



Highlights from April 4th, 2001 National Student Labor Day of Action

On April 4, 2001, 33 years after his assassination, thousands of students nationwide in over 30 states, in nearly 70 cities and on over 80 campuses celebrated the too often untold legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Worker Strike. This year's April 4 National Student Labor Day of Action involved a wide range of national student and labor organizations. The day of action was co-sponsored by Jobs with Justice, the U.S. Student Association (USSA), United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), and the Prison Moratorium Project (PMP). Locally, the participating organizations included campus based Student Labor Action Coalitions (SLACs), the American Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE), the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE!), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the United Steel Workers of America (USWA), the International Brotherhood of the Teamsters (IBT), and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) through a number of Central Labor Councils and State Federations.

For the second consecutive year, students upheld the cross-community, pro-economic justice and workers' rights coalition-building that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (and many others in movements for social and economic justice) practiced. Addressing a range of issues from **sweatshops** to **living wages** to the **right to organize** for campus workers, students and labor came together on April 4th to win concrete victories and build a more powerful movement.

Following are highlights from around the country:

Arizona

Arizona State University, Phoenix: Students with the Prison Moratorium Project, MEChA, Young Democratic Socialists and the Progressive Student Union organized a sit-in in the administration building. Students were supported by CWA Local 7019 and the AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Department. The central demand was that the University end its contract with Sodexho-Marriott because of their investments in private prisons and history of union-busting. The students' were successful in securing two meetings with ASU president Lattie Coor to discuss the campus food service provider.

California

San Jose State University: Students for Justice and the CAUSE, a USAS affiliate, sponsored an April 4th action that served to educate the campus community at San Jose State. Students constructed an "outdoor sweatshop" in the quad out of chicken wire and barbed wire enclosing tables and 4 sewing machines. Students worked all day to sew a giant mural that spelled out "No Sweatshops" on a stop-sign shaped piece of red fabric. The letters on the mural were sewn entirely out of clothing labels that students had been collecting during the weeks leading up to the action. While the "workers" sewed, other students gathered signatures on a WRC petition to the president. During the 6-hour action, students collected nearly one thousand signatures on a petition demanding that SJSU join the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), which monitors factories to ensure that university clothing is not made in sweatshop conditions. Students later pre-

sented the mural to SJSU's president along with the demand that he finally put the force of action behind his words and join the WRC.

Stanford University: The Student Labor Action Committee (SLAC) organized a labor speak-out on April 4 to raise student awareness about local and international labor issues, unite different student organizations on campus, and lay the groundwork for a living wage campaign at Stanford. Speakers at the event included Stanford workers and students, union organizers from SEIU Local 715, and a representative from the South Bay Labor Council. Ethnic, environmental, political and community groups participated and displayed art and information about



As part of the National Student-Labor Day of Action, students at SUNY Binghamton rallied to support food service workers' right to organize with HERE and protested Sodexho-Marriott food services' ties to the private prison industry.

their organizations' work for social justice. There was also music and an "open mic" event. On April 8th, SLAC screened a documentary of the 1968 sanitation workers' strike, "At the River I Stand."

Connecticut

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT: At Noon on April 4th over sixty concerned members of the UConn community converged to demand of President Phil Austin that the University enact the prevailing wage rate of at least \$8.47 per hour plus benefits for the sub-contracted janitors who clean academic buildings. Most of the workers currently make between \$6.50 and \$7.50 and none have benefits. The community also voiced its support of the janitors struggle to form a union with SEIU Local 531. The rally began at the library, where the crowd was addressed by a priest from the campus Episcopalian Church, a professor of Philosophy, an organizer and a worker from SEIU Local 531, and a student who delivered statements from campus workers unable to attend the rally. Carrying signs, mops, buckets, and brooms and chanting in English and Spanish, the demonstrators marched to the administration building. Forty of the protestors marched into President Austin's office and presented a copy of their demands to adopt the prevailing wage rate and an invitation to a forum to discuss adopting a Code of Conduct for workers' rights at U. Conn. Students, workers and professors left energized, knowing that together they will win rights, respect and dignity for all workers on campus.

Illinois

DePaul, Northwestern, University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, Harold Washington City College and others; Chicago, IL: The city-wide network of student activists from these area colleges and universities called the Chicago Student Labor Action Project joined with Chicago Jobs with Justice, UNITE!, and AFSCME to organize a series of three teach-ins and rallies to commemorate April 4th. Topics included the poor working conditions and wages for workers in industrial laundries as well as the private prison industry, the prison industrial complex, and colleges' and universities' relationship to them.

At 12pm at the UNITE! Union Hall, Chicago area students had lunch with UNITE! members and former workers at industrial laundries in Chicago while the workers spoke to the group. At 4pm at **DePaul University**, there was a rally in celebration of student and labor victories. Speakers included Stewart Acuff of the AFL-CIO, Reverend Calvin Morris of Jobs with Justice, and Pari Zutshi of the Prison Moratorium Project (PMP). At 7pm at **Harold Washington College** they held a panel discussion featuring Kamau Marcharia of PMP, Nicky Neulist from U. of C., folks from the American Friends Service Committee, and a rep. from AFSCME Local 3506.

Students with **Northwestern University** Students Against Sweatshops staged a mock sweatshop to catch the attention of students and to educate them about their attempts to get the administration to join the

Students & Workers Are Winning Concrete Victories Together!

University of Connecticut: After a successful building occupation in early May, students and janitors won their demands of a prevailing wage of \$8.75 an hour plus benefits!

Cleveland State University: Students and community members helped cafeteria workers with HERE Local 10 win a great contract!

DePaul University: Students were victorious in their campaign to end DePaul's contract with Sodexho-Marriott!

Harvard University: After a 3-week sit-in, students won a moratorium on subcontracting of essential services on campus and a deadline in early fall for implementation of their living wage demands!

Northwestern University: Northwestern signed on to the Workers Rights Consortium after students had rallies, teach-ins, and a tent city!

Oberlin College: After more than a year, students have forced Oberlin to end its contract with Sodexho-Marriott.

American University: Students persuaded AU to drop their contract with Sodexho-Marriott because of social concerns!

WRC. Students wore masks and acted out the role of the sweatshop worker making NU apparel with the corporate manager keeping them down. Also at Northwestern, 35 pizzas were handed out in 15 minutes to over 100 hungry students, providing them with a lunch alternative to Sodexho Marriott for the day. They also got plenty of flyers explaining the horrors of Sodexho and the act of goodwill from Northwestern PMP.

Kentucky

Transylvania University, Lexington, KY: On April 4th, students affiliated with Progress supported the organizing efforts of Lexington's Solid Waste department workers by joining them for a showing of "At the River I Stand." Former councilman R. Jefferson and current councilman George Brown also attended the program. The Solid Waste workers perform one of the most dangerous jobs in the city, earn barely more than the minimum wage, and receive few benefits and little respect. Many workers have two or three other jobs just to keep their families out of poverty. For the past year, the workers have been going before the city council to demand hazard duty pay, hazard duty retirement, and for temp workers to be hired as full time employees. Kentucky does not honor the public employees' right to organize and the Solid waste workers are not protected by national labor laws.

Massachusetts

Harvard University, Cambridge MA: Two weeks prior to their occupation of Massachusetts Hall, the Progressive Student Labor Movement, which is waging the Harvard living wage campaign in solidarity with the Affordable Housing Coalition, held a “sleep-out” on the lawn in middle of campus. The sleep-out was accompanied by a number of rallies and a candle light vigil. Members of SEIU, HERE, and Boston Jobs with Justice supported these efforts. The demand are a living wage for workers on campus and more action by Harvard, as the biggest landlord in Cambridge, to provide affordable housing in the community. Strategically, the sleep-out was in preparation for escalated actions. Since April 4th, the Progressive Student Labor Movement has taken another giant step closer to their ultimate goal of obtaining a Living Wage for all workers at Harvard. After a three-week occupation of the President’s office, they obtained a moratorium on sub-contracting and a deadline in the early fall for an implementation of their living wage demands with the Harvard administration. The PSLM’s campaign has provided additional leverage to campus workers’ (organized with SEIU and HERE) contract negotiations with the university, and it is likely that with this support, these workers will earn a living wage.

U. Mass – Amherst: At noon on April 4th, over 400 students and union members rallied at U. Mass Amherst to “Keep the PUBLIC in Public Education.” The rally was endorsed by all five campus unions (SEIU 509, USA/MTA, AFSCME 1776, MSP/MTA and GEO/UAW), various student groups, Jobs with Justice, and Western Mass Global Action Coalition. The student-labor demands were: 1) Stop the attack on diversity and educational access, 2) Defend family-friendly policies, 3) Protect quality staffing— no cut-backs, and 4) Stop privatization. A follow-up meeting of students and union members has been set to continue strategizing about how to take back the public university.

Maryland

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD: Students from Johns Hopkins SLAC participated in a series of events to defend workers’ rights in their community. Students continued their support of hospital workers at Johns Hopkins Medical Center who are members of SEIU 1199 E-DC, in their campaign for better wages and benefits, and the right to organize for workers at the Medical Center who aren’t members of the union. Three students were given citations by the police after refusing to leave the offices of Medical Center CEO Ron Petersen, who had refused to meet with them and had declined their invitations to an open forum on the issue. Later, students helped to organize a Workers’ Rights hearing where prominent community leaders and clergy listened to testimony from workers at the Medical Center and from workers from Up-To-Date Laundry, another violator of workers’ rights with whom Johns Hopkins does business. Up-To-Date is an industrial laundry where workers are organizing with UNITE!. Workers were threatened

and fired for trying to organize, and even after a victory with the NLRB, Up-To-Date continues to fire and repress workers who support the union. Students, community leaders, clergy, and city council members held a rally at Up-to-Date earlier in the day, and delivered a letter denouncing the recent violations of workers’ rights there.

Nebraska

University of Nebraska – Lincoln: Students affiliated with USAS held an educational rally about sweatshops, advocating that the university join the WRC and that the university pressure the New Era Cap Company to negotiate in good faith with workers at their factory in Derby, NY. New Era produces baseball caps for many colleges and universities, including U. of Nebraska, and students are concerned about conditions in a the Derby, NY facility, where workers represented by CWA local 14177 are being laid-off and forced to accept enormous wage cuts. Surrounded by music, juggling, and frisbee, USAS distributed information to over 400 students. The group also met with the administration about New Era and the WRC.

New York

New York University, New York, NY: Students for Social Equality, a USAS affiliate, organized a number of events supporting workers’ rights for the April 4th National Student Labor Day of Action. Over 300 people participated in a rally and march from NYU’s main administration building to the East Natural Deli, the site of a boycott by UNITE! because they pay their workers less than minimum wage. Students, community members, and union activists demanded that NYU and East Natural Deli bargain in good faith with their respective employees. Protestors heard from representatives from AFT local 3882, which represents technical workers at NYU, NYU graduate student employees, who are organized with UAW Local 2110 and who will begin bargaining with NYU soon, and from part-time adjunct faculty at NYU, who are beginning an effort to organize with the UAW. The crowd was also addressed by workers from UNITE! local 169, which represents greengrocer workers who’ve been protesting greengrocer delis throughout the city to demand a fair contract.



UNITE! workers and NYU students march to the East Natural Deli.

Student-Labor Day of Action, 2001 Participating Campuses

Arizona - Arizona State U., U. Arizona - **California** - San Jose State U., Santa Clara U., UC Los Angeles, UC Santa Barbara, U. San Francisco, U. Southern California - **Connecticut** - U. Connecticut, U. Hartford, Yale U. - **District of Columbia** - American U., Georgetown U., George Washington U., Howard U. - **Florida** - New College, U. of Florida, U. of Miami - **Georgia** - Georgia State U. - **Illinois** - Depaul U., Harold Washington College, Northwestern U., U. Chicago, U. Illinois Chicago - **Indiana** - Indiana U., - **Kentucky** - Bellarmine, U. Louisville, U. Kentucky - **Louisiana** - Tulane U., U. New Orleans - **Maine** - Bates U., U. Maine, U. Southern Maine - **Maryland** - Johns Hopkins U., U. Maryland College Park - **Massachusetts** - Harvard U., Mt. Holyoke, U. Massachusetts, Wheaton College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute - **Michigan** - Grand Valley State U., Michigan State U., U. Michigan - **Minnesota** - Carleton, St. Olaf College, U. Minnesota - **Missouri** - U. Missouri, Washington U. - **Nebraska** - U. Nebraska Lincoln - **New York** - Cornell U., Fordham U., Ithaca College, Nazareth College, New York U., SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Buffalo, Syracuse U., U. Rochester, Vassar College - **North Carolina** - Duke U., U. North Carolina, Warren Wilson - **Ohio** - Cleveland State U., John Carroll U., Kent State U., Ohio State U., Wittenberg U. - **Oregon** - Southern Oregon U., U. of Oregon - **Pennsylvania** - U. Pennsylvania, U. Pittsburgh, St. Joseph's U. - **Rhode Island** - Brown U., U. Rhode Island - **Tennessee** - Nashville - **Virginia** - College of William & Mary - **Vermont** - U. Vermont - **Washington** - U. Washington - **Wisconsin** - U. Wisconsin LaCrosse, U. Wisconsin Madison, U. Wisconsin Milwaukee, Wheeling Jesuit U.

State University of NY at Binghamton: April 4th events at SUNY Binghamton surrounded a "Dump Sodexho" campaign and an effort by cafeteria workers to unionize with HERE. The Latin American Student Union, the Political Action Coalition and HERE joined together to conduct a one-day boycott of Sodexho-Marriott's food services. Hundreds of students participated in the boycott and in a teach-in/rally/concert that featured students, professors, workers, Kevin Pranis and Rashid Shabazz from PMP, and Treston Faulkner from the Student Labor Action Project. There were also musical performances by two local acts and the rap duo "Cocoa Brovaz" from Brooklyn, NY. After the program, which at its peak hosted between 500 and 1,000 students, workers, faculty and community members, a group of between 100 and 150 marched through all five campus cafeterias chanting "union yes, Sodexho no!" HERE and the graduate student-employee union, affiliated with CWA participated in the march with students.

North Carolina

UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State University and Duke University, Raleigh, NC: Students with the U.S. Student Association (USSA) and the Youth Seeking Justice Now campaign held a rally in front of the state capitol for "Racial Justice Not Racial Profiling". Demands included divestment from prisons, reinvestment in under-funded schools and an end to racial profiling in our schools and our streets. Speakers were Ali Fischer of USSA, Willena

Cannon, NC Community Organizer and mother of Kwame Cannon who was recently released after being imprisoned unfairly, and Rev. Nelson Johnson, member of the Pulpit Forum and survivor of the Greensboro Massacre, a Nov. 3, 1979 event where the Greensboro police escorted the Klan through a rally and executed 6 blacklisted people including a union organizer and the president of Bennet College (a black female college student).

Ohio

Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH: From behind the bars of a cage constructed outside of the cafeteria, student activists in coalition with HERE Local 12 passed out flyers and collected signatures on a petition calling for the termination of Sodexho's contract with Xavier and installation of a "card check/neutrality" agreement into the next food service provider's contract. In the evening, activists challenged Sodexho-Marriott Managers to play in the "Anti-Sodexho Invitational" soccer match and held an open forum on the issues which was attended Xavier's president, Rev. Michael Graham.

Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Jobs with Justice and HERE Local 10, supported by numerous unions, student groups and community organizations, carried out a completely successful one-day boycott of the Aramark cafeteria at Cleveland State University on April 4th. The Cleveland Student-Labor Day of Action was in support of food service workers at Case Western Reserve University who are trying to win recognition of their union and workers at CSU, where Aramark has stonewalled in contract negotiations for a year.

A teach-in/rally coordinated by Cleveland Jobs with Justice to accompany the boycott was sponsored by CWA Local 4309, SEIU District 925 and the CSU chapter of American Association of University Professors, as well as HERE Local 10 (all four unions represent workers at CSU) and student organizations including the Gay, Lesbian And Straight Alliance (GLASA).

Oberlin College: After a year of organizing to get rid of Sodexho on campus, students stepped up the pressure this spring as the university reconsidered Sodexho's contract. Students mobilized a steady stream of students to come to the meeting of the committee that chooses dining service companies on April 7th (a meeting that was undemocratically closed to non-committee members, in violation of the committee's own bylaws) to reiterate that SMS' prison profits and bad labor practices are unacceptable to Oberlin students. After a spirited discussion in the committee meeting, Oberlin dumped Sodexho!

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United States Student Association
1413 K St., NW
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www.usstudents.org

United Students Against Sweatshops
1015 18th St. NW
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(202) NO-SWEAT
www.usasnet.org

Prison Moratorium Project
180 Varick St., 12th Flr.
New York, NY 10014
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www.nomoreprisons.org

For short reports from other actions and events associated with April 4th, 2001 and for copies of this brochure, go to www.jwj.org
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