

New Haven Free Press.



FREE - ISSUE 3 - MAY/JUNE 2007 - POST-MAY DAY EDITION - NOT AFFILIATED WITH YALE - COMMUNITY NEWS FOR THE UNGOVERNABLE

ENERGETIC GROUP TAKES STREETS



Above: New Haveners took the day off from work and school to march, drum, dance, and sing in the streets. Immigrant workers lead the way, backed up by a contingent of SCSU students. **Upper Right:** Yale Students, members of Queers Without Borders, and SEIU 1199 health care workers stood together on the New Haven green. **Lower Right:** A University of Hartford student said the children of immigrants should get in-state tuition in the Connecticut State University system. (PHOTOS: NHFP)

MAY 1, NEW HAVEN—A sign outside a popular Mexican restaurant on State Street read: “Closed today in solidarity with immigrants cause. Stop undocumented people prosecution! Amnesty for all immigrants!”

In other workplaces and classrooms, similar signs hung in the entryway, urging people out into the streets.

Former Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver came to New Haven to keep the momentum of last year’s demonstrations going—not on stage with a lecture—but in the streets with her feet. As a key player in the black liberation movement of the 1970s and a current professor of race and citizenship at Yale University Law School, Cleaver said she was naturally drawn to supporting “a more humane policy for people trying to immigrate,” and against the “tremendously racist laws” currently on the books.

“For people who engage in struggles for human rights and against racism,” Cleaver said, “it only makes sense to extend that struggle to include the immigrant community.”

Her ideas were echoed by Jeri-Marie Liesegang of Queers Without Borders. Liesegang said the Hartford-based organization is against physical borders—such as the one being built between the U.S. and Mexico—but also against cultural and gender boundaries that keep people apart.

“We were doing anti-war demonstrations and working around immigrant’s rights and people would come up to us and say ‘Geez, we thought you guys only cared about marriage equality,’ but the fact is, we are working against all of those arbitrary borders,” Liesegang said.

Some unions supported Tuesday’s march, and others did not.

SEIU 32BJ, the union representing janitors in New Haven did not officially endorse the march, even though they were a strong and highly visible presence at two huge demonstrations last year. At an organizing meeting, a white 32BJ representative said the union

supports a version of the guest-worker program, which demonstrators denounced at the rally as akin to indentured servitude.

SEIU 1199, the health care workers union that represent Yale New Haven and Jewish Home for The Aged blue-collar workers, did officially endorse the march, according to Bill Meyerson. Local 1199 members carried yellow flags that said “Solidarity.” One man carrying a yellow 1199 flag, who did not want to give his name, said he was there as an African American supporting other people of color.

“You look at the color of my skin and you know I can’t afford *not* to be out here,” he said.

Meyerson said that although most of the people he represents in 1199 are not immigrants themselves, they agreed it was important to unite with the immigrant workers in struggle.

“Part of the way corporate America has attempted to divide working people in this country is along the lines of race and nationality,” Meyerson said.

Last year, a broad coalition led by New Haven’s Unidad Latina En Accion mobilized the largest May Day march in New Haven since 1970, when demonstrators filled both the upper and lower green and succeeded in shutting down Yale, in a campaign to free 9 Black Panthers accused of murder.

This year the turnout was much smaller than last years, which took up about three or four city blocks. This year, organizers estimated 600-1,000 people showed up.

Some of this year’s participants attributed the smaller turnout to a relentless propaganda campaign waged by white television reporters like Lou Dobbs (CNN), Allan Cohn (News Channel 8), and Bill O’Reilly (Fox News Network), who have agitated for raids and federal crackdowns against undocumented workers for about two years.

Local News Channel 8 has aired three stories that have directly resulted in federal immigration raids against un-documented work-

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LOCAL

YOUTH CURFEW SHOT DOWN

After an outpouring of public testimony against the proposed 10 o’ clock curfew for youth, the Board of Aldermen voted not to revive the law, which was first put in place in the 1920s to keep newspaper boys from hanging out in front of the pubs late at night, according to downtown Alderwoman Bitsie Clark.

BLACK PANTHER HOUSE BOUGHT UP BY SHADY BOSTON REAL ESTATE HOTSHOTS

The old Black Panthers Headquarters at 35 Sylvan Ave, once home to *Free Breakfast for Children* and one of the first free health clinics in the country to screen for sickle cell anemia, may get crushed by a bulldozer and replaced with a hotel parking lot. That’s what Will Smith, the representative from Intercontinental Developers said might happen, if the Board of Alderman approves his request to re-zone the area near the soon-to-be built Yale-New Haven Cancer Center.

PRISON POPULATION ON THE RISE

More and more Connecticut residents are getting locked up, especially on drug charges, and violation of probation. [Full story on Page 2]

NATIONAL

LAPD ATTACKS, AGAIN

VIDEO REVEALS POLICE COVER-UP

LOS ANGELES, Cal.—Police attacked a crowd of people who had taken the streets on May 1 to demand rights for undocumented immigrants. Police issued orders to disperse in English from a helicopter, then rammed horses and motorcycles into the mass of people marching into the park; and shot 240 rubber bullets and an unknown amount of teargas into the crowd, according to Associated Press reports. A police motorcycle was knocked over during the scuffle.

Although the LAPD initially blamed the outbreak of violence on 50-100 “agitators”—after video footage surfaced on the internet, LAPD spokesmen quickly recanted their initial claim and suspended 60 officers while they conduct an internal affairs “investigation.”

INTERNATIONAL



PHOTO: Jakarta IMC

JAKARTA, Indonesia—An anarchist march blocked traffic in Jakarta’s financial district on May Day while young people played soccer in the liberated zone. Indonesian anarchists celebrate the fight for the 8-hour work day, which began in Chicago, on May 1, 1886. (Jakarta IMC)

NOTICE:

TO HUNGRY NEW HAVENERS Food Not Bombs is back.

Free Lunch: Every Saturday, from 2:30-4:00pm on the upper green, near the bus stop at the corner of College and Chapel. Look for the flag, or people standing around and sitting in the shade, eating. Mostly vegetarian Thai food.



CT PRISONS PACKED IN '07: NEARLY 19,000 LOCKED UP

*“Violation of probation/
Conditional Release” still most
common offense, Number of
people given time for
drug possession doubles*

*** TOP 3 *
INCARCERATED
OFFENSES
Total # of
People as of
1/1/07**

Violation of
Probation/
Conditional
Release:
2,334

Dealing drugs/
Intent to sell:
1,685

Possession of
Narcotics:
1,112

Jan. 8, HARTFORD—Last year state lawmakers had a reason to brag: with the help of reforms aimed at easing prison overcrowding, Connecticut was one of the only states in the country to reduce its prison population. 73 fewer people were locked up at the beginning of 2006 than there had been at the beginning of 2005, according to Department of Corrections annual statistics.

But this year, the DOC reported a jump in the number of people sentenced to prison, adding an extra 974 inmates, bringing the combined population of all the state's prisons and Jails to 18,902 as of New Years.

Prison activists say the new figures represent a major setback.

“It's gone way up,” said Barbara Fair of People Against Injustice. “If you take your eye off of [the DOC, Lawmakers, and local police] for one second, they are right back to their old ways.”

About 1,800 kids between the ages 16-20 are among that population. That is 164 more young people locked up than there were last year.

Although the population boom comes in the wake of Connecticut's first jump in violent crime since the 1990's, the new inmates are not predominately violent criminals. In fact, more people are incarcerated for “Violation of Probation or Conditional Release” than any other offense, according to DOC statistics.

Prisoners of the war on drugs are the fastest growing demographic. The number of people incarcerated for possession of narcotics nearly doubled, making it the third most common offense, with sale or intent to sell being the second.

The New Haven Police Dept recently disbanded two aggressive units for different reasons.

First, in January, ID-NET, the FBI assisted program that enabled police to make sweeping arrests in specific neighborhoods and to conduct surveillance on people who were on probation or parole. From February to October of 2006, ID-NET's aggressive neighborhood sweeps stopped 11,768 people in the streets or driving their cars, arresting 1,300 people for everything from motor vehicle infractions to drug possession.

Then on March 13, top Narcotics Unit cops were arrested for allegedly running the squad like a street gang—with cash bribes, gambling rings, and seized evidence paying for houses in the suburbs. The unit was disbanded, and an internal investigation has been opened, but the “more arrests coming” promise from Police Chief Cisco Ortiz has not yet materialized.

Photo: Radio Callejera



[Continued from Page 1]

ers in Connecticut.

Last September, eleven Ecuadorian workers were kidnapped by Danbury police and handed over to ICE for deportation, after Channel 8 aired a series of stories by Allen Cohn that portrayed Latin American immigrants in Danbury as a public health and safety hazard. A quick search through Channel 8 archives revealed a trend of hostility towards immigrants in nearly a dozen stories by Cohn.

A key theme of this year's march was to end the raids and deportations — and to reunite the families who were torn apart in those raids.

Anti-Immigration groups have also sprung up around Connecticut in the past two years.

According to an intern who answers the phones for Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, anti-immigrant groups called DeLauro's office on the morning of May 1st claiming they were going to stage a “citizen's arrest” at the demonstration.

About 15 people, both men and women—all refusing to give their names and organizational affiliations, called the office that morning, according to the intern. Nobody

tried anything of the sort. One man did come out from Waterbury to express confusing disapproval of the event.

Decked out in matching stars and stripes bandana and Hulk-Hogan style sweatpants, Zequir Berisha waived the flag chanting “USA! USA!”

Berisha immigrated from the former Yugoslavia in 1969, and achieved refugee status as an opponent of communism. He said he waves his flag to continue that struggle.

“These people have no respect for the flag. They are communists,” Berisha said. “They burn the flag and step on it and they want to teach that to your children.”

In fact, many immigrants respectfully carried the American flag and flags from many other nations.

As the march passed through Edge-wood and Sherman Avenues, the people in the streets called on the people in the neighborhoods to join them in struggle.

“I support this,” said one man standing on his porch with his family, “it's a good thing when people stand up for their rights.” ■ NHFP and RADIO CALLEJERA

Who are the new prisoners in 2007?

More Locked Up for

| CHARGE | % INCREASE | # of PEOPLE |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Violation of Probation/ Conditional Discharge* | +10.5% | +223 |

| | | |
|---------------|--------|------|
| Drugs* | +10.9% | +276 |
| -Possession: | +95% | +259 |
| -Sale/intent: | + 0.1 | +17 |

| | | |
|--------|-----|------------|
| Murder | +5% | +33 |
| | | Total: 671 |

Fewer Locked up for

| CHARGE | % DECREASE | # of PEOPLE |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Sexual Assault 1st degree | - 3% | -16 |
| | | Total: 564 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------------|
| Robbery 1st degree/ Burglary 3 | -5% | -83 |
| | | Total: 1,543 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Conspiracy /Criminal Intent | -0.05% | -5 |
| | | Total: 927 |

Source: DOC January 1, 2006 and January 1, 2007 Prison Population, / Top Ten Offenses www.CT.gov/DOC Search: * Population, January 1*

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