One year ago Chicanos, Mexicanos and Central Americans celebrated the end of the eight years of Bush administration. In addition to launching two wars and ushering in the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression, the Bush administration stepped up repression against immigrants. Raids and deportations of workers by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) doubled, redoubled and then doubled again under Bush. The Bush administration implemented the notorious 287(g) program, where ICE teamed up with local police and sheriffs allowed racists such as Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio to harass Chicanos, Mexicanos and Central Americans. The October 2006 “Secure Fence Act” stepped up the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border, contributing to the deaths of more and more immigrants trying to enter the United States.

In December of 2005, the House of Representatives passed the Republican-backed HR 4437 that would have further criminalized the undocumented. In response, the Chicano, Mexicano and Central American communities erupted in massive protests in March of 2006, another example of their aspirations for equality. These street protests swelled into the millions on May 1, 2006 in Los Angeles, San José, San Diego, Chicago, Milwaukee and in almost every major city and in many smaller cities across the country. These protests demanded legalization for the undocumented, an end to raids and deportations, stopping the militarization of the border and opposition to any guest worker program. Chicanos, Mexicanos and Central Americans made up the vast majority of protesters, as the struggle for legalization is part of the Chicano people’s long struggle for equality and self-determination. They were joined by significant numbers of other Latinos and labor unions, as well as African, Arab and Asian Americans and others whose communities had large numbers of immigrants.

Commenting on the protest, veteran Chicano activist Carlos Montes stated, “The rally is important because it draws attention to the increased suffering of the millions of immigrants, especially those from Mexico and Central America. It comes at an important time where immigration reform legislation is being discussed in the U.S. Congress. The rally puts pressure on President Obama and the U.S. Congress to take action now - this spring - we cannot wait another year.”

The politicians responded to these protests in two ways. In the House of Representatives, Illinois Democrat Luis Gutierrez and Arizona Republican Jeff Flake teamed up to submit the STRIVE act. STRIVE was a combination of good (expanding legal immigration) and bad (more criminalization of the undocumented) policy. On the key issue of legalization, it had too many barriers. The Senate Immigration Reform Act, largely written by Massachusetts Democrat Luis Gutierrez and Arizona Republican John McCain and supported by President Bush, was even worse. The
International Women's Day Celebrated in Minneapolis

By staff

Minneapolis, MN - 50 people gathered here March 7, to celebrate International Women's Day. The event, organized by Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), included speeches, a showing of the film The Eyes of the Rainbow - a documentary about Assata Shakur - and brief toasts from trade union, anti-war, student and welfare rights organizers.

Leaders of FRSO and the FMLN Committee of Minnesota spoke at the program.

Angella Kahn, a member of Freedom Road Socialist Organization and the Welfare Rights Committee, welcomed people to the event, noting the great contributions women have made to the people's struggle.

Jess Sundin, of FRSO stated, "International Women's Day is a day to stand up and fight back, to demand full equality in society, and to take our place in the forefront of people's struggles. On International Women's Day we should raise the special demands of working class women and women of color must be at the center of our agenda. At the same time, International Women's Day should celebrate the special contributions of women to the people's struggles on all fronts. We make up half of the population. Society can't be transformed without the full participation and leadership all working-class women.

Sundin continued, "The histories of class and national liberation struggles are the histories of women. Women who have fought not only to improve their own lives for today, but also oppose capitalism and imperialism - women who are revolutionaries and socialists. Many have been brutally repressed by the powerful. They've paid with their lives and their freedoms. It should not be a crime for a woman to stand up and fight. This is why the international communist movement, 100 years ago, did not hesitate to create an international holiday to recognize our place in the people's struggles."

Sundin concluded, "We will fight not only for our class, and for the liberation of oppressed peoples and nations, but also for real equality for women, both within our movements and in society at large. Long live International Women's Day!"

Contribute to Fight Back! - May Day fundraising drive

Dear Readers:

On May Day, demonstrations will take place across the country demanding "Legalization now" for undocumented workers. Thousands of issues of Fight Back! will be distributed at those protests. Each edition of this newspaper is goes out to workplaces, communities and campuses all over the country. Almost every month, activists step forward to begin the distribution of Fight Back! in a city where it has not been circulated before.

We want to do more of this, and to do so, we could use your help. Shipping, printing and mailing all cost money. By contributing to our May Day fundraising drive you can join us in the effort to make sure that Fight Back! gets into the hands of workers who are walking the picket lines in Alabama or Chicago, who are marching for immigrants rights in L.A., or standing up to police brutality in Florida. Every issue of this newspaper brings you coverage from the front lines of the people's struggle. Our reporters are not sitting on the sidelines waiting for things to happen. And we promise they are not neutral or unbiased. The reporters and staff of Fight Back! are the ones who organize demonstrations and help lead strikes and protests. All of them are biased - towards you. They are part of the movements of working and oppressed people and they do everything they can to oppose the rich and powerful that run this country. And this shows up in the perspective from which they write.

In addition to the print edition of Fight Back!, we have an online edition that is updated on a nearly daily basis. We hope all of our readers check this out and we hope all of you send some cash our way.

Together, we can reach more people with a message of struggle.

Sincerely,

Mick Kelly
For the editors and staff of Fight Back!

WHERE WE STAND

This newspaper exists to build the people's struggle! We provide coverage and analysis of some of the key battles facing working and low-income people. We are not 'neutral' or 'even-handed' in our coverage. We are opposed to exploitation, discrimination and oppression. We hold that the rich class of people, who run the economy and government of this country, are unfit to rule. We support all movements that challenge their power and privilege.

The writers and staff of Fight Back! are activists and organizers - in the trade unions, low-income community, oppressed nationality movements, on the campuses and in other people's movements. We welcome articles, letters, comments and criticisms. Some of us working to put out this paper are members of Freedom Road Socialist Organization. Articles represent the views of the people and organizations that author them.

For the time being, Fight Back! is being published five times a year.

To contact us, write:

FIGHT BACK!
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Minneapolis, MN 55458
info@fightbacknews.org

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Stand up for our
Standard of Living
On April 5, the members of the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) at the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) prepared for a strike. Their bargaining committee went in for a last-ditch session with a federal mediator and the team from management. After 13 hours at the table, the GEO scored a significant victory, emerging with a tentative agreement that protects tuition waivers and increases job security. They also won two years of raises to their minimum stipends and an increase in the university’s contribution for health insurance.

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She continued, “We are sick of seeing destruction that foreclosures and evic- tions cause in our communities. We call for a moratorium on foreclosures and on evictions from foreclosed properties.” Many participants at the rally held signs calling for a moratori- um on foreclosures and evictions.

Mick Kelly, of the Minnesota Coalition for a People’s Bailout, puts it bluntly: “Michael Kidd is being robbed. Aurora is pressuring him into taking a bogus deal that only makes Aurora richer. They are basically turning his house into an ATM for the banks.”

Michael Kidd and many others who have lost homes on the north and south sides of Minneapolis are exam- ples of the racial disparities in home foreclosures and remodifications. As an African American born and raised in North Minneapolis, Kidd says he could have moved away, but chose to stay and build his community. “I am not just speaking for me, but for thou- sands in my situation,” said Mr. Kidd. “There are empty homes all around this neighborhood. We don’t need any more.”

The Minnesota Coalition for a People’s Bailout joins Michael Kidd in demand- ing that Aurora come to the table, fol- low the rules of the HAMP program and renegotiate the mortgage at the home’s current value.

“Give Mr. Kidd a deal he can afford,” says a statement from the Minnesota Coalition for a People’s Bailout for a Peoples Bailout.

Opening day of MN Legislature: Protest Demands Tax the Rich, No Cutbacks, Foreclosure Moratorium

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Tuscaloosa: Crimson Ride bus drivers get first contract

By Jenae Stainer

Tuscaloosa, AL - After a week in and out of work and negotiations, Crimson Ride bus drivers at the University of Alabama have successfully achieved their first contract with First Transit. The agreement was reached at approximately 2:30 a.m. on March 8, after several hours at the bargaining table. The negotiating process stalled several times, which led to the Crimson Ride drivers’ strike on March 1. After a few hours on the picket line, First Transit agreed to come back to the table, but once again these negotiations went nowhere. On March 7, they returned to the table once more, threatening the drivers with a lockout and scab buses if no agreement was reached.

Mario Harmon, ATU Local 1208 Financial Secretary, said that the drivers would vote on the contract the evening of March 8. “It’s a good first contract and it improves our situation a great deal. There are some things we want to work toward in future contracts, but this is a good contract,” he said. He mentioned that their main priorities were to improve the drivers’ wages as well as provide them with a just cause clause to give them more job security.

Leading up to the strike, Students for a Democratic Society in Tuscaloosa and the Network to Fight for Economic Justice have supported the drivers. “There was a successful call-in day to university president Dr. Witt on Feb. 17 demanding that the school put pressure on First Transit to provide the drivers with a fair contract. Since then they have continued to call in, and students have offered on-the-ground support through leafing on campus, holding a rally and joining the drivers on their early morn ing picket line.

‘The most powerful tool we have is collective action’

UIC Geo, continued from page 3

A graduate employee currently receiving a waiver would continue to receive one so they would be able to finish their degrees at UIC. We were also concerned about skyrocketing tuition differential fees. These fees vary in amount, in some cases reaching up to $11,000 per year. We knew that a big, visible action like a strike was one of the best ways to make the university hear our voices.

‘These cuts would kill’

Die-in at MN Governor Pawlenty’s office

By staff

St. Paul, MN - Tombstones and bodies filled the halls outside the Governor’s office here, March 23, as participants in a ‘die-in’ demonstrated against the effects of Governor Pawlenty’s proposed cuts in health and human services. Members of the Welfare Rights Committee and the Minnesota Coalition for a Peoples Bailout, along with other social justice groups, joined the protest.

Joanne Gonzalez and Angel Buechner spoke at the press conference before the action, explaining the potential devastation of Pawlenty’s cuts and spoke out against further cuts that are being proposed by Democrats in the House of Representatives.

According to Kim DeFranco, of the Welfare Rights Committee, “Pawlenty’s proposed budget cuts are the most hurtful, illogical, inhumane and criminal to date. If these cuts are passed in this 2010 legislative session, it would bring more harm and devastation to many families that are already struggling. As we continue face severe economic crisis, there is a need more than ever for the very programs that Pawlenty is proposing to cut! Pawlenty is leaving office, but first he is trying to sink Minnesota.”

While the event started as a die-in, it soon morphed into loud and defiant chanting and drumming. For nearly 30 minutes, the capitol building rang with, “Hey hey! Ho ho! Pawlenty’s cuts have got to go!” Security guards eventually shut the doors to the governor’s reception room, only to have to witness dozens of tombstone-shaped signs that protesters pushed underneath the door.

Tuscaloosa Crimson Ride Drivers on the picket line. Getting a first contract can be a real battle anywhere. It is especially hard in the anti-union South.

Die-in at the State Capitol to protest devastating cuts to low-income Minnesotans.

Gemmel: Throughout the year, the GEO has held events to both send a message to the administration about the issues we care about and to get our membership involved in the fight. Two of our biggest events were a work-in on the ground floor of University Hall in December and a rally with SEIU members and other members of the UIC community in January.

In order to prepare concretely for the strike, the GEO spent time visiting grad students in departments all over campus to explain the issues and listen to their thoughts on a potential strike. We prepared logistically with picket line schedules and by training GEO members to be picket line captains. Finally, we made our intention to strike if we were not able to settle our contract in mediation known to the campus community through our “Ready to Strike” posters and buttons, with which our membership flooded the UIC campus.

Fight Back!: What are the key parts of the agreement?

Gemmel: The key parts of the agreement are the guarantee of our tuition waivers and language that will allow for more transparency in tuition differential policy. We now have a guarantee that graduate employees will not be surprised by any reductions or cuts to their existing tuition waivers, without which, in most cases, students would not be able to afford graduate study. We have also received a guarantee in our contract that the university will discuss tuition differential fees with the GEO, answering questions that have previously been ignored, such as where the money from these fees goes and who exactly determines their implementation and increases.

Other important agreements included guarantees that graduate employees would be paid on time, greater job security through stronger language regarding appointment and re-appointment criteria, a 2% increase to the minimum stipend in the 2010-2011 and 2011-2010 academic years, and an increase in the university contribution to health care costs from $100 to $250 per year.

Fight Back!: What are the lessons for the other workers on campus?

Gemmel: The biggest lesson from our year-long fight for a fair contract is that the most powerful tool to make sure workers are protected is collective action. The most movement we saw at the bargaining table happened in the mediation session after the university received our intent to strike notice, and of course, we were able to get our contract settled as our massive rally outside the site of mediation last Monday. When the university knows that we can collectively act to disrupt normal operations, they are compelled to listen.

The GEO’s slogan is “UIC works because we do,” and this slogan can really be applied to workers all over campus. When we show the administration how essential we are to the success of UIC, they must listen.
Justice for Kofi! Gainesville students protest police shooting

By Jared Hamil

Gainesville, FL - Over 400 angry protesters - a coalition of students, local residents and university professors - rallied and marched, March 16, to protest the racist police shooting of Kofi Adu-Brempong.

Adu-Brempong is an international graduate student from Ghana who was shot in the face by a University of Florida policeman. After receiving a call from a neighbor concerned that Adu-Brempong was sounding due, due to stress over his studies and his immigration status, campus police stormed his apartment, tased him three times and then shot him in the face with a assault rifle.

To add to the outrage, the University of Florida police charged him with a felony for ‘resisting arrest with violence.’

Gainesville Area Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) led the campus action. Beginning with a rally and speakers at Turlington Plaza, the mass of protesters marched through campus to the Board of Trustees in the Emerson Hall Alumni Building. The Board of Trustees governs the entire university. Since the building was closed to the public, the protesters pulled the doors open, pushed past security and took over the building.

They presented the board with a list of demands, including dropping all charges against Kofi Adu-Brempong. The other important demand is the firing of Keith Smith, the officer who shot Kofi in the face. In 2008, Keith Smith was given a verbal warning for throwing eggs and harassing African Americans in the local community.

As the students settled in, waiting to see how the Board of Trustees would Adu-Brempong, continued on page 9

Immigrants in Minnesota fight for right to a drivers license

By Brad Sigal

Saint Paul, MN - The struggle for immigrants to be able to get drivers licenses in Minnesota is gaining steam.

The group leading the struggle is Mujeres en Liderazgo (Women in Leadership), a grassroots group of Latina immigrant women. They want the Minnesota legislature to allow anyone who lives in Minnesota to get a drivers license, regardless of their immigration status.

A bill has been introduced in the state legislature, House File 1718, which will have its first hearing on March 10. Mujeres en Liderazgo has built a coalition to support the bill, along with various other immigrant rights activists and supporters. They are mobilizing to go to the capitol to show the massive community support for the bill at the March 10 hearing.

According to Jovita, an organizer of Mujeres en Liderazgo and also a member of the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Coalition (MIRAc), “We are organizing for drivers licenses because it’s an important need for our community. When we started, we did a survey in the community and the majority of people said this was a big need. So many people are stopped by the police while driving, and since they don’t have a license they get their car impounded and have to pay a huge fine to get it back. They also get a ticket, and sometimes are taken to jail. The majority of immigrants work far away so if they lose their car they can’t get to work and also lose their job. People drive with the constant fear of losing their car, or of getting taken to jail and having their family separated.”

Immigrant workers in the Twin Cities are largely forced to drive to work because many work evening and overnight shift jobs when there are no buses or trains running. Many immigrants also work in suburbs that aren’t accessible by public transit in jobs like construction, hotels, restaurants, office and retail cleaning, warehouses and small factories. Additionally, the number of immigrants living in greater Minnesota in smaller towns has skyrocketed. Many small towns have little or no public transit, forcing immigrants who live in greater Minnesota to drive to get to work too.

Racial profiling and discrimination makes the situation worse. Police frequently pull over Latino drivers because of racial profiling, not because they’ve done anything wrong. According to an ACLU report, a statewide racial profiling study commissioned by the Minnesota legislature “found significant evidence of racial profiling in traffic stops across the state. According to the state, African American, Latino and American Indian drivers were all stopped and searched by law enforcement at greater rates than white drivers, though contraband was found more frequently among white drivers.”

States are not forced to restrict drivers licenses to only U.S. citizens by federal law; each state sets its own policies for issuing drivers licenses. A number of states only require proof that the individual lives in the state to get a drivers license. Immigrants who drive without a drivers license have not had the opportunity to take the drivers test and officially learn the rules of the road in the state. And without a drivers license they can’t get car insurance either.

The House hearing for the drivers license bill on March 10 is the first step the drivers license bill takes toward becoming state law. It faces many more obstacles because powerful politicians in the state oppose any immigrant rights proposal. But Mujeres en Liderazgo is committed to continuing the struggle until victory. According to Jovita, “We will do it. We have to keep pressuring the legislators, keep struggling. There are examples that have passed here like the separation ordinance. And there is the struggle for the Dream Act too, and other fights for equality that have gone on for years. We will see change.”

To find out more about the ‘Drivers Licenses for All’ campaign, see the MIRAc website: http://mirac1.wordpress.com

Selma, Alabama
1965 Bloody Sunday March commemorated

By staff

Selma, AL - Thousands gathered here, Sunday, March 7, to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the 1965 Bloody Sunday civil rights march - during which women and children crossed over the Edmund Pettus bridge and were brutally attacked by police.

Jesse Jackson was among this year’s speakers. He pointed out to the crowd that while the banks got a bailout, it is Alabama that needs a bailout.

Leaflets supporting the struggle of Tuscaloosa’s Crimson Ride drivers were warmly received by the participants.
Thousands of students, workers and faculty at over 100 campuses in at least 39 states participated in a national day of action on March 4. One demand was that administrators and chancellors must quit raising tuition and fees. Another demand was that these administrators cut the salaries of the highest-paid administrators instead of the lowest-paid staff on campus. Many of the protests opposed layoffs. Actions ranged from walkouts and marches, to occupations and shutdowns, to teach-ins and movie showings.

At the University of California-Los Angeles, where cuts have been especially severe, over 300 students staged a sit-in at the administration building, where the chancellor refused to come out and meet with the protesters. Eric Gardner from UCLA Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) said during the protest, “We don’t accept the explanation that their hands are tied by the crisis. There are a lot of things they can do right now to alleviate the situation for students and workers, but they refuse - so we are confronting them and will continue to do so, today and in the future. Our struggle is not over yet. We make this university run, so they cannot ignore us for long.”

Charla Schlueter from UCLA SDS reported from the protest. “Five hours later, students are still here protesting the cuts with spirit. Later tonight, there will be a march with both UCLA and high school students demanding an end to the furloughs, and no more pink slips for high school teachers [who are expecting 5000 more pink slips this spring]. This whole day has been incredible - I have never seen so much unity amongst students, workers and professors working together to defend public education. Professors have brought their classes to the protests, people have been bringing food at water, workers have been taking their furlough days to protest.”

Schlueter continued, “The most inspiring moment to me was when a group of visiting grade school kids came to the protest and talked about how nobody in their family has had the opportunity to attend college. That’s when I realized that if we don’t fight this now, then those children might never get that opportunity.”

Protests happened across California. At UC-Davis, police were firing rubber bullets into the ground as students tried to take over Interstate 80 in a dramatic effort to force the administration to listen to their demands. UC-Berkeley had a rally of hundreds and blocked the campus’s main gates. Students at UC-Santa Cruz held a day-long strike, blocking intersections starting at 5:00 a.m. and shutting down the university for the day. Students held a rally chanting, “Whose university? Whose university?”

At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a peaceful speak-out and march to the chancellor’s office ended with the police arresting 18 people, including the student body president and a member of the press. 16 of those arrested were later charged. Police were overheard saying, “Let’s go arrest some hippies,” and demanding that protesters put away cameras and video equipment.

Rachel Matteson, an SDS member and a leader of the UWM march, was one of the arrested students. She said of the protest, “All of the arrests were completely unjust and unnecessarily forceful. I was pepper-sprayed in the mouth and kicked repeatedly in the shins before being arrested - my throat is still burning hours later. However, all of the arrested students were in high spirits and chanting in our cells. Everybody here is ready to come to the next protest, because this fight is not over. I am proud to have been arrested for standing up for our right to education.”

Students at Syracuse University in New York held a sit-in at Bird Library to demand an end to cuts in workers’ benefits and a tuition freeze. They have more than 1000 signatures on a petition they are going to present to administrators. SDS member Mariel Fiedler says, “We figured we would do something at the library because we saw it as symbolic and action-oriented. The sit-in is the culmination of everything.”

In Maryland, over 700 students, mostly high-school students, marched to a juvenile detention center, stopping at the state school board where more students joined to rally with them. Students demanded the state divert $100 million from the juvenile detention center to education-based jobs. Once at the detention center, 15 youths and adult allies initiated an occupation of the building that lasted for over an hour. Activist Chris Goodman from the Baltimore Algebra Project said that he was excited about the protest and the amount of people there, and is looking forward to next steps to pressure Governor O’Malley to invest in students and young people.

Steph Taylor from the University of Minnesota SDS said about their protest, “Over 400 students, staff and faculty rallied at the University of Minnesota demanding the administration take a pay cut before laying off thousands of workers, forcing furloughs on faculty and staff or raising students’ already inflated tuition and fees. After the rally SDS led the mass on the student union and out into the streets chanting, ‘Fund education, not administration!’ The University’s regents will be meeting next week to discuss the state of the university in this trying economic time and SDS plans to be there with our banners and voices to demand a say in how our university is run and to keep the student movement growing.”

In Chicago there was a forceful protest of over 250 people at the University of Illinois-Chicago who came out to defend education and fight for fair contracts. Chanting, “Chop from the top!” and “Whose university? Our university!” students, members of SEIU Local 73, the Graduate Employees Organization and faculty joined in uni son against the administration placing
the budget crisis on their backs. “This is the first step toward more militant actions,” says Kait McIntyre, a student at UIC and member of Chicago SDS. “Today we showed that you can’t put this on the backs of students and workers and you can’t cut our diversity centers without a fight.”

These protests received international attention and solidarity from students around the world who are also striking and fighting for their right to education. Student groups in the Philippines issued a solidarity statement: “We Filipino youth raise our fists in solidarity with you in the continuing struggle to end the foreboding annual budget cuts and tuition increases. We must join our hands in resisting the onslaught of imperialism against our education and the youth’s future.”

At the University of Minnesota, students, staff, graduate students and faculty united against cuts to higher educations. The real solution is to chop corporate education not occupation,” noted Students for a Democratic Society organizer Rachel Matteson.

Washington, D.C. - About 10,000 demonstrators filled Lafayette Park across from the White House to demand an end to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. March 20 marked the seventh anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, while the occupation of Afghanistan is now in its eighth year. A broad range of organizations mobilized for the demonstration, organized by the International ANSWER Coalition. Military veterans, student groups, trade unions, Arab American organizations, church congregations and many other groups brought thousands of people into D.C. for the rally.

Addressing the crowd at the rally, Natasha Morgan from Students for a Democratic Society talked about the education rights movement and the anti-war movement. “When we say fund education not occupation,” Morgan said, “we mean an end to all academic punishment for the 16 student protesters who were arrested during the March 4 National Day of Action for Education Rights.

“15 police in riot gear were inside the building protecting the chancellor,” noted Students for a Democratic Society organizer Rachel Matteson. “15 police in riot gear were inside the building protecting the chancellor,” said Natasha Morgan.

Milwaukee, WI - On March 11, over 70 students, professors and teachers assistants picketed outside the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee chancellor’s office, as several organizers met inside with the chancellor to demand that he drop the threat of academic punishment for the 16 student protesters who were arrested during the March 4 National Day of Action for Education Rights.

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by Kosta Harlan

Thousands rally In D.C. to protest occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq

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“We won two basic demands today, which were to have the chancellor participate in a public forum about the demands of the UWM Education Rights Campaign and to have more investigation into the excessive use of police force on March 4, but the academic punishment of the 16 protesters is still uncertain and the much larger struggle for student and worker rights must continue.”

Many students report that Chancellor Santiago had ready three swat vans, two police wagons, 20-30 police in riot gear and six cops on horseback - all hidden behind the university dormitories.

by Kosta Harlan

Milwaukee students tell university: Stop threatening education rights protesters

By Daniel Ginsberg-Jaeckle

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Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at March 20 anti-war protest.

Others called for a halt to the drone strikes and a strong South Asian contingent held banners and signs denouncing the drone attacks in Pakistan that have killed hundreds of civilians. At the end of the march, at least eight people were arrested when they attempted to place mock coffins draped in Iraqi and Afghan flags on the White House lawn.

Military veterans gave a powerful condemnation of the occupation and two speakers with Military Families Speak Out and Iraq Veterans Against the War ripped their dog tags and badges off of their uniforms and threw them off the stage, in a symbol of their rejection of the immoral, unjust and criminal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of the protesters were youth and new to the anti-war movement and are committed to rebuilding a broad movement to force the United States to withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq.
May Day 2010: Time to Build the People’s Fight Back!

By Freedom Road Socialist Organizing

May 1 is International Workers Day, a day to celebrate the struggle of the working people of the world for rights and demands on both the local and international level. The United States, May 1 is also a day of struggle for immigrant rights. This May Day, cities across the country will see a renewed spirit of activism as the undocumented and their supporters take to the streets in this fight for justice full equality.

While the bankers’ obscene bonuses are soaring to new stratospheric levels, the working class is struggling with new problems. As incomes are falling, unemployment is still in double digits. Across the globe, the big capitalists, the politicians that they own and the corporate media are saying that now is the time for workers to tighten our belts so that the ‘economy’ that is their profits - can continue to grow. From Greece to Spain and from California to Illinois, governments are slashing spending on social services, raising taxes on working people, cutting government workers’ pay and cutting schools and college.

The United States government is trying to rally support for escalating and expanding war. Tens of thousands of troops have been sent to escalate the war on Afghanistan, while a 100,000 foreign soldiers still occupy Iraq. The U.S. is threatening Iran, deepening its military involvement in the Philippines and Cuba and looking to expand U.S. military presence in Mexico.

But working and oppressed people are fighting back. In Greece, there have been general strikes against the that government’s policies of austerity. Here in the United States, the SK Tool workers struck and won back their health insurance benefits that their bosses had tried to take away. In the heart of the non-union South, bus drivers and teachers at the University of Alabama were able to win a union contract with the Amalgamated Transit Union.

On campuses throughout California and across the country, another fight-back has grown. Budget cuts, outrage against Tea Party legislators for top administers and tuition increases brought thousands of students, faculty and workers to protest. With slogans of “Chop from the top,” “Tax the rich,” and “Books not bombs,” the fight for education has targeted campus administrators and tuition increases brought thousands of students, faculty and administrators and tuition increases brought hundreds of universities.

A year ago, many people had hope for ‘change.’ They had voted for a change from the Bush administration’s policies of war and laissez-faire or free markets that saw the rich get richer, while the poor went off to fight and die halfway around the world. But today, with the escalation in Afghanistan and an even bigger military budget, it is becoming clearer and clearer that the war policy continues with the Democrats in charge. The free market neo-liberal policies have changed, but not for the people. Instead, the big banks, auto companies and drug companies are getting bailed out while millions of people are out of work for longer and longer and millions have either no or substandard health insurance.

There has been no action on the Employee Free Choice Act that would allow workers to beat back anti-union companies. The military’s discriminatory ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ anti-gay policy is still in place. And there has been no action on the promise of immigration reform. For the rest of this year, the Democrats are going to be more concerned with getting reelected than following through with their promises to help working and oppressed people.

The right wing is trying to rebound after the elections of November. Without health care reform, millions of workers are being denied health care coverage.

Stop Raids and Deportations! All Out for May Day!

Immigration Reform Act would have eliminated family reunification visas and, instead of legalizing the undocumented, would have made them and their families into guest workers. Neither bill passed, as they were opposed from both the left and the right.

Since 2006 the protests on May 1 have given workers a new way to fight for rights. Since 2006 workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California to protest their firing under the new ICE audits, which target businesses that hire the undocumented and other immigrants face. Thousands of workers have marched in Southern California.

In March, tens of thousands of people rallied for immigrant rights in Washington D.C. and other cities. In communities across the country, Chicano, Mexicanos, Central Americans, other Latinos, Asians, Africans and Arabs are losing patience with politicians’ promises and are demanding “Legalization now!” and “Stop the raids and deportations!”

Around the world, resistance to U.S. domination is growing. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people of the world want to control their resources.

Since 2006 the protests on May 1 have erupted at events featuring right-wing attacks on immigrants, including allies such as labor and other worker programs. We must continue to build on the successes of May 1 and build for May 1 2011.

The editors of Fight Back! think that support for the CIR-ASAP can help to rebuild the mass movement that is key to meaningful immigration reform. We support reform that genuinely improves the lives of poor and working people. While the bill is not perfect, it would benefit millions of undocumented and their families, as it allows the reunification of Mexican Filipinos and others who are forced to wait up to 20 years to reunite their families. One problem with the bill is that it would expand the government's hypocrisy and hate. As they rail against “government health care” (which many of them enjoy in the form of Medicare), their racism, sexism and homophobia are exposed. But their extremism is backed and protected by powerful Republican and conservative institutions who see May Day as a way to turn the country back to the right.

The people’s fightback has to take on the conservative, pro-business Democrats and the right-wing, reactionary Republicans who both serve the interests of big business and the capitalist system. The way to do this is not mainly by electing ‘better’ Democrats or even progressive third party candidates, but by organizing our work places, communities and campuses to fight for jobs or income, housing and education.

We must fight back with the same spirit as that of the U.S. workers who struck on May 1, 1886 for the eight-hour day. We need to learn from the struggle of workers and oppressed people in other countries, and show our support for them. Ultimately we will need to replace the current capitalist system, that brings economic crisis and war, with a socialist system that can meet people’s needs.

Long Live International Workers Day!

Legalization, Not Raids and Deportations!

Jobs or Income Now! Stop the Foreclosures and Cuts to Schools and Services!

Bring the Troops Home Now: End the War and Occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq!
Electric shock ‘trial’: Sickening violation of human rights of Ricardo Palmera

By staff

Tom Burke, spokesperson for the National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera, urgently requests, “Help and aid for Ricardo Palmera, Colombia, and the international community to stop a crime.” Professor Palmera is being put on trial in Colombia while held in solitary confinement by U. S. intelligence agents, then extradited, put on trial, and imprisoned by the U. S. government.

Palmera went to Ecuador to meet President Jamiles Lenine, a UN official working for the prevention and resolution of internal conflicts, including the 60-year-old social and armed conflict in Colombia.

Following these negotiations in 2002, Palmera was illegally detained in the Colombian army (popularly known in Colombia as Simon Trinidad). We denounced the wrongs committed against Ricardo Palmera by the U. S. and Colombian governments, along with the abuses and violations of human rights.

In a public denouncement, Ramiro Orjuela Aguilar, Palmera’s Colombian lawyer said “Ricardo Palmera is in chains, with electric shock equipment attached to his body that paralyzes him if he moves abruptly. This is the third time this happened in front of the ‘virtual’ courts of Neiva.” The Colombian government is accusing Palmera of planning a FARC guerrilla attack that killed six travelers and injured six more on May 7, 2000.

“Ricardo Palmera is handcuffed, with his feet shackled, and then chains running between his hands, waist and feet” says the Lawyer Orjuela Aguilar. “He is taken to the courtroom with a machine that shocks him. They attach equipment to his body so if Ricardo moves too much, then it shocks him with enough voltage to paralyze him. During the trials, he cannot move easily enough to see the downtown in front of him,” the lawyer explained.

Ricardo Palmera was one of the negotiators in the discussions for peace between the Colombian government of Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) and the guerrilla organization FARC-EP that ended in San Vincente del Caguan, in Caqueta, Colombia.

Chicago activists protest Israeli apartheid.

By staff

Chicago, Il. - About 20 protesters marched at 7:00 a.m., March 3, outside the Palmer House Hilton, in opposition to an official Sister Cities relationship between the City of Chicago and the municipality of Petach Tikva in Israel. The event was organized by the Palestinian Solidarity Group-Chicago (PSG) in response to the Annual International Business Breakfast keynoted by Mayor Daley.

The Palestinian Solidarity Group rejects use of the Sister Cities program to normalize Israeli apartheid, demanding that Israel instead be held accountable for its human rights violations. PSG also protests the relationship between the Petach Tikva Sister Cities program and Israeli governmental and other organizations that have played a role in the colonization of Palestinian land and the continued dispossession of the Palestinian people.

Professor Palmera is held by the U. S. government in solitary confinement, under inhumane conditions. In Colorado, Colorado Supermax prison. Tom Burke says, “We need friends and sympathizers to support freedom for professor Ricardo Palmera (popularly known in Colombia as Simon Trinidad). We denounce the wrongs committed against Ricardo Palmera by the U. S. and Colombian governments, along with the abuses and violations of human rights.

Following four unfair trials in Washington D.C., including one where Chief Judge Hodge was forced to step down after cheating with U. S. Prosecutor Ken Kohl, Professor Palmera is now the victim of U.S. government in solitary imprisonment of this brave Colombian freedom fighter Ricardo Palmera. Ricardo Palmera should be set free.”

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In a public denouncement, Ramiro Orjuela Aguilar, Palmera’s Colombian lawyer said “Ricardo Palmera is in chains, with electric shock equipment attached to his body that paralyzes him if he moves abruptly. This is the third time this happened in front of the ‘virtual’ courts of Neiva.” The Colombian government is accusing Palmera of planning a FARC guerrilla attack that killed six travelers and injured six more on May 7, 2000.

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Next Palmera faced four trials in Washington D.C. Two of the trials were repeated because the American juries refused to convict Palmera. The U. S. Department requested new trials, until Palmera was found guilty of one charge - membership in the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). During the four trials Palmera was proud to say and explain why he belongs to the FARC, the largest guerrilla army in Latin America. However, the U. S. government defines FARC as a criminal conspiracy.

There is nothing normal about Ricardo Palmera’s case: the UN official was not allowed to testify in his trials, Palmera is held in solitary confinement, the U. S. press cannot interview him, he cannot make phone calls, he is not allowed to interact with other humans, to breath fresh air, nor to see the sky. The National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera has denounced the recently denominated ‘West Bank and Gaza Strip’ for not allowing Professor Palmera to read books sent by his American supporters.

Instead of allowing a peaceful negotiation to the 60-year-old armed conflict, the U.S. is choosing war. The U. S. government is abusing the U. S. court system in an effort to criminalize the national liberation struggle of the Colombian people. Tens of thousands of Colombian revolutionaries are not criminals. Solidarity is necessary and urgently needed. The National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera urges friends and sympathizers to denounce U. S. authorities for these violations against this brave fighter for peace, justice, and the Colombian people. Free Ricardo Palmera!

“Free Ricardo Palmera” letters can be received by: Eric Holder, the U. S. Attorney General U. S. Department of Justice 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20530-0001

To contact the National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera write to info@colombiansolidarity.org or call Tom Burke 773-844-3612.

Adu-Brempong, continued from page 5

respond, tension rose inside the boardroom. After a half hour, a trustee came out to speak to the protesters. Following his lead, the students proceeded to give speeches about stopping police brutality and continuing the fight for Adu-Brempong. An hour later, the protesters decided the demands of the coalition were clearly received by the board and left the building.

Then the protesters marched to the Tigert Hall Administration Building for another rally, targeting University President Bernie Machen. Unfortunately President Machen was “out of town.” The students chanted, “Justice for Kofi!” and “No justice, no peace! No racist police!”

Fernando Figueroa, of Gainesville SDG spoke: “We will not let up until we gain justice for Kofi. We are taking a stand against police brutality and racism on our campus and throughout the country.” Figueroa continued, “It is astounding to see so few reporters covering the point-blank shooting of an African man in the face here. This is the same campus where you could not walk ten feet without bumping into a reporter or TV crew following a white student’s famous ‘Don’t tase me bro!’ incident.”

Late in the afternoon, the student protesters attended a student government meeting to demand a resolution calling for a grand jury investigation of the racist cop. With some persuasion, the resolution passed. With protests heating up in Gainesville, the Coalition for Justice Against Police Brutality vows to continue the fight for Kofi Adu-Brempong.
El primero de mayo es el día internacional de los trabajadores, un día para celebrar la lucha de la clase trabajadora y de los pobres. En todo el mundo, las luchas generales de los trabajadores tienen que vivir con menos para 'la economía' o mejor dicho sus ganancias puedan seguircreciendo. Desde Grecia hasta España y desde California hasta Illinois, los gobiernos están recortando sus presupuestos, recortando lo que ganan en servicios sociales, aumentando los impuestos para los trabajadores, recortando los salarios de los trabajadores públicos y recortando los presupuestos de las escuelas y las universidades. Estados Unidos está intentando ganar apoyo para seguir escalando y exponiéndose a la guerra contra Afganistán, mientras que 100,000 soldados extranjeros siguen ocupando a Irak. Estados Unidos está amenazando a Irán, profundizando su involucramiento en la política de Afganistán, Pakistán y de Colombia y buscando expandir su presencia militar en México. Pero los trabajadores y la gente oprimida está resistiendo. En Grecia, han hecho dos huelgas generales en contra de la política de austeridad del gobierno. En Estados Unidos, los trabajadores de SK Tool fueron de huelga, mientras que 100,000 soldados extranjeros siguen ocupando a Irak. Estados Unidos está amenazando a Irán, profundizando su involucramiento en la política de Afganistán, Pakistán y de Colombia y buscando expandir su presencia militar en México.

La lucha por los derechos de los inmigrantes es un componente clave de la lucha del primero de mayo. En marzo, decenas de miles de personas marcharon en Washington D.C. y en otras ciudades del país para los derechos de los inmigrantes. D.C. y en otras ciudades del país para los derechos de los inmigrantes. En comunidades en todo el país, los Chicanos, Mexicanos, centroamericanos y otros Latinos, Asiantas, africanos y árabes están perdiendo sus ganancias con las promesas incumplidas de los políticos y están exigiendo “legalización ya” y “alto a las redadas y deportaciones.”

Hace un año, muchas personas esperaron ’cambio.’ Habían votado para un cambio de las políticas de la régimen de Bush de guerra y del libre comercio que enriquecieron a los ricos y mandaron a los pobres a pelear y morir en el otro lado del mundo. Pero con le estalación de la guerra contra Afganistán y un aumento al presupuesto militar, hoy queda más claro que nunca que la política de guerra sigue con los Demócratas en poder. Las políticas económicas del mercado libre han cambiado, pero no a favor del pueblo sino a favor de los bancos grandes, compañías de autos y drogas quienes están recibiendo rescates del gobierno mientras millones de trabajadores pierden sus casas a la ejecución hipotecaria, millones de personas permanecen sin trabajo mas y mas tiempos de empleo siguen sin seguro medico.

Por Freedom Road Socialist Organization

Primeros del mayo 2010
Hora de luchar

Alrededor del mundo, la resistencia en contra de la dominación estadounidense está creciendo. Los países quieren independencia, las naciones quieren liberación, y el pueblo quiere revolución. Países como China y Brasil mostraron oposición a los Estados Unidos en conferencias internacionales sobre el cambio climático y están oponiéndose a los esfuerzos estadounidenses para aislarnos a Irán. Las luchas para la liberación nacional en Afganistán, Irak y Palestina siguen en contra de ocupaciones hecho por Estados Unidos, Israel y OTAN.

La lucha revolucionaria del pueblo de Colombia, India, Nepal y las Filipinas siguen dando golpes en contra de gobiernos reaccionarios de carácter feudal y capitalista que están aliados con las corporaciones multinacionales para explotar su labor y sus recursos naturales. Estados Unidos, lassel, y el sistema capitalista. La lucha del pueblo tiene que enfrentar a los Demócratas conservadores y pro-negocios, y también los Republicanos derechistas y reaccionarios, ambos de quienes sirven los intereses de las compañías grandes y el sistema capitalista. La manera de luchar no es principalmente por intereses, sino por un cambio de las políticas de las compañías grandes y el sistema capitalista, la lucha revolucionaria de los trabajadores y los oprimidos en contra de la dominación estadounidense.

Tenemos que luchar con el mismo espíritu que los trabajadores quienes hicieron huelga el 1 de mayo 1886 exigiendo un día del trabajo de solo 8 horas. Debemos aprender de la lucha de los trabajadores y los oprimidos en otros países y mostrárselo nuestro apoyo. Últimamente tenemos que reemplazar al sistema capitalista actual que solo trae crisis económica y guerra, con un sistema socialista que puede realizar las necesidades del pueblo.

¿Que viva el Día Internacional de Trabajadores!

¿Legalización SI! ¿Redadas y Deportaciones No!

¿Trabajo o Ingreso Ahora!

¿Alo a las ejecuciones hipotecarias y a las recortes a escuelas y servicios!

¿Que Regresen las Tropas a Casa Ya: Alto a la Guerra y Ocupación en Afganistán y Irak!

¡Lucha y RESISTE!

MAYO 2010
PÁGINA 10
Anuncian marcha para el 1 de mayo en Minneapolis
Por Anh Pham

Minneapolis, MN - El 2 de abril, activistas del movimiento inmigrante anunciaron el plan para una marcha grande el 1 de mayo, el Día Internacional del Trabajador. La marcha empezará a las 2:00 pm en el parque Martin Luther King en la calle 41 y la avenida Nicollet. Los organizadores de la marcha dicen, “La lucha por una reforma migratoria comprensiva esta en un momento clave y vamos a hacer todo lo posible para tener la marcha mas grande que sea posible este año para exigir la legalización e igualdad para todos. Los políticos en Washington DC están debatiendo sobre la reforma migratoria. AHORA es el momento para decir qué clase de reforma queremos: una legalización real para todos, derechos laborales e igualdad, y un fin a las redadas, deportaciones y a la discriminación.”

La marcha en Minneapolis esta organizado por MIRAC, Asamblea de Derechos Civiles, Mujeres en Liderazgo, Centro Interfie para Justicia Laboral, Mujeres Levantando Mujeres, y el Comité FLMN-Minnesota. Mas organizaciones están sumándose al esfuerzo diariamente, tanto grupos inmigrantes como organizaciones de trabajadores y otros grupos activistas progresistas.

Marcha para derechos de inmigrantes
Legalización, continúa de página 12

Gutiérrez presentó la propuesta de ley “Reforma Integral de Inmigración para la Seguridad y Prosperidad de América” o CIR-ASAP. Este proyecto de ley fue respaldado por los congresistas latinos, los congresistas de los asiáticos y de las islas del Pacífico, los congresistas afroamericanos y los progresistas en el congreso. Esta propuesta de ley es mucho mejor que la ‘Acta de Legalización combinada con protestas masivas en la calle y con movilizaciones masivas de las masas el 1 de mayo.

Jesse Jackson fue uno de los oradores de este año. Dijo a la multitud que, mientras los bancos tienen un plan de rescate, es Alabama que necesita un rescate. Folletos apoyando la lucha de los conductores de buses “Crimson Ride” de Tuscaloosa, Alabama fueron muy bien recibidos por los participantes.

Marcha del domingo sangriento de 1965 conmemorado en Selma
Por Redacción

Selma, AL – Miles de personas reunieron aquí, un domingo 7 de marzo para conmemorar el 45 aniversario de la marcha del “Domingo Sangriento” por los derechos civiles en 1965 en donde las mujeres y niños intentaron cruzar el puente Edmund Pettus y fueron brutalmente atacados por la policía.

Marcha conmemora la original marcha del 1965 del “domingo sangriento”

¡Este período existe para construir la lucha del pueblo! Reportaron y damos análisis sobre unas de las batallas centrales en las que se encuentra la gente trabajando y de bajos ingresos.

No somos neutrales en nuestro informe. Estamos opuestos a la explotación, discriminación, y opresión. Sostenemos que la clase de la gente rica, que manejan la economía y el gobierno de este país, no están calificado para gobernarnos. Apoyamos a todos los movimientos que denuncian su poder y privilegio.

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