

Students and Workers Unite for Justice!

Highlights from the April 4, 2002 National Student Labor Day of Action

On **April 4, 2002**, 34 years after his assassination, thousands of students nationwide celebrated the too often untold legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s support for the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Worker Strike. In 90 cities across 31 states, there were **more than 100 events** as part of this year's April 4th National Student Labor Day of Action that involved a wide range of national student and labor organizations and workers' rights campaigns. Co-sponsoring the day of action were Jobs with Justice, the U.S. Students Association, United Students Against Sweatshops, and the Prison Moratorium Project. Locally, the unions involved included AFSCME, CWA, HERE, UNITE, SEIU, the Teamsters the Steelworkers, UFCW, the AFL-CIO, and a number of Central Labor Councils and State Federations.

For the third 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.

San Diego, CA

On April 4th, Students for Economic Justice at **UC San Diego** (a USSA member school) marched through the La Jolla mall and presented the management with a trash bag full of crumpled up butcher paper that said "POVERTY WAGES" and "UNJUST FIRING." Janitors at the mall are organizing with SEIU and fighting for recognition. Last summer, the Westfield Corp., which owns the mall, hired an anti-worker contractor, Building One Services, who unjustly fired 6 janitors at another mall for demanding better wages and benefits. Another rally took place on April 10th at the mall, and the management was forced to agree to a meeting with community and interfaith groups.

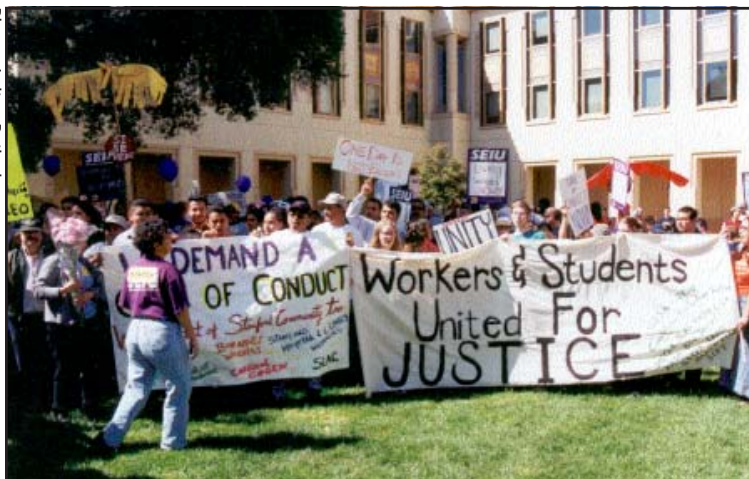
Stanford, CA

At **Stanford U.** (a USSA member school), over 1000 students, workers, and members of the local community marched around campus to demand that Stanford President John Hennessey meet with students and workers about a University Code of Conduct. The protest took place during Stanford's "Community Day," an open-house for the surrounding community to see the "great things" the university has to offer. The group protested Hennessey's refusal to meet with them about their proposed Code of Conduct, which includes a living wage and health benefits for all campus workers and an end to subcontracting by the university. The rally was sponsored by the Stanford Coalition for Labor Justice, which includes the Student Labor Action Coalition, MEChA, the Black Student Union, the NAACP, the Asian-American Students Association, and the Queer-Straight Social and Political Alliance, and supported by **SEIU local 715**.

Willamantic, CT

About 130 students, workers, and supporters from around the state converged at **Eastern Connecticut State U.** to demand

Photo: Lolita Rohbol



Over 1,000 students, workers, and community members rally for a living wage, health care and an end to subcontracting at Stanford.

recognition for the cafeteria workers' union. Students from nine campuses, including ECSU, U. Connecticut, Wesleyan U., Fairfield U., Southern Connecticut State U., and Yale U., joined **HERE**, the Hartford Central Labor Council, and the Carpenter's union to support the cafeteria workers and to demand that the university publicly state that it does not object to any legal means for the workers to decide if they want a union.

Washington, DC

About 100 students, workers, and community members gathered at the DC public high school called the **School without Walls** to demand better funding for and maintenance of DC public schools. Despite the deteriorating conditions in school buildings, DCPS maintenance engineers and custodians, who are members of the Teamsters, are facing staffing cuts and inadequate supplies and equipment. Speakers at the event included parents, students, and a maintenance engineer from the school, presidents of **Teamsters Locals 639 and 730, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney**, Fred Azcarate of Jobs with Justice, DC SLAP organizer

Nick Laskowski, and a representative from the **DC Metro Labor Council**. The crowd included students from **George Washington U., American U., Georgetown U.,** and **DC public schools** and union members from the Teamsters, LIUNA, IUPAT, and HERE.



Photo: Allison Fletcher

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney at DCPS School without Walls on April 4.

Miami, FL

In Miami, students and labor joined together for a spirited action organized by **South Florida Jobs with Justice** in support of workers at Mt. Sinai/St. Francis Nursing Home, where workers have been fighting to join **SEIU 1199**. Students from the **Youth Labor Movement**, the **U. of Miami**, and the **Youth Labor Activists High School** and members of many local community and labor organizations turned out for great speakers and music. Residents of the Nursing Home and even two police officers assigned to the action couldn't resist the energy of the crowd, and joined in with chanting and singing. Even though Management tried to 'dampen' the protestors spirits by letting the sprinklers come on twice during the action, JwJ just turned the music up. Management has accused SEIU 1199 of using Voodoo to scare the mostly Haitian workers into joining the union. In the words of Sister Edeline Clermont, "Was it Voodoo that made the workers vote for the union, or was it the Power of the People? It was the power of the people working together and supporting these workers!"



Students at Morehouse University rally to demand a living wage for campus workers.

Atlanta, GA

Nearly 200 rallied at **Morehouse College** on April 4, demanding a living wage for the janitors. The Morehouse Student-Labor Alliance organized the day's events, which began with a march from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chapel and ended with a rally at Kilgore

Hall in the center of campus. Speakers included representatives of **SEIU Local 1985, Georgia AFL-CIO President Richard Ray**, a representative from the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute, and SLAP co-coordinator Treston Faulkner. One week after the demonstration, organizer MSLA reported that the campus janitor's salaries had been increased by \$1, but the campaign for justice continues!

Hilo, HI

On April 4, Not with Our Money organized educational events at the **University of Hawaii** to promote awareness about the Sodexho, which runs the school's cafeteria and invests in private prisons. Students constructed a mock jail cell, gave away literature, condoms, and candy at a table outside the library, and held a speak-out for students to express their opinions about the company. Students also presented the cafeteria's manager with a piece of collaborative artwork.

Indianapolis, IN

On April 4, No Sweat! **Indiana U.** (a USAS affiliate) and the **Earlham College** Progressive Student Union rallied at the Brylane Distribution Center gates with workers and **Indianapolis Jobs with Justice**. Workers at Brylane are organizing with **UNITE!** because of low wages, high injury rates, no pensions, high insurance, and harassment, and are demanding a card check recognition, though management has responded with an aggressive racist and anti-union campaign.

Louisville, KY

Over 150 union members, church-goers, students, and **Louisville JwJ** activists packed into the Zion Baptist Church in Louisville, KY to hear **Rev. James Orange** speak about Martin Luther King Jr's legacy of fighting for civil rights and workers' rights. The evening began with a showing of "At the River I Stand." The crowd then heard from local clergy, union leaders, and long-time activists, who encouraged everyone to take action for a living wage for workers in Louisville and Jefferson County. Over 100 postcards to the City Board of Alderman and to the County commission supporting the living wage were signed at the event!

Photo: Treston Faulkner

Boston, MA

On April 4th, Boston SLAP organized a rally for Equal Pay for Equal Work for subcontracted janitors at **Harvard U.**, and to launch a support campaign for Justice for Janitors throughout the Boston Area. About 80 students, workers, and community members joined in the protest to demand that Harvard "Put its Money where its Mouth is" and force sub-contractors to sign a contract with **SEIU local 254**. Students from **Boston College, Brandeis U., Simmons College,** and **Emerson College** were at the protest, and kicked off living wage campaigns on their own campuses!

Ann Arbor, MI

At the **University of Michigan**, Students Organized for Labor Equality (SOLE, a USAS affiliate) organized an action to demand that the University cut its contract with the New Era Cap Company, where **CWA** members have been on strike since July

2001. 25 SOLE members stormed the administration building and read worker testimony through a bullhorn. Students wrapped the entire administration building in a 360-foot banner covered in slogans like “people before profit” and “how long will the administration ignore the workers.” UM President Joe White later announced to the students that he will cut the University’s contract with New Era Cap!

Twin Cities, MN

About 250 people gathered at the Dakota Premium Foods Plant to support workers there who voted to unionize with the UFCW 789 over a year and a half ago. Present to protest the company’s unfair treatment of its workers were **AFL-CIO**

Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, SEIU Local 113, Machinists Union Lodge 459, and the Carpenter’s Union. In addition, student groups from **Macalester College**, the **U. of Minnesota**, **St. Thomas U.**, and **Hamline U.** came to show their solidarity after participating in information leafletting on labor issues on their campuses.



Supporting Dakota Foods workers in Minneapolis, MN on April 4.

Photo: Emily Davis

Durham, NC

On Wednesday, April 10th, 150 **Duke U.** students and workers were joined by **Triangle Area JwJ**, **AFSCME**, **IUOE**, and community allies in marching through campus to demand “No more outsourcing! People before profits!” Duke’s administration has increasingly been outsourcing and contracting out crucial campus services, causing layoffs for campus workers and poor services for students. The march was the public kick-off of a campaign to force Duke to be accountable to its community by stopping all outsourcing of campus operations and treating its workers with respect and dignity. The march and rally were organized by Duke’s Student Employee Relations Committee, and were endorsed by the Black Student Alliance, the Asian Student Association, FLOC,



Duke students and community members demand an end to outsourcing campus jobs.

Photo: Jonathan Harris

Student Action with Farmworkers, Students Against Sweatshops, Student Peace Action Network, Hiwar, Mi Gente, and the Duke Progressive Alliance.

Buffalo, NY

At **Buffalo State U.**, students held a press conference and teach-in on proposed cuts to New York’s tuition assistance and the need for more funding for higher education in New York State. Students and faculty spoke out against state funding cuts for education that would cause tuition to go up and would erode the wages and working conditions of part-time faculty, members of **United University Professions (AFT)**. The speak-out was sponsored by NYPIRG, the **Coalition for Economic Justice/ Jobs with Justice**, and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Cleveland, OH

At **Case Western Reserve University** there was a celebratory rally, focusing on the re-hiring of two cafeteria workers who had been fired for their union organizing activities. Student group Catalyst, **HERE Local 10, Cleveland JwJ**, and the **Cleveland AFL-CIO** sponsored the rally and provided free food to students and faculty. Music was the key to this spirited rally, with local progressive songwriters and activists Deborah Van Kleef and Susan Hagan (also an organizer with Cleveland JwJ) and Oberlin Rhythms of Resistance, a student drumming group, leading the group through the campus. Organizations supporting the event

included Heights Community Congress and Welfare Rights Organization, SEIU 1199, IBEW Local 38, CWA District 4, IATSE Local 160, USWA Local 1915, AFSCME Retirees’ Council and UFCW Local 880.

Photo: Steve Cagan



Celebrating the re-hiring of 2 cafeteria workers fired for their union activity at Case Western.

Philadelphia Metro Area, PA

There were April 4th events at five Philadelphia Area colleges and universities! The day started with a rally of about 70 students & graduate employees at the **U. of Pennsylvania** to support the organizing efforts of graduate employees through **GET UP/AFT**, and to protest the increasing corporatization of the university. Penn SAS, Philadelphia JwJ, Good Schools PA, the Philadelphia Central Labor Council and AFSCME came out to support GET UP. Over 100 students at **Temple U.** gathered to protest a proposed 10% tuition hike, and to support the graduate employee union, **TUGSA/AFT**, which was bargaining for their first contract. Thirty people attended a forum called “Education is a Human Right” that was held in the evening at **Community College of Philadelphia**. At **Swarthmore College**, the Swarthmore Living Wage and Democracy campaign organized a rally attended by 150 activists to demand a living wage for campus

workers. At **Villanova University** on April 5th, USAS/DSA put on a “sweatshop fashion show” attended by over 100 students to raise awareness about labor abuses and to pressure the administration to join the WRC. Congratulations to Temple Grad Student Workers, who recently won their first contract!

Pittsburgh, PA

On April 4th at the **U. Pittsburgh** (a USSA member campus), 200 activists from Students in Solidarity, Alliance for Progressive Action/ Pittsburgh JwJ, SEIU, HERE, UE, Americans for Democratic Action, United Faculty, Thomas Merton Center, along with Pitt workers, gathered to demand a living wage and same sex benefits for campus workers. Speakers included James Wright, Jr., a food-service worker on campus who read a poem about his experience as a minimum wage worker trying to get more out of life, and SEIU member Pamela Mannella, who explained how the university is exploiting loopholes in the SEIU contract to pay service workers less than a living wage.

Providence, RI

Over 75 student, union, community, and **RI JwJ** activists rallied on April 4th at **Providence College (P.C.)** in support of the janitors and cleaners who have been working without a contract since January. The administration prevented activists from even entering college grounds, so the rally took place outside the university entrance. Students from **Brown U., Rhode Island College, U. Rhode Island**, and local high schools joined P.C. activists and RI JwJ to demand justice for the janitors at P.C., who earn \$3/hour less than janitors at other universities in the area. Janitors at P.C., represented by **SEIU Local 134**, have been fighting for a fair contract since January 2002, when their contract with UNICCO, a P.C. subcontractor, expired.



Rally for a Living Wage at Providence College.

Seattle, WA

On April 4th, student and youth activists joined with union members to loudly denounce the Seattle School Board’s decision to contract with anti-worker school bus corporations. **WA State JwJ** helped mobilize a broad coalition of over 500 students & youth, parents, faith leaders, and union members to rally in front of the School Administration Building and then converge on the April 3rd Board meeting. High school students, university students from many Seattle schools, **Youth Undoing Institutional Racism, Students for Fair Trade, Seattle Young People’s Project,**

2002 Student-Labor Day of Action Participating Campuses

Arkansas - U. Arkansas - **Arizona** - Northern Arizona U. - **California** - UC Berkeley - Claremont Colleges - California State U. Fresno - California State U. Long Beach - UC Los Angeles - U. Southern California - UC Riverside - UC San Diego - San Francisco State U., San Jose State U. - UC Santa Barbara - Stanford U. - **Colorado** - U. Colorado Boulder - Colorado College - **Connecticut** - Eastern CT State U. - U. Connecticut - Trinity - Wesleyan - Western CT U. - Southern CT U. - Fairfield - Yale U. - U. Hartford - CT College - Sacred Heart - **District of Columbia** - Georgetown U. - George Washington U. - American U. - Georgetown U. Law Center - Howard U. - School without Walls High School - **Florida** - U. of Florida - Florida Memorial College - U. Miami - FMC - New College of S. Florida - Florida State U. - **Georgia** - Morehouse College - Georgia State U. - **Hawaii** - U. Hawaii Manoa - **Iowa** - U. Iowa - **Illinois** - U. Chicago - U. Illinois Chicago - Loyola - Depaul - Antioch College - Indiana - Indiana U. - Earlham College - Notre Dame U. - Purdue U. - **Kentucky** - Northern Kentucky U. - U. Louisville - **Louisiana** - Louisiana State U. - Tulane U. - **Massachusetts** - U. Mass Amherst - Boston College, Boston U. - Emerson College - Simmons College - Harvard U. - Smith College - Maryland - Johns Hopkins U. - U. Maryland College Park - **Maine** - Bates College - **Michigan** - Grand Valley State U. - Alma College - U. Michigan - Western Michigan U. - Michigan State U. - Central Michigan U. - **Minnesota** - U. Minnesota Morris - U. Minnesota Minneapolis - Macalester College - Missouri - Central Missouri State U. - **North Carolina** - U. North Carolina Chapel Hill - Duke University - North Carolina State U. - **New Hampshire** - U. New Hampshire - **New Jersey** - Bergen Academics High School - Rutgers U. - Princeton U. - **New York** - U. Buffalo - Buffalo State U. - Cornell U. - SUNY Binghamton - City University of New York - NYU - Columbia U. - Fordham U. - U. Rochester - Syracuse U. - **Ohio** - Bowling Green State U. - Case Western Reserve U. - Ohio State U. - Kent State U. - Miami U. of Ohio - **Oregon** - U. of Oregon - Lane Community College - Portland State U. - **Pennsylvania** - U. Pennsylvania - Temple U. - Community College of Philadelphia - Villanova U. - Saint Joseph U. - U. Pittsburgh - Carnegie Mellon U. - Swarthmore College - **Rhode Island** - Providence College - U. Rhode Island - Brown U. - Johnson & Wales College - Rhode Island College - **Tennessee** - U. Memphis - U. Tennessee - **Virginia** - U. Virginia - Virginia Commonwealth U. - **Washington** - U. Washington - Gonzaga U. - **Wisconsin** - UW La Crosse - UW Madison - UW Milwaukee - Marquette U. - **West Virginia** - West Virginia U.

the graduate student worker union **GSEAC-UAW**, and members from **Teamsters 763** and **Machinists 289** expressed support for bus drivers’ rights to liveable wages and a voice on the job.

Madison, WI

On Thursday April 4, approximately 50 **University of Wisconsin** students, Limited Term Employees (LTEs), and concerned community members rallied in front of the Memorial Student Union, demanding that the University of Wisconsin stop its abuse of LTEs. Under the State Budget signed into law last August, UW was to convert 50 LTE positions to full-time this year, but Student Union Director Mark Guthier has failed to do so. The UW Student Labor Action Coalition joined with LTEs and rallied in front of the Student Union and marched to Guthier’s office to demand that he fill vacant permanent positions and put an end to the subcontracting of floor cleaning services.



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