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Workers take back May Day

By John Wojcik

Across the country yesterday, Sunday, May 1, tens of thousands of workers, led by the presidents of the nation's largest unions, reclaimed May Day as an American holiday.

From a podium next to a memorial here for the Haymarket Martyrs, Terence O'Sullivan, president of the Laborers International Union of North America, said: "May Day is the real Labor Day for American workers. For those who say it is a day associated with ideas too militant or too radical we say that there is nothing too militant or too radical when it comes to what must be done to protect the rights of workers."

One hundred and twenty miles to the north, in Milwaukee, the president of the nation's largest labor federation told a cheering crowd of more than 100,000: "May Day is our day to stand together!!"

"Gov. Scott Walker has declared war on Wisconsin workers," said AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka at the mass rally in Milwaukee. "We reject the idea that America can no longer be a great nation and that we're too broke to treat people fairly."

The crowds went wild, cheering, whistling and chanting.

Back in Chicago the crowds were so quiet that you could hear a pin drop when Lulu Martinez, a



member of the Immigrant Youth Justice League told them from the podium, "I am undocumented and I am not afraid."

As Martinez spoke union leaders on the stand wiped or choked back tears. She described how it was immigrant workers at the time of the Haymarket affair in 1886, who led the fight for the eight hour day, the fight for the right to assembly and free speech and the fight to form labor unions.

The fusing of the two great struggles of the day - the fight for workers rights and the fight for

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immigrant rights - was a feature of all the May Day rallies with unions rejecting the notion that immigrants take jobs away from the native born.

Some 10,000 May Day demonstrators in Los Angeles called for immigration reform, starting

These demonstrations are seen as indications that May Day is back in the country where it was born.

with passage of the Dream Act, which would provide undocumented youth with a route to legal residency through either higher education or service in the military.

According to a recent report by the Center for American Progress and the Immigration Policy Center, if federal immigration reform included a path to legalization, California, alone, would add 633,000 jobs and increase tax revenue by \$5.3 billion.

In Chicago, Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO's secretary-treasurer addressed the crowd at the Haymarket memorial. "What better place to gather than here," she asked, adding, "the place where 125 years ago the struggle for the eight hour day and for collective bargaining rights was front and center."

"But history repeats itself and today those gains themselves are in danger. We are here to show Chicago and the world that we are one and that we will not let that happen," Shuler told the cheering crowd.

She said it was an "irony" that working-class people would "buy into this idea that America is broke because some workers get paid too much."

"That's nonsense," she said. "This is the rich-

est country in the world and we can well afford what unions have always fought for - jobs, health care, education and equal opportunity for all. And we will build a massive movement that will not stop until all of that comes true for all of us. We will not let them turn some of us against others of us."

At the end of the Chicago rally the refurbished memorial to the Haymarket martyrs was unveiled.

It was police violence and a dynamite bomb at the Chicago demonstration that resulted in the deaths of both policemen and workers on May 4, 1886.

Eight randomly selected leaders of the eight-hour day movement were tried and four were hanged.

The issues the condemned men had fought for - the right to organize for things like the eight hour day, freedom of speech, freedom of press and the right to fair trials by jury - became the themes of May Day celebrations around the world for the last 125 years.



John Wojcik is a writer for the People's World.

Osama bin Laden and the way forward

By PW Editorial Board

The end of Osama bin Laden closes one ugly chapter, and let's make sure it does not open another one.

Bin Laden was in part a U.S. creation, as the bipartisan federal 9/11 Commission pointed out in its official report.

As we know, bin Laden "went rogue" with a series of attacks on U.S. installations abroad, culminating in the horrifying apocalypse of Sept. 11, 2001, in which nearly 3,000 Americans lost their lives. Those scenes of unspeakable horror are engraved in the memories of everyone who was old enough to remember that day.

But 9/11 and Osama bin Laden became an excuse for two unilateral U.S. invasions and ensuing wars and military occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq that have cost hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. In essence, it was a continuation, on steroids, of the Cold War policy that spawned bin Laden and al-Qaida in the first place: a policy of achieving U.S. superpower dominance by overwhelming military might.

Bin Laden was not captured or killed through these wars. He was killed by a U.S. covert military-

intelligence operation in Pakistan. It remains to be seen what the impact will be on reducing terrorism in the region. In fact, al-Qaida and similar groups may be in decline, not due to U.S. militarism, but instead due to the mass democratic movements across North Africa and the Middle East - against the very regimes that the U.S. has aided and propped up for decades.

September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, composed of family members of victims of the 9/11 attacks, issued a brief statement today that draws an essential conclusion.

The statement reads, in part, "It is our hope that the rule of law, underpinned by our Constitution that was so terribly strained in the name of September 11th will again become the guiding light of our policies at home and abroad. One person may have played a central role in the September 11th attacks, but all of us have a role to play in returning our world to a place of peace, hope and new possibilities. We hope that process will begin today."

We strongly agree.

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Obama, Trump and the new racism of the right

By Ryan Ebersole

Oklahoma State Rep. Sally Kern is no stranger to controversy. Many gay rights activists will remember her virulent homophobic statements both in the House chamber and out. In fact, that is pretty much what she is known for. However, she has recently drawn fire for offensive comments of a different stripe: racism.

Kern often serves as a caricature for her party's anti-LGBT views. However, earlier this week, Kern inflamed a new segment of the population. While debating SJR 15, a bill introduced by a fellow Republican that would change the state's constitution to eliminate affirmative action, Kern suggested that perhaps the high proportion of incarceration and financial hardships of the state's African American population is due to laziness, that women earn less than men because they don't work as hard as a man.

Of even more visibility is real estate mogul, reality TV star and potential GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump. He has spent the past few weeks fanning the flames of the right's most ardent conspiracy theorists, the "birthers."

Trump now has turned to questioning how President Obama, an African American, could have gained access to Columbia and Harvard universities, stating that he believed Obama's grades to be subpar, calling him a "terrible student." Trump has even tried to call into question Obama's authorship of his best-selling autobiography, "Dreams From My Father." He insinuated that Obama's admission to the two schools was a result of affirmative action, as if somehow Obama, as an African American, could not have gone to Columbia and Harvard otherwise. This line of thought was parroted by MSNBC's conservative commentator Pat Buchanan (who is virulently anti-affirmative-action, anti-multiculturalism, and anti-LGBT-rights), who claimed that the president's academic career was "affirmative action all



the way."

However, the president graduated from Harvard Law School magna cum laude - it is nearly impossible to make better grades than that. Even more impressive, he was elected editor of the Harvard Law Review - which Buchanan also claimed was somehow due to affirmative action.

On more local levels, many in the GOP leadership have exhibited strains of racism. Tea partier and GOP central committee member in California Marilyn Davenport sent out an email depicting Obama as the child of two monkeys with the caption, "Now you know why no birth certificate." Davenport responded to critics by saying, "I didn't think people would be upset by it."

Between the birther claims, the countless racist emails from GOP addresses (including "Barack the Magic Negro"), and these comments by Republican officials, it would appear that the Grand Old Party might be beset by a racist element. Republicans like to brag that their party was the reason behind emancipation; but it was the conservative movement that opposed civil rights, and appears to, at some level, not be above courting the racist element of the right. Somehow, the party of Lincoln has become the party of John Wilkes Booth.

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Texas's grim solutions

By Jim Lane

The Texas Senate passed its budget, and it would cause fewer than the 330,000 public worker layoffs than would the House version. Labor says its better, but still lousy.

But there's cheerful news, sort of, for those frustrated Texans who have completely given up. Our wise leaders in the legislature are offering us several simple shortcuts to offing ourselves.

First of all on the gun front: large numbers of Texans are now legally carrying concealed weapons, thanks to earlier efforts by the lawmakers. Just to show that they put their butts where their mouths are, the legislature lets them carry pistols into the State Capitol during sessions. In fact, they encourage it. People with a gun permit can go through the security lines faster than the general public; consequently, all the lobbyists are armed.

Our better-known shootouts occur on college campuses. To some of us, it makes sense that every college campus in the state has banned weaponry; but not to some in the legislature. They want to pass a bill that would override every Texas colleges' ability to disarm their campuses, so we'd have more, not fewer, armed students.

For those averse to violence, Texas leaders offer us the option of slow death by poisoning. They are infamous for opposing all federal environmental rules, and they are intent on weakening the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality.

Another new option for ending it all in Texas is the state's highways. Texas drivers already terrify, but our legislative leaders want to raise the speed limit to 85 MPH.

Everyone is getting in on the act of finality. Even our armadillos are lethal. The Los Angeles Times recently reported that Texas Armadillos carry leprosy.

El muerte de bin Laden

Por Prensa Latina

En un mensaje a la nación transmitido en vivo desde la Casa Blanca, el presidente de Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, anunció que el líder de la red Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, fue muerto por militares estadounidenses durante un operativo realizado en Pakistán.

Obama aseguró que ninguno de los militares estadounidenses resultó herido en el tiroteo que acabó con la vida de quien se había convertido en uno de los hombres más buscados del mundo desde que se le vinculó con los ataques del 11 de septiembre de 2001.

Bin Laden, emparentado con la familia real saudí, fue un aliado de Estados Unidos, apoyado por la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA), durante la guerra que libró el movimiento Talibán en los años 1980s contra la presencia soviética en Afganistán.

Pakistán confirma muerte de Bin Laden

El gobierno de Pakistán confirmó la muerte del líder de la red Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, en una operación realizada por militares estadounidenses a menos de un centenar de kilómetros de esta capital.

La cancillería local afirmó en una declaración emitida este lunes que el operativo en Abbottabad, ciudad ubicada a unos 60 kilómetros de Islamabad, se llevó a cabo de acuerdo a la política declarada por Washington de que Bin Laden debía ser eliminado por el Ejército norteamericano en cualquier lugar que se encontrara.

Tras calificar la muerte de uno de los hombres más buscados del mundo como un serio revés para las organizaciones terroristas en el mundo, el texto apunta que el presidente paki-

staní, Asif Ali Zardari, fue informado vía telefónica por el mandatario de Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, sobre la muerte de Bin Laden.

De acuerdo con la cancillería, el hecho reafirma además la voluntad de Pakistán, cuyos servicios de inteligencia han sido acusados en más de una ocasión de estar en contacto con los rebeldes afganos, de luchar contra el terrorismo.

"Hemos establecido sistemas extremadamente efectivos para compartir información de inteligencia con otras agencias del mundo, incluida la de Estados Unidos. Continuaremos apoyando los esfuerzos internacionales contra el terrorismo", agrega la nota de la cancillería.

Temores en Europa

Bruselas, 2 may (PL) La anunciada muerte del líder de la red Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, por parte de tropas estadounidenses desató el miedo en Europa a eventuales ataques terroristas.

El manifiesto regocijo que el deceso provocó en el seno de la Unión Europea (UE) y la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte (OTAN) contrasta con el temor a las represalias.

Bélgica decretó alerta especial para sus servicios de seguridad ante la posibilidad de que seguidores de Bin Laden intenten alguna acción contra las sedes de la UE y de la OTAN.

Rob Wainwright, director de Europol (oficina policial europea), comentó a la prensa acreditada que "cabe esperar una acción de respuesta a corto plazo".

Wainwright vaticinó que la desaparición de su líder no quitará poder operativo a Al Qaeda.

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