



MLK March to Show Solidarity with Immigrants and Black People

By Tyneisha Bowens, NYC FIST

On Jan. 3 a coalition of anti-racist organizations and activists in New York City welcomed in the new year with a planning meeting for the Martin Luther King Jr. March Against Racism that took place at the Solidarity Center.

The MLK March Against Racism Coalition was formed this past Dec. 12 at an anti-racist meeting hosted by N.Y. FIST (Fight Imperialism—Stand Together) youth group and the International Action Center. This coalition was formed as an answer to the nationwide increase in racism.

January 21 was nationally recognized as Martin Luther King Day, a progressive holiday fought for by Black people and anti-racist allies to honor Dr. King's commitment to social justice.

Over the years, this day has been co-opted and commercialized by the ruling class. To the MLK March Against Racism Coalition the recent racist attacks on immigrants, Black youth, LGBT people of color and women clarified the need for people of color and anti-racist allies to reclaim Martin Luther King Day as a day of building unity and solidarity by taking to the streets.

A march in New York City, as well as other events around the country, took place on Jan. 21. This march against racism will connect the attacks on all people of color including immigrants, Black folks, LGBT folks and women and staunchly criticize corporate-funded racists like Lou Dobbs of CNN and radio host Don Imus of the infamously racist network ABC.

Lou Dobbs has been spreading his racist anti-immigrant sentiment for years now through the supposedly liberal CNN. On his program he has falsely blamed immigrants for increased crime and disease in this country and has vocalized his support for murderous bigots like the Minutemen.

As a scapegoat for the economic crisis and victim of demonization campaigns the immigrant community has had to face racist legislation, deportations, physical assaults and detentions.

Last April Don Imus made racist and

sexist remarks toward the Rutgers University women's basketball team, including his reference to them as "nappy-headed hoes." Imus' show was dropped after mass protest, but after only 9 months off the air Imus has been hired by ABC.

ABC has had a history of racist programming including the recent "Desperate Housewives" TV episode that portrayed Filipino health care workers as inferior to U.S. health care workers.

The Filipino community and their allies were outraged at such white supremacist implications. ABC offered employment opportunities to Filipino people but has yet to officially apologize for this particular episode.

"We don't want jobs from them, we want an apology," said Bernadette Ellorin of BAYAN-USA during the Jan. 3rd coalition meeting.

For these reasons and more, the MLK March Against Racism will target CNN and ABC in New York where both Dobbs and Imus broadcast from.

The march also brought attention to the housing struggle that is taking place from Harlem to New Orleans. Tenants, "homeowners" and community members are combating racist gentrification, foreclosures and demolitions.

As exemplified in New Orleans, the right to public housing is under attack and those who defend this right are being brutally silenced. To acknowledge the racism of these attacks on housing and to show solidarity with those facing eviction, demolitions, and foreclosures



Over 1,000 people march in NYC MLK Day March Against Racism in coalition with FIST

the march to stopped at a local housing development.

The writer is a leading organizer of FIST.

BOSTON The first MLK hip-hop rally

A militant youth-led Martin Luther King Day rally, march and speakout against racism filled the streets of downtown Boston on Jan. 21 with chants, hip-hop and spoken word calling for funding Dr. King's dream, cutting the military budget and using the money for jobs, housing, education and health care. Boston.

Youth from FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and Voices of Liberation led the demonstration, which included strong participation by activists from the Boston Workers Alliance, a community organization that organizes against discrimination based on "CORI" past criminal records. The crowd of about 70 included strong representation of youth as well as older representatives from the oppressed communities and a good representation of

DENVER A Day of World Solidarity

It was a bitter cold morning but that didn't stop hundreds of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. supporters to come out for the "Marade." Activists organizing for the March Against Racism called for a Day of World Solidarity.

For years State Farm Insurance has been the official "sponsor" of the "Marade," which has gotten smaller as people have grown tired of the corporate

Boston MLK (continued)

supporters of all ages.

The opening rally at Park Street on the Boston Common featured hip-hop performances addressing issues affecting oppressed youth in Boston, including police sweeps in the community and a surge in violence affecting Black youth.

City Councilor Chuck Turner told the crowd he was honored to be addressing "the first hip-hop rally commemorating Dr. King," and raised the need to continue the fight to fund Dr. King's dream and abolish the three evils identified by Dr. King: militarism, economic exploitation and racism.

Minister Rodney X from the Nation of Islam also gave a rousing talk to the crowd, highlighting Dr. King's legacy of struggle. The youth, including Jonathan Regis, D. J. Nomadik, Jesse and Augustin, coordinated and led the program and played hip-hop with a message that can no longer be

co-opting of Martin Luther King Jr. Activists from the Black, Latin@ and Asian communities and white supporters had an alternative rally, calling for unity of the oppressed against racism and war and drawing attention to State Farm's failure to pay back hundreds of claims filed by the victims of Hurricane Katrina, yet their slogan for the Marade was "We share the same dream."



heard over public media, where it has been co-opted and taken over by big business interests.

The demonstration marched through downtown Boston led by a sound truck playing excerpts from Dr. King's final speeches condemning the Vietnam War, and raps and chants led by Miya Campbell of FIST and the Women's Fightback Network. Rev. Franklin Hobbs, director of Healing Our Land, highlighted the disproportionate incidence of HIV/AIDS among communities of color resulting from discrimination and failure to provide resources available to

The activists drew many people to the alternative rally and community speak-out, where people spoke against the \$600 million new jail being built, the closing of schools, police brutality, U.S. imperialism and the attacks against immigrant workers.

When the "Marade" started, a State Farm truck was supposed to be at the head of the march, but was successfully blocked by those opposed to its co-opting of the commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. to sell insurance.

Later, there was a people's video night where "The Murder of Fred Hampton," "Welcome to New Orleans" and "Legacy of Torture" were shown. ■



Members of FIST in Denver defend the legacy of MLK.

other communities, and led militant chants against racism.

The demonstration was closed out by messages from members of Boston Workers Alliance including Mr. Tim and Phil Reason, Sara Mokuria of VOL, and Bob Traynham of the International Action Center and the Boston School Bus Drivers Union. It was endorsed by City Councilors Charles Yancey and Sam Yoon, New England Human Rights for Haiti, and Bishop Filipe Teixeira, OFSJC.