didn't give a damn," Casey Davis told Workers World. He then said he would have the whole group arrested if they didn't leave immediately. Green Party activist Art Browning asked the editor, "You support torture and do you go to church on Sunday?" Again the response was a threat of arrest.

The demonstrators then drove in a car caravan for the four miles from the town to the prison. The 400 men on death row are housed at the Polunsky Unit outside of Livingston, 80 miles north of Houston. They were moved here in 2000, after an attempted prison escape by six prisoners at the Ellis Unit in Huntsville, where death row had been housed for decades. One man, Martin Gurule, did escape, but his body was found a few days later in a river. The other five never made it over the fences.

#### **Families join protest**

Joined by several families of people on death row, the protest began directly across the highway from the

#### **MUMIA SPEAKS**

An interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution and solidarity. Additional essays on the prison-industrial complex by Monica

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#### This week ...



#### **★**In the U.S.

X = 11
$Immigrants\ come\ out\ 2\ million\ strong.\dots\dots 1$
Protest hits Texas death row 2
The ruling-class crisis deepens
Hundreds demand Bush's impeachment $\ldots 3$
Why can't workers own their jobs? 4
Denver transit strikers win up-front raises 4
Marchers demand justice for Katrina evacuees 5 $$
New Orleans organizer: 'Freedom Summer 2006' $\ldots$ 5
Workers demand back pay
West Coast tour is lavender and red 8 $$
Feinberg melds personal and political post-9/118
The persecution of Cynthia McKinney 10
★Around the world
Mass uprising shakes Nepal's royal regime 9
Warsaw police shut gay club $\ldots \ldots 9$
Big victory for workers, students in France $\ldots$ 11
★ Editorials
Stop war on Iran!
Who wants civil war in Iraq?
★ Noticias En Español
L@s inmigrantes siguen marchando

#### **WW CALENDAR**

Jóvenes perturban ceremonia para derechista cubano . 12

#### DETROIT

#### Sat., April 22

Workers World Party public meet ing: Defending abortion rights. Hear a Marxist analysis of the rightwing efforts to overturn Roe v Wade and what can be done about it. With guest speakers on 'The origins of women's oppression" and on "How Cuba guarantees reproductive rights." Dinner served. 5:00 p.m. At5920 Second Ave. For info (313) 831-0750.

#### LOS ANGELES

#### Sat., April 15

`Finding Each Other on the Road to Freedom.' Minnie Bruce Pratt on Walking to New Orleans and reading from her book, Walking Back Up Depot Street. 4 p.m. At 5274 W Pico Blvd #203, L.A. For info (323) 936-7266.

Stop War on Iran Before it Starts: Hear Ardeshir Ommani, just returned from Iran, and Sara Flounders, initiater of the Stop War on Iran Campaign. 4 p.m. At 5274 W Pico Blvd #203, L.A. For info (323) 936-7266.

#### **NEW YORK**

#### Fri, April 14

Workers World Party meeting. Hear Ardeshir Omanni, just returned from Iran, on the latest U.S. war threats. Also discussion on the immigrant rights struggle. 7 p.m. At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-

#### **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. 48, No. 15 • April 20, 2006 Closing date: April 12, 2006

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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, New York, N.Y. 10011.





### The ruling class crisis deepens

By Deirdre Griswold

The signs of political and economic crisis for U.S. imperialism keep multiplying.

The Bush administration is under siege, its ratings having tanked. Former members of the government like I. Lewis Libby, once Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, are turning against it to save their own necks.

Tom DeLay (R-Texas), until recently the powerful majority leader in the House, has announced he will be resigning from his congressional seat. One of his closest allies, Jack Abramoff, was recently sentenced to six years in prison for large-scale corruption. DeLay, whose corporate connections bought him 11 terms in Congress, knows where a lot of the administration's bodies are buried.

The administration's troubles are of course directly linked to the military occupation of Iraq and Washington's attempts to cobble together a government there that will be subservient to U.S. economic and geopolitical interests.

Despite all the deaths and destruction inflicted by the Pentagon, the expansionist Rumsfeld Doctrine of military victory through the application of expensive hightech weaponry hasn't worked. Not only is the Iraqi resistance as active and determined as ever to get the U.S. and British out, but the political fallout from this bloody debacle is eating away at the Bush administration.

Even though to this day the Democratic Party leadership won't take a clear antiwar stand—its major standard-bearers even want to expand the number of boots on the ground in the Middle East!—Bush's dismal showing in the polls and the prospect of the war escalating to Iran have multiplied his critics and broken the wall of silence in his own party.

There are few in the capitalist political establishment who want to oppose the war directly. None, certainly, who will call it what it is: an attempt to control the richest oil area in the world for the benefit especially of those corporations and banks whose lifeblood has been oil profits—and who are closely connected to the present ruling group in Washington.

The critics mostly focus on the process by which George W. Bush and his neo-con clique took the U.S. to war and got other imperialists and a few dependent countries—the much-touted "coalition of the willing"—to sign on to it. They appear surprised that the administration engaged in lying and other skullduggery, even though the history of imperialist interventions is replete with such deception.

What was the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution, by which Congress gave the Johnson administration a blank check to fund the deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops to Vietnam, but a blatant pretext for war? It was based on a supposed "attack" by a courageous Vietnamese PT boat that was sunk approaching huge U.S. warships after they violated North Vietnam's territorial waters. Maybe the public at large was bamboozled for a time by the media outcry, but the cynical leaders of Congress certainly knew better. As the saying goes, truth is the first casualty in wartime.

Eventually, with the publication of the Pentagon Papers, the details came out—but not until after the Vietnamese resistance had stalled the U.S. offensive and there was a militant, mass anti-war movement here at home and within the U.S. armed forces themselves.

This time the focus of criticism is on retaliation by Bush and Vice President Cheney against high-level government professionals—CIA agent Valerie Plame and her husband, former ambassador Joseph C. Wilson—who refused to endorse false administration claims that Iraq had bought aluminum tubes needed for a nuclear arsenal.

The latest news is that "Scooter" Libby, the who has been cooperating with the investigation headed by special prosecutor Patrick J. Fitzgerald, has named Bush and Cheney as the high officials who personally authorized the leak of classified information to the press that "outed" Plame, an undercover agent.

#### A Specter enters the arena

The most recent Republican to call on the White House for an explanation of all this is Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, who has remained silent until now. Specter is no liberal. He gave his powerful support to the war and the Patriot Act.

He first became nationally known when he was chief counsel to the Warren Commission. In this sensitive position—one that required his total loyalty to the overriding interests and political stability of the U.S. ruling class—he helped concoct the "single bullet theory" that denied any conspiracy in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, despite all the evidence to the contrary. The commission especially repressed evidence that power-

ful right-wingers in and out of the government had the motive and the access to direct the killings of Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald.

Specter also harshly grilled Anita Hill on the witness stand when the African-American law professor bravely stood up and opposed the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, alleging consistent sexual harassment.

Specter's intervention in "Leakgate," therefore, implies a new level of disaffection with the Bush grouping by ruling-class forces who feel its handling of foreign policy has contributed to the decline of U.S. power over the rest of the world, when it was supposed to do just the opposite.

#### Iran and the nuclear threat

The administration had used the phony nuclear weapons story, even though its own intelligence agents rejected it, in making its case to the UN and the world that Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" justified an invasion.

At first the invasion appeared successful. The initial "shock and awe" bombing of Baghdad quickly overcame Iraq's defenses, so that six weeks later Bush could boastfully proclaim, "Mission Accomplished." But it soon became obvious that the Iraqi people would not bow down to foreign domination—not half a century after they had fought for and won their independence.

Now, the administration is once again trying to use the same scare tactics to arouse public opinion against Iran, which is openly developing facilities for peaceful nuclear energy. This time, authoritative voices of the ruling class like the New York Times are voicing apprehension over where the administration is going with its campaign. While the Bush administration is making light of them, an April 11 Times editorial takes seriously the allegations of investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, who wrote in the issue of the New Yorker magazine dated April 17 that the Pentagon is working on plans to attack Iran, possibly with nuclear weapons.

The nuclear threat has been part of the U.S. arsenal ever since the bomb was dropped on Japan in 1945, and this threat was used countless times against the USSR, Vietnam, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and even Cuba. The fear of the ruling class, however, is that it will boomerang today and put U.S. imperialism in an even worse position.

The disgust of the masses around the

world for the U.S. war in Iraq affects other capitalist governments, too, where figures associated with the Bush policies, like rightwing media magnate Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, have suffered political setbacks.

#### Big leap in class struggle at home

This struggle over foreign policy is playing out at the same time that the class struggle in the U.S. has suddenly taken a dramatic leap.

Even threats of lost income, firing and deportation aren't enough anymore to silence the many millions of underpaid, overworked immigrants whose superexploitation has swollen the profits of bosses large and small across the United States.

In a shock to the capitalists who are used to taking them for granted—and to the politicians who had thought that pending legislation to turn every undocumented person into a felon would club them down even further—they are pouring into the streets in a countrywide movement for full rights that continues to broaden and pick up steam.

The impact of this sudden rising of the most oppressed will be enormous. It is bound to accelerate the awakening of millions of other workers—organized and unorganized—who desperately need a way to fight back against the looting of their jobs, pensions, health care and wages by the rapacious class of multi-billionaires.

It has also opened a rift in Bush's own ranks. His avowed support of a "guest worker" program pleases employers who want a steady supply of low-wage workers stripped of their rights, but it turns off the rabid, xenophobic racists who blame immigrants for everything that's going wrong and want to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. It's another case, like the Dubai port fiasco, of Bush's reactionary policies coming back to bite him.

Finally, a piece of economic news confirms that many of the people with money to invest are afraid of the stock market, which generally anticipates what the economy is going to do. The price of gold just reached \$600 an ounce—a sure sign that investors fear rocky times ahead.

Instability in the center of world imperialism should be a signal to the movement to politically prepare for a serious struggle against this racist, imperialist government, which is prone to creating military crises, as well as the vile system of capitalist exploitation that is bringing chaos into the lives of so many millions of workers.

# Hundreds demand Bush's impeachment

By David Dixon Charlotte, N.C.

Some 400 people protested against President Bush when he came to Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte on April 6. The protest started with a march from Independence Park through the CPCC campus where students cheered chants of "Impeach Bush."

Demonstrators filled the sidewalk across from Halton Theater, where Bush was to give his speech defending the U.S. war on Iraq. Police immediately tried to move the protest farther away from the students, but the protesters refused to leave, citing a permit issued to the Action

Center for Justice for that location. As police grouped, protesters defiantly chanted, "We have a permit" and "We have a constitution." With the demonstrators obviously unwilling to leave, police acknowledged the people's right to protest.

From there, a spirited demonstration began with many students joining in. Loud chants of "Impeach Bush," "Not my president, not my war, what the hell are we fighting for?", "Drop tuition, not bombs" and "Books not bombs" were a few popular slogans echoing across the campus.

Two people were arrested, one the police cuffed and carried away by his hands and feet. Demonstrators angrily chanted, "Arrest Bush, not citizens" and Protesters confront Bush in Charlotte on April 6.

PHOTO: DIANE STALFORD

. .

"Not my president, not my war, the real criminal is inside that door."

One protester had managed to get invited and confronted Bush during a Q & A, making headlines around the world. Harry Taylor said to Bush, "While I listen to you talk about freedom, I see you assert your right to tap my telephone, to arrest me and hold me without charges." After a short interruption of boos from the audience, he continued, "What I wanted to say to you is that I—in



my lifetime, I have never felt more ashamed of, nor more frightened by my leadership in Washington, including the presidency. I would hope from time to time that you have the humility and the grace to be ashamed of yourself."

Bush responded only by defending his illegal domestic spying program. (New York Times, April 7).

### **Auto industry plans 100,000 layoffs**

### Why can't workers own their jobs?

By Martha Grevatt

Last year, while touting the "ownership society," President Bush went on the "Today" show and uttered a classic Bushism: "Ownin' stuff is good."

While the "stuff" Bush referred to is out of reach for the working class, most of us would agree that it is good to own some things. It is good if you can own food, clothing, furniture, and some basic appliances. It is good if you can own your home outright and not have to worry about eviction or foreclosure. It is good if you can even own the means to send your kid to college.

For workers, losing a job can mean losing everything you think you own. Shouldn't workers be able to own their jobs?

This question is not abstract-it is immediate and urgent. Earlier this year General Motors announced plans to eliminate 35,000 hourly positions. Ford followed by saying it would cut 30,000. Thousands more non-unionized salaried workers are being let go already. Just days after asking the bankruptcy courts to scrap its union contracts, Delphi, the former GM parts division, last week stated it would close 21 of 29 plants, laying off 23,000 union workers.

That's nearly 100,000 jobs! Indirectly, many more jobs will be lost worldwide. Goodyear Tire, for example, announced job cuts and is closing a plant in England. GM just announced that it is eliminating the midnight shift at the Lordstown, Ohio,

complex. How will the Lordstown schools continue to pay their teachers? Considering that these auto workers have families, it is not hard to believe that these closings and job losses will affect a million lives.

What if there was a way for workers to block these inhuman cuts — what if workers could exercise their property rights to their jobs and tell the bosses to keep their

It's not as far-fetched as it seems. The concept that "a job is a right" has been upheld legally for decades. The Employment Act of 1946 made "maximum production and employment" a national goal, echoed by President Truman, who stated then that "all of the policies of the federal government must be geared to [that] objective."

Also passed in 1946, the UN Charter on Human Rights declares "everyone has the right to work...and to protection against unemployment." The Full Employment Act of 1978, while weaker, still upholds "the policy and responsibility of the federal government" to create "conditions which promote useful employment opportunities."

Why isn't the government fulfilling its obligation, under U.S. and international law, to go after these corporate scofflaws who threaten a million human beings with economic ruin?

#### It took a struggle then

The legal argument that jobs are workers' property goes back to 1937 when Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins stated that right. She was defending the right of sit-down strikers to occupy plants.

Perkins' actions cannot be understood outside of their historical context.

The famous Flint sit-down strike lasted 44 days and ended Feb. 11, 1937, with tremendous gains for the United Auto Workers. There were 476 additional sit-down actions recorded that year, involving

half-a-million workers. In the period leading up to the Flint strike there was a series of GM strikes in 35 cities in 14 states over job security at a time when 50 percent of the GM workforce had been laid off.

These were "moments of dual sovereignty, with unions challenging corporations for control," according to legal scholar James Gray Pope, writing in the Columbia Law Review. It was the sit-down movement, asserts Pope, that prompted a conservative, anti-labor Supreme Court to uphold the Wagner Act, a law that gave workers the right to organize. Pope's conclusions are striking, given the propensity of most similar experts to isolate legal history from history itself.

Perkins' declaration that workers have a property right to their jobs, and that they were defending that right by seizing the means of production, should be seen in that context. Perkins was merely putting in legal terms what the exploited workers

had already accomplished — by taking over the plants they had temporarily established workers' control and put the question of ownership up for discussion.

#### And it will take a struggle now

IS CRIMINAL

IMMIGRANTS.

NOT

Currently, the automakers' contracts with the UAW still include a moratorium on plant closings during the life of the agreement. This came about after a grass-roots

mobilization called the Job Is a Right Campaign raised that demand in response to the first big wave of plant closings at GM in 1987. Exactly 50 years after the glorious sit-downs, workers were again mobilized to defend their jobs as property rights.

Layoffs and concessions can and must be fought. Delphi cannot be allowed to use the bankruptcy courts to wipe out the majority of its workforce and dismantle the hard-won gains for those remaining. The struggle has begun, with Soldiers of Solidarity leading work-to-rule actions, workers holding spontaneous on-the-job protests, even the UAW leadership talking strike and some Flint workers talking about repeating history.

As Workers World Party's founding chairperson Sam Marcy wrote in 1989 during the Eastern Airlines strike, when CEO Frank Lorenzo was using bankruptcy to bust the airline unions, "Cut through the rigmarole with mass action!"

### Denver transit strikers win up-front raises

By Larry Hales Denver

Workers in the 1,700-strong Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001 voted on April 7 by 82 percent to 18 percent to accept a new contract after a five-day strike. The new contract provided higher raises at the front end of its three-year period than the one the workers rejected by a vote of 55 to 45 percent on April 2.

Instead of the first offer of a paltry 15cent-an-hour raise the first year-their first raise since a wage freeze began three years ago-the workers will receive 50 cents an hour more up front. After three vears they will have gotten a \$1.80-perhour raise. In other areas the contract had changed little.

In the deal, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) raised its contribution to the health and welfare fund from \$436 to \$456, and an additional \$250 who were fighting fare hikes and other bonus the workers would have received is

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to be put into that fund. When the workers went in to vote for the contract, they had not yet learned all its details.

On April 5, the RTD called in a private security firm with the excuse that this firm would provide security to RTD operations centers. RTD said it needed the security because workers were threatening riders. These accusations are familiar to those used in New York City to try to intimidate the transit workers during the TWU Local 100 strike in December. In New York, the MTA, the capitalist politicians and the corporate media were more belligerent, calling the TWU workers "thugs" and other racist terminology.

The demagogy used against the TWU workers blamed the workers fighting the bosses for the strike, to try to make the union appear greedy. Meanwhile the MTA had a \$1 billion surplus. In New York, many commuters supported the workers, work rules that put riders at risk. This tactic didn't work in Denver either when RTD bus drivers, light rail operators and mechanics struck.

The New York situation has still not been resolved, although the union members are all back at work.

The Cleveland-based International Management Assistance Corp., the security firm, came to the RTD armed with cameras, which they used to videotape workers at picket lines. This outfit's goal is to use the tapes to single out certain workers and to attack them in an attempt to break union solidarity.

It cost the city \$27,000 to fly the teams in and out of Denver and \$30,000 a week for pay and expenses. Private security goons have a long history in this country and especially Colorado. In the past, the Pinkerton agency was used extensively to attack miners in Colorado and was responsible for many massacres of workers, most notably the Ludlow massacre.

Governor Bill Owens has laid out the

RTD's long term plan to privatize the public transportation system. Already, 45 percent of RTD work is contracted out to private companies. Many of these workers are not unionized.

Owens showed his disdain for unionized workers when he blamed the union leadership for causing the strike, even calling them "union management."

Owens and the RTD salivated because the union leadership had not wanted a strike, and in fact tried to force binding arbitration on the workers, so that it could avoid a strike. However, the workers spoke out and struck back and took to the streets, and they received a great deal of community support.

The bus drivers talked of the conditions of performing their jobs, of having to drive for 90 consecutive days without a day off, and some have had to take their sick days just to rest. They must keep on time, no matter the road conditions, have to make transfers to get riders to their destinations, and when they do take a sick day, they are written up for being late. They are worried about fatigue and their riders' safetv.

Patricia Stephens, an employee for eight years, said, "If they are number one, we made them that way." RTD is considered one of the best transit systems in the country, even though the workers labor under bad conditions, and the workers made that eminence possible. All they asked for was an upfront raise that accounted for the rise in cost of living, but RTD, which had voted for huge raises for the executive board, averaging over 40 percent, wanted to withhold that raise.

The real fight has just begun. The ATU workers say that they sent a message to RTD that they will fight privatization and will need community support in this burgeoning battle.





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April 1, Brooklyn Bridge.

#### **NEW ORLEANS MARCHERS**

### Demand justice for Katrina evacuees

By Clarence Thomas **New Orleans** 

Thousands of people, predominantly African Americans, mobilized on April 1 in New Orleans to protest the treatment of Katrina survivors and to ensure that displaced residents are allowed to participate in the upcoming municipal election on

Participants included people from throughout the country, including International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and Million Worker March Movement (MWMM) members from Oakland, Calif., and Seattle, Wash.

The event was organized by Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. The theme was "March for Our Right to Return, A Protected Vote & Reconstruction."

The action started with a three-hour rally at the Convention Center parking lot. Speakers included Bill Cosby, author Michael Eric Dyson, former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, the Rev. Al Sharpton, Congressman William Jefferson of New Orleans and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson of Texas, current New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, AFSCME international secretary-treasurer and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists President William Lucy and Sibal Holt from the Louisiana AFL-

Lucy expressed brief remarks of solidarity and introduced Sibal Holt, who announced the "New Orleans Workers' Rights March and Rally" for May 2. She stated that, "Labor unions and community organizations will urge city and federal governments to set standards for how workers should be treated" during the rebuilding of New Orleans. The event is being sponsored by Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO.

#### **Activists left out**

Malik Rahim, a leader of Common Ground Collective, explained that while he had been initially contacted by Rev. Jackson weeks earlier and was part of the initial planning for April 1, he was not included in subsequent meetings regarding the organizing. Although Malik's work and contribution to the struggle of the Katrina survivors is well-known in New Orleans, nationally and around the world, he was not invited to be a rally speaker. Brother Malik said, "I felt exploited. I was good enough to do the organizing but not to speak at the rally."

Another important long-standing community activist, Sister "Mama D" from the Seventh Ward, organized for the event yet was not a part of the original speaker list. She worked on the 1963 March on Washington under the leadership of Bayard Rustin. She testified in Washington, D.C., following the hurricane on the government's lack of response and magnitude of the destruction and human suffering in New Orleans after Katrina.

"Mama D" remembers when there was a strong coalition between labor and the civil rights movement. She expressed that labor should be the driving force for civil rights and human rights in America. The organizers during the rally extended an invitation for her to speak but she declined the offer in light of the lastminute invitation.

"Mama D" is sending out a request for skilled tradespersons from across the country to come to New Orleans and contribute to the rebuilding. Recently, she addressed the ILWU Local 19 Executive Board in Seattle, Wash. The union agreed to provide financial support for survivors



PHOTO: DUNG NGUY

Student construction team helps rebuild New Orleans.

rebuilding their homes in the Seventh Ward community.

There were no militant trade union activists represented at the rally or progressive community activists from New Orleans who spoke. A pitifully small number of evacuees were a part of the program.

#### **Crescent City Connection**

Thousands marched across the Crescent City Connection bridge on April 1 for an important reason. The bridge goes over the Mississippi River. It is symbolic of the injustice in post-Katrina New Orleans. The image of primarily Black New Orleans survivors as pedestrians who tried to cross the bridge over the West Bank was seen worldwide this past Sept. 1.

At that time there was a blockade formed by city police from Gretna, Marrero, Harvey, as well as the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department to keep survivors from crossing the bridge. The evacuees were hungry, thirsty and tired from suffering days of trying to survive the hurricane devastation. In the smoldering heat, they walked across the Crescent City Connection to look for shelter and food. They were turned back and forced to return to New Orleans by police officers, intimidating the survivors with their weapons.

New Orleans officials at the time described this action as blatantly racist because evacuees were depicted as "potential thieves and thugs.'

The West Bank authorities, according to the local Times-Picayune newspaper, said the racism charges were unfair. They claimed that the West Malik Rahim and Clarence **Thomas** Bank had run out of resources and was not equipped to handle more fleeing families from New Orleans.

#### **ILWU, MWMM solidarity** & voting rights

ILWU Local 19 member/ MWMM committee leader Gabriel Prawl and ILWU Local 52 member/MWMM committee leader Michael Hoard, along with 17 students, two professors and three faculty members of Shoreline Community College also attended the march.

The delegation of labor and students is part of a community/labor coalition, the Puget South Katrina Relief Reconstruction Committee. This coalition has been spearheaded by ILWU Locals 19 and 52, the MWMM of the Pacific Northwest and the African-American Longshore Coalition.

The students spent a week assisting homeowners in the lower Ninth Ward gut and clean homes under the direction of the Common Ground Collective. Rahim described the students as the best of all the volunteers to offer their services.

The Pacific Northwest Labor and community/labor coalition are collecting construction supplies as well as providing

financial assistance to Katrina survivors in New Orleans.

Rev. Jackson, comparing Saturday's event to the 1965 historic march from Selma to Montgomery, stated, "We've marched too much, we've bled too often, we've

PHOTO: DELORES THOMAS died too young." Al Sharpton spoke of how the law should be changed to establish satellite voting sites in cities outside of Louisiana. Sharpton said, "What happens here will

The Louisiana State Legislature has only agreed to allow displaced Orleans Parish voters to cast early ballots at 10 satellite sites in their largest cities and parishes such as Alexandria, Baton Rouge and Lake Charles.

affect our voting rights all over the United

States."

The writer is the former secretarytreasurer of ILWU Local 10 and national co-chair of the Million Worker March Movement.

#### **New Orleans organizer:**

### **'Freedom Summer 2006'**

By Bryan G. Pfeifer **Boston** 

Curtis Muhammad was in Roxbury, Mass., on April 8 as part of his travels announcing a new national campaign called Freedom Summer 2006 that calls on students to get involved in relief work on the U.S. Gulf Coast ravaged by Hurricane Katrina last year. The campaign evokes the Freedom Summer movement of the 1960s civil rights era.

"The government tried to snuff our people out," Muhammad declared at a luncheon sponsored by the Coalition of the Caring, a Boston-based organization to assist Hurricane Katrina/Rita survivors.

Muhammad is a co-founder and Inter im Coordinating Committee member of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition (PHRF). He is also a veteran of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and serves as a consultant with Junebug Productions, The Colorline Project, The Young Peoples Project and The Algebra Project.

Freedom Summer 2006 is a follow-up to the Spring Break initiative, which brought mostly young Black students from across the country to the Gulf Coast in March and April.

Survivors of Katrina, community leaders and grassroots activists formed PHRF in New Orleans immediately following the hurricane's destruction and the government's wholesale abandonment of the mostly Black population in the region. An independent organization, PHRF addresses the immediate and long-term needs and justice for survivors as well as government accountability and comprehensive reconstruction of the Gulf South.

Black political leaders, relief service providers, labor and community organizers, college students, and survivors living in Massachusetts listened intently to Muhammad as he described the wholesale criminal acts of government officials regarding Katrina/Rita before, during and after the storm.

After an introduction by L. Soul Brown of the Griot House, Muhammad showed the video, "They Left Us Here To Die." filmed in December 2005. Accompanied by Sweet Honey & the Rock music, the film depicts Black and poor white communities destroyed and in shambles with cars, rubble, electrical wires and more strewn about for dozens of blocks as well as pulverized levees. This is juxtaposed in the film with pictures of affluent white communities' houses and other infrastructure already rebuilt or in the process of rebuilding.

After the film Muhammad gathered the audience in a circle, where they remembered those who died in the storm; many bodies are still being found amid the destruction or elsewhere. "We cannot forget that they tried to kill our people. We're not talking about an accident here," said Muhammad, referring to government officials, real estate developers and corporations.

Muhammad then described how the local, state and U.S. government agencies had pointed guns at members of peoples' organizations who tried to go back into New Orleans to assist those in distress. They didn't allow in provisions to feed people or working vehicles to evacuate them. Black people were labeled as "thugs" and "criminals" when engaged in survival activities such as securing food and water. He said aid from various European states, Venezuela, Cuba and others is still being rebuffed by the government.

Muhammad stressed that it was those people the media labeled "gangsters," mostly young Black men, who delivered supplies after government officials and agencies abandoned the people. At this point he talked about the historical and present-day legacy of British, French, Spanish and U.S. influence in New Orleans and throughout the South, specifically slavery.

Katrina survivors living in the Greater Boston area then described their difficult experiences of resettling in the Northeast. They pledged to help their fellow sur vivors, including supporting the survivors' right to return to the Gulf Coast.

Audience members also spoke, some raising the plight of the thousands of displaced or deserted children and the upcoming April 22 New Orleans mayoral elections.

Tony Van Der Meer of the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee, speaking from the floor, said, "This fundamental violation of our human rights is nationwide throughout the United States. We need an independent vehicle to organize our people for our own survival such as a reconstruction party to deal with this genocide."

Speakers included Coalition of the Caring members Sen. Dianne Wilkerson, Rep. Gloria Fox, the Rev. Richard Richardson and Catherine Hardaway of Elder Services. The coalition is largely responsible for securing a \$25-million state appropriation immediately after Katrina/Rita hit to help temporary or permanent survivors in Massachusetts.  $\square$ 

### Immigrants come out 2 million strong

Continued from page 1

groups, teachers and activists, but mainly it was the Latin@ working class. The historic gathering, estimated at over 50,000, came just a little over a week after a series of electrifying student walkouts that  $resulted\,in\,the\,arrests\,of\,several\,youth\,and$ harassment of their families.

Altogether over 21 cities in California held planned demonstrations, including a rally at the federal building in Santa Ana at noon and candlelight vigils in the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles.

In Atlanta, the March for Dignity on April 10 with at least 60,000 was the largest political demonstration in the city's recent history. Rev. Timothy McDonald and James Orange, two of Atlanta's most prominent Black progressive leaders, called for unity among all those marginalized by the system and applauded the struggle of immigrants for their rights.

International Action Center organizer Dianne Mathiowetz described the scene: "People were streaming in from every direction-whole families with small children and babies in carriages, groups of men wearing t-shirts from their jobs as painters, electricians, landscapers, etc. People were coming out of their homes for blocks and blocks and walking miles to get [to the rally]. Traffic in the area was absolutely deadlocked with people looking for places to park."

Organizers reported that 500,000 protesters converged on the National Mall and marched in Washington, D.C. People poured out of every community. Demonstrators marched from bus stops at the D.C./Maryland border into the city. Many youths also left high schools in Virginia, Maryland and the district to join the protest.

Sharon Black described it this way: "For many of the youth who participated in the march you could clearly sense the feeling of liberation and empowerment. Most were from the surrounding Washington D.C. Salvadoran community. Many demonstrators had obviously come straight from



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

work-construction workers with muddy boots, custodial workers with company uniforms, nurses, teachers with school t-shirts.

"From the bridge overlooking 16th Street, African-American pedestrians stopped to wave and shout. In front of the National Education Association a group of a hundred supporters came out and held signs. Office workers all along the route cheered in support. A group called Arabs for Immigrant Rights hung banners from their office building. At 16th and I Street, a group of Asian workers joined the march."

Philadelphia's Love Park was filled beyond capacity as over 7,000 immigrant rights activists, students, unionists and workers on lunch hours gathered for a noon-time rally. Feeder marches came from Chinatown and the Mexican communities. Speakers included representatives from the Hoyu Chinese American Association; the Union de Trabajadores de Kaoli (mushroom workers' union); the African and Caribbean Affairs Council; Asian Americans United; several Latin@ immigrant organizations; Pennsylvania State Wide Coalition of Black Clergy; union leaders and student groups.

The park's center fountain was ringed with colorful banners; Korean drummers performed at one end of the park while mariachis sang their way through the crowd. Rally organizers called for participants to join in the next round of actions on May 1, and participants grabbed up fliers calling for May Day rallies.

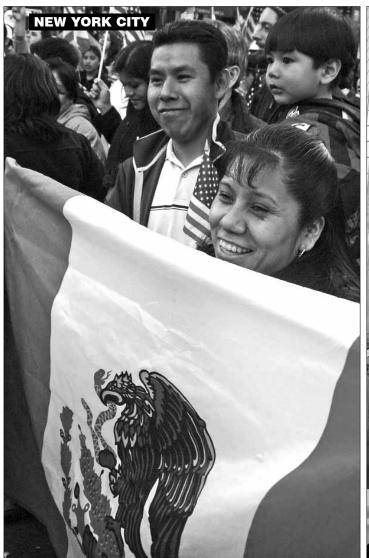
The rally area in St. Paul, Minn., was so crowded with the 30,000 immigrants and supporters who gathered around the State Capitol that most couldn't even hear the speeches. But the message was clear. Speakers included Hmong and African immigrants along with a majority from Latin America. They called for comprehensive immigration reform and challenged the draconian Sensenbrenner Bill

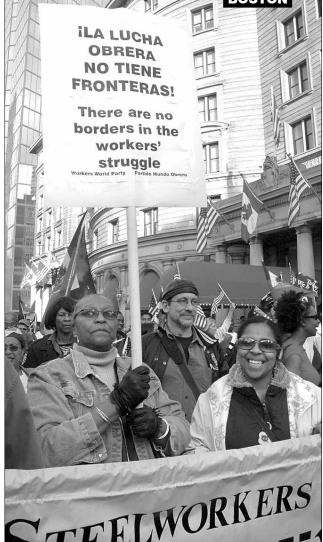
Over 125,000 people marched on City Hall in downtown New York City, including a contingent of 7,000 organized by Immigrant Communities in Action, a coalition that includes many anti-imperialist and national liberation organizations, including CAAAV-Organizing Asian Communities, DAMAYAN Migrant Workers Association, DRUM- Desis Rising Up and Moving, and the Justice 4 Immigrants Filipino Coalition (Philippine Forum, Anakbayan NY/NJ). The ICA contingent also included representatives from lesbian/gay/bi/trans organizations, including the Audre Lorde Project, Gay Men's Health Crisis, Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE), and Queers for Racial and Economic Justice.

In **Miami** some 7,000 demonstrators gathered downtown on April 9, filling the bowl outside the Government Center and clogging the streets in a march to the Torch of Friendship on Biscayne Boulevard. It was the largest immigrant rights march in South Florida since the Senate began its debate on immigration reform last month.

In a stunning display of defiance, courage, pride and dignity, well over 10,000 immigrants and their allies marched in **Boston** from the Commons to Copley Square on April 10 with rallies at both sites. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Coalition, the main demands were "Legalization, not criminalization" and "No to racist legislation." A wide array of multinational contingents from African countries as well as Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East participated in the actions. Many hoisted flags of their homelands and beautiful multi-colored banners.

Large labor delegations from the Service Employees and UNITE HERE participated as well as Food and Commercial Workers and Steelworkers Local 8751, the school bus drivers' union. People cheered and carried placards reading "La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!" (There are no borders in the workers' struggle!) and "We are workers, not criminals." According to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, Massachusetts has the seventhlargest documented immigrant population-about 14 percent of all residents and approximately 200,000 undocumented workers statewide.







WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK



Salt Lake City organizers of the "Dignity March" put the turnout for Sunday's rally and march at around 40,000—a truly historic figure since the estimated number of undocumented immigrants in Utah is only 90,000. Tony Yapias of Proyecto Latino de Utah, who started organizing the march two weeks earlier with his group, was amazed by the size of the crowd. Volunteers had passed out fliers at Latin@ dance clubs, markets and schools from southern Utah to Wyoming. "We knew there was an interest, but we had no idea how many people would show up," Yapias said.

In Birmingham, Ala., 4,000 people marched from Linn Park to Kelly Ingram Park, the historic site of the civil rights movement where police turned fire hoses on Black children in 1963. The rally called for a comprehensive plan for immigration reform that would provide undocumented immigrants with a path to citizenship, worker protection and family visas.

Rev. Darrell Wilson of the Alabama Southern Christian Leadership Council in Birmingham embraced the link between the historic civil rights movement and today's struggle for immigrant rights, saying, "Here you stand up for yourselves. Stand up for everyone. And most of all, stand up for your children."

Elsewhere 4,000 marched in Boise, Idaho. There were also rallies in Des Moines, Iowa, Omaha, Neb., and Pitts**burgh**, where protesters gathered outside Sen. Arlen Specter's office. Yinka Aganga Williams, who moved to the U.S. from Nigeria six years ago, joined the group outside Specter's office, noting, "This country was built by immigrants, Pittsburgh in particular."

In Jackson, Miss., 500 demonstrators sang "We Shall Overcome" in Spanish. In St. Louis, thousands stood silent for one minute on Sunday to remember those who have died trying to come to the U.S.

sand others demonstrated in **Tucson**. In

Champaign, hundreds of demonstrators marched along a busy street to the University of Illinois campus with signs reading, "The Pilgrims had no green cards." Protesters also turned out in Portland, Maine., and Harrisburg, Pa.

An estimated 3,000 people demonstrated in Garden City, Kan., a farming community in the southwest corner of the state that numbers fewer than 30,000 residents. Rallies in **Dodge City**, Kan. and **Schuyler**, Neb. had a noticeable impact on production at Excel Corporation, the nation's second-largest beef processor, as many workers were gone for the day.

About 25,000 immigrant workers and supporters marched on the Federal Building in Seattle. African-American County Executive Ron Sims told themarchers that about 20 percent of Seattle residents were born in another country, emphasizing the demand for full civil rights for all. Huge marches were also held in the cities of Portland and Salem, Ore.

Over 2,000 protested in front of Rep. Peter King's office in suburban Massapequa Park, on Long Island, N.Y. King is the co-author of the brutal antiimmigrant bill HR 4437. Everyone cheered when May First Coalition member Carlos Canales called for support for the "Paro de Primero Mayo," the May Day strike to support workers' rights and immigrant rights. "That will be 'a day without immigrants' in the U.S. economy," said Saul, a factory worker and an organizer from Hempstead's Workplace Project. Then he took his megaphone and chanted, "King, escucha, iestamos en la lucha!" ("Listen, King, we are in the struggle!")

Students walked out from McNair Academic High School in Jersey City, N.J., an hour before the school officially was dismissed, chanting, "Si se puede" (Yes, we can), "Schools are prisons" and "The people united will never be divided." The students' families came from many coun-In Arizona over 50,000 protesters tries including Mexico, the Dominican turned out in **Phoenix**, while several thou- Republic, Puerto Rico, Palestine, Egypt, mostly European immigrants in the early India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philip-



### Workers demand back pay

Immigrant and undocumented workers are not only marching in the streets demanding their rights, they are demanding rights on the job too. When Arandas restaurant in Waterford, Mich., refused to pay its wait staff for two months, six women refused to work without pay and shut it down. Arandas owes each woman from \$1,000 to \$7,000 in back pay. Two of the unpaid workers are only 16 years old.

Three of the six Arandas workers (shown in photo) were in Detroit on April 10 to protest the unjust firing of 15 Latina meat cutters at Wolverine Packing. They also discussed their own situation.

Angeles, a 24-year-old undocumented mother of two young children, said, 'Because we are Mexican, we don't have papers, we don't speak English, they take advantage of us. I am not asking for anything free. I am only asking for the salary that is owed to us.'

Angeles and her two co-workers were among the 50,000 who flooded Detroit streets and surrounded the Federal Building on April 1. So were the 15 Latinas from Wolverine Packing.

"They were fired for standing up for their rights," said Elena Herrada.

A multi-national labor/community delegation confronted Wolverine Packing spokesperson Steve Reppenhagen on the packing plant steps in Eastern Market near downtown Detroit. The fight for justice on the job and in the streets is growing.

-Story and photo by Cheryl LaBash



pines. They were joined by African Americans and whites. Mothers of the students who walked out were there in solidarity.

Over 4,000 people then attended a rally at Liberty State Park located between Ellis Island, the entrance point for millions of 20th century, and the Statue of Liberty.

Imani Henry, Bob McCubbin, Dianne Mathiowetz, Sharon Black, Bryan Pfeifer, Gloria Rubac, Jim McMahon, Heather Cottin, Monica Moorehead and Pat Hilliard



**BOSTON** 

WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

### West Coast tour is lavender & red

By Workers World Los Angeles bureau

West Coast branches of the International Action Center (IAC) worked with online bookseller leftbooks.com to organize seven events March 23-28 that were themed "LGBT liberation in time of war, racism and repression." The meetings in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego featured transgender lesbian activist Leslie Feinberg.

The tour brought Feinberg's new political novel, "Drag King Dreams," to West Coast readers. She stressed the anti-war novel's solidarity with the Iraqi people and with Arab, South Asian and Muslim immigrants in the U.S.: "This may be the most pro-Palestinian self-determination and sovereignty novel ever written in English by a white Jewish author. I'd like to be wrong about that and I also hope that distinction is stripped from this book quickly by as many writers as possible.'

The week of meetings helped organize wider and deeper unity on two fronts of the class war: the struggle against the U.S. imperialist war drive and the domestic struggle against racism, anti-woman and lesbian/gay/bi/trans oppression.

Feinberg, a Workers World managing editor and IAC organizer, emphasized the imperative need of the LGBT and women's movements to defend the Iranian people against U.S. and British imperialist "regime change." She pointed out that Washington had used the domestic status of women in Afghanistan as a "humanitarian" cover for invasion. Yet, Feinberg said, much earlier, when the Afghan people had carried out a revolution that benefited women because it sought to overturn feudal relations and establish socialism, it was the CIA that had funded and organized a bloody counter-revolution.

"Beware the pre-war spin that the U.S. and British use to bring democracy to Iran on bayonet tips—that they have to 'liberate' Iranian gays and women and trade unionists from their own population, religion and five-millennia-old culture. The Iranian people know all about imperialist regime change-they survived the CIAinstalled Shah."

Feinberg highlighted the importance of supporting undocumented workers by breathing life into the truth that "there are no borders in the workers' struggles." And she concluded that serious organizing against all forms of oppression is the cement that creates the kind of durable unity needed to advance the class struggle against capitalism and create a basis to build socialism and its higher stage-communism.

#### 'Right of return'

IAC leader John Parker kicked off the week of events at a March 23 meeting in the national organization's Los Angeles office. He restated the importance of bringing working-class-wide solidarity to the struggle against LGBT oppression. LeiLani Dowell, a national leader of FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), roused those gathered by relating the exciting role of militant youth-from the immigrant rights struggle in the U.S. to the powerful French struggle for job rights.

The following night, a full-house audience greeted Feinberg at the Eureka Valley Recreational Center in San Francisco's Castro district. Feinberg explained how World War I split the socialist movement. "On the one hand were the Social Democrats who supported their own rulers in that colonial war for empire. On the other were the communist revolutionaries who tried to unite workers and oppressed peoples across national boundaries against the imperialist ruling class."

She said that the inability to take a strong, principled stance against the war derailed the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement, as well as the workers' struggle against the boss class, until the momentum of the 1917 Russian Revolution put the struggle back on track. Later, internationalist support for the Vietnamese people and struggles against racism, repression and economic warfare by the left wing of gav liberation infused the movement with greater power.

On March 25, Feinberg joined a panel of speakers on "The Right to Return: From Katrina to Palestine," co-sponsored by the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC).

San Francisco TONC organizer Judy Greenspan chaired the afternoon event. Dave Welsh, from the Haiti Action Committee, spoke about the Haitian struggle against the U.S.-backed coup in 2004 that overthrew the elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A speaker from Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism and Tova Klein, who was born in Israel, gave moving support to the liberation of historic Palestine.

As a communist, Feinberg described ancient pre-class societies on every continent that were based on cooperative labor. "The right of humanity to return to a society free from exploitation and oppression requires building a movement today that fights every form of injustice-economic and social. It must include the rights of Katrina survivors to return home, Palestinians to return to their homeland, and the Haitian people to return to their sovereignty and self-determination."

#### Together on the road to women's liberation

In San Diego the next day, Feinberg was part of an emotional celebration of International Women's Month at the Malcolm X Public Library. Zola Muhammad of San Diego IAC and Dawn Miller, a local activist and school teacher, co-chaired. Muhammad talked about the origins of International Women's Day. Gloria Verdieu of San Diego IAC gave a presentation on Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Wangari Maaphai, the first African female recipient of the award.

Sylvia Telafaro, a local activist/poet and president of the African American Writers and Artists Association, gave a heartfelt spoken-word performance about women in the struggle.

Third-grade student Cheyenne Muhammad received a standing ovation. She said of Rosa Parks: "Even though people say she was tired from a long day of work, I think she was also tired of segregation."

Ruth Vela of San Diego IAC and FIST reported on the previous day's Immigrant Rights March in Los Angeles.

Feinberg was greeted with a standing ovation. She gave a stirring presentation in defense of immigrant rights and against racism and all forms of oppression and then read from her new book, "Drag King Dreams." Her dedication to the struggle and the people she graces with her presence, as well as her lucid social and political commentary, brought into sharp focus for many the need to deepen their commitment to the struggle.

Feinberg was back in Los Angeles on March 27 for an event jointly hosted by the IAC and the local artists' collective known as The Sugar Shack, which describes itself as building "intentional community" with a sense of activism. It was a good fit, she noted, because the IAC is building "intentional activism" with a sense of community.

SAN DIEGO: 'Fight racism right here on campus!'

At San Diego State University on March



### Feinberg melds personal & political

By Bob McCubbin

"Drag King Dreams" by Leslie Feinberg (Carroll & Graf, 2006, \$15.95). Available at leftbooks.com.

\*McCubbin uses the gender-neutral pronouns hir instead of his/her and ze instead of he/she throughout the review.

In hir newly published second novel, "Drag King Dreams," transgender lesbian activist Leslie Feinberg continues to make sex, gender, sexuality and class important issues for the people of this story. But in this post-9/11 world, the overriding political issues of the day intrude in a big way. Perhaps the greatest achievement of this new anti-war novel is the successful melaing of the very personal and the profoundly political, a literary challenge that

A new book from leslie feinberg, transgender author & activist Autographed copies of **Drag King Dreams** are available only from

www.Leftbooks.com.

few writers apparently feel up to the task of undertaking.

Feinberg, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, brings hir communist worldwiew to all hir writing.

"Stone Butch Blues," the groundbreaking and highly praised 1993 novel by Feinberg, stands as a germinal literary work that has exposed the life and struggles of a working-class transgender person to a wide audience in the U.S. and around the world. The novel has been translated into Chinese, Italian, German, Dutch, Slovenian and Hebrew, and plans for an Arabic edition are in the works.

Jess Goldberg, the central character of 'Stone Butch Blues," stands as a truly unique figure in world literature. Hir struggle, comparable in a general way to that of Stephen Gordon in Radclyffe Hall's "The Well of Loneliness," is, however, more fully and honestly developed, and the story unfolds in the socially and culturally rich context of working-class Buffalo, N.Y., in the mid-20th century.

"Stone Butch Blues" brought a muchappreciated message of personal courage, development and triumph over the prevailing forces of class, sex, gender and sexual oppression.

In hir new novel, "Drag King Dreams," the central character is Max Rabinowitz, a Jewish transgender worker. Ze works as a bouncer at a trans club in Manhattan and lives across the river in a working-class neighborhood in Jersey City. Almost as soon as we enter hir world, violence, death and illness intervene. Returning early one morning from Manhattan on a PATH train, Max and hir cross-dressing friend Vickie/Victor are threatened by a transhating man. Then Max's dear friend Ruby takes ill suddenly and is hospitalized.

Max's life is full of difficulties. Ze reminisces early on:

"When I was a child, I pored over photographs and maps in my geography book, excitedly telling my Aunt Raisa how when I grew up I was going to row the length of the Amazon River, scale the heights of Mount Kilimanjaro. Now my little path leads from work to home. When did my world shrink so small?"

But geography aside, Max's world is fully flavored with friends and experiences, and some of the real limitations on hir world, we learn, are based on Max's feelings of powerlessness and fear of political commitment. It may be this same fear among contemporary fiction writers that makes an unabashedly political novel like this one so rare.

Max's Yiddish-speaking, communist Aunt Raisa is the voice from the past that guides and goads Max to overcome hir fears. Raisa's wise words elucidate Max's personal experiences in the post-9/11 nightmare of war and racist profiling.

Max befriends a Palestinian neighbor, Hatem Ashrawi, and Hatem's friend Mohammad, an Egyptian shopkeeper in the neighborhood. Days later Max watches from hir tenement window as Hatem and Mohammad protest harassment that neighborhood youth are getting from the police:

"Mohammad is arguing with the police from the stoop of his store, 'What did they do? Tell me! They are just children!'

"Hatem comes out of our apartment

building waving his arms. 'Wait, stop!' he says with such authority that the officers look in his direction.

"I open the window further and lean out, straining to hear.

"Hatem points to the teenagers lined up against the wall, 'I do not believe this is a legal search. You are going through their

Later, Max learns from Mohammad that: "Hatem has disappeared, like many

others.' He whispers, in a quieter voice, 'Like my brother-in-law.'"

The post-9/11 roundup of Muslims, Arabs and South Asians is in full swing. The U.S. invasion of Iraq is approaching. Everyone knows it. One of Max's friends at work, Thor, is an anti-war activist who is putting out the word that no one should go to work the night after the attack begins. Max is at home:

"Suddenly, the television screen glows with a blazing image: shock and awe. Baghdad is aflame. I turn away from the television screen toward my window. The sky flashes with lightning. Thunder cracks. It looks and sounds like war. A cry pierces the air, an ancient wail. I pry my window open to listen: a muezzin's call. Mohammad leans out his window and shouts: 'Allah akbar!' His voice breaks with a sob ....

"Stop the war!" It isn't until I hear the hoarse cry that I realize it is coming from my own throat. 'Stop the war!' I shout again, as shadows of neighbors appear at their windows."

Max's heart is with the targets of Bush's war. But ze is afraid. Ze goes to the club

Continued on page 9

28, students filled every seat in the large lecture hall and virtually every inch of floor space. Feinberg lent her strong support to a battle to reinstate Dr. Pat Washington, a Black lesbian professor who was denied tenure at the university after having protested that she and students of color faced a hostile, racist work environment. (For more information about this important struggle, visit www.patwashington.org.)

On the drive back to Los Angeles, IAC leader John Parker and Feinberg did some impromptu anti-war outreach to half a dozen Marines guarding the entrance to Camp Pendleton.

That evening, at the ONE Archive in Los Angeles, Parker related to the audience how the capitalist class has forced both Katrina survivors and Palestinians to fight for their homes. "Our bodies are our homes, too," he said. "And LGBT people have to fight for those homes—their bodies, their loves and their lives."

Feinberg pointed to the repository of LGBT books in the ONE archive. She said that in Germany, the archive of the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement had been one of the early targets of the Nazi Party. But when the street sweepers—low-paid workers—were ordered to clean up the pyre of 10,000 books that had been burned, they found and saved a few precious volumes under the mountain of ashes, preserved to this day in LGBT archives around the world.

"They were like seeds carried on the winds of struggle," she said. "Look around. They have taken root once again."

Cumulatively, these West Coast events brought more activists into the struggle to defend the rights of undocumented immigrant workers, the battle against racism, imperialist war, the struggle against the oppression of women and the LGBT communities.

Thanks to Carl Muhammad for contributing to this article.

### Mass uprising shakes Nepal's royal regime

By David Hoskins

Popular forces in Nepal have stepped up their campaign to overthrow the government of King Gyanendra and end the monarchy. The revolutionary forces, led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [CPN(M)], and the opposition parties launched a new wave of coordinated resistance and protest.

A four-day general strike began April 6, called by the opposition parties—a coalition of seven parties that oppose the king—and backed by the revolutionary forces. The CPN(M) and opposition parties reached a 12-point agreement in late December that calls for allied actions to end autocratic monarchy and bring about fair elections to a constituent assembly. The demonstrations have been called to challenge Gyanendra's assumption of dictatorial powers 14 months ago.

Gyanendra's forces quickly moved to violently quell the demonstrations, even though the CPN(M) initially declared a ceasefire in Nepal's capital, Katmandu, to ensure that its activities would not be used as an excuse for the government to violate the rights of the protesting people.

Plainclothes police officers had arrested hundreds of political leaders before the strike began. Over 400 additional people were detained on the first day of the strike. The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) and police forces have turned to increasingly violent measures as thousands of workers, students and professionals poured into the streets in defiance of the government's daytime curfew.

Government forces repeatedly fired on protesters, leaving four dead and dozens

seriously injured. In Bharatpur, police shot dead a woman who was simply observing the protests from the balcony of her home. A protester in Banepa was killed when police fired on a crowd demonstrating against an earlier killing.

The United Nations Human Rights Office in Nepal has criticized the government and expressed "grave concern" over its violent tactics. Even the U.S. and British imperialists, who want a stable government in order to more effectively beat back the revolutionary forces, are now publicly distancing themselves from the king.

Meanwhile, the government has threatened to get "stricter" with the protesters by imposing extended curfews and granting its police forces shoot-to-kill orders.

#### **Protesters fight back**

The demonstrations have grown more militant as protesters attempt to protect themselves from violence at the hands of the RNA and police. "Burn the crown" is the new slogan in Katmandu.

Protesters have taken to setting up barricades of burning tires and throwing bricks when the police attempt to charge the crowds with batons and rubber bullets.

In some areas the demonstrators have expressed their anger by occupying government offices in protest of the killings.

People stormed a hospital in Pokhara to demand the body of a slain demonstrator.

The opposition party leadership has called for an indefinite extension of the strike. As one unnamed demonstrator put it, "We are not afraid of bullets. We have to get democracy at any cost and we will get it."

#### **CPN(M)** intensifies offensive outside Katmandu

The top two leaders of the CPN(M)—Chairman Pranchada and Chief of Foreign Relations Baburam Bhattari—issued a statement promising that their party's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), would take control of roads throughout the country in support of the



Katmandu, Nepal, April 11.

general strike and destroy all royal statues and signs that refer to "His Majesty's Government." The statement also announced a new campaign to stop businesses from paying taxes to the royal government.

In solidarity with the struggles in the cities and in defense of the unarmed protesters, the revolutionary forces have intensified the armed offensive throughout the countryside. On April 6 the PLA launched simultaneous attacks on all government agencies in Malangawa. Over 100 prisoners were freed when the PLA overran the district prison. A night-vision helicopter sent to reinforce government troops was reportedly shot down by the PLA.

On April 7 the PLA launched simultaneous attacks on government installations in Butwal and Kapilvastu, freeing 110 inmates from an area prison. Bombs destroyed several police posts, RNA barracks and other government buildings. Thousands of PLA soldiers reportedly participated in the armed actions.

The monarchy's state apparatus has been severely shaken by the revolutionary military offensive and the coordinated general strike across the country.

Anger against the government's use of violence to repress the revolutionary movement is evident in the massive nature of both the demonstrations and the revolutionary armed actions.

As Lok Raj Baral, head of the Nepal Center for Contemporary Studies, recently stated, "If the movement goes ahead like this, the inevitable will happen very soon. The anger everywhere is against the king."

### post-9/11

despite the strike call, but there is a sign on the door saying the club is closed for the night. The next night at the club:

"I wear remorse like a shroud. My friends at work are circling me, eyeing me strangely.

"You okay, buddy?' Thor asks.

"Sure,' I wave him away, pointing to the line of people waiting to get into the club, 'I'm just tired.'

"Okay,' he says. But he puts his hand on my arm and leaves it there while he examines my eyes like an optometrist.

"I turn away and readjust the stanchions. I've evaded everyone's eyes tonight. But it's not working. I feel worse hiding what I did.

"Listen,' I say to Thor as he turns to go back inside to work. 'I should have told you this before.' I press my palms together in an entreaty. 'Thor, I came to work last night.'

"He turns slowly, stiff with new knowledge. His lips press together until they turn white. 'What would you have done if the club was open?'

"I shrug. 'I wasn't thinking that far ahead, Thor. I really wasn't thinking at all. I was just scared. Losing a job is a big deal to me. Especially right now.'

"'Well,' he says finally, 'it's a good thing the club was shut down anyway, wasn't it?'

"That's all he says. Then he looks at me once more and goes inside. But in that final glance he reassessed me, did another calculation, and arrived at a different sum."

Max will overcome hir fear and learn the meaning of solidarity. But you won't find out how from this review.

There's so much in this book: so many real people, so many real problems, and so

much of the present-day world—the world, Feinberg reminds us, we must find the courage to change.

McCubbin is author of the groundbreaking book "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist Analysis," available at www.leftbooks.com.

#### Warsaw police shut gay club

# Coalition occupied Le Madame to keep it open

By Leslie Feinberg

Polish police carried out a final dawn raid against Warsaw's Le Madame gay bar on Friday, March 31, ending a week-long occupation of the club by an ad hoc coalition of movement forces.

Earlier that week, on Monday, police had blockaded the bar and tried to force the more than 200 people inside to leave. The Warsaw City Council had reportedly ordered the establishment shut down, once and for all.

But those inside refused to budge. Instead, they vowed to hold on to the club by staging a sit-in. As word of the resistance traveled, police barricades proved insufficient to keep out reinforcements—gays, lesbians and other left-wing, artists, students and other intellectuals—including those from out of town.

A group of militants from the left-wing political party Nowa Lewa [New Left], with its chairperson Piotr Ikonowicz in the lead, "eventually broke through the police barricades while lobbing a few beer bottles at blockading forces." (Gay City

News, Doug Ireland)

Le Madame, which opened three years ago, is owned by Krystian Legierski, a gay Polish-born Black activist.

The club's artistic director, Kastia Szurstow, explained that the former electronics factory had become a home to many political currents. "Gays, feminists, anti-globalization activists, pacifists, anarchists, the left-wing opposition parties, we welcome them all there, especially when they find it hard to get meeting rooms elsewhere." Before police shut down the building, the offices of the Warsaw Green Party had been on the first floor of the club.

Szurstow added, "We work with 61 theater groups and have produced 204 plays and pieces of performance art—everything from Chekhov and the classics to a play featuring only actors who were all schizophrenics. Our primary focus, however, is contemporary theater and art." The club also served as a gallery exhibiting paintings and photographs.

As negotiations with police and the right-wing capitalist government in Poland



Occupation of Le Madame.  $^{\mbox{\scriptsize PHOTO: BENT.COM}}$ 

continued throughout the week, support from an already broad political spectrum widened. All but the government-owned television station and the most reactionary newspapers aired sympathetic media-coverage of the sit-in. U.S. actor John Malkovich held a March 30 media conference supporting the occupation.

The next morning, however, police chose 6 a.m. on March 31 to raid the club again, at a time when there were only 50 people there. Some of the bar defenders had chained themselves to pipes and railings.

Gay activist Lukasz Patucki said the cops were brutal, beating many occupiers as they drove them out.

Forced into the streets, the resisters regrouped, chanting at the cops: "To nie koniec, to poczatek!" [It's not over, it's just the beginning!]

### Stop war on Iran!

are worrying over whether the U.S. is planning a devastating wave of air attacks on Iran, possibly using tactical nuclear weapons, with the objective not just of destroying its nuclear program but also of "regime change"—that is, overthrowing the government.

Articles in the New Yorker magazine and the Washington Post have touched off this recent round of speculation. Seymour Hersh, an investigative reporter whose specialty is writing on what is going on behind the scenes in the military and intelligence communities, presents a great deal of evidence in the New Yorker dated April 17 (but issued a week earlier) that such plans are far advanced.

He says the U.S. already has Special Forces on the ground in western Iran—which is both near the Iraq border and also where Iran's richest oil fields lie—whose mission is to foment ethnic tensions, prepare for sabotage and scope out targets to attack. Hersh adds that U.S. planes off the Iranian border have deliberately been carrying out maneuvers imitating a nuclear attack, in which the planes drop their payload and then climb steeply to avoid the blast wave.

Some view these reports as part of psychological warfare meant to intimidate the leaders of Iran and open rifts among them over whether to proceed with developing nuclear energy. If that was their purpose, it didn't work. On April 11, the leaders of Iran announced they had succeeded in enriching uranium and were proceeding

with the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Many of the sources quoted by Hersh, however, believe the planning is now so advanced and involves such a huge part of the military bureaucracy that it must be for more than bluff. The official position of the Bush administration, reinforced again this winter, is that it reserves the right of first-use of nuclear weapons whenever it deems them necessary. In other words, it will not abide by any international agreements barring a first strike-yet a criminal U.S. attack on Iran, which international inspectors say has no weapons program and couldn't possibly build bombs sooner than a decade from now, is presumably justified because it's a potential "nuclear

Regardless of what Iran does, this sword of Damocles posture by the administration and its threat to reintroduce into warfare the most fearsome weapons ever built should be forcefully answered by progressives everywhere—especially by the anti-war movements around the world.

A major March for Peace, Justice and Democracy will be held on April 29 in New York City. The main slogan is to end the war in Iraq and bring the troops home. This is good, and should be supported by all people who oppose the war and occupation. But those who recognize the ominous significance of what is happening must also do all they can to make the message "Stop War on Iran!" an inescapable element in this and every major demonstration from now on.

# Who wants civil war in Iraq?

It is normal for capitalist governments to lie through their teeth to justify war and aggression. Even allowing for this normal deception, the Bush administration suffers from a wider than usual credibility gap. If Bush says "It's a beautiful day," one's first impulse is to scan the sky for clouds and check that you've brought your umbrella.

So when George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, the Pentagon generals and the U.S. ambassador to Iraq say they are trying their hardest to avoid "civil war" in that occupied oil-rich country, it's even more normal to suspect that U.S. agencies are provoking that civil war, creating incidents that encourage different parts of the Iraqi population to fight each other and in general using "divide and conquer" tactics that British imperialism, now a U.S. junior partner, used in the heyday of the Empire.

The suspicious bombing of the golden dome mosque in Samarra in February began a rapid increase in the killings of civilian Iraqis. Even worse for the Iraqis, many of the killings appeared to be pitting members of the Sunni Moslem religious group against members of the Shiite group. No organization ever took public responsibility for the bombing, and the killings were carried out by private militias, often masked and of unclear origin.

What arouses greater suspicions is that some U.S. strategists began at the end of 2004 to suggest the U.S. occupation adopt the "Salvador option." The headline in a Jan. 14, 2005, Newsweek article was: "The Pentagon may put Special-Forces-led

assassination or kidnapping teams in Iraq," just as it did in El Salvador to kill Salvadoran progressives, unionists and any civilians in the way, and just as it did with the "Phoenix Program," another death-squad venture in Vietnam. Once it became clear that "shock and awe" had failed to subdue the Iraqis, this bloody option started gaining support in U.S. imperialist circles.

To add substance to these suspicions, the Iraq puppet government's interior minister, up to now someone who cooperated with the U.S. occupation, has admitted that death squads and unauthorized armed groups have been carrying out sectarian killings in the country. In a BBC interview on April 11. Bayan Jabr denied these groups were his responsibility. He added that there are non-governmental armed groups called the Facility Protection Service, set up in 2003 by the U.S. occupation, that number 150,000 effectives. Jabr said these 150,000 hired guns are "out of order, not under our control," along with another 30,000 private security guards.

This total of armed agents is even more than the number of regular U.S. troops operating in Iraq. Whatever ax Jabr has to grind, his comments mean the U.S. has a wide supply of mercenary personnel capable of carrying out provocations and acting as death squads—in other words, executing the "Salvador option." The Bush administration has certainly proved capable of lying about such a strategy. Anyone born earlier than yesterday can only assume it is lying once again. □

# The persecution of Cynthia McKinney

By Monica Moorehead

On March 29, Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia reportedly had a physical altercation with Capitol Police as she attempted to enter the House of Representatives building in Washington, D.C. The African-American congresswoman stated at a March 31 press conference that an officer who stopped her at the metal detector entrance treated her with suspicion as she tried to gain entrance to her office. She added that House representatives are usually able to bypass the detector because they are recognized by the authorities, whether they wear special lapel pins or not.

Although the nationality of the officer in question has still not been identified, McKinney stated that she was a victim of racial profiling. At a March 31 press conference at Howard University, McKinney went on to say, "This whole incident was instigated by the inappropriate touching and stopping of me, a female Black congresswoman. I deeply regret this incident occurred, and I am certain that after a full review of the facts, I will be exonerated."

Not waiting for a full review of the case, McKinney has been tried and found guilty by the big business media and her colleagues. The former House majority leader, Republican Tom Delay, labeled McKinney a "racist." Rep. Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, has refused to speak to her.

After speaking privately to some members of the Congressional Black Caucus on April 5, McKinney formally apologized for the incident on the House floor on April 6. Even with this public apology, the Capitol Police and federal prosecutors are determining whether to seek a warrant for McKinney's arrest for allegedly striking the officer.

#### Real issues behind the backlash

It is important to understand why the right-wing and ultra-right politicians have used this particular incident to launch an all-out racist offensive against Cynthia McKinney while, at the same time, so-called liberal politicians have all but abandoned her and treated her like a social pariah. Some of these same Democrats view McKinney's actions as an unhelpful distraction as the elections loom ever larger.

Millions of African Americans and other peoples of color can identify with McKinney being a victim of racial profiling. There isn't a person of color in the U.S. who has not been either the direct or indirect victim of police scrutiny or outright harassment, whether they live in a poor, urban area or if they are an elected politician like McKinney.

It is crucial that McKinney receive the benefit of the doubt in this case because racism is endemic throughout U.S. society in many forms and transcends class barriers.

McKinney's political history is also an important factor. She is an articulate, outspoken Black woman who has taken many progressive stances since she became the first Black woman elected to the Georgia state legislature, in 1988, and the first African American woman from Georgia to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, beginning in 1992.

McKinney initiated conferences exposing the imperialist role of U.S. corporate interests in Africa, including the Congo. She openly accused the U.S. government of conspiring to allow the 9/11 attacks to happen. She has spoken at numerous rallies against the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq and cutbacks in social programs. In 2002, she lost her seat in the House when the right-wing mobilized against her. She won her seat back during the 2004 elections.

McKinney will be a central figure in the upcoming documentary "American Blackout," which calls for a full investigation of the disenfranchisement of Black voters during the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.

The right-wing likes to go after an influential figure who visibly stands up and defends the rights of the most oppressed, and this is the main reason why they have seized on this latest incident to politically persecute Rep. Cynthia McKinney.

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# Big victory for workers, students in France

F.I.S.T.

By LeiLani Dowell

Mass protests on the streets get results! Weeks of demonstrations by millions of youth, trade unions and their supporters have forced the French government to back down from a measure that would impose "at will" hiring and firing practices on young people under the age of 26.

The protests shut down schools and disturbed business across the country so much that even Medef, the largest business federation in the country, began to criticize the CPE, or First Employment Contract. If passed, the law would have allowed bosses to engage youth for a two-year contract that could be terminated at any time, without reason.

On April 10, the Elysée Palace issued a communiqué announcing termination of the CPE. Of course, it neglected to mention that the fight-back of workers throughout France was responsible for the law's demise.

The statement read, "Under the proposal of the prime minister and after having heard the presidents of the parliamentary groups and the officials of the parliamentary majority, the president of the republic has decided to replace Article 8 of the law on equality of opportunities by a mechanism in favor of the professional integration of young people in difficulty."

Opponents of the law vowed to continue the struggle. Youth and unions have pledged now to fight against a law passed in 2005 that allows the same provisions CPE offered around termination, but only to smaller companies. The CNE, or New Employment Contract, allows employers of fewer than 20 employees to fire their

employees at will. Protesters also vow not to back down until new legislation has been passed to help employ youth.

A leader of the Unef student union told Reuters that repeal of the CPE was a "first victory" but that students had other issues that need to be addressed as well. The major trade union confederation (CGT) leader, Bernard Thibault, has also announced that the battle against the CNE must start. He has fixed the traditional May Day demonstrations as the first major test. Workers' Force (FO), another union federation, has also warned that the CNE is unacceptable.

In a televised address, a chastened Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, until now considered a leading presidential candidate, said, "The necessary conditions of confidence and calm are not there, either among young people, or companies." The New York Times noted that Villepin's "sober, subdued demeanor contrasted sharply with his defiant and angry stance in speeches earlier before the Parliament." (April 11)

An alternative to the CPE was presented the same day to Parliament by senior law-makers from President Jacques Chirac. While the new proposal will increase guidance and internships for those seeking jobs, its solutions to the problem of youth unemployment—a staggering 23 percent throughout the country, and upwards of 50 percent in the poorer immigrant sub-urbs—also involve continued givebacks to employers, including financial incentives, temporary subsidies or tax breaks for companies who hire workers under the age of 26.

This victory in France comes at a time

when the imperialists throughout Europe are attempting to force neoliberal policies—including the weakening of laws protecting labor rights, an increase in job insecurity and privatization—onto the backs of the European people, offering it as the only option to bring Europe into the 21st century. The struggle against this has been strongest in France, where the people voted in May against a referendum to endorse the EU Constitution.

On May 19 Workers World wrote, "The constitution would strengthen the central authority of the EU..., increase the power of the European-based monopolies against the working class..., increase the police and repressive powers of the European states, and invest more money into the EU's joint military forces."

#### **Impact throughout Europe**

Now this new triumph of the French working class strengthens the struggles of workers throughout Europe, who are being threatened with similar losses of labor rights and who are also fighting back.

As if warning other capitalist governments about the "problems" of giving too much to the workers, a plethora of articles and editorials have appeared in the corporate newspapers in the U.S. since Villepin withdrew the CPE. These editorials have decried the strength of laws protecting labor in France and the strong working-class resistance to their being weakened.

An editorial in the New York Times says, "A class accustomed to security—those with traditional jobs ending in generous retirement plans—opposes any effort to change the system."

Others argue that because of the nar-

row-sightedness of the youth and unions, France will not be able to compete in a "globalized" world.

Another article in the Times describes the situation: "Opponents say the [CPE] will just make it easier for employers to hire cheap, disposable labor and keep young people... turning in an unsteady netherworld of partial employment. That may sound like basic market economics to Americans, but ... France in particular remains devoted to a quasi-socialist ideal."

No one should think France is a socialist country, but its workers have won through decades of struggle a social program that is among the best in the world. And even this Times article, in condemning the French for holding onto these ideals, admits that France was ranked highest in productivity in 2004 among the Group of 7 industrialized nations, and that the World Health Organization rated its health care system the best among its members.

Nicolas Dheift, an unemployed 29-yearold who has not been able to find steady work in Paris since graduating from college in 2003, told the Washington Post, "I disagree with those who say French young people are lazy and don't want to work. They want to work, but they want to work the French way—with a 35-hour week and a steady job. People want to be able to plan for the future and think ahead."

Marches continued to be held on April 11, a day after CPE's reversal, in celebration of the victory as well as in protest of the CNE—including the blocking of two bus depots by about 100 students in Toulouse, according to Reuters. □

**MUNDO OBRERO** 

### PUERTO RICO Jóvenes perturban ceremonia para derechista

Continua de pagina 12

entrada al edificio quedaron desprotegidas, permitiendo la entrada de jóvenes militantes al cuerpo legislativo colonial.

En la consiguiente lucha dentro del edificio, se rompieron ventanas, se desordenaron muebles, pinturas fueron arrancadas de las paredes, y la vitrina en que estaba guardada la constitución (colonial) de Puerto Rico quedó agrietada. Periodistas como Humberto Trías que estaba reportando sobre este acontecimiento fueron tumbados al suelo por la policía, y el personal de seguridad usó extinguidores de fuego para ahuyentar a los manifestantes. Todo esto arruinó por completo la ceremonia de homenaje al terrorista.

#### Una segunda interrupción se llevó a cabo

Después de que llegó la fuerza de choque para reforzar el edificio, la representante por el Partido Nuevo Progresista, partido pro estadidad, Jennifer González, quien estaba dirigiendo el evento, trató de continuar con la ceremonia, pero asombrando a los oficiales de seguridad, se escuchó un ruido fuerte, otra vez interrumpiendo el evento.

Esta vez Kayak había podido entrar rompiendo una ventana de las oficinas de Norma Burgos, la senadora del Partido Nuevo Progresista. El caos se extendió mientras la policía y agentes de seguridad corrían por todos lados buscando el origen del sonido, y después, al intruso. Kayak fue detenido.

Esta acción escandalizó a la burguesía en Puerto Rico.

Según el personal del capitolio, los daños ascendieron a \$30.000. Ricardo Santos, hablando por el Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores, se refirió al asesinato de Muñiz Varela, diciendo, "¿Qué vale más: \$30.000 en daños, o la vida de una persona?"

La representante González, organizadora de la ceremonia, luego le dijo a la prensa que Carlos Varela Pérez, el hijo de Carlos Muñiz Varela, le había pedido que no honrara a Julio Labatut a causa de sospecharse su papel en el asesinato de su padre

Dirigiéndose al mitin fuera del capitolio, Carlos Varela Pérez, que ahora tiene 31 años, recordó cómo en una entrevista de televisión una vez, Labatut fue preguntado si él había desempeñado algún papel en el asesinato de Varela. Su respuesta fue: "No tuve el honor de participar en ese

Jorge Farinacci, portavoz del Frente Socialista, comentó en una declaración escrita, "Repudiamos este acto de provocación por el cuerpo legislativo, al organizar una ceremonia para honrar a un asesino y terrorista cuyos manos están manchadas con la sangre de independentistas y socialistas.

"Por más de tres décadas, la historia de Julio Labatut está llena de conspiraciones para asesinar y destruir el movimiento independentista y socialista, y todo lo que parece ser como Cuba revolucionaria." □

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-Hugo Chávez President, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The words of President Chávez are profound and true. The growing struggle of the people of the world against war, neoliberalism, imperialism, racism and poverty must be guided by a historical and revolutionary vision—the construction of a new world, a socialist world. We invite you to join activists from across the country, and special guests representing struggles around the world at a special conference entitled, "Preparing for the Rebirth of the World Struggle For Socialism." At the conference, both veterans as well as people who are new to the movement will discuss the current issues and challenges that we face. We will analyze, strategize, and organize for the coming struggles. We will take a critical look back at more than a century of world struggle for socialism, and what history and experiences tell us about our approach to today's struggles for everything from the rights of working people globally for basic things like a living wage, health insurance and a union, to the struggle for a new world free of war, exploitation and oppression. Please mark the dates of this conference and make plans to attend.

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### L@s inmigrantes siguen marchando

#### Llamado para un boicot el 1º de mayo exigiendo legalización

Por John Catalinotto Nueva York

Decenas de miles de personas marcharon a través del puente Brooklyn hacia el centro de Manhattan el 1º de abril para exigir respeto y legalización para 11 millones de trabajador@s indocumentad@s. La marcha se extendió tres horas por más de dos millas de distancia.

Esta acción en Nueva York en contra de la ley HR-4437 fue la más reciente en la ola de protestas que ha estado invadiendo a los Estados Unidos desde San Diego hasta Boston desde que la ley fue aceptada por la Cámara de Representantes el 16 de diciembre del 2005.

Cualquiera que estuviera en las aceras del puente podía ver gente de todo el sur y centro América y del Caribe, en su mayoría jóvenes con sus familias exigiendo primero, un resonante NO a la ley HR-4437, también conocida como la ley Sensenbrenner-King; segundo, legalización para l@s trabajador@s indocumentad@s; y tercero, dignidad para las millones de personas sin papeles que trabajan, pagan sus impuestos y obedecen la ley.

Muchos grupos llevaban la bandera de México, pero también de países del Caribe, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras y de casi todos los países de América del Sur, incluyendo a Chile, Colombia y Uruguay. Se había pronosticado lluvia, pero se aguantó hasta la tarde y desde el puente se podían ver claramente los puentes y rascacielos del bajo Manhattan. Muchas per-

sonas ondearon la bandera de los Estados Unidos. En la distancia hacia el sur de la bahía se podía ver irónicamente, la Estatua de la Libertad.

Junto al masivo número de gente originaria del sur de Río Grande, había también contingentes más pequeños de inmigrantes de China, Corea e Irlanda. Cuando estos grupos se unían a las consignas militantes, también las gritaban en español. Una delegación del partido Workers World Party/Mundo Obrero se unió a la marcha con la manta en inglés y en español que leía, "No hay fronteras en la lucha obrera," recibiendo muchos aplausos cuando se desdobló.

Muchas de las consignas que se coreaban eran de luchas anteriores, como "Sí, se puede," de la lucha de los trabajadores de la agricultura en California junto a "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido." Otros eran "Bush, escucha, el pueblo está en la lucha" v "quien se calla jamás será escuchado." Un lema muy desafiante fue "Aquí estamos, no nos vamos; si nos sacan, regresamos." Hasta los motoristas que estaban estancados en el tráfico del puente sonaban sus bocinas en apoyo a la manifestación. Muchos motoristas de raza negra tanto aquellos nacidos en el Caribe como los nacidos aquí alzaban sus puños en solidaridad o hacían el signo de victoria.

La ley HR-4437, presentada por el Republicano James Sensenbrenner (Representante de Wisconsin), es la más racista, reaccionaria y xenofobita de los once proyectos de leyes presentados ante el Congreso, ninguno de los cuales satisface las exigencias de l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes. La HR-4437 convertiría a cualquier pariente, empleador/a, compañer@ de trabajo, oficial religioso, abogad@s o amig@s de una persona indocumentada, en un "traficante de extranjeros" y criminal. La HR-4437 fue la amenaza que despertó la explosiva reacción de l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes.

Berta Joubert-Ceci, corresponsal de nuestro periódico, dijo ante un foro público el 31 de marzo que estos proyectos de lev representan una lucha entre "la derecha y la ultra derecha" y todas estas propuestas incrementan las medidas policiales para detener la entrada de l@s inmigrantes a los Estados Unidos. Aún las menos reaccionarias, como la propuesta McCain-Kennedy, que propone un "programa de trabajadores invitados," permitiría a algun@s inmigrantes ser residentes temporer@s sin derechos civiles excepto el de trabajar en empleos no satisfactorios con baio salarios sin ser arrestad@s o deportad@s.

Joubert-Ceci dijo que el objetivo de los tratados de libre comercio tales como NAFTA, era el de globalizar el control imperialista de las economías latinoamericanas, "la lucha de l@s inmigrantes aquí está globalizando la reacción de los pueblos latinoamericanos contra esos programas neoliberales y trayendo la lucha acá."

Las encuestas han demostrado que l@s inmigrantes recientes con papeles, simpatizan abrumadoramente con l@s traba-

jador@s indocumentad@s, y hasta en la población general, por lo menos la mitad simpatiza.

Los grupos inmigrantes y sus partidarios han llamado otras actividades. Las siguientes fueron el 10 de abril, en un Día Nacional de Acción, una serie de manifestaciones regionales coordinadas en Nueva York, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Los Ángeles y otras ciudades, organizadas por grupos laborales, de inmigrantes, de derechos civiles, religiosos y políticos.

A la misma vez, grupos de derechos para inmigrantes ha comenzado a organizar un boicot nacional y una huelga para el 10 de mayo, para ilustrar el histórico impacto positivo del trabajo inmigrante sobre la economía nacional.

La Coalición 25 de Marzo en contra del HR-4437, que organizó la enorme manifestación en Los Ángeles, está llamando a un Gran Boicot Americano cuando no se trabaje, ni acuda a la escuela, no se venda ni compre el Día 10 de Mayo, para demandar amnistía y derechos plenos para tod@s l@s trabajador@s. El portal www.nohrff37.org tiene más información y un lugar donde se puede endosar.

En la Ciudad de Nueva York, la Coalición Tropas Fuera Ya está trabajando con varios grupos, incluyendo de inmigrantes, para organizar una manifestación y marcha comenzando en la Union Square el 1º de mayo en apoyo al boicot nacional. Su portal www.troopsoutnow.org, tendrá información actualizada sobre esta acción en desarrollo. □

#### **PUERTO RICO**

### Jóvenes perturban ceremonia para derechista

Por Tom Soto San Juan, Puerto Rico

A veces lo que puede parecer un evento político oscuro, puede resultar en una vía de lucha. Esto es especialmente cierto cuando hay una profunda crisis política y económica desarrollándose, como la situación actual en Puerto Rico.

El 29 de marzo, mientras que miembros de la Cámara de Representantes,

dominada por el partido derechista pro estadidad, Partido Nuevo Progresista, intentaban celebrar una "ceremonia de reconocimiento" para agradecer a Julio Labatut Escarra—un empresario derechista nacido en Cuba— por sus "contribuciones filantrópicas en Puerto Rico", una militante manifestación de independentistas marchó frente al capitolio gritando, "Labatut, Labatut, asesino eres tú".

Julio Labatut Escarra ha estado vincu-

lado públicamente con los derechistas escuadrones de la muerte que operaron en Puerto Rico en los años 1970 y 1980 e implicado en el asesinato de Carlos Muñiz Varela en 1979.

Varela, también nacido en Cuba, era un trabajador que se casó y vivió en Puerto Rico. En 1979, tenía 26 años y dos hijos, Yamaira y Carlos. Administraba la Agencia de Viajes Varadero, promoviendo viajes y diálogo con Cuba revolucionaria—una política opuesta por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos.

Varela también estaba activo en el Comité Nacional de la Brigada Antonio Maceo, que organizaba viajes de solidaridad a Cuba.

Según Milagros Rivera del Comité de Solidaridad con Cuba, "Con la idea de acabar con los viajes a Cuba, Carlos Muñiz Varela fue asesinado por el FBI por medio de sus agentes en Puerto Rico. Omega 7, una organización terrorista creada y auspiciada por la CIA, tomó responsabilidad del asesinato".

Labatut está protegido por el FBI, que por 26 años no ha entregado evidencia sobre el asesinato al Departamento de Justicia de Puerto Rico.

#### Represión y crisis económica despierta militancia

El intento de honrar a Julio Labatut Escarra ocurre poco después del asesinato por parte del FBI de Filiberto Ojeda Ríos el 23 de septiembre y de redadas del FBI en febrero en contra de activistas pro independencia. Esto sucede dentro de una atmósfera económica donde los precios de todos los productos y comestibles han subido drásticamente durante el año pasado; cuando un impuesto de ventas está siendo considerado por la legislatura. y en el medio de una crisis fiscal y de deuda, en la cual el gobierno de Puerto Rico rehúsa negociar salarios con empleados públicos como los del sindicato de los trabajadores de la industria eléctrica y de la Federación de Maestros. Este caos ha ubicado al movimiento pro independencia en una posición para dar un ejemplo de lucha.

La manifestación del miércoles, llamada en poco tiempo por familiares y el Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano, el Comité de Solidaridad con Cuba, el Frente Socialista y otros grupos, creció a casi 1,000 personas.

L@s manifestantes marcharon hasta las puertas del capitolio, gritando "asesino, asesino", mientras la policía y los guardias de seguridad del capitolio bloqueaban las entradas por dentro y fuera del edificio.

En un momento, el activista ambiental Alberto De Jesús Mercado, llamado popularmente Tito Kayak, intentó escalar el mástil frente al edificio, donde ondeaba la bandera de EEUU. Cuando la policía se apresuró para detenerlo, las puertas de

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"Diferente a Karlos Marx, cuando él primero publicó la llamada para el socialismo en el siglo diecinueve, no nos falta mucho tiempo. El siglo XXI ahora ha llegado, 'cuando el dilema se debe finalmente resolver.' No tenemos mucho tiempo. Si ahora no cambiamos el mundo, quizás no habrá el siglo 22 para la humanidad. El capitalismo ha destruido el equilibrio ecológico de la tierra. ¡ Es ahora o nunca!"

-**Hugo Chávez** Presidente, República Bolivariana de Venezuela

Para registrarse con antelación y obtener documentos que serán la base de la conferencia, visite en línea a **workersworld.net Workers World Party Oficina Nacional** 55 West 17th Street, New York NYC 10011 Léan el periódico Mundo Obrero en línea a **workers.org** 

Continua a pagina 11