



Verizon strike solidarity, Va. See page 5.

Brazilians fill streets to protest coup

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On the morning of May 12, the Brazilian Senate announced the decision to begin a trial of impeachment against President Dilma Rousseff. This long session, begun the day before, in which each member of the Senate had 15 minutes to testify in the trial, was a demonstration of the power of the Brazilian oligarch class aligned with U.S. imperialism in order to impose a full neoliberal plan to take back any advance that has benefited the poor.

To no avail were logical arguments by some senators and the President's lawyer, who rejected the final judgment based on facts that showed, without any doubt, the lack of evidence against Rousseff and the illegitimacy of charges of corruption.

As Vanessa Graziottin, senator of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) said, "[It] is not a process of impeachment. It is a coup to change the political-economic plan for the nation." (Telesurtv)

The decision had been made in advance. Those who voted for the trial based their action on the critical situation of the economy and the need to advance policies for the benefit of private investment and not the people.

Approved with a majority of 55 votes in favor and 22 against, Rousseff was removed from office for up to 180 days, and Vice President Michel Temer, from the right-wing Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), was named interim president. The trial will begin in mid-May.

Meanwhile Temer also faces the possibility of impeachment by the Supreme Court. According to the Datafolha polling agency, only 2 percent of the population would vote for him in a presidential election.

It is no wonder then that the PMDB has opted for a change under a congressional coup, as it would not have happened by electoral methods. It is interesting that a September 2015 Wall Street Journal article noted: "The Brazilian Democratic Movement Party became one of this nation's most powerful political forces by adopting an unusual strategy: Instead of seeking the presidency, it has long functioned as Brazil's kingmaker, trading its support to the ruling party in exchange for patronage jobs and influence."

Despite Temer's being part of the Rousseff cabinet, his tendency to neoliberalism and criticism of the governments of Lula da Silva and now Rousseff have been previously documented. In a May 14 article in La Jornada of Mexico, titled "Michel Temer was a CIA informer in 2006, says Wikileaks," "Temer criticized Lula for his 'narrow view' and the 'excessive emphasis on social programs that do not promote growth or economic development.'"

Now, the PMDB through Temer has wasted no time in presenting his cabinet and neoliberal program, which

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Nakba Day march for Palestinian return

On May 15, the 68th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine, activists in New York City rallied at City Hall Park, then marched across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Elections and social change

The current presidential election campaign has certainly differed from any other within memory. First of all, the great energy and creativity shown by tens of thousands of progressive Sanders volunteers, who have raised the funds and done the outreach to propel his campaign forward, have confounded all predictions about the outcome of the primaries — to the point that Sanders is still a contender for the Democratic Party nomination. The struggle may even continue at the convention itself.

The objective factor that has propelled the Sanders campaign, especially among workers and youth, is the continuing capitalist economic crisis.

On the flip side, the stagnating economy has also provided grist for Donald Trump, who, despite a lifetime of arrogantly flaunting his billionaire credentials, now poses as an anti-establishment outsider as he works his disgruntled audiences into a frenzy of insults and hatred toward immigrants, especially Muslims and Spanish-speaking workers.



Trump is a would-be politician hungry for votes. He discounts the immigrants, but he doesn't openly attack African Americans and has toned down some of his earlier vitriol against women. He leaves it to his followers to openly display the ugly racism and misogyny he incites. Fortunately, his Klan-like rallies have been unmasked by the courageous Black Lives Matter movement, women and others.

The capitalist system, which results in an ever-smaller class of super-rich owning and controlling the wealth created by the labor of millions, is what's behind the deepening inequality that is hurting and angering so many in this country. And the parties that dominate U.S. politics — Democrats and Republicans — are both

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¡Ramón Jiménez presente!

Ramón J. Jiménez never stopped fighting, even after being diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer. The Puerto Rican lawyer, Bronx activist and champion of poor people everywhere died May 10 at age 67. He is survived by his daughter Laila Roman-Jiménez.



Ramón Jiménez and Laila Roman-Jiménez.

Law School. Both men used their legal skills to defend working and poor people by any means necessary.

Operating out of his 149th Street law office near Hostos, Jiménez fought slumlords and helped injured workers to win compensation.

He was best known for saving Eugenio María de Hostos Community College in the South Bronx. Mayor Abe Beame wanted to close New York City's only bilingual college in 1976 while shoveling millions of dollars to Yankee Stadium. At the same time, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was threatened with destruction by the New York Public Library.

Jiménez led a 20-day takeover of Hostos that culminated with 40 people arrested, including Jiménez. But Beame backed down and Hostos was saved.

Jiménez grew up on 97th Street in East Elmhurst, Queens, across the street from Malcolm X. His mom worked in sweatshops until her sixties, operating a sewing machine. An early experience was being bused to a school in Astoria where cops allowed racists to assault the arriving Black and Latino/a students.

Like his hero, Puerto Rican independence leader Pedro Albizu Campos, Jiménez graduated from Harvard

In 2010, he ran as the Freedom Party candidate for New York state attorney general, along with gubernatorial candidate Charles Barron and Eva Doyle for lieutenant governor.

The Freedom Party was a heroic attempt to break the stranglehold of the corrupt Democratic Party machine in the Latino/a and Black communities. In 2014, after being told he had cancer, Jiménez ran for attorney general on the Green Party ticket.

Hundreds of people attended the May 14 wake for Ramón Jiménez. Many were from the South Bronx Community Congress, which Jiménez helped found.

Among the speakers were City Councilperson Inez Barron and State Assemblyperson Charles Barron. Grave-diggers came from Woodlawn Cemetery — the “Band of Brothers” — whom Jiménez helped get a union.

¡Ramón Jiménez presente!

—Stephen Millies

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Michael Ratner: 1943 - 2016

The progressive and anti-imperialist movement lost a valued fighter on May 11, when Michael Ratner died at the age of 72. Ratner was known for standing up against the U.S. ruling class and power structure on all issues, domestic and international, from Guantánamo to Yugoslavia.

Ratner used his legal training and know-how throughout more than four decades to battle class injustice, imperialist war and all forms of discrimination. In the decade before his death, he was president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights, an organization that he had played a big role in building, and president of the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, based in Berlin.

Most recently, he impelled the CCR to fight to end the use of the U.S.-occupied Guantánamo naval base in Cuba as a concentration camp for alleged “terrorists.” The CCR defended the rights of the Guantánamo prisoners against illegal detention without trial and against the torture practiced by CIA inquisitors. Ratner has also given as-

sistance to struggles in Palestine, Central America and other parts of the world. His contribution to the Cuban Revolution was recognized in a eulogy written by the former president of Cuba’s National Assembly, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada. (cubadebate.cu, May 13)

Ratner had not only political insight but also civic courage. He stood up when many others failed to recognize the Bill Clinton administration’s demonization of the Yugoslav and Serb leadership as a pretext to justify the 1999 imperialist war. Ratner made an important contribution as a judge at a people’s tribunal in June 2000 that found the leaders of the U.S. and its NATO allies guilty of war crimes against Yugoslavia.

Michael Ratner, we will miss you.

— WW managing editor John Catalinotto, an organizer of the International Action Center’s People’s Tribunal on Yugoslavia. For the CCR’s message on Michael Ratner, see tinyurl.com/huex3r8.

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we’re fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 57 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions. □

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 Vol. 58, No. 20 • May 26, 2016
 Closing date: May 17, 2016
 Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

Student hunger strikers win ethnic studies agreement

By Terri Kay
San Francisco

Four hunger strikers — Hassani Bell, Ahkeel Andres Mestayer, Julia Retzlaff and Sachiel Fredric Rosen — together with the Third World Liberation Front 2016, all students at San Francisco State University, declared victory May 11 after they signed an agreement with the SFSU administration which included funding of \$482,806. (This is in addition to an already previously conceded \$250,000 for the 2016/17 academic year.)

Ten student demands were originally presented to the administration on Feb. 25. After an active campaign to press the demands was ignored, the four students began their hunger strike on May 2, pitching tents on a grassy area in the center of the campus. Negotiations leading to the settlement finally moved quickly after one of the strikers was hospitalized and SFSU President Les Wong agreed to meet with them.

Highlights of the agreement include:

- Funding for two full-time tenure track faculty positions in Africana Studies
- Appointment of a working group to increase recruitment of underrepresented minorities
- Work study funds for four students at the College of Ethnic Studies for the 2016/17 academic year
- Support for the review and restructure of the College of Ethnic Studies graduate program
- Increase from half to full time for the College's Development Officer
- Funding for the Race and Resistance Program to be converted to department status
- Movement of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Program to the CES
- The launch of a program in Pacific Islander Studies with two classes in the fall of 2016
- Regular, ongoing meetings between the administration and students on academic programs
- No disciplinary action against any of



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Third World Liberation Front 2016 celebrates victory.

- the people involved in this campaign
- Discussions with the Academic Senate on a more transparent budget process
- Meetings with constituents of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diaspora Initiative to develop a plan to reinstate two tenure track faculty lines.

Bell, an Africana Studies major, talked about the strike to this reporter as they were celebrating their victory. Asked why he joined the hunger strike, he said, "The budget cut would have eliminated about 40 percent of the faculty and most of the graduate programs." His thoughts on the victory? "It's bittersweet. I know the work is not over; we didn't get all the demands that we wanted. There's still a lot of work

to do. I am happy that we were able to advance the college, but the fight never stops."

The students involved in this campaign named themselves the Third World Liberation Front 2016 in honor of the original students who fought for and won the creation of the College of Ethnic Studies in 1968. Actor Danny Glover was a member of the Black Student Union and one of the students who went on strike at that time. He came and spoke in support of the strikers on May 9.

More information about the students' demands and the strike can be found on their Facebook page, "Defend and Advance Ethnic Studies at SF State." □

An immigrant detention nightmare

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Lumpkin, Ga.

May 12 — On April 17, Alaa Ismail Yasin, a 27-year-old Palestinian who has been held in Stewart Detention Center since September, stopped eating.

Operated by the Corrections Corporation of America, Stewart is the second-largest immigrant detention facility in the country and is located in rural southwest Georgia. Stewart County ranks among the highest in the state for unemployment and poverty among its largely African-American population.

Yasin arrived at the for-profit detention center around the time detainees protesting the deplorable conditions and lengthy holds had gone on a hunger

strike. The protest was violently ended by armed guards entering the unit and placing many of the participants in solitary confinement.

Stewart has been the focus of widespread concern by immigrants rights and human rights organizations, with resistance actions by detainees and numerous annual protest marches and rallies organized by Georgia Detention Watch at its gates.

Immigration officials say Yasin, who was arrested in Wake County in North Carolina, violated his student visa by helping out at his uncle's pizza restaurant and must be deported.

However, Yasin was born in the West Bank, which is under Israeli military occupation. The U.S. does not recognize

Palestine as a state and he is not an Israeli citizen. There is no country that can accept him. He is technically a stateless person.

Under U.S. immigration rules, each detainee's case must be reviewed after six months if their deportation has not occurred. Those who are determined not to pose a "terrorism" threat, a danger to the public or a flight risk must be released if the government has not been able to deport them.

Yasin's review and release should have been in March. Despite efforts by his lawyer, his sponsor, and family and friends in North Carolina, Immigration and Customs Enforcement kept stalling on resolving his case. So the young Palestinian determined to force the issue by

declaring his refusal to eat until he was released or allowed to go back to the West Bank.

On May 10, ICE attempted to get legal permission from a judge to force-feed him via a nasal tube. In their argument before the court, they claimed that his possible death would create a dangerous disturbance among the detainees. Although Yasin had lost more than 20 pounds in the course of his three-week hunger strike, the judge ruled against the request.

On May 12, Yasin ended his hunger strike but vowed to his supporters that he would continue to press for his release.

He has been placed in solitary confinement for 29 days.

A petition demanding that ICE free Yasin is at georgiadetentionwatch.com. □

Flint crisis drags on

By Martha Grevatt

The struggle for justice continues in Flint.

The crisis of lead contamination, caused by a failure to add anti-corrosive chemicals to water drawn from the Flint River, did not end when Flint returned to its previous source, Detroit Water and Sewerage.

While Detroit water comes properly treated, Flint's estimated 15,000 aging lead service lines are still leaching lead into the water. One reason is that the pipes were damaged during 18 months of exposure to untreated river water. Another is that residents are still limiting their use of the toxic water, which prevents phosphates from coating the lead pipes.

The filters provided for some residents are ineffective in homes where the water has more than 150 parts per billion of lead. Many residents are without filters at all. Thus, untold numbers of people, including children, still do not have safe drinking water.

Moreover, lead is not the only contaminant in the water. Showering and bath-

ing still cause skin rashes, hair loss and breathing trouble, with disinfectant by-products a possible factor.

The people of Flint are weary of endless trips to procure bottled water, which is getting harder to come by as the state cuts back. The amount of waste is staggering, yet the fire stations, which have served as both water distribution and recycling centers, have stopped accepting empty bottles.

The struggle has turned ordinary residents into celebrities, the latest being Amaryana "Mari" Copeny, whose appeal brought President Barack Obama to Flint. "Little Miss Flint" is recognized in public and often complimented. Yet 8-year-old Mari has been the subject of racist attacks over misspelled words and how she speaks.

By holding a meeting in Flint the president did more than Gov. Rick Snyder, who lives just 45 minutes away in Ann Arbor but has yet to meet with residents. Obama lost all credibility with Flint residents, however, when he drank city water to support the government's position that the water was safe to drink. Snyder infuriated residents when he pulled the same

publicity stunt and then left the country, avoiding Flint water for 10 days.

The president made a point of telling Flint that help is on the way, but the federal government is only sending an \$80 million revolving loan fund — for all of Michigan.

The latest outrage is the announcement that Flint water bills, already among the highest in the country, are expected to double over the next five years. The point of disconnecting from Detroit was supposedly to save money.

Residents sue for pipe replacement

On May 13, attorneys presented initial arguments in a lawsuit charging state and city officials with violating the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Melissa Mays, founder of "Water You Fighting For," filed the suit along with Flint-based Pastors for Social Action, the Michigan American Civil Liberties Union and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Plaintiffs are seeking injunctive relief in the form of a court order to replace all of Flint's lead service lines.

State attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit, arguing that the state

is complying with a remedial order from the federal Environmental Protection Agency. NRDC attorney Dimple Chaudhary pointed out that the state is trying to get out from under that very order. "Pipes continue to leach lead. Lead is not minimized. There is continued harm to residents of Flint," Chaudhary told the judge.

More than 100 people attended the Detroit hearing. Activists in solidarity with Flint packed the chambers, with latecomers straining to hear the proceedings outside the doorway. The plaintiffs are waiting on federal Judge David Lawson to decide if the case, one of many lawsuits by Flint residents seeking justice, will go forward.

What is needed?

Lead has been known to be toxic for ages, but was used in paint, gasoline, piping and other products with no regard to worker or community safety. Lead at any level is poisonous, especially to young children, who suffer developmentally. Water is only one route of entry into the body. Untold numbers of children — particularly children of color — were harmed

Continued on page 5

Undocumented students take over Regents meeting

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

In a bold action, Georgia undocumented youth and their allies entered the meeting room of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia on May 10, and then sat in the chairs of the appointed policymakers for the state's public university system.

The great majority of the board's 19 members, who each serve 7-year terms, are heads of major corporations such as Georgia Power, PruittHealth, Synovus financial services, and liquor and beer distributor Crown Distributors. Several are close political allies and donors of Gov. Nathan Deal. Only one of the two women regents has any background in education.

Since 2011, graduating high school students without papers have been barred from applying to the top five universities and are ineligible to pay in-state tuition at all of the system's other universities, colleges and technical schools. Out-of-state tuition can be double, triple or even more, effectively denying access to higher education to thousands of undocumented youth no matter their test scores or academic qualifications. They are not eligible for federal Pell grants or the state HOPE scholarship funds.

With supporters in the audience, seven young people took the regents' places at the front of the room and convened a "people's hearing." After testimony from state Sen. Vincent Fort, immigration rights activist and lawyer Azadeh Shahshahani and undocumented student Salvador Alvarado, they announced their decision to revoke the two policies, 4.1.6 and 4.3.4, and end segregation and discrimination in Georgia's institutions of higher learning.

When the two undocumented youth and five young allies would not cede the seats to the businessmen and political appointees of the governor, they were arrested by the Capitol police on trespass charges.

All were released about 12 hours later

from the Fulton County Jail. Their civil disobedience action received wide news coverage.

The campaign to change the Board of Regents' policy dates to 2012, when the federal government provided "legal presence" to those brought to the U.S. as children who met additional criteria.

This program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival, grants work permits and driver's licenses to those accepted into the program and exempts them from deportation.

In 2011, the Georgia Legislature enacted a number of anti-immigrant laws that denied those without "lawful presence" certain benefits, including full access to higher public education. The political establishment, including the courts, so far have declared that federal "legal presence" is less than Georgia's "lawful presence."

The May 10 action and many others have been organized by Freedom University students, a nationally recognized alternative school initiated by professors at the University of Georgia to provide college-level courses for undocumented students, now located in Atlanta. Dozens of highly motivated and qualified students are continuing to advance academically but are also learning the skills of political activism.

Freedom University youth have been accepted into numerous universities and colleges across the U.S., where they have excelled. Twenty-one states currently have no restrictions on admission of undocumented students and six, including California and Texas, offer financial aid.

Georgia, and several other former Confederate states, fought to keep segregated education for years past the 1954 Supreme Court ruling outlawing so-called "separate but equal" public schools.

The Freedom University students see themselves as struggling in the same tradition as the many thousands who marched, sat in and went to jail to end Jim Crow laws denying African Americans their civil and human rights. □

Food workers fight for their jobs

By a UFCW steward
Landover, Md.

Food and Commercial Workers Local 400, joined by other unions, community organizations and half a dozen religious leaders, took to the streets May 11. They marched to Giant Food's headquarters to demand full disclosure of the secret sale of eight Giant Food supermarkets that currently have contracts with UFCW Local 400.

Local 400 President Mark Federici told affected union members that Giant has disclosed no more than what was known six weeks ago about the behind-closed-doors deal-making Giant is engaged in with other big grocery chains. He characterized politicians that the union has approached about the matter as only "talking about good jobs" and in reality "doing nothing" to save union jobs.

"We get nothing but disrespect from corporate America," Federici asserted, pointing out that corporations like Giant "can only make big deals because of our hard work!" Local 400 represents 35,000 members in retail food, food processing,

health care, and other industries and services from Maryland to Tennessee.

Local 400 members this writer spoke to speculated that the two Maryland and six Virginia stores could be going to Kroger or Ahold. Local 400 is in a bitter battle with Kroger at the bargaining table right now. As for Ahold, one union member, addressing the crowd of about 300, said, "If [nonunion] Ahold gets control, we'll go from a middle-class salary to a Section 8 salary."

The last speaker before the crowd took to the streets was well-known internationalist, the Rev. Graylan Hagler. With the other clergy standing behind him, he declared, "The rich will take away from you anything you're not willing to fight



PHOTO: FACEBOOK #SAVEMYSTORE

On the picket line

By Matty Stardust and Sue Davis

Aerospace machinists strike against two-tier system

Some 400 aerospace workers at Triumph Composite Systems in Spokane, Wash., walked off the job at midnight on May 11 and set up a picket line outside the factory. The members of Machinists Union District Lodge 751 voted 94 percent to reject the company's latest contract and 93 percent in favor of striking.

At issue is Triumph's unequal, two-tier pay system, which eliminated pensions and offers significantly lower wages for newer hires doing the same work as higher paid co-workers. "This is a generational job," said longtime Triumph worker Victor Parker, "and these kids deserve as good if not better benefits than what we had." Dan Byrne added, "We're one equal team. We work together. We fight together." (krem.com, May 11)

The union accuses Triumph of bad-faith bargaining by attempting to negotiate with workers individually, and even threatening some. Jon Holden, president of 751, reported in a statement that Triumph has not only benefitted from the state's \$8.7 billion aerospace industry tax incentive program, but has also moved some jobs from Spokane to Mexico: "We don't think it's fair for Triumph to expect the Spokane community to support their corporation with tax dollars, only to have them take some residents' jobs away while cutting overall pay and benefits for those who are still working."

In 2007, the union struck for three days to resist the two-tier pay system. This time union members vow to stay out "as long as it takes." (iam751.wordpress.com, May 10)

Prisoner work stoppages spread in Alabama

Inmates at Alabama's Holman and Elmore prison facilities went on strike May 1, International Workers' Day, to protest the institutions' deplorable conditions as well as the racist injustice system that put the inmates there. Within days, the strike spread to three other Alabama prisons: Staton, St. Clair and Donaldson.

The inmates' list of demands includes repealing the habitual offenders statute, banning life sentences for first-timers, releasing inmates who are eligible for parole and ending forced prison labor, which inmates rightly refer to as "prison slavery." Overall, the prisoners are demanding "education, rehabilitation and re-entry preparedness." For the full text of their demands, visit tinyurl.com/j92q8gj.

Inmates report that prison guards have retaliated against the strikers by withholding food and refusing to clean inmate facilities. A photo uploaded to Twitter shows toxic black mold growing in the showers. In a text message sent to the press, one inmate wrote, "We [are] weak, feeling nauseated and having headaches from the lack of balanced meals." (theintercept.com, May 10)

For more information, petitions and a way to donate to support the strikers, visit freealabamamovement.wordpress.com.

Illinois homecare workers sue for overtime pay

How many hours a day do workers spend caring for people with disabilities in their homes? An Associated Press study conducted in April found that caretakers, usually family members, report working up to 18 hours a day. Before a new federal rule went into effect on Jan. 1 requiring homecare workers be paid time-and-a-half after clocking 40 hours a week, the workers made straight time.

As of May 1, the state of Illinois is balking at paying overtime to 24,000 homecare workers who make \$13 an hour. A spokesperson for the state called it "fraudulent" for workers to claim they're on the clock three-quarters of the day. That's why the state issued the new ruling requiring workers to justify their hours.

And that's why SEIU Healthcare Illinois filed an unfair labor practices charge with the Illinois Labor Relations Board on May 6. The union, whose members are only full-time workers, represents caregivers who are predominantly women, the majority women of color. Currently negotiating a new contract due June 1, SEIU charges that the new policy was timed to force it to make concessions during collective bargaining. (AP, May 6)

But caring for people with disabilities in their homes isn't like other jobs; it requires round-the-clock attention. So the state of Illinois is not just disrespecting the job homecare workers are required to do — it's also discriminating against people with disabilities. □

for. We won't back down. We stand arm-in-arm to turn back the forces of evil."

The rally outside Giant's headquarters was addressed by Teamsters Local 730 President Ritchie Brooks: "Usually it's us coming to the UFCW to ask for your help. We're your comrades. Let us know and we're there for you." Several speakers, including AFL-CIO Metro Washington Council Executive Director Carlos Jimenez, berated the Federal Trade Commission for allowing Giant to sell out to the highest bidding conglomerate.

By not stopping increased monopolization of the food industry, the FTC has partnered with the capitalists responsible for ever-increasing food prices in a period when the price of gasoline — the industry's previous excuse for raising food prices — has been down in the bust half of the economic cycle. As bluntly put by one speaker, "The FTC is closing us down." Several more speakers, including Local 400's president, repeated this theme.

The Democratic Party-controlled state government in Annapolis recently defeated legislation proposed by the UFCW to have labor law apply to airport Super-Shuttle drivers who are exploited as "independent contractors" at less than the minimum wage.

This new betrayal by the government's FTC appointees shows that, once again, the political party that repeats ad nauseam that it's "for the workers" has other allegiances.

Unsure about whether any or all of the eight stores will close or will reopen with new hires or the present union workforce, what the rank and file most often wrote on the signs they marched with was "SAVE OUR STORES."

Among the other unions marching in solidarity were sister UFCW Locals 27 and 1994, Teamsters Locals 730 and 639, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 and Service Employees Local 32BJ.

For more information on Facebook: #savemystore □

Verizon strikers fight for all workers

By Kathy Durkin

For more than a month, Verizon workers in the company's landline and broadband FIOS sectors have been on strike in Washington, D.C., and nine East Coast states. These members of the Communication Workers (CWA) and the International Electrical Workers (IBEW), who have worked without a contract since Aug. 1, walked off their jobs on April 13 after months of unproductive negotiations.

These workers are bravely fighting for their jobs and benefits against a corporate monolith. They know the history of job loss in the company, which has cut its workforce through attrition, pressure on senior workers to retire, outsourcing and offshoring. In 2000, 80,000 Verizon workers went on strike; in 2011, the workforce of 45,000 struck for two weeks. Today, 39,000 women and men are on the picket lines, fiercely determined to protect their livelihoods.

Their fight has implications for the entire U.S. multinational working class and those in the global workforce. These workers are standing up to a transnational corporation that has \$244 billion in assets and reaped \$39 billion in profits over the last three years. In 2015, the cable monopoly gained \$17.9 billion in profits and purchased AOL for \$4.4 billion. Recently, it purchased AwesomenessTV, a digital studio. The communications giant was also helped by the federal government to garner even more revenue: From 2008 to 2013, the company received \$732 million in tax refunds.

All this wealth was created by the labor of past and present Verizon workers. But

the way the capitalist system works, the corporate owners always seek to maximize profits, and in today's cutthroat global economy that means slashing labor costs however they can — reducing benefits, tossing longtime workers onto unemployment lines or forcing them into retirement.

Verizon aims to close East Coast call centers, eliminate those union jobs, among others, and ship the work to non-union domestic contractors or out of the country. Executives are demanding more cuts in health care, retirement and disability benefits; "forced relocation" assignments, in which workers would be required to commute far from their families; and elimination of job security.

Verizon sends SWAT team after CWA

A critical issue for the strikers is the offshoring of jobs overseas. Some 13,000 of the strikers are call center workers. Their unions say that Verizon is transferring far more customer service jobs than they admit to call centers in the Philippines, where workers are being paid poverty wages of \$1.78 an hour to handle calls from irate U.S. customers. While they must work overtime, they are denied overtime pay rates.

A May 13 CWA press release reports that the union was contacted by call center workers in the Philippines, who said Verizon was "lying to our members and the public about the extent of offshoring" good jobs. In response, during the week of May 9 the union sent a delegation to the Philippines to uncover the truth.

The CWA team traveled with representatives of UNI, a global labor federa-

tion, and KUM, a Filipino union. When they discovered "how Verizon is padding its incredible profit margins by replacing good-paying [U.S.] jobs with poverty-wage jobs abroad, Verizon sent armed guards and a SWAT team after them," read the press release. Verizon executives refused to meet with the union members at company headquarters in Alabang, south of Manila; instead they were surrounded by masked guards brandishing automatic weapons.

There should be no quarrel with the workers in the Philippines, Mexico or any other country. Verizon is exploiting their labor and making super-profits by paying these workers the lowest wages they can get away with in their "race to the bottom." These workers are all part of the global working class and deserve livable wages, benefits, unionization — and solidarity, too.

'One day longer, one day stronger'

CWA members, locals and community and union allies, including the AFL-CIO and Jobs with Justice, are picketing Verizon Wireless stores in every CWA district. Locals of the Food and Commercial Workers, Amalgamated Transit Union and American Federation of Teachers are joining them.

Targeting Wireless stores is important because Verizon is trying to keep unions out of the expanding Wireless division, while executives aim to eliminate the old copper network in the shrinking Wireline division, which has unionized technicians. Although workers at some Wireless stores have organized, Verizon won't negotiate contracts with them.

CWA and IBEW members are maintaining strong picket lines to pressure Verizon. Their chant is "One day longer, one day stronger." A National Day of Strike Action was held on May 5 with 400 protests. (See "Wide support for striking workers" posted May 11 at workers.org.)

Since the strike began, the workers have waited for Verizon to "get serious" about negotiating a fair contract, but the company has been intransigent in their demands for major concessions. Executives even cancelled strikers' health insurance on May Day, but the unions are assisting strikers in obtaining coverage.

The federal government just intervened. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez initiated a meeting with Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam, CWA President Chris Shelton and IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson, which took place on May 15, and called for negotiations to resume. A session is now scheduled for May 17. However, it should be noted that the federal government intervened during the 2011 strike, and many workers were dissatisfied with the resulting contract because of reductions in health care and pension benefits, job security and more.

The Verizon strikers are risking a lot, having boldly taken on this global monopoly. Many of these courageous workers are women; many are African American. They have put their jobs on the line and are fighting to keep their hard-won benefits. But they are also standing up for the right of the entire working class to have decent jobs, wages, benefits and a union. Solidarity should be extended to them on the picket lines, at rallies, via petitions and in every possible arena. □



Boston

WW PHOTOS: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Members of the Communication Workers and the International Electrical Workers unions in Radford, Va., were joined on their picket line May 13 by community supporters from the Blacksburg, Va.-based Coalition For Justice, the Southern Workers Assembly and the Virginia Professional Staff Association.



Virginia

Boston Verizon strikers hold mass march

By Stevan Kirschbaum

Nearly 1,000 strikers and their supporters demonstrated their rock-solid determination to win against Verizon's corporate war on the hardworking members of the International Electrical Workers and the Communication Workers unions by occupying the streets on May 11. They marched from three locations throughout downtown Boston — the State House, City Hall and Post Office Square — converging in a militant and massive rally at Verizon headquarters at 6 Bowdoin Square.

Organized by the indefatigable IBEW Local 2222, led by Business Manager Myles Calvey and President Eddie Hastings, the demonstrators were a virtual flood of red shirts! The strikers were joined by contingents from Team Solidarity; Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers; the Massachusetts Nurses Association; Service Employees Local 1199; Postal Workers; Ironworkers; Steelworkers; as well as representatives of many of the public sector workers' unions in town.

Speakers at the rally included the leaders of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, community and political leaders, and many supporting unions. Hastings fired up

the crowd, explaining that the strike was gaining momentum and support daily and that the ranks are determined to win.

In keeping with tradition, the final speaker was Eddie "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, retired (from office, but never the struggle!) president and the recognized heart and soul of the union. Fitz gave a long, impassioned appeal for determination in the ranks to proudly withstand the suffering caused by Verizon's cruel war and a sobering challenge to the labor movement to more broadly organize the solidarity necessary to win this fight, which so represents corporate America's war on the unions and the entire working class. He ended his speech as he has at every rally for 30-plus years: "We're proven! We're union! Hang tough!"

In other developments, IBEW 2222 has organized massive "Wake-Up Calls" at area hotels where the scabs are staying, resulting in many being evicted. On May 12 at 8:30 a.m. at one such hotel, the Extended Stay in Westborough, Mass., a drunk Florida scab drove into the picket line, injuring striker Joseph Rooney and hitting a cop. After this lowlife's arrest, it was disclosed that this was his 4th DUI and he was operating without a license!

The next day, the union doubled the mass picket to send the clear message

that the union will not be intimidated. They have also picketed restaurants that were catering the scabs, forcing them to stop. Verizon is now bringing charges against the union with the National Labor Relations Board and in federal court, in an attempt to stop the "Wake Up" actions.

The union is fighting back! IBEW 2222 is planning for two major "Family Day" pickets in Boston, on Thursday, May 19, at 4 p.m. at the Verizon Wireless Store, 770 Gallivan Blvd. in Dorchester; and on Saturday, May 21, at 2 p.m. at Verizon headquarters, 6 Bowdoin Square in Boston. □

Flint crisis drags on

Continued from page 3

by contact with lead-based paint until its use was banned.

Many communities across the country have aging lead pipes that need to be replaced. High levels of lead in water have been reported in large cities, small towns and on Native reservations. On March 17, USA Today reported that "hundreds of schools across the nation" have water lead levels in "excessive amounts." Earlier, the same paper reported that 2,000 water systems across the country had elevated lead content. Lead above cautionary levels has been found in school drinking fountains in Detroit and even in the well-off suburb of Grosse Pointe in Michigan.

Fixing the problem would be a massive undertaking. It would cost billions upon

billions of dollars and require a massive endeavor of human labor. But what is more important?

Many of the cities where excessive lead has been reported in the water also have high rates of poverty and unemployment. Flint, the poorest city in Michigan, has an official poverty rate of more than 40 percent. Detroit's rate is only a percentage point behind Flint's. Why not put residents to work fixing pipes?

It is time for a massive public works program similar to the Works Project Administration of the 1930s. The state and federal governments, the banks and corporations like General Motors who created the environmental and economic havoc, should be made to pay for what the plaintiffs are suing for: Fix the pipes now! □

Bolivian foreign minister:

'Live Well' campaign confronts global crisis

By Teresa Gutierrez

The solidarity movement in New York City was privileged to hear David Choquehuanca, the foreign minister of Bolivia, on May 12. He spoke specifically about Bolivia's "Live Well" Campaign.

The event, described as a "Conversation with the Foreign Minister," was held at the SEIU Local 1199 Hall in Manhattan. It was organized by the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle and endorsed by a number of groups, including the International Action Center.

As the event ended and participants gathered to leave, there seemed to be unanimous agreement that Comrade Choquehuanca's words were so powerful they left the crowd speechless. All felt his message was riveting and deserved attention and study.

Choquehuanca began by stating that the world today is in deep crisis and chaos. Throughout the evening he used the comparison of the two flags of Bolivia as symbols of two different things, but together they are symbols of unity, integration, family and solidarity — all concepts



Foreign Minister of Bolivia David Choquehuanca, May 12.

the troubled world must strive for.

An Aymara Indian, Choquehuanca has been an adviser to President Evo Morales, who is also Aymara, for many years. When Evo was elected president of Bolivia in December 2005, history was made.

Morales, a declared socialist, was the first Indigenous president of Bolivia. Progressive and revolutionary changes were part of Evo's platform, which today includes raises of the minimum wage as well as increased pensions for the elderly.

But most important was the pride Bo-

livia's Indigenous people felt in having one of their own as president. A clear symbol that an Indigenous person was now president was making the pan-Indigenous flag of Bolivia, the wiphala, also the national flag of the country.

Two flags are now flown in Bolivia, which prove the struggle of Native peoples has moved to center stage. It is a source of pride for Native people not only in Bolivia but around the world.

Since then, Bolivia's social and political movement has been in the forefront of revolutionary struggle against poverty and exploitation. Most notably, Bolivia has been on the front lines of the climate change issue, demanding that those who are most responsible for polluting the planet take full responsibility.

Brother Choquehuanca, a spokesperson for the "Live Well" campaign, used the solidarity event to challenge the movement philosophically and ideology.

He said that the problems the world faces, including poverty, food and the energy crisis, have led to world indignation. He pointed out how Native peoples throughout the continent and in the global South may be a source of knowledge and experience in order to return to harmony.

Choquehuanca urged activists and freedom fighters to struggle to "live well" — not only as a society but as individuals. He stressed that being healthy physically and psychologically is so vital to the survival of humanity.

"We cannot go on like this in the world," he said. "They talk of a world order, but it is a world disorder. Monsanto wants to be the owner but that is poison. Cuba, however, talks of a world order, but with social justice, and that is what we need."

In Bolivia people have begun to recapture their culture and their self-esteem. "We have to return to our culture to live well."

Choquehuanca stated that the rainbow is sacred for Indigenous people and represents unity, no borders; it belongs not just to one people, but everyone. Whether you are from Palestine, Venezuela or Syria, we need to "dialogue and work together," he said.

Choquehuanca ended by stating that "rainbow guerrillas," which is what Evo is, are important in order to reject capitalism and construct socialism in the world.

Clearly movement activists left the event feeling inspired to "live well" in order to continue the fight. □

Activists support Rev. Pinkney at hearing



The Michigan State Appeals Court hearing for the Rev. Edward Pinkney, an African-American political prisoner, was held in Grand Rapids, Mich., on May 11. The hearing was attended by many activists from throughout the Midwest region, including Berrien County, Lansing, Mt. Clemens, Ann Arbor, Detroit, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Chicago and other areas. A press conference took place outside the courtroom in the aftermath of the proceedings.

— Report and photo by Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan-African News Wire

Family, activists honor Joe Campos Torres

By Gloria Rubac Houston

Almost 40 years after one of the most infamous and brutal Houston police killings, the family of Joe Campos Torres, along with the Brown Berets and young Houston activists Orlando Lara and Dee Arellano, organized a powerful event to remember Campos on May 7 in Houston.

Forces gathered at the site of the cantina where cops arrested Torres for being drunk on Cinco de Mayo, 1977, and then marched downtown to the secluded spot on Buffalo Bayou where he was brutally beaten, so badly that the cops at the city jail refused to book him until he was taken to the hospital.

Instead of going to the hospital, the cops



Janie Torres and Orlando Lara.

went back to "the hole" at the bayou and beat him some more before throwing his handcuffed body into the river, with one cop yelling, "Let's see if the wetback can swim." Torres, who was a Vietnam vet, died; his body was found a little way down the bayou

three days later, on Mother's Day.

Janie Torres, his sister, said she helped organize the Joe Campos Solidarity Walk for Future Generations. "Forty years later, this is still such a difficult time for my family. My mother has never been the same and Mother's Day is nothing more than a reminder of what the cops did to her son. But we decided that we need to speak out and fight for change."

The walk ended up on the McKee Street Bridge, overlooking the spot where Torres' body was found floating on the bayou. □

Demands to fire SF police chief re

By Terri Kay San Francisco

As the Frisco 5 ended their 17-day hunger strike, which had the sole demand to fire San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr, the campaign morphed into the Frisco 500. The Frisco 500 took over City Hall on May 6, when 33 people were arrested. This was followed by a 12-hour picket, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., around City Hall on May 9, with hundreds participating.

That evening, an independent three-judge "Blue Ribbon Panel on Transparency, Accountability, and Fairness in Law Enforcement" announced scathing preliminary findings after a year-long study of the San Francisco Police Department. The panel was launched by San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon after last year's revelations of racist text messages among SFPD officers. The panel's findings were coupled with publication of more accusations of racist slurs by SFPD officers.

All this led to declarations by five San Francisco Board of Supervisors on May 11 that San Francisco needed a new police chief. All sides are closing in on Chief Suhr with a resounding crescendo!

Cops' racist practices revealed

Significant findings in the panel's draft release of May 9 to the San Francisco Examiner include:

- "The department engages in controversial 'stop and frisk' practices and there is a disparity when it comes to black and Latino citizens."
- "Use of force practices and policing, which are undergoing major mandated changes, which include a federal review, following the Dec. 2, 2015, killing of Mario Woods, were found to be in dire need of updating. What's more, the department's internal data collection on use of force incidents is done in a way that discourages auditing and review from outside parties."
- "There is no transparency in the disciplinary process ... the disciplinary guidelines are outdated and there is little tracking of the outcome of discipline."



- Investigations into police misconduct allegations by the department's watchdog, the Office of Citizen Complaints, "rarely result in disciplinary consequences, and when they do, the discipline imposed is almost always mild." Additional findings were reported during a panel presentation that evening (48hills.org, May 9):

- "Overall, the report shows, the department allows rogue officers to operate with impunity and there's a profound lack of accountability at all levels."
- "We find that the SFPD is, in fact, influenced by the [Police Officers Association] and the POA's influence has been an impediment to open dialogue and sustained reforms."
- Michelle Park Chiu, of the office of Morgan Lewis, said, "[The SFPD] 'does not collect enough data to see if the use of force disproportionately impacts minority populations.'"
- "The discipline imposed by the chief of police is almost always mild, mostly just admonishment. There has not been one sustained complaint sent to the Police Commission (which can impose discipline of more than 10 days' suspension) since 2012."

SF officials called for Suhr's removal

The SFPD released details about another officer accused of racial slurs, which the Examiner reported on May 9. "Sgt. Lawrence Kempinski, a 17-year veteran who most recently worked in the Bayview Sta-

Baltimore

Activists denounce voter suppression

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

In an unprecedented move, the State Board of Elections decertified Baltimore city primary election results on May 12 until it can conduct a thorough investigation. The announcement followed protests by community activists who pointed out widespread inconsistencies and voter suppression.

The Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and an activist with the People's Power Assembly, stated, "We have vigorously protested voter suppression in this election and attempts by the 1% and powerful to suppress the voices of the voters in this majority Black city, particularly those who live in the Black and poorest voter precincts."

Statement from candidates

Andre Powell and Sharon Black, unaffiliated socialist candidates and members of Workers World Party, issued this statement on the recent revelations of inconsistencies and voter suppression in the Baltimore primary election:

"Andre Powell for Mayor and Sharon Black for City Council President join with



Voters Organized for the Integrity of City Elections and other community groups in condemning recent voter suppression and the corruption and incompetence of the present election board.

"At a May 5 community hearing at the Sharon Baptist Church, we heard evidence of inconsistencies and voter suppression which included missing thumb drives of up to eight voter districts — one thumb drive has still not been recovered; inadequate training of judges; breaking of protocol on the sequence of how votes are turned in and delivered; voters being inappropriately turned away at the polls; and, most egregious of all, the turning away of newly registered voters who qualify to vote under the new state law that al-

lows formerly incarcerated felons to vote.

"Our protest is centered not on individual candidates, but on the rights of the people of Baltimore!

"This is not about [Maryland state senator and mayoral candidate] Catherine Pugh or [former mayor and current mayoral candidate] Sheila Dixon or, for that matter, any other candidate. We are both unaffiliated candidates who must collect signatures to qualify to be listed in the November election. Can we ourselves trust the certification process?

"Do we need to call on representatives of the Venezuelan government to come to Baltimore to act as observers?

"While we contend that the Baltimore, Maryland and national elections are a

sham and are rigged in general in favor of the 1% — that huge amounts of money and power determine the outcome in the majority of cases — we nevertheless feel it is critical to not only defend voter rights but to expand them. It is why we, as working-class and poor people's candidates, are fighting to be on the ballot. It is also why we rigorously protest voter suppression and corruption in the recent Baltimore city elections, as revealed at the community hearing.

"African Americans, Latinos/as, women and poor people fought and in many cases died for the right to vote. There was a time when only rich white men who owned property could vote.

"Our campaign believes that Baltimore needs more democracy, not less. This includes lowering the voter age to 16 to empower the youth, and extending voting rights to our sisters and brothers behind bars and to undocumented workers.

"We feel that real democracy means more than just being able to vote on a few token politicians every four years, but about deciding everything from who your boss is to the police commissioner and the police that walk your streets, the school board and much more. Ultimately, it means that you have control over your community and your life." □

each crescendo



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

tion, allegedly made the remarks in front of other officers who reported the incident. Kempinski allegedly said he only transferred to the station to 'kill n—rs,' according to a source in the department."

This is on top of a Los Angeles Times report on May 7 that Gascon has thus far "identified 3,000 criminal cases that could have been affected by perceived bias by 14 officers" because of revelations of their racist, sexist and homophobic texts. "The texts," the Times reported on April 3, "were exposed in a court filing during the trial of former SFPD Officer Ian Furminger, who was convicted and sentenced to 41 months in prison for corruption pending an appeal."

On May 11, Suhr's dominoes were falling as four of 11 San Francisco supervisors, one by one, publicly announced their support for a new police chief. Supervisor Jane Kim called for a new police chief just before noon, reported the Examiner. Supervisors Dave Campos, John Avalos and Jane Kim called for Suhr to step down, reported 48hills.org at 3:30 pm. Finally, less than half an hour later, Supervisor Eric Mar joined the call for Suhr to resign.

The community continues to pressure for Suhr's removal. A press conference was held by the Frisco 5 on May 12, with three of the four hunger strikers. (Cristina Gutierrez, still recovering from fasting, was unable to attend.) A "Black and Brown Community Meeting" was held on May 14 to "unite and move forward with our goals for justice." □

Elections and social change

Continued from page 1

wedded to capitalism and have always been the political instruments of the capitalist-owning ruling class.

That is the source of the great contradiction facing the Sanders movement. It has coalesced behind a politician who identifies as a "democratic socialist," which is a step forward, given that no previous candidate of either capitalist party would utter a word about socialism, except to attack it to the hilt. But his campaign takes place within the confines of the capitalist political machine.

That said, even a capitalist election can be a barometer of progressive mass sentiment, whether voters reject a war-making president or vote in a person of color. However, a barometer is not an instrument by which to effect change; it only measures change.

To really make change happen, you need more than a barometer. You need an instrument of struggle. Take the issue of racism and the suppression of African Americans in this country.

After the massive Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements defeated segregation, Black people began entering the electoral arena. Many times, a majority of voters, including some whites as well as people of color, have chosen African Americans to represent them in various public offices, finally reaching as high as the president of the United States. This is certainly a step forward from the days of open segregation in the South and the refusal of the Northern establishment to allow more than a token few Black people into political office.

Yet even in cities that have had Black elected officials — like Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Flint and Newark — racism continues and even deepens in housing, jobs, wages, education, rates of police murders and incarceration, etc. These cities struggle just to provide the most basic services, while the banks and real estate interests profit off the people's misery.

Even as political concessions have been made to mass struggles for democratic reform, the obscene gap between rich and poor has widened. That gap also intensifies national oppression, as the poorest are disproportionately people of color. New movements are gaining strength outside the electoral arena — especially the militant movement against police murders.

The question is, how can the multinational U.S. working class exert its enormous potential strength and strike out independently of the capitalist parties?

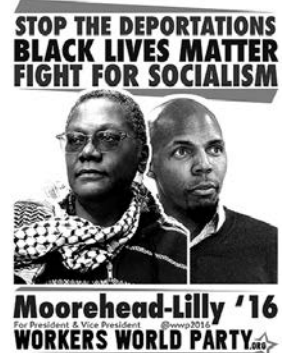
Workers World Party admires the enthusiasm and innovative work of the Sanders supporters, who have injected real issues affecting the masses into this campaign. But it also sees the pressing need for a working-class, revolutionary socialist program that will endure after the elections are over, regardless of who wins office. We need a movement to not only reform or soften capitalism, but get rid of it.

Socialism is not just capitalism with government controls; it is an entirely opposite social system. It is based on the working class taking power and liberating the means of production from the strangle-

hold of capitalist ownership, so economic life can be planned to meet human needs, not to profit a few.

Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lilly are WWP's candidates for president and vice president. They are both people of color and workers. They are revolutionary socialists. They bring something different into this campaign: They say that to win class unity in the struggle against the super-rich, the interests of the most oppressed must be brought to the fore. Fighting police violence, racism, sexism and discrimination against immigrants and LGBTQ people is absolutely essential to uniting the working class and the oppressed in the struggle for socialism.

WWP is also running candidates in many cities and states. The elections are not going to change the system, but they can be a way to convey a much-needed revolutionary message to the people. And that's just what the Moorehead-Lilly campaign is doing. □



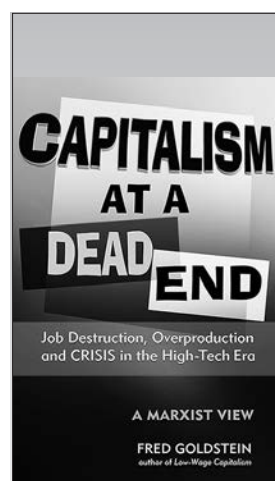
Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, Overproduction and Crisis in the High-Tech Era By Fred Goldstein

Capitalism at a Dead End explains that the economic crisis, which began in August 2007, marked a turning point in the history of capitalism. The author contends that the system will not return to the normal capitalist boom-and-bust cycle. Unlike Thomas Piketty's Capital in the 21st Century, Goldstein's work points to socialism, not reformed capitalism, as the solution.

For decades the capitalist class has used the revolution in digital technology to increase productivity of labor at record rates. Fewer workers are needed to produce more goods and services in less time at lower wages, resulting in a race to the bottom for the working class and oppressed. Repeated crises of overproduction lead to economic contraction and persistent mass unemployment.

Goldstein uses Marx's laws to show how productivity is strangling production and capitalism has outgrown the planet. The work includes an important chapter, "Historical materialism: robots and revolution."



Available at barnesandnoble.com and other online booksellers. Go to lowwagecapitalism.com for more writings by Goldstein.

China, U.S. and global warming

'Carbon pricing' vs. a planned economy

By Deirdre Griswold

Environmentalists in capitalist countries are in a quandary over what to do about global warming. Even some of those most active in warning about the devastating consequences of atmospheric greenhouse gases have no solutions to propose except those based on "market mechanisms." The main such scheme is called "carbon pricing."

"The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are pressuring governments to impose a price tag on planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions," reported the New York Times on April 28. This "solution" has been notably advanced by former Vice President Al Gore, whose company, Generation Investment Management, promotes carbon pricing.

The task of such a scheme is to convince investors that they will profit from higher prices for carbon fuels once those prices have been imposed across the board by governmental action. So it's a win-win situation. Right? The capitalists continue to profit while higher prices lower the demand for carbon fuels, there-

by helping the environment. That's how this idea is being sold.

There are just two little problems.

First, it's those who can least afford it — the workers — who will be stuck with the bills. The capitalists can pass on higher costs to their customers, but the workers can't pass on to anybody else the higher costs of gasoline, coal, natural gas or the electricity generated from fossil fuels. And they're not likely to have the upfront money it takes to buy a new car or a new furnace to benefit from less-polluting technology.

Second, there's no proof that carbon pricing will decrease the demand for fossil fuels. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking. The recent fires in Alberta, Canada, are just one of the many disasters that show global warming is proceeding at an even faster pace than predicted earlier.

So if carbon pricing isn't the answer, what is? What can be done that doesn't depend on the capitalist market and keeping rich investors happy?

Where public ownership of the means of production allows for government planning of the economy, real changes

can be made — now. Not just if and when investors can be convinced that their profits can be enhanced through greener speculation. The People's Republic of China has shown much progress on this front.

China takes real steps away from CO2

The latest news is that a big change has been made in China's economic plans regarding energy production. The country is continuing to move swiftly away from coal as a major source of energy. On April 25, the Chinese government announced that it would not build 200 new coal-fired power generators that had previously been part of its long-term economic plans.

It had already begun closing coal mines — thousands of them — while vastly increasing its solar, wind, hydro and nuclear capacity. It has allocated billions of dollars to relocate coal miners to new jobs. Now its plans have eliminated the construction of coal power plants that would have generated 105 gigawatts of power — "more than all the electricity-generating capacity of Britain from all

sources." (New York Times, April 26)

Coal is abundant in China. It has fueled the country's rise as an industrial power. But it has also created terrible air pollution, in addition to adding CO2 to the atmosphere.

Clearly, China's long-term economic planners are not tied to the profit system. They have the freedom to revise their plans based on much more important considerations than the capitalist market. That is not to say that there is not capitalism in China. Obviously, there is. But it is not the dominant economic system, nor does the capitalist class control the Chinese state.

China has the ability to control its economy and plan economic growth. It has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. This ability comes from a great socialist revolution that took decades, in which the masses vanquished the landlords, the capitalists and their imperialist backers.

The future of humanity hangs on the ability of the masses everywhere to break free of class and national oppression and take control of their own destiny. □

Hundreds protest fracking in Colorado

By Viviana Weinstein
Denver

Protests against the use of fossil fuels and hydraulic fracturing have been taking place in Colorado. All over the state, people are urging that fossil fuels be kept in the ground.

Coloradans are coming out to defend the right of their communities to protect themselves against an invasion by gas and oil companies that are buying up public lands for a song in order to drill in, under and around towns. Some 7,000 acres have already been sold.

Members of Greenpeace, Food and Water Watch, Frack Free Colorado and 350.org, in addition to many residents of threatened Colorado towns, participated in a well-organized protest on May 12. More than 300 angry protesters gathered in Lakewood, outside a Holiday Inn near Denver, risking arrest by blockading a meeting of the Bureau of Land Management. On May 14 hundreds of people again protested at active drilling sites in Thornton, north of Denver, with more than 50 risking arrest at one site.

Proposals are in the works to drill in the developed area near Denver's airport and in the thousands of acres of the Denver watershed in the South Platte River Basin. This has caused loud opposition and bans from residents whose health and lives will be dramatically affected. People's property values have also plummeted. Residents have no idea when and where the next drilling is going to take place.

Bill McKibben from 350.org has spoken at many of the national protests and in Colorado on May 14. A recent article by McKibben in *The Nation*, based on a study by Harvard scientists, showed a dramatic increase in the amount of methane released by current drilling and fracking around the world.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently proposed national limits on methane released by fracking, but they would affect only new wells — about 2 percent of the total — and not touch the higher-polluting older wells. This move was made just before national and worldwide protests.

However, towns can no longer refuse to



PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

allow fracking nearby, since the Colorado Supreme Court in April overturned local fracking bans and moratoriums that had been in place in Longmont and Boulder. The court ruled that towns cannot interfere with "maximum production of oil and gas." Before this, towns that wanted to institute bans on fracking to protect the health of their residents were sued or threatened with suits by the oil and gas companies.

Colorado politicians, including the governor, have been strong supporters of gas and oil drilling as well as the expansion of coal mining at the huge Elk River mine, which contains 10 million tons of methane-rich coal.

The mine is another huge source of unregulated methane gas release that is causing extreme and rapid warming of the planet. Journalists from the Colorado Independent climbed into the hills and through mud in the backwoods to photograph open methane vents they say are releasing enough methane to heat 30,000 homes. Despite this, the mining companies are seeking a huge expansion.

Fracking endangers people, environment

Modern hydraulic fracturing is a newer industrial process that drills wells as deep as 30,000 feet deep and horizontally as far as 30,000 feet under towns and homes in housing developments and dense populations. The wells have created mega-industrial sites in quiet towns and small cities all over Colorado. The dust, noise and vibration have radically altered life in these areas and caused residents to plead for their physical safety and mental health.

In a meeting this past fall of the Col-

orado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission — a tool of the oil and gas industry — many Colorado residents who live near fracking industrial sites spoke bitterly of not being able to sit outside in the day or sleep at night because of the dust, noise and vibration in their homes. They were also concerned about the contamination of their farm animals.

The methane released is supposedly trapped, but much escapes into the atmosphere at all levels of the production process. Methane is at least 25 times more heat trapping in the atmosphere than CO2. It may have contributed to many of the sudden weather catastrophes in the last 10 to 15 years.

The 50,000 fracking wells that have already been drilled in this arid state use up to 6 million gallons of water per well to crack the rock and release the oil and gas trapped inside. Toxic wastewater coming from the wells is sometimes kept in above-ground pools that can leak into groundwater. Mostly however, the wastewater is forced down an injection well maybe 10,000 feet deep, which can endanger water tables and has already caused earthquakes.

Recently there has been disturbing news that "cleansed" toxic wastewater is being used for watering vegetables in California.

This new industry is also dangerous to the health of the oil and gas workers, who are exposed to chemicals and dust. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 823 fracking workers died in oil and gas extraction from 2003 to 2010. Their death rate is seven times higher than the general U.S. industrial rate.

Signatures are now being collected by Coloradans to place two issues on the November ballot that would affect the state constitution. One would allow towns to again ban fracking; the other would require fracking to occur 2,500 feet away from any areas of human activity, allowing a minimum of safety.

Meanwhile, Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs for the Western Energy Alliance, which wants to hold the land auctions on-

line, called the protests a "circus." (Denver Post, May 12)

It is clear that we cannot allow fossil fuels to enrich the few and destroy the planet for the many. Here in Colorado the oil and gas industry is not only threatening the watersheds but also the food supply. We must support research and building of other sources of energy, ways of heating our homes and modifying our production to keep the planet from heating up and becoming unlivable. □

Puerto Rico:

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

May 9 — In a few days, the U.S. Congress is expected to deliver the equivalent of a coup de grâce to its colonial territory, Puerto Rico. If anyone had any doubt about the colonial status of this island, which belongs to the United States but is not part of it, this legislation will eliminate that doubt.

Called HR 4900 or PROMESA (Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act), this proposal is actually a collection agency to serve Wall Street bondholders. For that purpose, it will create a financial control board (FCB).

Although created by Republican Party politicians, it does not mean that Democrats are totally against this endeavor. Their stillness and timid criticisms of PROMESA make them collaborators in this crime. Meanwhile, the White House is watching from a distance, placing total blame on Congress and hoping that this act, which answers to Wall Street, will solve the crisis.

Puerto Rico has a public (and illegitimate) debt exceeding \$72 billion, and without its own sustainable economy, Puerto Rico's Gov. Alejandro García Padilla has repeatedly declared that the debt is unpayable, and, in fact, last May 1, the country could not pay the \$420 million scheduled for repayment on that date. It is expected that this failure to pay will be repeated on July 1, when another IOU for

Continued on page 9

African Liberation Day at 53: U.S. intervention continues

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

May 25 marks the 53rd anniversary of the formation of the Organization of African Unity, known as the African Union (AU) since 2002. Africa Day or African Liberation Day comes during a period of increasing Pentagon and CIA interference in a number of African states, noted here.

At a 1963 summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at least 32 African heads of state formed the OAU to foster the continent's rapid decolonization and move toward greater cooperation among governments. The OAU encompassed diverse views on how Africa should move toward unity.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, then the Republic of Ghana's president and founder of the ruling Convention People's Party, called for the immediate formation of a continental government with integrated military, economic and social systems. Nkrumah believed that if Africa did not unite, imperialists would reverse the national liberation movements' and political parties' gains.

Conservative states represented in the "Monrovia and Brazzaville Groups" advocated a gradualist approach. Even some progressive forces did not embody the commitment to unification and socialism promoted by Nkrumah and Guinean leader President Ahmed Sékou Touré, who, along with Modibo Kieta of Mali, formed the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union in 1960.

Nkrumah stressed at the founding OAU Summit, "On this continent, it has not taken us long to discover that the struggle against colonialism does not end with the attainment of national independence. Independence is only the prelude

to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference.

"From the start we have been threatened with frustration where rapid change is imperative and with instability where sustained effort and ordered rule are indispensable. Nothing will be of avail, except the united act of a united Africa."

Three years later, the CIA, U.S. State Department and other imperialist entities coordinated a coup which overthrew Nkrumah. His ideas are still relevant in light of growing imperialist military penetration of Africa.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Moise Katumbi, opposition presidential candidate and former governor of Katanga Province, has been accused of hiring U.S. mercenaries to provide campaign security to assist him in his bid to become the leader of the mineral-rich state. On May 9, DRC authorities questioned Katumbi, who denied the accusations. He could face a prison term and be tied up "in legal knots that could derail his campaign to succeed President Joseph Kabila" in November elections, wrote Reuters on May 9.

Senegal

Senegal's government in West Africa has signed a military agreement with the Pentagon giving Washington full access to the country. Dakar participated in the Flintlock military exercises Feb. 8-29, conducted annually by the Pentagon working with other African and European states. The U.S. Africa Command (AF-

RICOM) coordinates these military maneuvers and similar operations around the continent.

Senegal's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mankeur Ndiaye said the agreement "will facilitate continued U.S. military presence in Senegal, and 'will ... enhance security cooperation and further strengthen defense relations to face common security challenges in the region.'" (Reuters, May 2)

Relations between Senegal and neighboring Gambia have been strained for years. Escalating U.S. military cooperation and economic assistance to Senegal only fuels regional tensions.

Western Sahara

In the Western Sahara, war threats are coming from Morocco, a close U.S. ally. Morocco occupies Western Sahara in contravention of AU and United Nations policy. Western Sahara has minerals, a source of potential wealth in northwest Africa.

Morocco took administrative control of Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, in the 1970s. The Polisario Front, a resistance movement, grew out of the demand for full national independence.

After years of fighting, a ceasefire agreement between Morocco and Polisario prompted the 1991 establishment of a U.N. mission: MINURSO. The U.N. will vote again on whether to extend MINURSO's mandate. This mandate provided for an internationally monitored referendum — which has not been held — in which Western Sahara's people could choose independence from or integration with Morocco.

The AU officially recognizes the Sahara people, which caused Morocco to withdraw from the regional organization.

Somalia

The imperialist-backed government in Somalia, where the CIA has a field station, is training children to spy on Al-Shabaab members in the counterinsurgency campaigns in the Horn of Africa. Training is carried out through the Somalia National Intelligence and Security Agency, which works closely with the CIA.

The children told the Washington Post that Somalia's NISA used them "as 'finger-pointers'. They [were] sent to dangerous neighborhoods where al-Shabaab insurgents were hiding and told to point out their former comrades." The children "were used on other missions to collect intelligence and sometimes told to wear NISA uniforms." They "were threatened if they refused to cooperate." (Sputnik News, April 7)

The U.S. and European imperialist states fund and train the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), deploying 22,000 troops that work alongside the Somalia National Army.

Africa must unite against imperialism

Only an upsurge from leftist and anti-imperialist forces can fulfill the visions of a true united Africa in line with the work of Nkrumah, former Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and other revolutionary leaders. The worsening economic crisis due to commodity price declines and Western-sponsored destabilization is reversing 10 years of advances in growth and development.

African Liberation Day is a vehicle for propagating the genuine liberation and unification of the continent under a socialist system. Demonstrations commemorating this day have been held annually in cities across North America. □

imperialist Control Board to be imposed

Continued from page 8

the enormous sum of \$2 billion is due.

This default, which represents the latest chapter of the economic deterioration of Puerto Rico, exposes the anxiety of bondholders, who fear a debt restructuring that might reduce their multimillion-dollar profits.

Criminal provisions

What provisions does PROMESA contain? On April 12, the Committee on Natural Resources of the U.S. Congress issued its 121-page report.

With the usual imperialist arrogance, Reps. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chair of the committee, and Sean Duffy (R-Wis.), sponsor of the project, issued a statement that reads in part: "This package of reforms will restore the guardrails of freedom and self-governance in Puerto Rico. It will hold Puerto Rico accountable to its debt, uncover audited financial statements, enforce fiscal responsibility and cut red tape holding down the Island's economy. It provides tools to redirect Puerto Rico from a path of destitution towards a path of prosperity, preserving freedom and opportunity for the next generation." (full text: tinyurl.com/zo5elhx)

Here it's clear that they have not counted the thousands of young Puerto Ricans aged 20 to 40 years old, who have had to emigrate due to the lack of jobs and wages sufficient to support a family.

Among its points the following stand out. The FCB would be composed of sev-



en members appointed by the U.S. president and chosen by the leaders of the House and the Senate, plus one nonvoting, ex-officio member appointed by the governor of Puerto Rico.

Their powers — we have to remember that they are directed to pay the bondholders — would be overarching and autonomous, without being accountable to the Puerto Rican people or governed by its laws. The FCB:

- must approve and certify all measures, regulations, budgets, loans, restructuring, in effect, all actions by the government of Puerto Rico and any of its instruments.
- determine and enforce the budget, over and above any budget approved by the island government.
- will have the power to investigate and/or sanction anyone.
- will institute automatic hiring freezes and require approval of contracts in ex-

cess of \$100,000.

- requires that all debt related cases will be heard in federal court.

- requires that any plan of debt restructuring must be consistent with its financial plan, for the "best interest of creditors."

- will reduce the minimum wage of workers under 25 years old

from \$7.25 to \$4.25. (Is this what Bishop and Duffy referred to as the "opportunity for the next generation?"—BJC)

Another disposition which seems to be aimed at saving some money for the U.S. government pertains to Vieques. Following the valiant struggle of the people to oust the U.S. Navy from the island municipality of Vieques, the U.S. Department of the Interior claimed a part of the territory where it had a duty to clean up the massive contamination from 60 years of bombing practice. Something that until now has not been achieved and remains a demand of the people of Vieques.

PROMESA proposes to "transfer" the area to the government of Puerto Rico, but with the caveat that the Secretary of Defense could not be sued by the government of Puerto Rico, the municipality of Vieques or persons of any class; nor could they claim damages resulting from emissions of hazardous substanc-

es or contaminants resulting from the operations of the Navy in said territory, unless the claim includes a number of requirements set forth by the act itself in its Section 1502.

"HR 4900 additionally provides for voiding the cooperation agreement with the Secretary of the Interior in such Zones of Conservation, releasing the Federal Department of the Interior (FDI) of responsibility for the conservation of the land." (tinyurl.com/gsnswv5)

Vieques community leaders, however, responded to this with a joint statement: "We want the lands that are now in the hands of the Federal Department of the Interior (FDI) to be returned to the people of Vieques, but we demand the cleaning of all the territories (including those that are now under the jurisdiction of FDI) by the Navy and/or any other responsible body, as required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act." (tinyurl.com/jyu6uve)

This FCB has aroused great indignation in the Puerto Rican progressive movement.

The people of Puerto Rico need demonstrations of solidarity from the world anti-imperialist movement and especially from within the U.S. to stop this criminal enterprise. Let's say "No!" to the Financial Control Board! Free Puerto Rico!

The frontal attack of imperialism against the movement and against militant unions and the current struggle will be the subject of the next article.

WORKERS WORLD editorials

'Solidarity Forever' means in the bathroom, too!

Everywhere nowadays — on the car radio, the TV at the gym or CNN at home — really loud voices are trumpeting the current hate campaign against trans people. It's like a sweeps week for the news media, showcasing bullies and raking in the advertising revenue.

But why all this hate right now? After all, trans people — people who cross or do not conform to culturally assigned gender identities or roles — have been around since before recorded history. In what's now the United States, gender fluid roles, with no specific genitals required, were part of Indigenous peoples' cultures long before European colonizers came to grab the land. (Our comrade Leslie Feinberg wrote about this in detail in "Transgender Warriors: Making History.")

In February of this election year, the Republican National Committee — looking for its own kind of "sweeps" — passed a resolution calling for state anti-trans "bathroom bills." Since then, several states have passed such laws, including the infamous HB2 in North Carolina, which threatens police action if a person's genitals or sex on their birth certificate don't align with the designated bathroom.

The bill was a serious attack on trans workers. It's hard to hold down most jobs if you can't use the bathroom at work without violating a state law!

HB2 was more than anti-trans. It also eliminated all protection in the state for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. It rolled back all local laws improving limited state standards on job discrimination, minimum wage and other workplace issues.

The anti-trans campaign sweeping the U.S. is yet another repetition of the old owning-class divide-and-conquer tactic against the multinational, multigender working class.

Bigots are using the anti-gay stereo-

type "sexual predator" to allege that trans people will attack women and children in bathrooms. But anyone who's ever lived as a woman, anyone who's ever lived as a trans person, knows that bullies and haters don't bother to disguise themselves to attack someone. Bigots think they have the right to attack anywhere, anytime — including with the weapon of legislation.

The ruling class is always strategizing on how to turn working people against each other — even in the bathroom. The anti-trans laws prey on people's existing anxieties and encourage people to become "gender police" and condemn anyone not fitting the conventional idea of a "feminine woman" or a "masculine man."

Anti-trans bills have been introduced across the U.S., but it's no accident that so far they've only passed in "right-to-work-for-less" Southern states — states fighting off a wave of union drives, drives increasingly led by workers of color.

Working-class unity, insight and compassion can be organized into strength to support trans lives. The resistance of workers and oppressed people to bigotry in North Carolina has been inspiring. There have been marches and civil disobedience led by queer trans people of color, widespread social media campaigns like #NoHateInMyState and restaurants changing their bathroom signs to read "Everybody Is Welcome Here."

A new generation of multinational young workers are leading the way on this issue — and for them gender nonconformity and fluidity are part of everyday working-class life. More than half of 13- to 20-year-olds say they know someone who goes by gender neutral pronouns such as "they," "them" or "ze."

The anti-trans bigots, like other bigots before, will end up in the dustbin of history. On to working-class solidarity and gender liberation for all!

Stop harassment of gay, trans prisoners

Friends,

Gay and trans prisoners at the G. Robert Cotton correctional facility in Jackson, Mich., have been suffering sexual harassment from guards for years. They complained to administrators who did nothing. The harassment is not only dehumanizing, it creates a hostile environment in which other prisoners and guards are more likely to sexually harass and assault LGBTQ prisoners. Gay prisoners have been knifed in the yard at Cotton by anti-gay prisoners.

Seven prisoners filed grievances under the federal Prisoner Rape Elimination Act, writing 17 pages of testimony about sexual harassment by an officer named Castilla. Retaliation began almost immediately, with three of the prisoners transferred to other units or facilities and at least three facing unwarranted

Letter to the editor

disciplinary actions. The complaint was rejected for "insufficient evidence" and Castilla was returned to his former unit to continue his harassing behavior. One of the lead prisoners, who has been at Cotton for eight-plus years, was transferred the same day the complaint was rejected.

The prisoners knew retaliation was a risk, and decided it was worth it because the harassment is so dehumanizing. The whole grievance process is a mess, with some investigators who are also openly anti-gay. Prisoners aren't even permitted to be in possession of the PREA handbook -- that's penalized with a 30-day loss of privileges.

The prisoners have asked for our help. Here's what you can do:

- Spread the word to interested groups and friends.

Obama's visit to Hiroshima

President Barack Obama's visit to Hiroshima, Japan, on May 27 will be the first such visit by a U.S. president in office. This visit has a historical background and a present meaning; it will have a pacifist facade while the U.S. prepares for imperialist war. Obama's visit comes nearly 71 years after one U.S. atomic bomb in one flash destroyed 60 percent of the city and its people.

A brief history

World War II broke out in the Pacific in December 1941 after decades of competition between the imperialists of Japan and the U.S. for domination of the markets, raw materials and labor power of Asia.

Millions of workers and farmers fought in that war, which served only the interests of the super-rich. The war's casualties included workers and farmers of China, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Philippines and the islands that are now Indonesia. Japan occupied these areas and later fought against U.S. troops as well as national liberation movements. Both Japanese and U.S. troops were casualties, as were millions of Japanese civilians who lived in 68 city centers that U.S. incendiary bombs reduced to ashes.

The war's final victims were the 100,000-plus Japanese people killed instantly by atomic bombs in the cities of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, and Nagasaki on Aug. 9. Along with them were 30,000 Koreans the Japanese army had forced to work there, plus another 100,000 people who died slowly from radiation poisoning. The war in Asia was nearly over. Washington's purpose for using these terrible weapons at the very end was to intimidate the Soviet Union — by showing that U.S. imperialism had the military means to dominate the post-war world.

Tokyo soon after surrendered to the U.S., which then occupied Japan. Despite the enormous U.S. military and economic advantages in 1945, however, the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions went on to liberate much of Asia from imperialist control.

Fast forward to May 2016

According to the April 16 Military Times, "U.S. Forces Japan consists of about 2,000 soldiers, 6,000 sailors,

15,000 airmen and Air Force civilians, and about 18,000 Marines, who are mostly based in Okinawa." On tiny Okinawa, which Japan claims despite a strong independence movement, the local population holds massive protests against the U.S. military and its crimes, from environmental destruction to rape.

The May 12 New York Times reported that Obama's talk in Japan would plead for no future use of nuclear weapons — although he would avoid condemning the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima. In a visit filled with contradictions and doublespeak, President Obama comes not as a world peacemaker, but as U.S. imperialism's commander in chief. Behind the peaceful facade is the so-called U.S. "pivot to Asia."

Even at its peak of power in 1945, the U.S. couldn't unilaterally dominate the world. Relatively weaker now, but still possessing enormous destructive power, Washington's "pivot to Asia" means strengthening its alliance with the ruling class of Japan so that, under U.S. leadership, the two imperialist powers can intimidate, threaten and even make war against China and north Korea, the DPRK.

The Japanese rulers, as represented by the right-wing Shinzō Abe government, have accepted U.S. insistence for increased militarization as their own policy. The Abe government has already approved plans to allow Japan's "Self-Defense Force" to intervene abroad, despite massive popular opposition. Washington has urged this policy on Tokyo, just as it urges its NATO allies to spend more on arms.

Despite its doublespeak on worldwide nuclear disarmament, the Obama administration has already pushed to modernize the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, with plans to spend as much as \$1 trillion over three decades.

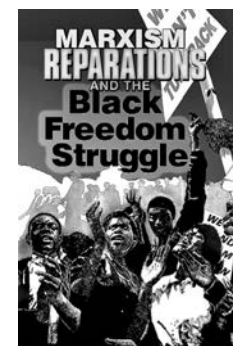
Disguised as a move for peace, the visit to Hiroshima is really a showpiece to consecrate an aggressive imperialist alliance.

In response to Obama's trip and in solidarity with the Okinawan and Japanese people, the WWP presidential campaign demands that the U.S. take all its troops and bases out of Japan and Okinawa. WWP pledges solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Japanese people to reverse the aggressive arming of Japan's military.

In solidarity with the other peoples of Asia, WWP demands the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from all countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region.

WWP calls upon the working classes of the U.S. and Japan to strengthen their mutual solidarity against the imperialist bosses of both countries. We in the U.S. pledge to fight all military or economic aggression by U.S. imperialism throughout Asia and to put an end to anti-Asian bigotry at home.

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle



An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Available at major online booksellers.

**In solidarity,
A Michigan prisoner support activist**

International support for Cuba at Havana solidarity conference

By Cheryl LaBash
Havana, Cuba

Some 2,000 international guests celebrated May Day 2016 here and witnessed the massive support of Cuban workers for their revolution. In the capital and throughout Cuba they marched with the theme “For Cuba: Unity and Commitment.”

The guests were not in Cuba just to watch. The next day they filled the convention center at the May 2 International Solidarity Conference to participate in the fight to repel the renewed imperialist offensive in Latin America — from Argentina to Brazil, Venezuela to Honduras and to Cuba itself. Reports that day demonstrated that on every continent Cuba represents a socialist beacon for human development.

Most importantly, the discussion made it clear that the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade of Cuba is still very much in place. That dispelled any possible confusion left by President Barack Obama’s recent visit to the island.

Won’t forget history

The conference agenda heading was “Why we will not forget history.” This directly responded to Obama’s appeal to look to the future and forget the past.

A panel speaker from Venezuela reported that U.S.-backed destabilization is in full swing there. Others described that Brazil is in the throes of a corrupt “soft” coup via impeachment of the Workers’ Party government. In Argentina, the election of President Mauricio

Macri thrust 150,000 workers into unemployment.

Meanwhile in Honduras a new mass organization named for assassinated Indigenous leader Berta Caceres is uniting all social movements against the U.S.-backed coup regime and its neoliberal program. The Honduran speaker urged delegates to return home with the slogan “Berta Caceres didn’t die, she multiplied.”

In the floor discussion Uruguayan Leonardo Batalla, representing the Encuentro Sindical Nuestra America, pointed out the need to fight for power, not just electoral victories.

Kenia Serrano Puig, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), highlighted the need to strengthen the struggle against the blockade by using what was learned in the successful struggle to free the five Cubans unjustly imprisoned by the U.S. for fighting anti-Cuba terrorism.

She urged united actions against the blockade on the 17th day of every month and continued efforts to reach the U.S. Congress. Examples of important U.S. protests were the September 2015 and April 2016 Days of Action in Washington, D.C., which were mentioned by the Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister.

Serrano said socialism is solidarity and renewed commitment to oppose imperialist hegemony and colonialism. She cited examples of supporting Palestine, the independence struggle of Puerto Rico and freedom for Oscar López Rivera.

There were speakers from Haiti, India, Barbados, Palestine, the French General Confederation of Labor, the Nigerian

Labor Congress, the World Federation of Trade Unions — who saluted Fidel Castro’s 90th birthday — and from Sri Lanka’s United People’s Freedom Alliance, the Vancouver, Canada, Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and UNITE the Union from Britain.

Solidarity from the U.S.

Mothers and families of victims of police brutality in the United States addressed the terror faced by Black and Brown communities there. Juanita Young, mother of Malcolm Ferguson, whom cops killed in March 2000, explained that she came to Cuba because she heard about the Cuban 5; she wanted to meet their mothers, who had fought so tirelessly for their freedom. Young said, “If I had lived here, maybe my son would not have been murdered. I would still have my son if I was living in Cuba.”

The mothers included Detroit Arnetta Grable, whose son Lamar Grable was killed in 1996 by three-time killer cop Eugene Brown. The mothers raised banners in the hall.

At least 50 elected union representatives from the U.S. joined the May Day celebration and solidarity conference. These included a majority of the Maryland/DC AFL-CIO executive board, who were primarily African Americans. Fred Mason, president of the Maryland/DC AFL-CIO, spoke from the podium on be-



WWW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

half of U.S. workers and called for ending the U.S. blockade and solidarity with the Cuban labor federation.

A 34-person delegation, with representatives from six California central labor bodies, brought banners and signs expressing workers’ solidarity. The Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings County AFL-CIO Labor Council signs featured the Cuban and U.S. flags configured in solidarity fists, resembling the emblem of the 2011 mass labor struggle at Wisconsin’s capitol in Madison against anti-labor Gov. Scott Walker. A Southern California delegation included Workers United, Teamsters and other unions.

The strong U.S. labor presence at 2016 May Day signals an opening for labor’s voice to be heard to end the U.S. blockade, return the Guantanamo naval base to Cuba and end regime-change programs funded by U.S. tax dollars, including illegal TV, radio and internet broadcasts. Also needed is ending all U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba and recognizing the self-determination of the Cuban people to continue their socialist course.

Read full article at workers.org.

Brazilians fill streets to protest coup

Continued from page 1

the business sector, both Brazilian and transnational, welcomes. According to a May 12 article in the Spanish Wall Street Journal, titled “The business sector welcomes the change in Brazil,” “The initial reaction in the currency market in Brazil was positive. The Real rose one percent” after the vote.

Neoliberal recipe

Temer’s neoliberal program, called “A Bridge to the Future” and unveiled in October 2015, is an actual transfer of the people’s wealth into private hands and transnational companies. The 19-page document “evaluates” various social programs established during the governments of Lula da Silva and Rousseff that helped raise the standard of living of thousands of Brazilians. Unemployment compensation will be ended, and cuts will be made to housing, education subsidies for poor and Black students, and health. Temer’s program will also reduce social assistance to only the poorest 10 percent. (tinyurl.com/h6zhztq)

Regarding labor rights, the program seeks to increase the retirement age and alters provisions guaranteeing the minimum wage. Included are attempts to privatize the national oil company, Petrobras; reform the pension system; etc.

To achieve this, Temer appointed a cabinet of 22 ministers, eliminating such ministries as Culture, Agricultural Development, Science and Technology, Women, Racial Equality and Human Rights.

Previously, João Pedro Stedile, the co-

ordinator of the Movement of Landless Workers (MST), had declared, “A Temer government would be fully aligned with U.S. interests. ... I think the worst part is that they are applying a policy aimed at having U.S. companies dominate our economy. The U.S. modus operandi is to ally with Brazilian parliamentarians to achieve that dominance. This happened with the Chevron oil company, which, through Senator Jose Serra of the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, is pushing to change the oil law to move towards the privatization of resources in the very deep waters in the pre-salt area.” (Pagina12.com.ar)

Right-wing, sexist, racist, anti-LGBTQ Cabinet

In the country with the largest Black population outside of Africa, it has been a real slap in the face against that Black population, women, Indigenous and LGBTQ people that the Temer cabinet is composed only of white men with business interests.

For example, consider some of the new ministers: Agriculture Minister Blairo Maggi is a millionaire landowner known as the “soy king,” who environmental activists blame for much of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Alexandre de Moraes, Temer’s “pitbull,” who headed the cops accused of violating human rights with their death squads in Sao Paulo, is now in charge of the Ministry of Justice. Evangelical pastor Mark Pereira is the minister of industry, after the scientific community rebelled against the proposal that he be named to head the

Ministry of Science and Technology. Jose Serra, who is tight with Chevron, will be the foreign minister.

Incidentally, seven of the new ministers are under investigation regarding the Lava Jato corruption case and for fraud regarding Petrobras.

‘Mobilize now’

Even before the vote, there had been no calm days in Brazil. The people have taken to the streets constantly, creating alliances demonstrating under the slogan “Temer must go.”

On May 9, thousands of peasants occupied a farm connected to Temer. Kelli Mafort, MST leader, said, “The occupation of this farm is aimed at denouncing the role of agribusiness in bringing about the coup ... and we are here to denounce Michel Temer’s ties to the owner of the farm, and of his company’s role receiving kickbacks.” (Telesur)

Feminist activists chained themselves to the gate of the presidential palace protesting Temer’s cabinet, which they called “racist, sexist, homophobic and elitist.”

People have demonstrated not only in the capital, Brasilia, but in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere. MST leader Stedile, in an interview with Resumen Latinoamericano on May 13, summed it up: “It’s the moment to mobilize against the coup d’etat. It’s a coup without army tanks in the streets, but just as destabilizing. ... The president has committed no crime and has been illegally deposed. The popular organizations are clear on this. The working class is clear. The intellectuals, artists and progressive grass-

roots church are clear. For the MST, for all the movements gathered in the Brazilian Popular Front, the Temer-Cunha government has no legitimacy because it is born under the sign of corruption and the return of neoliberalism.

“We brought to the president of the Senate, Renan Calheiros, and to the president of the Supreme Court, Ricardo Lewandowski, the equivalent of three volumes of signatures against this impeachment process. Meanwhile, we must be ready to use all our energy because we expect a period of great struggles and crises at all levels: political, social, environmental.”

Governments and organizations condemn the coup

Several governments in the region have already spoken out against the coup. Venezuela withdrew its ambassador in Brasilia for consultation. El Salvador and Nicaragua do not recognize the Temer government.

The countries that make up the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Trade Treaty of the Peoples (ALBA-TCP) issued a statement rejecting the coup.

The Network of Intellectuals and Artists in Defense of Humanity is circulating a petition against the coup internationally: “Humanity against the coup in Brazil.” Cuban organizations also issued a statement of condemnation.

In several countries demonstrations rejecting the coup have been called, and on social media there are many messages against the coup and in solidarity with the Brazilian people in struggle. □



Libertad para Oscar López Rivera, ¡YA!

Puerto Rico — Junta de control imperialista

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El 9 de mayo — En pocos días se espera que el Congreso de los Estados Unidos finalice lo que equivale a una estocada final a su territorio, Puerto Rico. Si alguien tenía alguna duda sobre la condición colonial de este archipiélago perteneciente - pero no parte de — EUA, esta legislación lo esclarecerá.

Llamada la HR 4900 o 'PROMESA' por su nombre en inglés "Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act" (Ley de Fiscalización, Manejo y Estabilización Económica), esta propuesta en realidad será la agencia de cobro al servicio de los bonistas de Wall Street. Creará una Junta llamada de Control Fiscal, JCF, para ese fin.

Aunque creada por republicanos, no implica que los demócratas estén totalmente contra este esfuerzo. Su inmovilidad y tímidas declaraciones en su contra los ponen en contubernio con este crimen. Mientras la Casa Blanca mira desde la distancia echándole toda la culpa al Congreso y esperando que éste, el cual responde a Wall Street, resuelva la crisis.

Con una deuda pública (e ilegítima) que supera los \$72 miles de millones, y sin una economía propia y sustentable, el gobernador Alejandro García Padilla en varias ocasiones ha declarado que la deuda es impagable, y de hecho, el pasado 1 de mayo no se pudieron pagar los \$420 millones 'adeudados' en esa fecha. Acción que se espera repetir el 1 de julio cuando vence otro pagaré por la cuantiosa suma de \$2 mil millones.

Este impago que representa el más reciente capítulo del deterioro económico de PR, saca a relucir la preocupación de los bonistas que temen una reestructuración de la deuda que pueda mermar sus multi-

millonarias ganancias.

Criminales disposiciones

¿Qué disposiciones encierra esta 'Promesa'? El 12 de abril, el Comité de Recursos Naturales del Congreso estadounidense emitió su informe de 121 páginas.

Con la habitual arrogancia imperialista los representantes Rob Bishop (R-UT), presidente del comité y Sean Duffy (R-WI), patrocinador del proyecto, emitieron una declaración que en parte dice: "Este paquete de reformas restaurará las barreras de protección de la libertad y el autogobierno en Puerto Rico. Responsabilizará a Puerto Rico de su deuda, descubrirá los estados financieros auditados, hará cumplir la responsabilidad fiscal y reducirá la burocracia que mantiene atada la economía de la isla. Proporcionará herramientas para redirigir a Puerto Rico de una vía de miseria hacia un camino de prosperidad, preservando la libertad y las oportunidades para la próxima generación". (texto en inglés: tinyurl.com/zo5elhx)

Claro está que aquí no han contado a los miles de puertorriqueños/os entre las edades de 20-40 años que han tenido que emigrar debido a la falta de empleos y salarios suficientes para mantener a una familia.

Entre sus puntos resaltan los siguientes. La JCF estaría compuesta por siete miembros nombrados por el presidente de los EUA y escogidos por los líderes de la Cámara de Representantes y del Senado más una persona designada por el gobernador de PR la cual no tendría derecho al voto.

Sus poderes - que hay que recordar que están dirigidos al pago de los bonistas - serían abarcadores y autónomos, sin tener que rendir cuentas al pueblo puertor-

riqueño ni regirse por sus leyes. Todas las disposiciones, regulaciones, presupuestos, préstamos, reestructuración, en fin, toda acción del gobierno de PR y cualquiera de sus instrumentos tendrá que ser aprobado y certificado por la JCF. Podrá determinar e imponer el presupuesto, incluso sobre cualquier presupuesto aprobado por el gobierno insular. Puede investigar y/o penalizar a cualquier persona. Puede congelar puestos de empleos y tendrá la potestad de que se requiera su aprobación para cualquier contrato que sea mayor de \$100,000.00.

Todos los casos relacionados a la duda se verán solo a nivel de la corte federal y cualquier plan de reestructuración de la deuda deberá ser consistente con su Plan Fiscal y que sea para el "mejor beneficio de los acreedores". (noticiasmicrojuris.files.wordpress.com)

Para "mejorar" las oportunidades de la próxima generación," proponen reducir el salario mínimo de las y los trabajadores menores de 25 años de edad, de \$7.25 a \$4.25!

Otra disposición para de paso "ahorrarle algún dinerito" al gobierno estadounidense tiene que ver con Vieques. Luego de la valiente lucha del pueblo para sacar a la Marina de la isla-municipio de Vieques, el Departamento del Interior de EUA mantenía una parte del territorio donde éste tenía el deber de limpiar la enorme contaminación producto de 60 años de bombardeos. Algo que hasta ahora no ha realizado y que permanece como una demanda del pueblo viequense. 'Promesa' propone que se "ceda" esa zona al gobierno de PR pero con la salvedad de que, "el Secretario de la Defensa no podría ser demandado por parte del Gobierno de Puerto Rico, el Municipio de Vieques o

de personas de clase alguna; ni se le podría reclamar indemnizaciones como resultado de emisiones de sustancias peligrosas o contaminantes como resultado de las operaciones de la Marina en dichos terrenos, salvo que la reclamación incluya una serie de exigencias dispuestas por la propia Ley en su Sección 1502.

"El HR 4900 dispone, además que se dejaría sin efecto el acuerdo de cooperación por parte del Secretario del Interior en tales Zonas de Conservación liberando de responsabilidad en la conservación de los terrenos al Departamento del Interior". (tinyurl.com/gsnsvv5)

Líderes comunitarios de Vieques, sin embargo, respondieron a esto con una declaración conjunta. "Queremos que se devuelva al pueblo viequense los terrenos que ahora están en manos del Departamento del Interior Federal (DIF), pero exigimos la limpieza de todos los terrenos, incluyendo aquellos que están ahora bajo jurisdicción del DIF por parte de la Marina y/o cualquier otro ente responsable, según lo requiere el Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act". (tinyurl.com/jyu6uve)

Esta JCF ha despertado gran indignación en el movimiento progresista puertorriqueño.

El pueblo boricua necesita demostraciones de solidaridad del movimiento antiimperialista mundial y sobre todo desde los Estados Unidos para detener esta criminal iniciativa. ¡Digamos NO a la Junta de Control Fiscal! ¡Libertad para Puerto Rico!

El ataque frontal del imperialismo contra el movimiento y contra los sindicatos militantes y la lucha actual serán objeto del próximo artículo.

Elecciones y la política de EUA hacia África

Por Abayomi Azikiwe

Ninguna discusión sustancial relacionada con la política exterior de Washington hacia África ha tenido lugar durante estas elecciones capitalistas.

Aunque las personas de descendencia africana constituyen el mayor grupo de votantes entre las minorías nacionales en EUA, los problemas relacionados con las mismas, tanto en política interior como exterior, casi no se les ha dado ninguna consideración.

Aunque se ha mencionado la draconiana legislación que aceleró el encarcelamiento de afroamericanos durante el gobierno de Bill Clinton, solo constituye una fracción del marco político de la opresión nacional.

No sólo indigna que el gobierno de Clinton aprobara leyes que intensificaron el tratamiento desigual dependiendo de la raza en el sistema de justicia, sino que ambos Bill y Hillary Clinton han estado involucrados en las operaciones de política exterior a beneficio del gobierno de EUA y el capital privado, como en Haití y Libia, que resultaron desastrosas para esos pueblos.

La ex secretaria de estado Hillary Clinton, fue la cara pública de la campaña de bombardeos de la OTAN y el Pentágono contra Libia en 2011, que produjo decenas de miles de muertes, el desplazamiento de millones de personas y el empobrecimiento de este país del norte de África, una vez el más próspero del continente.

Hoy Libia está en ruinas, mientras que la ONU intenta apuntalar un "gobierno de acuerdo nacional", ilegítimo incluso entre las dos facciones rivales impuestas por el imperialismo después de que su guerra de

cambio de régimen asesinara brutalmente al ex líder Coronel Muamar Gadafi. Los ingresos del petróleo, que bajo el liderazgo de Gadafi proporcionaron a Libia recursos para desarrollar esta antigua colonia italiana, ahora son objeto de peleas por el control del país.

La situación en Libia es un producto de Washington y Wall Street en su continuo esfuerzo por dominar África y sus recursos. Los fuertes ataques contra gobiernos y movimientos independientes y antiimperialistas en África y el Oriente Medio, son parte integrante de los esfuerzos del Occidente para extender su dominio económico y político sobre naciones ex colonizadas y estados emergentes.

Aumenta militarismo imperialista

Durante la última década el militarismo en África ha aumentado con intervenciones en Somalia, Libia y otros estados bajo el AFRICOM, establecido bajo el gobierno de George W. Bush y reforzado por el presidente Barack Obama. AFRICOM ha fomentado más inestabilidad y dislocación dentro de los estados miembros de la Unión Africana.

Un oficial de las fuerzas armadas de Mali, que se formó en escuelas militares de EUA, ejecutó un golpe de estado en 2012. Somalia, Yibuti y Etiopía sirven como plataformas para operaciones militares imperialistas en el continente y en Oriente Medio. Yibuti alberga la mayor base del Pentágono conocida en Camp Lemonnier, donde están estacionadas miles de tropas estadounidenses y francesas.

Hay estaciones de drones y oficinas de la CIA en el este de África. El Pentágono a

menudo bombardea al grupo islamista Al Shabaab en Somalia. Flotillas de guerra de la OTAN patrullan el Golfo de Adén, una de las rutas comerciales más lucrativas del mundo.

En África occidental, el Pentágono a menudo conduce maniobras navales con estados regionales bajo el pretexto de la lucha contra el terrorismo y la piratería. Sin embargo, el país más afectado por el terrorismo, Nigeria, siendo la economía líder de África y con la población más grande, ha tenido dificultades para conseguir armas modernas y datos de inteligencia del Pentágono y la CIA en su lucha contra Boko Haram, un grupo armado que ha desplazado a millones de personas y matado a miles en el noreste del país.

Caucus Negro del Congreso en silencio

Esta actitud apática en la actual escena política de EUA no siempre fue así. Durante los años 1970 y 1980, el Caucus Negro del Congreso apoyó los movimientos de liberación nacional contra el colonialismo y el apartheid.

En 1987, la primera Ley Contra el Apartheid fue aprobada por el Congreso de EUA después de haber sido iniciada en la Cámara por el Rep. Ron Dellums de California, a pesar del veto del presidente Ronald Reagan.

Pero en 2015, cuando los miembros republicanos de la Cámara cuestionaron a Hillary Clinton por la muerte de cuatro diplomáticos/agentes de la CIA en Bengasi, el Caucus no defendió al pueblo de Libia. De hecho, el Rep. Elijah Cummings de Maryland, líder demócrata, defendió a Clinton.

No hay ningún incentivo político para Clinton o Bernie Sanders para enfrentar la

situación de África, a pesar de la crítica migración masiva de Libia.

Las/os africanos que emigran a varias regiones de Europa a menudo enfrentan discriminación y violencia racial. Muchas/os viven en viviendas segregadas y con trabajos mínimos sin recursos adecuados para la educación y oportunidades económicas.

En África misma, organizaciones obreras, asociaciones de mujeres y grupos de jóvenes luchan por la falta de trabajo, impago de salarios, degradación ambiental y desigualdad de género. Zimbabue y Sudáfrica han sido objeto de estrategias de cambio de régimen por la administración Obama y otros gobiernos imperialistas.

Relaciones económicas EUA - África

El volumen real del comercio entre EUA y África ha disminuido significativamente bajo Obama.

Un informe del 22 de febrero, por el Centro Internacional para el Comercio y el Desarrollo Sostenible reveló: "El comercio total entre EUA y los países apoyados bajo la Ley de Crecimiento y Oportunidades para África (AGOA) mostró otra disminución en el año 2015, según datos publicados por el sitio AGOA.info. El comercio combinado, que llegó a US \$50 miles de millones en 2015, sólo alcanzó \$36 mmdm el año pasado. El comercio entre EUA y países de la AGOA ha ido disminuyendo por cuatro años".

La intervención de EUA en África ha desestabilizado el continente en lugar de crear condiciones para su plena independencia y soberanía. Se requerirá el resurgimiento de movimientos de transformación radical y construcción socialista. □