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The articles in this pamphlet are reprinted from *Fight Back Newspaper*, which is online at www.fightbacknews.org.

would be completely inhumane to separate them because one or both of the parents are undocumented. We will continue to fight until our rights and dignity as human beings are recognized,” declared one local immigrant student organizer. Speakers from the local Arab and African American communities talked about how



Minneapolis, MN on May 1, 2006

the Latino struggle is linked to theirs and expressed solidarity with the Latinos.

Organizer William Martinez said of the Minneapolis rally, “On this day we are showing Congress and the politicians that immigrants are an economic and political power. We are here and we demand justice and equality, not just for Latinos, but for all immigrants in the United States. We not only support the U.S. economy, but we support the economies of two countries at once. One, through the

remittances that we send to our countries of origin, and two, through the taxes that we pay here in the United States.” ★

Introduction

This pamphlet is a collection of some of the articles, interviews, and editorials that have appeared in the newspaper *Fight Back!* dealing with the attacks on immigrants and with the dynamic movement for immigrant rights. Since this past spring, millions of undocumented workers, along with their communities and supporters, have taken to the streets and altered the political landscape of the United States. In our April 2006 editorial we commented:

“When the forces of reaction and racism decided to push their vicious anti-immigrant agenda, they lifted a rock, only to drop it on their own feet. Across the country, one of the most powerful waves of demonstrations in U.S. history is now unfolding. In Chicago on March 10 it became apparent something really big was in the offing; a sea change was under way. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Latinos, along with other immigrants and their supporters, filled the streets. A general strike shut down hundreds of factories and businesses. This was followed by major demonstrations; some accompanied by work stoppages – that rocked Denver, Colorado; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Georgia and Phoenix, Arizona. Then on March 25, one million people took to the streets of Los Angeles.”

The wave of demonstrations that took place on May 1, International Workers Day, showed the power of immigrant workers and stands as a powerful example for other working class and oppressed peoples.

These protests left no doubt that a sleeping giant had awoken. From now on nothing will ever be the same. A substantial section of the U.S working class has immigrated here from Mexico, Central and Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and points between. Inequality, discrimination, and criminalization are unacceptable. This means amnesty, and saying no to “guest worker” programs. National oppression must go, and along with it the systematic, racist discrimination visited upon Mexican, Latino and other immigrant workers.

The immigrant rights movement has already made history. And there is no doubt it will shape the future in the months ahead.

–*Fight Back!* editors, August, 2006

Bush Immigration Plan: No Solution for Undocumented Workers, Serves Corporations

By Freedom Road Socialist Organization

The Bush proposal on immigration does not address the real problems of the more than ten million undocumented workers in this country. It is simply a recycled version of past 'guest worker' programs which lock immigrant workers into poverty, without providing any real path for toward security, residency and justice.

Specifically, Bush's plan states that undocumented workers who come forward can stay for two three-year periods. The logical question is, "What then?" All

The Bush proposal on immigration does not address the real problems of the more than ten million undocumented workers in this country.

that the Bush plan holds out is that folks can then go through the 'normal' immigration process. Because of the very strict immigration quotas, this amounts to a dead end for the millions of undocumented working here. Another part of the administration immigration

proposal says that undocumented workers will need their employer to 'sponsor' them. The effect of this will be chaining undocumented workers to their jobs, making it hard for the undocumented to leave rotten jobs and giving the employers incredible power over the immigrant labor.

The Bush proposal reflects the fact that the corporate owners depend on immigrants. As things stand, a substantial section of the working class in this country, particularly those who work in the most difficult sections of service, agriculture and manufacturing,

"I was impressed by the spirit of unity in the march. We carried a banner, "Asians for immigrant rights," and were constantly getting smiles, whistles, thumbs-up and even a few clenched fists from the overwhelmingly Latino crowd," said local community organizer Masao Suzuki.

Chants of, "Sí se puede!" (Yes, we can!) were mixed in with white t-shirts saying, "Un dia sin inmigrantes, May 1, 2006." While U.S. and Mexican flags were most common, there were also others: Salvadoran, Chilean, Brazilian and even a few red flags and religious banners.



San Jose, CA on May 1st, 2006

Many of the smaller businesses along the route were closed that day, either in support of the economic boycott or because their workers did not show up for work.

In Asheville, North Carolina, a town of 70,000, 3500 people come out for immigrants' rights, shutting down most of the streets in the downtown area for several hours. Many people walked out of their workplaces and students walked out of schools in the area. "There was a very high spirit of solidarity and unity and the demonstration was marked by a strong optimism that the people are winning in the fight against the racist Sensenbrenner legislation," said local student organizer Kostas Harlan.

Danielle Fernez, one of the organizers of the Asheville protest, said, "I'm more full of pride than anything else. It's about what you stand for. We can and want to fight together with you for a better community. We are not just fighting for us, but for every American, for every person, for the dignity and respect that all people deserve." In the spirit of International Workers Day, chants like, "We are workers! We are workers!" as well as, "No somos criminales!" were popular.

And in Minneapolis, despite drizzling rain, 3000 immigrants and supporters came out for a community rally in a local park. "It was great to see so many immigrant families present at the event. It

May 2006

Immigrant Workers on the Move

By Tracy Molm

May 1 marks International Workers Day around the globe. Here in the U.S., immigrants' rights coalitions called for a National Day Without An Immigrant, advocating no work, no school and no buying to show the impact that the immigrant community has. Millions of undocumented workers and their supporters took to the streets.

Throughout California, protests drew record numbers — 25,000 in Salinas, 15,000 in Sacramento and Oakland, 30,000 in San Francisco, 1000 in Union City and over 100,000 in San Jose, where small red flags with, "Fight Back!" on one side and, "¡Lucha y Resiste!" on the other were very popular.

More than 1 million marched in Los Angeles. Carlos Montes, a veteran leader of the Chicano national movement, said of the Los Angeles march, "This is a new era of struggle in the U.S., with the Chicano-Latino people's fight for equality and self-determination. And we will keep the pressure on, with other types of actions and potentially an Immigrant



Asheville, NC on May 1st, 2006

Mother's Day of solidarity and a Dump Arnold action in California. We will call for dumping racist politicians in the Nov. elections, linking the immigrant rights struggle to the anti-war movement."

In San Jose the march was so huge that people were still leaving the starting point when the first marchers arrived at the end, more than four miles away. The protest was almost all Latino, with more Central and South Americans and Asians than the previous protest on April 10.

are immigrants, millions of whom do not have legal status.

When big business dreams of their ideal immigration policy, they see well-regulated labor markets, where there is an ample supply of workers, eager to take any job when the economy is booming. They also see workers who can be sent home in times of economic crisis or recession — avoiding the need to pay for programs like unemployment insurance for those who are out of work.

Behind immigration, stands an ugly truth: U.S. corporations have used the political and economic power they wield to wreck the economies of many third world countries. As a result, people leave behind their homes and families in search of a better standard of living.

No discussion of immigration to the U.S. can ignore the issue of Mexico, where most undocumented workers come from.

From the theft of northern Mexico right up to NAFTA, the Mexican people have suffered the oppression and exploitation at the hands of the colossus of the North. The wealth concentrated in Wall Street is mirrored by the spread of poverty in urban and rural Mexico. This reality underscores the stupidity and chauvinism that is inherent in the ruling class's discussions of immigration.

Right-wing commentators and self-serving politicians spew gallons of venom about 'illegals' crossing the southern border — as if they were the rightful owners of the Southwest portion of the U.S. Ignored is the fact the area was stolen from Mexico, and the Spanish speaking majority left on this side of the border were forced to endure more than a century and a half of oppression. In that process, a new nationality, Chicanos, came into being. As such,

U.S. corporations have used the political and economic power they wield to wreck the economies of many third world countries. As a result, people leave behind their homes and families in search of a better standard of living.

Chicanos have the same rights as any other nationality – including the right of self-determination.

To hear some reactionary politicians, who seem to have a sense of entitlement as big as a house, talking about the southern border (and the Southwest as whole) as if it were their personal property would be laughable, if the entire matter weren't so deadly serious. Each year, hundreds of men, women and children fleeing poverty - poverty created by the U.S. elites – lose their lives attempting to cross the border. This is a life and death question.

The only just solution to the legal problems faced by undocumented workers is immediate and unconditional amnesty. Immigrants do not need 'guest worker' programs or political grandstanding that is aimed at widening the political base of the Republican Party. The undocumented need documents – documents that allow them to stay, work and exercise their rights.

It's vital that every possible contribution is made to strengthen the movement that insists upon amnesty for the undocumented. At the same time, we need to insist on the defense of democratic rights such as drivers licenses and equal access to social services. By taking this course, a blow is struck at the system of racism, inequality and injustice that is visited upon the oppressed nationalities within the borders of the U.S. – and at the same time we unite all who can be united against the rich who rule this country. ★

Asian Americans, Chicano/Latinos, Native Americans and Native Hawai'ians. Today's struggle for immigrant rights is also drawing support from other immigrants, especially oppressed nationality (African, Arab and Asian) communities who share the unjust treatment by a racist society that Mexicanos, Latinos and Chicanos face.

Another similarity between the African American movement and the struggle today is the role of militant students and youth. African American college students started the direct action, which spread around the country, of sitting-in at segregated facilities and also spearheaded the drive for Black Studies on college campuses. Today's Chicano, Mexicano and Latino youth, both immigrants and the children of immigrants, are walking out of their schools to join protests against the attempts to criminalize the undocumented and scapegoat immigrants.

African American workers were the backbone of the civil rights movement, from those who boycotted the buses in Montgomery to the garbage workers on strike in Memphis where Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In today's struggle Mexicano, Chicano and Latino workers have also been the backbone of the movement, not just swelling the ranks of demonstrators, but also as organizers of the protests. Thus it is quite natural that the immigrants' rights protests will be on May 1, International Workers Day, which commemorates the struggle of American workers, many of whom were immigrants, in the 1880s for an eight-hour day.

In this spirit, we call upon workers of all nationalities to support their brother and sister Mexicano, Chicano and Latino workers, to fight for full equality for Mexicano and other Latino peoples and to uphold the right to self-determination for the Chicano Nation. This is because we share a common enemy – the capitalist class in general, and their representatives in the Bush administration and the right – that is behind the anti-immigrant, anti-Latino, anti-Black and anti-union policies of the government and the big corporations. ★

***Long live May 1, International Workers Day!
Full equality for Mexicanos and all immigrants!
Self-determination for the African American and Chicano Nations!
Workers and oppressed peoples unite!***

in at Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina, for this is the home of the African American Nation. The African American Nation developed as slavery forged different African peoples with their own languages, cultures and religions into a single people with a common territory, economy, language and culture. After the end of the Civil War and slavery, the United States kept this new nation in chains through Jim Crow and the lynch mob. The Black liberation movement, by breaking the chains of segregation and the Klan, was a step toward both full equality for the African American people in the North and South and towards self-determination for the African American Nation.

Mexicans in the U.S. Southwest have also been forged into a Chicano Nation, as the thousands of Mexicans who lived on land annexed by the United States in 1848 have grown into millions due to immigration from Mexico, under conditions of legal segregation, economic exploitation, systematic suppression of their language and culture and theft of their land. Just as African Americans were denied their human rights through Jim Crow, so today are Chicanos, Mexicanos and other Latinos denied their human rights through unjust immigration laws. These laws are chains on the Chicano Nation, not only affecting millions of undocumented, but millions more of their family members who are legal residents or U.S. citizens.

This wave of anti-immigrant legislation in the works at the national, state and local levels, and the rise of new white vigilantes such as the Minutemen, is not just a tactic to try to build support for the right, the Republicans and the Bush administration, who are suffering from their debacles in Iraq, New Orleans and the attempted privatization of Social Security. Just as the right is trying to reduce the Black population of New Orleans – one of the most important cities economically and culturally of the African American Nation – so too would the anti-immigrant movement try to reduce the Mexicano and Latino population. This is a direct attack on the Chicano Nation, which is gaining strength as Mexicanos and their children who settle in the Southwest become a part of the nation.

The African American movement of the 1950s and 1960s drew support from all nationalities and helped jumpstart the struggles of

March 2006

Chicago: General Strike for Immigrant Rights

By Staff

Chicago IL – Upwards of 200,000 people marched through downtown Chicago, March 10, chanting, “Si, se puede!,” meaning, “Yes we can!” defeat the Sensenbrenner bill.

This legislation, HR (House Resolution) 4437, was passed in December by the U.S. House of Representatives and looks ready to move quickly through the Senate. If passed, it would make it a crime for organizations or individuals to assist undocumented immigrants. In other words, if your union or social service organization were to help someone who is undocumented, you would be guilty of ‘alien smuggling,’ and could face federal prison time.

Under current law, being an undocumented worker is a civil crime in the U.S. This bill will make it a criminal act. It would permanently bar all undocumented persons – including 1.6 million children – from the United States. It would lead to the separation of families.

“Somos Todos America” (We Are All America)

Most of the marchers came from the Mexican immigrant community in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. They were joined by Korean, Polish, Irish, Arab and other immigrant communities.



Together, they made up the largest rally of any kind in the history of Chicago.

More than that, everyone present had to take off work or school. One of the key organizers, Jose Artemio Arreola, told *Fight Back!* newspaper, “Over 100 factories allowed workers to take the day

Over 100 factories allowed workers to take the day off, because so many workers told the owners they were going for the general strike.

off, because so many workers told the owners they were going for the general strike.”

Referring to the slogan of the day, Arreola continued, “We want the message to go out all across the country: Somos Todos America – We Are All

America.” Arreola, together with Omar Lopez, initiated the Coalition Against HR4437, which called for the general strike just five weeks ago. Arreola hopes the groundswell of support that produced this historic event will produce a domino effect, with other cities around the U.S. holding rallies and general strikes as well. “If there is resistance everywhere, the senators will get the word and vote against this bill.”

Already, Los Angeles is planning two weekends of struggle. Latinos Against the War in East L.A. is raising immigrants’ rights in an action on the anniversary of the Iraq war, March 17. In addition, March 25 will see a rally against HR4437 and on March 26, immigrants’ rights will be the focus of the annual Chavez Labor Mass for the churches in the area. ★

April 2006

May 1 and the Fight for Equality and Self-determination

By Freedom Road Socialist Organization

May 1, 2006 was an historic day, as millions of people, mainly Mexicanos (immigrants from Mexico), Chicanos and Central Americans, poured into the streets of United States to support the struggle for immigrant rights. Many have called this upsurge in protests a ‘new civil rights movement.’ We think that this is a very good description of the broad united front of labor, religious, community and youth organizations and the grassroots participation. Most importantly, this fight for equality and self-determination in fact represents a challenge to the monopoly capitalists that rule this country.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was more than a fight for civil rights; it was a Black liberation movement. It was a struggle of the African American people for full equality. For 75 years, Jim Crow, the system of legal segregation backed by the death squads of the Ku Klux Klan in the South and the systematic discrimination in housing, education and employment in the North and West denied African Americans equality with whites.

Today, the mass mobilization of Mexicanos, Chicanos and other Latinos shows the grassroots desire for full equality in the face of discriminatory immigration laws and practices. A key demand is legalization of the undocumented, which will help them to challenge exploitation and racism and aid in the reunification of their families. The Bush administration’s call for a ‘guest worker program’ to aid business would be a step in the wrong direction, as it would establish a group of second-class residents whose only right would be to work for low pay.

The Black liberation movement was also a struggle for self-determination. It is no accident that the movement began in the U.S. South, from the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott to the sit-

the chains of inequality. The movement of the undocumented, of Mexicans in the U.S. and other oppressed nationalities who have immigrated from other countries, including Latino immigrants from Central and Latin America, is a movement for constant democracy and equality that challenges this system of racist national oppression. And this movement creates an improved set of conditions to build the fight for African American and Chicano liberation.

This movement to resist the attacks on those without legal documents deserves the support of all progressive, working and oppressed peoples. Big business and its bought and paid for politicians have created a situation where the undocumented are among the most oppressed and exploited. In this context, anti-immigrant bigots have tried to pose as defenders of the working class. Nothing could be further from reality or any sense of justice and fair play. Truth be told, equal rights for the undocumented – which include amnesty and legalization — will increase the capacity of the immigrants to resist those determined to hold them down. Every advance by those at the bottom improves the condition of working people as a whole.

This is a critical point in time. There is a real possibility that the attacks in Congress can be defeated. Every effort should be made to build the movement to defend immigrant rights and every possible force that can be mobilized should be; our unions, community, civil and human rights groups. The masses of people are the makers of history and the movement under way is nothing short of historic. Insist on equality and democratic rights for the undocumented and an end to the policy of criminalization. Seize the hour, seize the day, seize the time! ★

March 2006

Interview with Jose Artemio Arreola An Organizer of Chicago's Immigrant Rights Protest

Just after the protest, *Fight Back!* caught up with Jose Artemio Arreola, a key organizer of the massive protest for immigrant rights that rocked Chicago, March 10. He explained how the Coalition Against HR 4437 built the unity necessary for a turnout of such proportion.

“When we wanted to call for a coalition meeting, it was suggested that we bring together local representatives of PRI, PRD, and PAN. But these are Mexican parties.

It had to be broader,” Arreola explained.

Last year, Arreola was elected to serve on an advisory council created by Mexican President Vicente Fox to aid immigrants in the U.S. “My friend thought the council could sponsor the meeting. This also was not broad enough.”

Arreola is on the executive board of Local 73 SEIU (Service Employees International Union.) He works as a janitor in the Oak Park public schools. And he is an active member in the Michoacan Club, a social organization of immigrants from the Mexican state of Michoacan. “The union, the clubs, the Mexican parties, yes, all of them needed to be present. But the entire community, and not just Mexican immigrants, had to be represented.”

So a meeting was called with this approach. It was successful, with over 30 organizations represented in the coalition. Arreola

The importance of this march can't be understood by the numbers alone. It has to be stressed that this was a general strike. It took place on a work-day. This means that 200,000 people took off work.

explained that, in the next stage, the Spanish radio stations spread the word far and wide. Starting with Rafael ‘El Pistolero’ Pulido, on “Que Buena,” WOJO 105.1 FM, Univision Radio; then others joined, such as Javier Salas, host of “Un Nuevo Día,” on “La Tremenda,” WRTO 1200 AM, also a Univision station.

Not Just Any March: A General Strike

The importance of this march can't be understood by the numbers alone. It has to be stressed that this was a general strike. It took place on a workday. This means that 200,000 people took off work. Tens of thousands of workers – from hundreds of factories, restaurants, grocery stores and landscaping companies – walked out of work, or told their managers they wouldn't be coming in that day. And thousands of high school students walked out as well.

One important note is the role that unions played in the mobilization. While SEIU Local 73, SEIU Local 1 and some other unions endorsed the rally, and encouraged some of their members to come out, not all unions were supporting it. Arreola related, “Workers called me to tell me they wanted to come for the general strike. When they asked their union representatives, however, they were told, ‘If you leave work, you will be punished.’”

Arreola added, “The marchers were workers and their families. This is a lesson and a challenge for trade unionists, like myself, that immigrant workers want to organize and fight.” ★



Jose Artemio Arreola (center), a key organizer of the general strike, together with Joe Iosbaker of Fight Back! (right) and Bill Silver of SEIU Local 73 (left), after the massive rally March 10. Photo by George Schmidt

April / May 2006

Equality for Undocumented Immigrants

By *Fight Back!* editors

When the forces of reaction and racism decided to push their vicious anti-immigrant agenda, they lifted a rock, only to drop it on their own feet. Across the country, one of the most powerful waves of demonstrations in U.S. history is now unfolding. In Chicago on March 10 it became apparent something really big was in the offing; a sea change was under way. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Latinos, along with other immigrants and their supporters, filled the streets. A general strike shut down hundreds of factories and businesses. This was followed by major demonstrations; some accompanied by work stoppages – that rocked Denver, Colorado; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Georgia and Phoenix, Arizona. Then on March 25, one million people took to the streets of Los Angeles.

This is a great thing. Bush, the Republican Party, their soul mates among the Democrats and those who make a profession out of whipping up anti-immigrant hysteria have been thrown into disorder. Bush, along with his backers in big business, favor a ‘guest worker’ program that would lock immigrant workers into poverty. An important section of the coalition that elected Bush essentially favors a ‘whites only’ U.S. They advocate wholesale deportations and measures that criminalize the undocumented, like House Resolution 4437. In the context of the power demonstrated by the immigrants’ rights movement, these contradictions among our enemies will make it harder for them to follow through with their racist attacks.

The United States is all about oppression and racist discrimination. It is a built-in feature of the system we live under. The cold reality is that entire nationalities – African- Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Asian Americans and Native peoples – are bound by