



Who brought it down?

WW COMMENTARY 7

Bree Newsome removes Confederate flag in Columbia, S.C.

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Vol. 57, No. 29 July 23, 2015

\$1

Stop bankers' rule in Greece

Mass resistance must say NO!

By Fred Goldstein

July 14 — With a gun to their heads, the leaders of Syriza, headed by Alexis Tsipras, have capitulated to the financial powers of Europe, headed by the German bankers. The terms of the agreement spell even graver hardship for the Greek masses and outright international bankers' rule over Greece.

This agreement overrides the resounding "No" vote to austerity by the Greek masses in the referendum of July 5. The 61 percent vote against giving in to the bankers showed there is widespread basis for mass resistance.

The latest deal has not yet been accepted by the Greek Parliament.

But before the Brussels capitulation, Tsipras had arranged to ram a blanket acceptance of whatever agreement was signed through Parliament. He did this in collaboration with the other Greek bourgeois and social democratic parties — the very ones who campaigned for a "Yes" vote in the referendum. He did this knowing that part of his own party would rebel.

The terms of the agreement signed by the 19 countries in the eurozone require Greece to sign on to tax increases, pension reductions and other onerous conditions by July 18.

German imperialism has gotten the endorsement of a strong bloc of countries and the collaboration of the French capitalist government to crush Greece under its heel and make an example out of the Syriza leadership. The European Central Bank forced the Greek banks to close by cutting off the flow of funds, threatening financial chaos and economic strangulation.

The masses in Greece had initiated an electoral rebellion against austerity, under the leadership of Syriza and the Tsipras grouping. This rebellion interfered with the European Union's project of holding the weaker countries of Europe in the iron grip of the financial powers in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and others. This project has been underway since the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe.

The Tsipras social democratic leadership was not up to the task of carrying through on the rebellion. Now the goal of the financial powers is to humiliate and bring down

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SOLIDARITY WITH IMMIGRANTS, COAST TO COAST



Immigrant rights protesters in New Orleans: 'Without papers, without fear.' See page 3.

PHOTO: ALABAMA COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE



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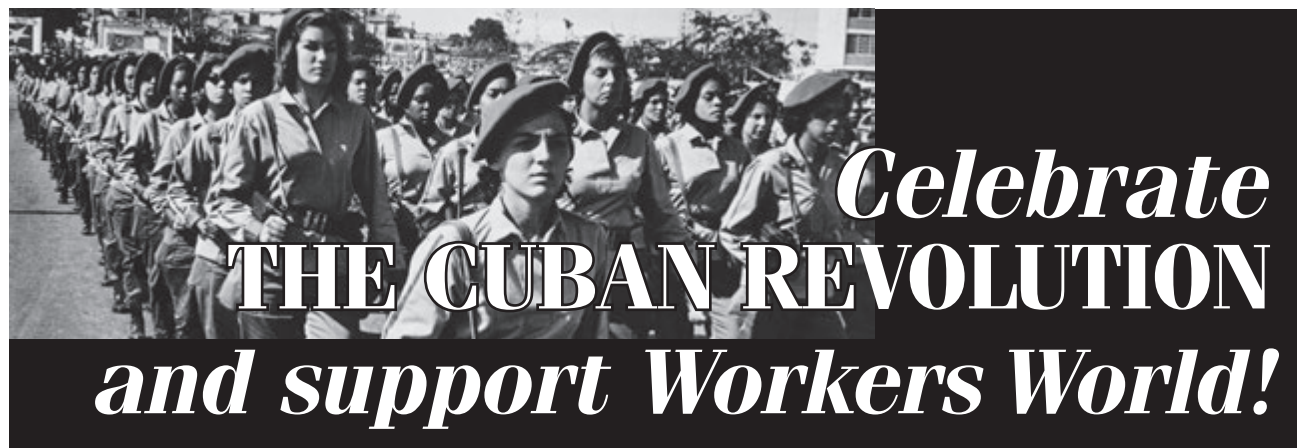
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Workers World
 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
 New York, N.Y. 10011
 Phone: 212.627.2994
 E-mail: ww@workers.org
 Web: www.workers.org
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
 Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson

Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk;
 Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

Copyediting and Proofreading: Sue Davis, Keith Fine,
 Bob McCubbin

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe,
 Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein,
 Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales,
 Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay, Cheryl LaBash,
 Milt Neidenberg, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer,
 Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci;
 Ramiro Fúnez, Teresa Gutierrez, Donna Lazarus,
 Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis
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On July 26, 1953, revolutionaries stormed the Moncada Barracks in Santiago, Cuba. Less than six years later, Fidel and his guerrillas ousted the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, marching into Havana during the first days of January 1959.

That same year, Workers World newspaper began to publish. After years of anti-communist reaction, the Cuban Revolution helped revive interest in revolutionary socialism in the U.S. It found an eager supporter in this newspaper. The more outrageous the anti-Cuba propaganda of the big business press, the harder Workers World fought to tell the truth about this great victory over U.S. imperialism.

When, on Jan. 3, 1961, the U.S. announced to the United Nations that Washington was breaking diplomatic relations with Cuba, Workers World's first editor, Vince Copeland, led a protest inside the U.N. chamber. His booming voice could be heard on WNYC radio shouting that Ambassador James Wadsworth "speaks for the bankers, not the people."

Anti-Cuba propaganda turned into sabotage and an outright CIA-directed invasion that April. Workers World closely covered the efforts of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the Committee to Defend Francisco Molina and other organizations in solidarity with the Cuban people. And when the Kennedy administration threatened a nuclear attack in 1962, Workers World's front page demanded "Hands off Cuba!"

Cuban troops helped liberate Angola from racist colonial rule. Tens of thousands of Cuban medical workers have gone to Africa, Latin America and Haiti to fight disease. Cuba even offered to send doctors to U.S. regions shattered by Hurricane Katrina. But Washington said "no."

In the early 1990s, Cuba endured great economic hardship after the USSR fell and the U.S. tightened its blockade of the socialist island. Workers World helped build the

Peace for Cuba International Appeal, which brought thousands to New York City's Javits Center in January 1992, calling for an end to the blockade, the travel ban and all intervention against Cuba.

The brutal blockade has failed to overturn the Cuban Revolution. Now Washington is discussing normalizing diplomatic relations with Havana. Workers World supports Cuba's precondition that the U.S. close its illegal base at Guantánamo and the torture prison there and return Guantánamo to the Cuban people.

Assata Shakur, an African-American freedom fighter, has lived in exile in Cuba for 31 years. Washington wants her sent back to the racist hellholes of mass incarceration here. We support Cuba's insistence that its sovereignty be respected, including the right to give shelter to those fleeing repression.

Our readers are familiar with Workers World's support for the IFCO/Pastors for Peace caravans that carry medical and other essential supplies to the island and the yearly Venceremos Brigades. You know our role in the campaign to free the Cuban 5 heroes.

We hope you will help us keep up this tradition of standing firmly with Cuba and its people. Donations from our supporters have been a big factor in getting our pro-Cuba writings in print, distributed and posted online at workers.org.

We invite you to donate to the Workers World Fund Drive, our biannual fundraising campaign. Send checks to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011, with your name and address. Indicate for "Fund Drive."

Also, please join the 38-year-old WW Supporter Program and make a regular donation, no matter how modest. Go to workers.org/donate/ or send checks to the above address; write "For WWSP."

We appreciate your help in growing the revolutionary media in the U.S. □

WORKERS WORLD PARTY 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 56 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. □

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers.org/wwp

National Office
 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
 New York, NY 10011
 212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Bay Area
 1305 Franklin St. #411
 Oakland, CA 94612
 510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

Cleveland
 P.O. Box 5963
 Cleveland, OH 44101
 216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Houston
 P.O. Box 3454
 Houston, TX 77253-3454
 713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
 585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Atlanta
 PO Box 18123
 Atlanta, GA 30316
 404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Boston
 284 Amory St.
 Boston, MA 02130
 617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Huntington, W. Va.
huntingtonww@workers.org

Rockford, IL
rockford@workers.org

Baltimore
 c/o Solidarity Center
 2011 N. Charles St.
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
 712 Main St #113B
 Buffalo, NY 14202
 716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Detroit
 5920 Second Ave.
 Detroit, MI 48202
 313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Los Angeles
 5278 W Pico Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
 323.306.6240

San Diego
 P.O. Box 33447
 San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Chicago
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
 Chicago, IL 60606
 312.229.0161
chicago@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
 804 Old Fayetteville St.
 Durham, NC 27701
 919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org
Philadelphia
 P.O. Box 34249
 Philadelphia, PA 19101
 610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
 P.O. Box 57300
 Washington, D.C. 20037
dc@workers.org

As conditions for migrants worsen, solidarity is key

By Teresa Gutierrez

Immigrants and their advocates have waited for years for Washington to create a humane pro-worker policy that would provide some relief for the more than 12 million undocumented workers in this country. But instead of relief, conditions for migrants continue to deteriorate — not only on the U.S. side of the border, but as workers make their way into this country as well.

No talk on Capitol Hill about immigration reform has dealt with the root causes of migration, which is decisive for real change. None of the thousands of pieces of paper on immigration policy addresses unfair trade policies, such as NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement), or the U.S.-created violence that sweeps Mexico and Central America.

President Barack Obama announced in November the creation of a program that would allow undocumented parents of children born in the U.S. to obtain temporary work permits so they could stay here with their citizen children. The

Obama administration had also planned to expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy of 2012 (DACA) that offers relief and work permits to undocumented youth who came here as children.

However, these measures have hit a legal stalemate because 26 states, led by Texas, are suing the Obama administration, seeking to stop executive actions signed by the president in November that could grant some relief for a sector of undocumented workers. This lawsuit, filed last December, contends that President Obama overstepped his constitutional authority by issuing executive actions that amount to a form of amnesty and that the Department of Homeland Security does not have the authority to grant work permits.

The 26 states behind the lawsuit are claiming a violation of states' rights — a right-wing, racist tactic rooted in the history of slavery in the U.S. South. The 26 include 13 states in the Deep South and Southwest.

In the legal battle between the Obama administration and the Fifth Circuit

Court of Appeals, based in New Orleans, migrant workers are no more than pawns. Oral arguments were heard on the case on July 10 by the court that is seen as one of the most conservative in the country.

The online magazine Politico reported on July 10: "President Barack Obama appears likely to lose — again — in the protracted legal fight over his executive actions on immigration. The chilly reception from the three-judge panel in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on whether Obama had legal authority to take such action seems to indicate that a lower court decision blocking the new programs would stay in place."

Build a united movement

To the movement's credit, hundreds of migrants and their supporters converged in Louisiana for a spirited demonstration outside the court. Additionally, the New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice blocked roads outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in a massive civil disobedience action that

included many undocumented workers.

Despite right-wing bluster against the November executive action, Washington's war on migrants continues in every way. Obama has deported more workers than any other U.S. president. The current executive action is way too little and way too late. It amounts to posturing more than anything else as the Democrats gear up for the 2016 presidential election.

The fact that the conditions for forced migration continue means that no matter what difficulties workers face once in the U.S., they have no other option but to leave their homelands. What undocumented workers need above all is a united movement of workers in this country that is fighting for the interests of workers and oppressed people.

A united movement with the Black Lives Matter movement front and center — which raises all the issues vital to the working class — can help to resolve the grave humanitarian crisis that has become a reality for migrant workers. The solidarity of U.S.-born workers with those born outside the U.S. is the first step. □

New Orleans protest: 'Not one more deportation!'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Chanting "Sin papeles, sin miedo/ Without papers, without fear," 800 people rallied behind calls to "End detention" and "Ni una más deportación/Not one more deportation" in New Orleans on July 10. The militant immigration rights protest was sparked by continuing exploitation and deportation of undocumented workers in the U.S. It was called by the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice.

People came from organizations nationwide, especially from the South, including busloads from Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. Also participating were worker contingents from other states, including California, Illinois and Washington state.

One rally theme was "Stop tearing families apart." The crowd, reflecting that, was markedly multigenerational, with very young children, many family groupings and older workers.

A multinational contingent organized

by NOWCRJ blocked traffic in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Regional Center. Fourteen people were arrested, some with chained hands and wearing blue T-shirts with the slogan "We are reconstruction workers."

Fernando Lopez, an organizer with NOWCRJ's Congreso de Jornaleros/Congress of Day Laborers, said: "ICE has used New Orleans as a testing ground for some of its most brutal and unconstitutional immigration enforcement tactics, and continues to target reconstruction workers who helped rebuild the city af-

ter Hurricane Katrina." He added: "People in our community aren't waking up thinking about court decisions — they're waking up wondering if they'll make it through the day without an abusive ICE raid." (nowcrj.org)

The protest continued in front of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, where hearings were underway on an anti-immigrant lawsuit that had been filed to block deportation relief measures ordered by the Obama administration. The lawsuit, upheld by a Texas judge, is now

Continued on page 8

'Libertad!'

End detention of migrant families

Bern Township, Pa. — On one side of the road were 300 migrant workers, family members, and supporters from Philadelphia and as far away as Washington, D.C., Chicago and New York. Holding signs and banners while chanting slogans in Spanish and English, the boisterous crowd heard speakers criticize the human rights crime of holding refugee men, women, children, toddlers and even infants in detention camps.

Across the street from the July 11 rally in Bern Township were refugee children and women, kept on the other side of a long row of orange plastic cones lined up on a green lawn, between the Berks Detention Center buildings on the left and guards and cops on the right. When a toddler ran toward the cones, one of the women rushed to stop the child from escaping their open-air prison.

As the crowd chanted "¡Sí, se puede!" some of the imprisoned youth replied with their own chant: "¡Libertad!"

The rally's highpoint was the appearance of Ana, 33, and her 12-year-old daughter Yubitza, who had finally been released from the facility the day before, after a year in detention. Ana expressed her solidarity with friends still being

unfairly held. "It's unjust that they're in there," she said. "They're not murderers, they're not delinquents." (ReadingEagle.com, July 12)

Organized by the Migrant Power Movement and at least six groups in the Philadelphia area, the gathering ended with what was billed as the "Shut down Berks" Liberation Concert.

Almost 5,000 individuals escaping violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and who were caught at the U.S./Mexico border are being held at the Berks County Residential Center — Immigration Family Center outside Philadelphia, as well as at two facilities in Texas, in Karnes City and Dilley.

The Department of Homeland Security either refuses to release, or sets high bonds on many families, even though U.S. officials admit that 88 percent of the mothers and children have been found to be asylum seekers, even by overly stringent federal rules.

"Seeking asylum is not an illegal act, and these families should be met with protection, not punishment," asserts the National Immigrant Justice Center.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette



Farmworkers union on the march

By Jim McMahan
Burlington, Wash.

Hundreds of farmworkers from Familias Unidas por la Justicia marched along with supporters here on July 11. The 3rd Annual March for a Union Contract marked the third anniversary of the union's founding. This union of Indigenous Mexican workers, founded in struggle, has held numerous strikes since then.

The protesters marched a mile and a half to Sakuma Brothers berry farm, where many of the workers have been employed for years. Only 10 days before the march, 200 workers walked out when Sakuma tried to separate them into groups of 10 and have them pick in 15-minute intervals. The union said this was an attempt to divide the workers and a reprisal against the union.

The marchers chanted, "Wage theft is not OK, Sakuma has to pay!" The union has exposed Sakuma for wage theft, poverty wages, racist and sexist harassment, among other abuses. Familias Unidas upholds the demand for a \$15-an-hour wage and wears it on their shirts. Some of the unions on the march were the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the Steelworkers, Food and Commercial



PHOTO: WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL

Farmworkers and labor supporters picket Sakuma.

Workers and also Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste from Oregon. Community to Community and religious groups also marched.

The rally was held in front of Sakuma's farm and nearby giant processor house, across from farmworkers' housing.

Speaking at the rally were Familias Unidas President Ramon Torres and Vice President Filemon Pineda. Jeff Johnson, of the Washington State Labor Council, representing 400,000 workers, also spoke, as did President Ramon Rodriguez of PCUN, representing 6,500 mostly Indigenous farmworkers in Oregon. A PCUN woman worker addressed the crowd in Mixteco.

Familias Unidas and supporters in the labor movement are carrying out an active boycott of Driscoll's, a global distributor and the main distributor of Sakuma berries. □

Right-wing backlash to marriage equality victory

By Martha Grevatt

As poll after poll demonstrates, public opinion is on the side of marriage equality. That seismic shift in political consciousness was a factor in the June 26 Supreme Court ruling striking down state marriage bans. Now, however, powerful and well-funded political forces have launched a coordinated campaign to limit the impact of that historic ruling. Hiding behind the mask of “religious freedom,” right-wing bigots are throwing up obstacles to obtaining a marriage license and advancing bills to encourage discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

The backlash began even before June 26, when in all but 13 states lower court judges overturned archaic laws defining marriage as between “one man and one woman.” Utah and North Carolina passed bills allowing county officials to deny a couple a marriage license on the basis of “sincerely held religious objections.”

Given that the high court found a constitutional basis for marriage equality, these officials have been granted legal cover to violate their oath of office to uphold the Constitution. In other states, county clerks are openly defying governors’ orders to obey federal law. A judge in Toledo, Ohio, is refusing to perform same-sex marriages.

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback issued an executive order allowing religious groups, including those receiving state funds, to deny services to same-sex couples. In Arizona, the Maricopa County Attorney is refusing to provide adoption services to LGBTQ potential parents. Michigan legislators passed a bill allowing state-supported “faith-based” agencies to deny couples adoption services on religious grounds.

So-called “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” bills in Indiana and Arkansas, even in their toned-down revised versions, give businesses the right to violate local anti-discrimination ordinances on religious grounds. An Indiana pizza parlor temporarily closed after publicly proclaiming it would not serve members of the LGBTQ community. This discrimination is normally illegal where civil rights laws cover sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

In Oregon, where legal protections exist, a lesbian couple was awarded \$135,000 because a bakery refused to bake their wedding cake. If Oregon had passed one of these bogus religious freedom bills, this bakery would be free to discriminate. A restaurant could refuse to seat customers. A gym could deny membership. A transgender woman could be forced to use the “men’s” room or be publicly humiliated. All of this would be legal if the business owner claims it would “violate my conscience” to serve those

deemed “sinners.”

The religious right has made it a priority to pass similar RFRA laws in every state. “Absolutely, we will be talking to lawmakers about providing religious liberties protections,” said Don Hinkle, public policy director for the 600,000-member Missouri Baptist Convention. (lgbtqnation.com) Anyone who claims that treating all people equally “violates their conscience” and suffers consequences for that will be made a martyr by racist, misogynist, anti-LGBTQ bigots seeking to build their base.

With the 2016 presidential elections on the horizon, most of the GOP’s contenders for the nomination are throwing fits over the Supreme Court decision — appealing to the most backward sentiments to build their campaigns.

Some “religious objectors” are going to bizarre extremes. Stories of heterosexual couples divorcing to protest the high court ruling and of pastors threatening self-immolation have received wide media coverage. Nevertheless, the right-wing mobilization to roll back the gains of the LGBTQ movement must be taken seriously.

Religious arguments twist facts

Marriage equality opponents, in promoting RFRA laws, maintain that “forcing” businesses, public officials and service providers to treat all couples equally somehow constitutes religious discrimi-

nation and is therefore illegal. Even from a narrow legal standpoint this is a false argument. While there are some religious-based exceptions to the law — such as granting “conscientious objector” status to military service objectors — normally people cannot break laws simply because their religion dictates. A person cannot commit murder because their god told them to, or rob a bank to fill the collection plate. “Sincerely held religious views” do not even allow for leaving unwanted religious tracts in a neighbor’s mailbox.

Where are the legal protections for the priests and nuns who have served six months in jail just for following their conscience and “crossing the line” to shut down the School of the Americas — where our taxes are used to train Latin American militaries in torture and interrogation?

Why then should there be new religious exceptions that allow people to break civil rights laws — which came about through hard struggle — and engage in hateful, hurtful discrimination?

The forces raising the false flag of religious liberty are the same ones who have upheld the Confederate flag as a symbol of “Southern heritage.” The bigots and the capitalists who back them can be pushed back by a united movement of workers and oppressed, built in the spirit of the Stonewall, Ferguson and Baltimore rebellions. □



LGBTQ youth discuss Marxism

Rockford, Ill. — The youth/student organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) sponsored a multinational forum on “LGBTQ Oppression and Liberation” at the Rockford Public Library on July 11. LGBTQ FIST members led the discussion with a historical materialist analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people up to the Stonewall Rebellion. They focused on heroic combatants like Sylvia Rivera and others, including theoretical contributors to this question like Bob McCubbin and the late Leslie Feinberg, both of Workers World Party. Group discussion following the presentations centered on current

struggles, such as marriage equality, the specific challenges facing working-class and oppressed LGBTQ people, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

The forum was part of an ongoing series of events from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, including discussion on fighting the low-wage police state, sponsored by Rockford FIST. For more information, go to facebook.com/RKFD-FIST, fightimperialism.org or call 424-262-FIST (3478).

— Report and photo by Workers World Rockford Bureau

Trans victory in West Virginia

By Jeremy Bauman
Wheeling, W.Va.

In the wake of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling favoring marriage equality, another triumph was won for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. The West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles has been pressured to update its bigoted photo identification policy that permitted the state’s Department of Motor Vehicles to openly deny proper driver’s licenses to transgender people.

The struggle started when five trans women from the state united and threatened to sue the discriminatory DMV through the Transgender Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

The spark that ignited struggle happened a year ago when Trudy Kitzmiller, a transgender woman, went to the Martinsburg, W.Va., DMV and was subjected to brutal treatment. She was shamefully referred to as “it” by backward DMV offi-

cial and was told she had to remove her makeup and jewelry in order to be photographed for her driver’s license. Kitzmiller even brought medical documentation with her, but none of that mattered to the anti-trans bigots at the DMV.

Kitzmiller soon discovered she was not alone in being mistreated by the state’s DMV. She met another trans woman, Kristen Skinner, who received similar hostility when she visited the Charles Town, W.Va., DMV. Unlike Kitzmiller, Skinner did remove her makeup in order to be photographed, which left her with a picture on her license that does not properly resemble her appearance.

As a result of the collective efforts of the five courageous trans women, the state’s DMV language now reads, “Applicants will no longer be asked to remove or modify makeup, clothing, hair style or hairpiece(s).”

As people celebrate the gains of the recent Supreme Court ruling on marriage

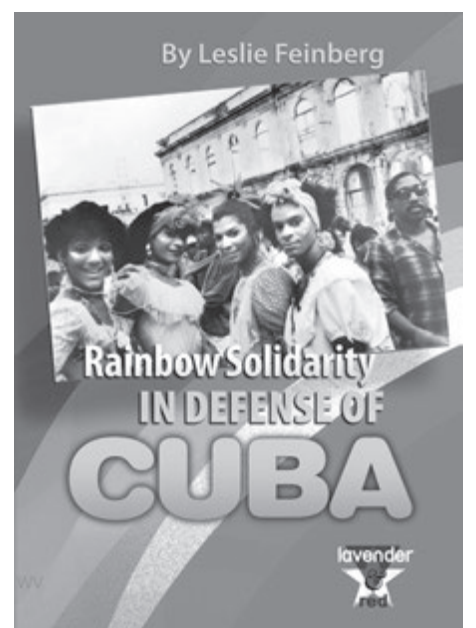
equality, this is one more example of how discriminatory practices against LGBTQ people, particularly trans people of color, are still commonplace in the capitalist U.S. In a quest for a truly just system, free from discrimination and oppression, it is important to seek out more victories such as this. □

Rainbow Solidarity in DEFENSE of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg,
author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This book is an edited compilation of chapters 86 to 110 from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper that began June 3, 2004.

It is available in paperback through online booksellers or read it at:
www.workers.org/lavender-red/LavenderRed_Cubabook.pdf



25 years after ADA

People with disabilities say 'Our struggle is not over'

By Joyce Chediak
New York

"We are proud of who we are" and "Our struggle is not over" were the main themes here on July 12 as some 5,000 to 7,000 people with disabilities, their advocacy organizations, families and allies took to the streets in a lively march celebrating disability pride.

The event was called by Disability Pride NYC, a nonprofit group working with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA is the most comprehensive piece of legislation to date to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. Similar activities have been called in Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia, according to media reports.

As important as the ADA has been, signs and banners pointed out that people with disabilities are still stigmatized and discriminated against.

People marched or rolled in wheelchairs behind banners of advocacy and the many groups that provide services to people with disability. Trade unions, parent support groups, student groups, activist organizations and individuals also participated in the parade and staffed festival tables. A group brought the banner of the United Nations Convention on People with Disabilities, which the U.S. has yet to ratify.

Many trade unions have consistently fought for the rights of their members and others with disabilities. Among them were Communication Workers Local 1180, the Sanitation Workers and municipal workers District Council 37 AFSCME.

Parents to Improve School Transportation, which seeks to shorten routes and upgrade conditions on school buses, was joined by school bus drivers and attendants in the leadership of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181. They leafleted about their mutual need for job security for experienced, trained bus workers to support safety for the children, many of whom have disabilities.

Groups active on a broad range of social issues formed a lively contingent behind a banner reading "Support Disabled Liberation." Members of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights carried signs saying "Solidarity with migrant workers disabled by forced immigration."

A People's Power Assembly sign read: "Half of all people killed by police have a disability. End racist police terror." A Workers World Party sign demanded: "\$15 minimum wage for all, including people with disabilities."

Many individuals came with their own signs, some looking for groups to march with. Jessica Delarosa, who commuted in a wheelchair with her dog Mayin, said it was "important for people without disabilities to see our pride and how like everyone else we are." Another young woman added, "Society puts us down, but this makes us more determined."

Other signs pointed to inequities in hiring for deaf people, social stigmatization of people with disabilities, inadequate housing and discrimination in health care. Many signs pointed to the lack of access.

Other signs read: "Our lives matter," "Think people first, disability second" and "My ability is much stronger than my disability."

A leaflet distributed by Workers World Party entitled "The disability rights movement won the ADA! Let's fight to get it enforced, expanded and funded" caught the mood of many here. Workers World called the ADA "not a guarantee," but "a tool we can use to fight for our rights." Let's "celebrate our militancy. When we raise our demands the government cries 'poverty.' But it has all the money to meet our social and economic needs. We say stop subsidizing Wall Street banks, wars of conquest abroad and the bloated prison-industrial complex." □



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC WILCOX

Marching for equality with pride.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

EACH Woman Act

Asserting right of poor women to abortion

By Sue Davis

A bold giant step in defense of poor women's right to abortion and for equal opportunity for all women took place on July 8. Democratic Congresswomen Barbara Lee, Jan Schakowsky and Diana DeGette introduced the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act in the House of Representatives.

The bill would ensure that every woman who receives health care or insurance through the federal government would be covered for all pregnancy-related services, including abortion. "Regardless of how someone personally feels about abortion," said Lee during the press conference at the Capitol, "none of us, especially elected officials, should be interfering with a woman's right to make her own health care decision just because she is poor."

If passed, the bill would apply to both federal and state laws and end "the terrible wrongs of the Hyde Amendment, which, for 37 years, have fallen hardest on people of color, low-income and youth," said Yamani Hernandez, executive director of the National Network of Abortion Funds, which for years has carried the banner to end Hyde.

Passed in 1976, only three years after

Roe v. Wade legalized abortion, the Hyde Amendment denied coverage for abortion services to poor women insured through Medicaid. This has had a widespread, discriminatory impact on one in six women of reproductive age (15 to 44) who are enrolled in Medicaid, half of whom are women of color. In 2008 (the last year for which statistics are available), Medicaid insured nearly 12.9 million women, who accounted for 61.8 percent of adult Medicaid enrollees.

While abortion is a routine medical procedure sought by one in three women in the course of their lifetime, statistics show that, as a result of Hyde, one in four women on Medicaid have been forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. Studies also show that a woman who seeks an abortion but is denied one is more likely to fall into poverty than a woman who has access to an abortion, because of the high costs of child-rearing combined with low wages.

But the injustice of the Hyde Amendment also extends to millions of women who receive health care through the federal government: a million female federal employees and their dependents, 1.1 million women of reproductive age in the military, nearly a million Native American women covered by the so-called "Indian Health Services," thousands of

women in federal prisons and migrants in detention centers, Peace Corps volunteers and low-income women in the District of Columbia.

Emboldened by their control of Congress, anti-choice legislators now seek to further codify and expand Hyde, apply it to all government spending and put private insurance coverage of abortion out of reach for most women through a new bill, H.R. 7, which passed in the House in January. Legislatures in 25 states have already adopted restrictions that limit abortion in private insurance, with 10 states banning coverage in all private plans, except under very limited circumstances.

Taking the offensive

"We've been on the defense constantly," Lee told Democracy Now! on July 9. "Now it's about time we take the offensive, and say, 'Look, there's got to be some justice and some fairness, as it relates to all women.'" It's important to note that Lee, an African American who has taken many progressive stands over the past 17 years in Congress, voted "no" to the U.S. war on Iraq, and is advocating for an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

Lee admits that passage of the EACH Woman Act is a "long-term fight." First, "we have to educate the public, which

I believe is really there." In fact, a Gallup poll issued May 29 showed that for the first time since 2008, 50 percent of those polled said they were pro-choice, while 44 percent said they are so-called "pro-life." A Hart research poll in June showed that 86 percent of those surveyed believe that politicians should not limit a woman's access to full health coverage because she is poor.

"We have to let members of Congress know," said Lee, that the public believes "there should be equity and low-income women should be treated fairly. So we have a massive educational campaign to conduct" in Congress. Not daunted by the current odds, Lee noted, "We're going to be very assertive. ... This is a marathon. But it must start somewhere, so we've taken the very first step."

Already 74 members of Congress are co-sponsors of the bill, which is also backed by 36 national and state health care, legal, women's and reproductive justice organizations, united under a campaign initiated by All* Above All. Founded in 2013, All* Above All, led by women's, reproductive justice and youth organizations, is a diverse national effort devoted to lifting bans that deny abortion coverage, "so that every woman, however much she makes, can get affordable, safe abortion care when she needs it." □

A visit with prisoner #294671, Rev. Edward Pinkney

By David Sole and Marcina Cole
Coldwater, Mich.

In rural, south central Michigan sits Lakeland Correctional Facility. The extensive state prison is surrounded by a triple row of 12-foot-high razorwire. After passing through metal detectors, pat-downs and shoe, sock and feet inspections, we entered the visiting room to the warm embrace of the Rev. Edward Pinkney.

Rev. Pinkney, a leading African-American activist in Benton Harbor, Mich., was tried and convicted in late 2014 by an all-white jury for supposedly altering five dates on a recall petition against Benton Harbor's mayor. Not one shred of evidence was presented that Pinkney committed these alleged acts.

Prosecutor Michael Sepic could not produce one witness to say that Pinkney was the culprit. Judge Sterling R. Schrock allowed Sepic to tell the jury, "You don't need evidence to convict Mr. Pinkney." All the prosecutor showed the jury was that Rev. Pinkney was a speaker at press conferences and chaired meetings of his organization, BANCO — Black Autonomy Network Community Organization. That was enough for this gang of racists to convict and sentence him to 2.5 to 10 years in prison.

Pinkney's energy and optimism after six months behind bars were amazing.

But Rev. Pinkney was also somber about his situation. "Lakeland has 1,400 prisoners, and I'd say 70 percent are lifers. Being here is serious business. Every day is a challenge. Many of these guys have been here 20, 30, 40 or more years. Today 'life imprisonment' means just that — they will never get out."

Helping those 'who will never get out'

In his short time among these men, Pinkney has done what he always does — organize and assist people. "I spend most mornings and afternoons in the law library helping inmates with legal research. Then a group of lifers asked me to help them better organize their group meetings, which I am doing. The Muslim prisoners invited me to speak to their Friday prayer session when they found out about my case and history of activism."

Rev. Pinkney receives many books and periodicals from supporters. Part of the work we do in the Detroit-based Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice is fundraising for his legal appeal. We also send a monthly donation to help pay for his daily phone calls to his spouse. He often calls in to our weekly Monday evening meetings.

Rev. Pinkney is a voracious reader, so we send him one or two books a month and gave him a subscription to Work-

ers World newspaper, which the prison allows in. "I share the books and articles you send me. As soon as I am done they go hand to hand," he said. He noted that he could use more good reading material.

Pinkney's activism and kindness have won him the respect and admiration of many of the prisoners, but not all. "I'd say that 90 percent of the prisoners here love me and 10 percent hate me. That 10 percent resent my getting so many visitors, when many of them never get a visit. They resent the many books and letters I get. They resent that I will get out of this prison sooner or later and maybe they won't."

This small group of hostile prisoners poses a problem for Rev. Pinkney and could endanger his safety. "I try to avoid confrontations and de-escalate situations. But I don't let them bully me. Several tense situations have arisen. Everyone here knows what goes on, and some of the Muslim brothers have taken to escorting me through the facility when I am done at the library each day," said Pinkney. "Another danger is that my friends and supporters might take it upon themselves to physically confront those who might threaten me — and that would also drag me into a situation in-



Rev. Pinkney and Marcina Cole at prison visitor center earlier in 2015.

volving the prison authorities. So I have to chill my friends out."

Don't sweep this injustice 'under the rug'

Rev. Pinkney was looking forward to his appeal, which is being filed soon. His hope of getting an appeal bond and going home was strong. He has high hopes that he will be released soon because there was no evidence to convict him of felony crimes. But he also knows that there is a "criminal enterprise in Berrien County" that put him in prison in the first place.

The court officials, Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower and behind them the power of the Whirlpool Corporation headquartered there will be working overtime to try to stop him from returning home. "I am asking all my supporters to get the word out in the next 30 days after the appeal is filed. Get this out to the news media so that this injustice can't be swept under the rug and the appeals court is forced to deliver justice," Pinkney urged.

For information on how to help free this political prisoner, visit bhbanco.org. □

Act now for Mumia Abu-Jamal



Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Henry Hagins

On July 4, the apparatus of state power, like it does every year, arrogantly lauded itself for its alleged mandate to occupy the "lighthouse of democracy" around the world. Drunk on the brew of grand larceny, they will never voluntarily imbibe the sobering elixir of Frederick Douglass' unforgettable Fourth of July speech in 1853, in which he soundly revoked U.S. claims to such authority.

Douglass' "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" speech could have been minted today, at a time when U.S. imperialism's wars pockmark the entire planet; when over 2.4 million prisoners, including about a million African Americans, languish and toil in slave-like conditions in U.S. prisons and jails.

Just look at the obscene cat-and-mouse game — a war by all levels of the state of

Pennsylvania — that is meant to torment political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and induce his demise, this time through outright medical abuse and neglect.

The assault on Abu-Jamal's health has been going on for well over six months. The alleged recovery prescription is Swiss-cheesed with gaping holes, contradictions and medical inaction.

On June 29, Suzanne Ross of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Mumia's brother, Keith Cook, visited the ailing Mumia. Their observations can be found at info@freemumia.com.

Bottom line: Abu-Jamal's health is not good. His skin condition offers great discomfort that hardly reflects healing.

We must pull out the stops again to protect Mumia's health and ultimately bring him home! Heat up the grapevine. Call friends, family, activists, influential people and organizations, etc. The time to act is surely now!

Mumia is innocent of all the charges against him and should never have been arrested. In the hands of the prison system, he has come extremely close to dying; continued medical neglect and abuse make this a constant threat.

He should be released to receive proper outside medical care. Call Secretary John Wetzel, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, at 717-728-4109 and Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Wolf, at 717-787-2500, to demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal be granted treatment by specialists of his choosing who are outside the Department of Corrections and that he get an appropriate diet and daily visits by family, friends and attorneys. □

Oakland, Calif.

WWP leader denounces police terror



"Capitalism, Policing and State Violence" was the topic of a talk given by Lamont Lilly at the Alan Blueford Center for Justice in Oakland, Calif., on July 10. Lilly, a leading member of the Durham, N.C., branch of Workers World Party, was visiting Oakland to share his experiences in the fight against police terror. He had recently been on the front lines in Baltimore for a month, after the police killing of Freddie Grey, a 25-year-old African American. Prior to that, Lilly had also visited Ferguson, Mo., in support of the Black community there, in the aftermath of the grand jury nonindictment of Darren Wilson, the white police officer who killed 18-year-old Michael Brown.

Jada, who also organizes First Friday performances at the Blueford Center, performed a beautiful spoken word piece,

to open the meeting.

Lilly talked about the origination of U.S. policing as antebellum slave patrols, used to catch runaway enslaved African people. He pointed out that whether or not an individual officer may have some good intentions, the role of police under capitalism is to protect the property and the interests of the 1% or the ruling class. He detailed how the school-to-prison pipeline, supported by the police, feeds the coffers of the prison-industrial complex.

Lilly is also a contributing writer for Workers World newspaper, as well as being published at truth-out.org and [counterpunch.org](http://coun-terpunch.org). He is currently working on publishing a book of his original poems. You can follow him on twitter @Lamont-Lilly.

— Story and photo by Terri Kay

WW commentary

Who gets credit for removing Confederate flag?

By Monica Moorehead

Finally. The profoundly offensive, pro-slavery Confederate flag no longer flies high in front of the State House grounds in Columbia, the capitol of South Carolina. It was taken down on July 10, 43 years after it was first hoisted in a ceremony “officially” marking the centennial of the start of the U.S. Civil War. In July 2000, a march of more than 50,000, mostly African Americans, demanded that the flag be removed. When state elected officials voted not to remove it, civil rights groups launched a boycott of South Carolina’s tourism industry.

The decisive moment that reignited the struggle to finally remove the flag was the horrific massacre of nine African-American Bible Study members at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston on June 17 by Dylann Roof, a white supremacist. One of the nine victims was the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, a state senator. Pinckney had demanded justice for Walter Scott, a Black man fatally shot eight times in the back by a white cop in North Charleston on April 4.

Roof posted a picture of himself on his website holding a Confederate flag, along with other repulsive racist memo-

abilia. He targeted this historic, activist church due to its anti-slavery heritage, led by Denmark Vesey, who bought his freedom from slavery in 1799 and was eventually hanged for attempting an armed insurrection against the slavocracy in 1822.

The angry response to the Charleston massacre and the role of the Confederate flag was quite swift and remarkable, not only in South Carolina but around the country. Confederate flags were burned everywhere in the North and South, and Confederate monuments were defaced by Black and white activists, including those involved in the Black Lives Matter movement fighting racist police terror.

Once Gov. Nikki Haley signed the bill to take down the flag, an official ceremony was held to mark the occasion. The mainstream media were there en masse. Thousands of people, mainly African American, attended the ceremony. Family members of the nine massacred by Roof were there. Many people cried tears of joy and relief, understandably so after having to endure so many decades of seeing a flag glorifying a barbaric system that forced their enslaved ancestors to suffer under whips and chains.

But many African Americans understand all too well that the removal of the

Confederate flag and other related symbols does not signify the end of white supremacy. There still exists the legacy of slavery today in the form of police brutality, low wages, lack of health care, the school-to-prison pipeline, the current rash of Black churches being torched and dire poverty in disproportionate numbers.

Why the ceremony?

Other African Americans, including this writer, asked: Why was a flag glorifying white supremacy given such pomp and circumstance in a ceremony that showed reverence to it? Why was a military honor guard necessary, with only a 21-gun salute missing? Once the flag was meticulously folded, it was sent to the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum near the Capitol.

As African-American CNN correspondent and New York Times op-ed writer Charles Blow commented angrily after the ceremony, they could have just taken down the flag in a low-key manner, given everything it represents. This media event turned out to be a photo-op for the governor, who fought for many years against taking down the flag, along with other white politicians.

What shouldn’t get lost is that it was

the massive struggle from below, led by the Black community, that forced the removal of the flag. The most dramatic example of this struggle was a young African-American woman activist from North Carolina, Bree Newsome. With the assistance of Black and white comrades, in an act of heroic defiance, Newsome scaled the flagpole on the State House grounds on July 4 and took down the Confederate flag. She and James Tyson, who assisted her from the ground, were arrested. Newsome is facing at least three years in jail, if convicted. More than \$125,000 has already been raised for her legal defense. Activists are demanding that ALL charges be dropped against her.

Bree Newsome and others who have been in the forefront of fighting white supremacy should be given the credit for bringing down the flag, not opportunist politicians like Gov. Haley and her ilk. There should have been a ceremony honoring Bree Newsome and others like her, who didn’t wait for the politicians to do what should have been done more than 40 years ago.

Moorehead was born under segregation in Alabama and refused to play the pro-slavery anthem “Dixie” in her high school band in Hampton, Va., during the late 1960s.

Muslim, Jewish help for torched Black churches

By Kris Hamel

July 13 — Muslim and Jewish groups have been raising money to help rebuild at least six Black churches in the South hit by arsonists in a racist backlash to the unity ignited by the June 17 massacre in Charleston, S.C.

This united outrage, in the footsteps of the national Black Lives Matter movement, brought about the long-overdue removal of the Confederate flag from the grounds of the state Capitol in Columbia, S.C. It also resulted in strong demands throughout the United States to destroy this profound symbol of racism, slavery

and national oppression wherever it is found. Led by Black youth and community members, this response to racist terror has proven to be a setback for reactionary and racist elements in the U.S. and their sponsors in the capitalist class.

The Charleston massacre, which occurred on the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, led to solidarity actions by Muslims across the country.

Faatimah Knight, a 23-year-old Black Muslim student, helped organize a number of Muslim organizations, including Ummah Wide, the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative and the Arab American Association of New York, to start a crowd-

funding campaign on launchgood.com.

As of this writing, LaunchGood reports that \$79,883 has been collected toward a goal of \$100,000 to help “rebuild Black churches” and “stand united against hate.”

Mosques have been targets of racist and right-wing hate attacks since 2001. In May an Arizona mosque had to defend itself from an attack by racist, anti-Muslim bikers, reported Huffington Post on May 28.

Jewish temples and synagogues, long a target of anti-Semitic hate acts, have also contributed to the fundraising efforts for Southern Black Christian churches that

have been torched or burned.

A broad coalition of more than 150 religious institutions has raised more than \$150,000 of its quarter-million-dollar goal to help rebuild Black churches, says Rabbi Susan Talve of the Central Reform Congregation in St. Louis. (theguardian.com, July 10)

After the police killing of unarmed Black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., last August, the groups in the Rebuild the Churches Fund began working together, said Talve. She stressed that all must work together to end hate — “racism, anti-semitism, homophobia, Islamophobia” — and stand up when it happens. □

BLACK LIVES MATTER
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Massive people's march July 25 in Newark

By Sara Flounders

A major demonstration in Newark, N.J., on July 25 — called the Million People’s March Against Police Brutality, Racial Injustice and Economic Inequality — has gained the support of over 100 community and grassroots organizations, union locals, religious groups, political prisoners defense committees, immigrant rights, women’s and LGBTQ groups. The July 25 march was initiated by the People’s Organization for Progress, which has a long history of mobilizing mass protests against police violence.

The rally is set to gather at noon at the Lincoln Monument in Newark at the intersection of Springfield Avenue and West Market Street, across from Essex County College. After a march through downtown Newark the mass gathering is expected to end at the same location.

Lawrence Hamm, the chair of POP, described the effort this way: “The epidemic of police murders and the massacre in Charleston propel this July 25 March and the many mass outrage events. July 25 is not just one event. It is about building a movement that responds to police violence and racist murders. The families of those murdered will be the first speakers at the July 25th march.”

Hamm led several recent building actions for the event, including a United National Antiwar Coalition call with activists from 14 cities on June 30, followed by a New York City mobilizing meeting on July 7 and press conferences in Philadelphia; Camden, Montclair and Plainfield in New Jersey; and New York City. It was also raised at the annual commemoration of the 1967 Newark Rebellion at Rebellion Monument in Newark. Organizers are expecting thousands of participants.

Groups are organizing to come from far away, including a bus from Atlanta and vans and cars from Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, Albany, the mid-Hudson area and throughout New Jersey. In New York, Black Lives Matter activists are planning to gather on the Sixth Avenue PATH subway platforms at both 33rd and 23rd Streets at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 25, and take the 11:05 a.m. PATH train to Journal Square and then Newark’s Penn Station.

Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m., People’s Organization for Progress holds organizing meetings at Abyssinian Baptist Church, 224 W. Kinney St., Newark. For more information call 973-801-0001. To endorse, send a message to info@njpop.org. Hamm has also appealed to activists to link to facebook.com/events/418074548350082. □

Detroit to Flint water march ends

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
 Editor, **Pan-African News Wire**
 Flint, Mich.

A week-long, cross-state march, organized under the theme “Clean, Affordable Water for All: Detroit to Flint Water Justice Journey,” ended in Flint, Mich., on July 10.

Organizations sponsoring the walk included the People’s Water Board, the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization in Detroit and others. Activists from Highland Park, Pontiac and Flint joined the march and rallies held in all four cities.

MWRO Co-Chair Marian Kramer, who lives in Highland Park, a small municipality surrounded by Detroit, reported that residents did not receive water bills for three years due to layoffs of meter readers.

The city of Detroit is now claiming huge debts are owed by Highland Park. Massive shutoffs could be imminent.

Under emergency management and bankruptcy, the banks and corporate interests sought to shield the forces responsible for the current crisis in access and safety. In Detroit, \$537 million was taken out of the system in order to terminate interest-rate swaps issued by leading financial institutions, including Chase, Bank of America, Loop Financial and Morgan Stanley.

In Flint, where the water situation is perhaps the worst, people marched and gathered at City Hall on July 10.

Although both Flint and Detroit have been removed from emergency management, the state of Michigan is still overseeing the finances of both municipalities. Water shutoffs in each city continue, but in Flint residents are also faced with the extreme deterioration of the quality of their service.

The Flint water system was connected to Detroit’s massive infrastructure until,

under emergency management, it was broken off in 2014 as a “cost-cutting measure.”

Water flowing into residential homes is coming directly from the Flint River. Testing by outside experts indicates that the use of high levels of chlorine and ferric chloride could be causing corrosion in the lead and iron piping system. At least half of the homes in Flint were constructed more than 50 years ago when the use of lead was common.

New regulations based on the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act of 1986 are not being enforced in the city. Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality has been criticized for not exercising its authority in response to complaints from Flint residents.

Today families in Flint are suffering from a number of health issues. Water from the local system has been described as not only undrinkable but unfit for washing and cooking.

Residents discussed the health problems they are facing due to contaminated water. Melissa Mays of Flint, who chaired the July 10 rally, said that she and her children were diagnosed with copper poisoning in March. The family is now in a detoxification process under medical supervision.

A Michigan American Civil Liberties Union report suggests that the local water department’s testing methods are designed to conceal the level of lead exposure of residents. Before samples are taken, residents are told to run the water in an effort to flush out the toxin build-up near the faucets.

Curt Guyette, of the ACLU of Michigan, reports, “Flint’s water contained corrosion-control chemicals until April 2014, when Flint’s ties to the Detroit water system were severed. ... Discontinuing the use of the anti-corrosion chemicals allowed the toxic scale built-up on the in-

sides of pipes over the past decades to be released into water flowing into people’s homes.”

LeeAnne Walters requested two city tests of her water. It revealed dangerously high levels of lead, charting 104 parts per billion and 397 ppb.

Yet Virginia Tech researchers found lead levels in Walters’ water had reached 13,200 ppb — more than twice the amount at which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency declares water as hazardous waste. (deadlinedetroit.com, July 9)

An extremely angry Flint resident outside City Hall brought with her a container of brown water run from her tap. She also held a fistfull of her hair, which she said fell out after washing with this water. She blamed the local and state authorities.

Capitalist disinvestment at root of crisis

Flint has been hit over the decades by plant closings and financial ruin caused by the banks and corporations. The birthplace of the United Auto Workers is now a source of underdevelopment and political oppression.

Much like Detroit, the city’s landscape is covered with abandoned factories and commercial structures. The foreclosure rates were extremely high at the height of the Great Recession several years ago.

Local officials are hampered by the constraints placed on politicians under state supervision.

Michigan’s right-wing, multimillion-



Flint resident holds hair and contaminated water.

aire Gov. Rick Snyder had presidential aspirations but failed miserably when he placed a statewide referendum on the ballot to raise sales taxes, aimed ostensibly to repair Michigan roads. A corporate media television outlet revealed that most of the money during the first year would go toward paying off bond debt on previous road construction schemes. After the referendum received an 80 percent “no” vote, Snyder announced he would not pursue the presidency.

The water march gained a significant amount of media coverage. Participants submitted a petition to the state Capitol in Lansing demanding clean and affordable water.

However, capitalist interests remain dominant in water management, which includes the global anti-worker firm Veolia. Every effort is being made by the ruling class to privatize the system. It will require vigilance to fight the corporate and financial interests seeking to deny safe water to the people. □

Detroiters demand: ‘Turn on the lights!’

By **Martha Grevatt**
 Detroit

For six weeks in a row, community activists in Detroit have held “light walks” every Thursday night. Radio talk show host Cynthia Johnson, who initiated the walks, pointed out that there are a number of major thoroughfares around the city that are pitch dark when night falls. Busy bus stops are unlit. Residents around Dexter Street, where the walks have been held, describe hair-raising situations such as being in a wheelchair and almost being hit by a car or smashing the brake pedal to avoid hitting a child.

“Mayor [Mike] Duggan promised a year ago the lights would be turned on,” said Errol Jennings, president of Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic Neighborhood Association.

This unsafe situation was preventable. Decades of neglect, failure to purchase new bulbs and mass layoffs of union workers in the city-owned Public Lighting Department left many neighborhoods in the dark. Public buildings on PLD’s power grid experienced regular outages. This became the excuse former Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr used to dismantle PLD and make private utility DTE Energy the power supplier. The

state created the Public Lighting Authority as an independent entity, incurring a debt of \$185 million to the banks.

Emergency managers are appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder over cities he deems to be in financial distress; almost every Michigan city with an EM has a majority Black population. Under Public Act 436 — popularly known as the “dictator law” — the EM has the power to break union contracts, sell off city assets and make all kinds of decisions without the approval of the elected mayor and city council. Payment to the banks, by law, takes precedent over city services.

The city of Detroit had only 35,000 out of 88,000 existing lights working as of 2014, but the PLA brags that “the lights are coming back on.” This seems to only be true in the downtown and midtown areas that are targeted for gentrification, but the spin doctors of the capitalist media have used these limited improvements to convince the country there is a “comeback” in Detroit. In fact, the PLA plans to reduce the total number of street lights to 45,000, leaving many areas of the city in darkness. Neighborhood residents, stuck in their homes on a nice summer night because of unsafe, unlit streets, aren’t seeing a comeback but are wanting a fightback. □

New Orleans protest: ‘Not one more deportation!’

Continued from page 3

under review by the most conservative federal appeals court in the U.S.

The federal measures are known as DACA and DAPA, standing for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for Parental Accountability. DACA would limit the deportation of some undocumented people who came to the U.S. as children. DAPA would prevent the deportation of some undocumented parents of children born in the U.S. or who have the status of “lawful residents.” Both measures, while very limited, have not been implemented due to the anti-immigrant lawsuit, filed by 26 states.

‘Stop the raids! Alta a la polimigra!’

Trumpets, trombones and tubas blared as two brass bands led the march, New Orleans-style, to rally before the Circuit Court. A battle between giant puppets broke out — a Latino worker in hard hat with tools in hand soundly defeating a Department of Homeland Security monster with a green head.

The hawk of La Raza flew in the United Farm Workers flag. Francisco Torres, a citrus farm worker from Porterville, Calif., marched with the banner, “Con la Union de Campesinos tendremos papeles/With a Farmworkers’ Union, we will have papers.”

The Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights carried “Brown is beautiful” signs, as nearby the Una Familia, Una Alabama red-shirted contingent was energized by a young child on a bullhorn

shouting, “¡Obama escucha! estamos en la lucha!/Obama, listen up! We are in the struggle!”

Young people from the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice chanted over and over, “We believe that we will win,” a slogan from the Black Lives Matter movement. A Black and Brown Unity campaign was launched by civil rights forces in Alabama in 2011 to counter hate legislation against immigrants there.

Immigrant workers from Texas, the lead state in the reactionary lawsuit, were especially well-represented. Present were the Texas Domestic Workers Network, LITE (Latinos Inmigrantes Triunfadores) and FIEL (Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha/Immigrant Families and Students in Struggle) from Houston. Women from FIEL’s Justice Worker Center held signs with a unique Spanish spelling to emphasize that “workers” includes both women and men: “Todxs Somos Jornalersxs.”

Participants at the protest were clear they needed much more than the small relief offered by DAPA and DACA. Reyna Wences, a national leader in the DREAM Act movement, said: “The people risking arrest were there to put an end to the deportations and detention of immigrants. Because they know that DAPA is not enough for our communities that don’t qualify for that program.”

As the march continued, one participant summed up the struggle in a social media tweet: “They want our cheap labor, but they don’t want us to have rights.” □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes • **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy • **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell • **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead • **Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry • **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad • **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal • **Racism & Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales • **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin • **Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee • **Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker • **Available online and at other bookstores.**

Stop bankers' rule in Greece

Mass resistance must say NO!

Continued from page 1

the government and destroy Tsipras in front of his own people as an object lesson to all others who would rebel against the iron austerity demanded by the European powers — and by the International Monetary Fund, headed by the U.S.

Terms of further austerity

The “Troika” — the IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission — and the Greek government, together with the other Greek bourgeois parties, have now signed terms that will deepen the Greek debt enslavement. Following are highlights of the agreement signed in Brussels by all 19 eurozone countries.

The Greek government has agreed to submit to the oversight of the IMF; to allow supervised machinery that will trigger automatic spending cuts if budget surpluses fall short; to “ambitious pension reform,” meaning cuts to pensioners; to “modernization of collective bargaining,” meaning curtailing union rights; and to “industrial action” reform, that is, cracking down on the right to strike.

The agreement requires the government to carry out “product market reforms” that remove any price protection on prescription drugs, milk and bread, among other things; and to proceed with the privatization of the national electric network (ADMIE).

There will be no reduction in the principal amount, the hundreds of billions of euros owed to the banks — no “haircut” — only a possible lowering of interest rates and a possible stretching out of the repayment period. But there has been no commitment at all to any debt relief.

The government must submit economic legislation to the Troika before it is submitted to Parliament or the public. These commitments are required before any negotiations for a future bailout begin.

Mass resistance needed

Whether or not the government falls, there needs to be a new leadership of resistance in Greece to mobilize mass struggle, both in the country and by winning solidarity throughout Europe, to rebuff this agreement before it can be fully implemented. An immediate, united mass response must be called to say No! — no to further austerity, no to paying this illegitimate debt.

An emergency gathering could be called by the Greek left and progressive forces of representatives from the factories, the communities, the pensioners, the schools and universities, and the countryside, as well as small businesses, to formulate a counter-program and a plan of agitation and ongoing mass resistance to overturn the agreement.

The aim must be to obstruct the implementation of the extreme austerity mea-

‘Those who insist on the choice of staying in the euro whatever the cost might know that it is a disaster. We need a prepared exit to open up a new path.’

Thanassis Petrakos,
Speaker of Syriza parliamentary group,
member of Left Platform

asures dictated by European finance capital, with Wall Street in the background, and agreed to by Tsipras’ hapless and battered government. The widest possible unity of resistance must be achieved in the coming days.

Last spring the Syriza-led Greek Parliament authorized a study by the Committee Opposed to Debt. (See Workers World, “Greek Debt Committee,” July 6.) Though presented within a capitalist framework, the arguments form the legal foundation for rejecting the extortionate debt to the bankers. The report provides evidence that the debt is “illegal, illegitimate, and odious.”

The report concluded: “The Committee considers that Greece has been and still is the victim of an attack premeditated and organized by the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission, aimed exclusively at shifting private debt onto the public sector.”

Break with the euro vs. long-term debt slavery

As we recently wrote in these pages, a commitment made in advance by the Syriza leaders to remain in the eurozone was a clear signal to the bankers that the financiers had the upper hand and would resort to financial strangulation, which is exactly what they have done.

Whatever the difficulties of breaking with the euro to free Greece from the absolute financial control of Frankfurt, the ECB and German, European and U.S. finance capital, these difficulties must be faced. The technical preparations and the education effort to explain it to the masses should have been carried out long ago. As many left forces have pointed out, it is better to go through temporary hardship than to submit to permanent debt slavery and financial plunder.

Left forces in Syriza called for a break long ago. Even the bourgeois anti-austerity Keynesian economists Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz have suggested that Greece would be better off if it left the euro.

Stathis Kouvelakis, a member of the Syriza Central Committee who teaches in London, quoted Thanassis Petrakos, one of the three speakers of Syriza’s parliamentary group and a prominent member of the Left Platform, who declared:

“The ‘no’ of the referendum was a rad-

ical and a class ‘no.’ Some high-ranked comrades insist on the ‘there is no other way’ logic. We should prepare exiting the eurozone and say that clearly to the people. The Left has a future when it opens its wings to the unknown, not to nothingness. Those who insist on the choice of staying in the euro whatever the cost might know that it is a disaster. We need a prepared exit to open up a new path. The first steps are the public control of the banks and of the Greek central bank and a crackdown on oligarchy.” (Jacobin magazine, July 10)

Only the left and revolutionary forces can prepare the path forward — the struggle to overturn the agreement and to break with the euro. Under new left leadership there could be a mass campaign to overcome the fear of a rupture. The possibilities of surviving a break with the euro could be illustrated concretely. For example, plans to form local committees everywhere to ensure the food supply and to carry out distribution, especially to the poor, could be drawn up. These committees could also be empowered to suppress hoarding, to monitor the capitalists against profit gouging and hoarding, to ensure medical services, etc.

It should be pointed out that a new sovereign currency could be employed to put the masses of unemployed, especially the youth, back to work; vastly increase production; and overcome the depression that Greece is now in.

Of course, the nationalization of the banks and of strategic sectors of the economy would be fundamental steps to regain sovereignty over the economy.

Such steps could be accompanied by international negotiations to set up alternate trade patterns where necessary, both import and export. This would be in anticipation of commercial obstruction by the EU. It should be possible to open up discussions with every government that praised the “No” vote. The ALBA (the Bolivian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) countries in Latin America come to mind.

This past April, the Greek ambassador to Iran was received by President Hassan Rouhani. “In the meeting (the president) said that Greece has many capacities in various fields and the economies of Iran and Greece can complement each other.” The Greek ambassador, in turn,

said: “Greece seeks strategic ties with Iran and is against the policy of imposition of sanction to isolate countries.” (Iran News Agency, April 20)

Tsipras recently made a trip to Russia to discuss a gas pipeline, which also opens up possibilities to maintain trade outside the euro. If necessary, temporary barter relationships could be established. This tactic was used successfully by Iran to get around U.S. sanctions.

In any case, the logic of remaining in the euro at all costs has transformed the Syriza government from an opponent of austerity to an enforcer of austerity. This cycle must be broken.

Capitalist parasites cheering

Right now the stock markets around the world are on the rise as news spreads of the signing of the austerity agreement by the Greek government. The millionaires and billionaires who speculate on stocks are drooling as they sense that the banks are going to squeeze ever more blood from the Greek masses.

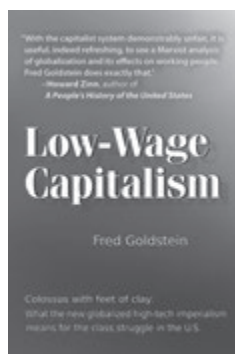
An obscene celebration is going on in financial circles over the intended attack by the banks on the Greek people — the workers, the poor, the pensioners, the youth. The global financial oligarchy is looking forward to the Troika shoring up the Greek banks so that Greece can shell out money to the creditors.

There are those on the left who regarded Tsipras’ capitulation as inevitable and used this as a rationale to abstain from the struggle. In particular the Greek Communist Party held back its broad following among the militant, class-conscious sectors of the organized working class from joining with the broader anti-austerity forces loyal to Syriza in a common struggle against the Troika. Thus, they gave up the chance to steer the wider movement in a left and revolutionary direction, which could have helped to forestall a capitulation or to prepare for it when it came.

We are confident that the Greek popular organizations will find solutions to overcome present developments and that all the forces on the left will rethink and regroup for the broadest possible united struggle to overturn this latest capitulation to the austerity demands of the financial powers.

The smiles can still be wiped from the faces of the financial parasites and the stock exchanges of the capitalist world if a powerful mass movement mounts a counterattack. It is time to overcome differences and launch a fightback that will rock the Merkels, Hollandes and all the bankers of Europe and the U.S. back on their heels.

Goldstein is the author of two books, “Capitalism at a Dead End” and “Low-Wage Capitalism.” More of his writing is posted on lowwagecapitalism.org and on his Facebook page.

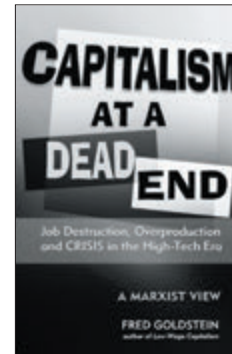


Low-Wage Capitalism describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to LowWageCapitalism.com

Available at all major online booksellers.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Solidarity with workers in Greece

Which side are you on?

In the struggle between European and U.S. finance capital, on one side, and the work force of Greece, on the other, the choice should be easy.

Any class-conscious worker, any progressive individual from Tierra del Fuego to Lapland, from Vladivostok west to Honolulu, should be in solidarity with the Greek workers — on the streets of their cities if possible.

Imperialist finance capital, using the debt that various countries, cities and territories have accumulated, are waging war on the workers around the world. Their banks are in trouble because they forced loans on people who can no longer pay them back. And they are using economic, political and military power to squeeze the workers to pay the banks.

We said the choice should be easy. What complicates the choice is the mountain of lies that finance capital orders its media mouthpieces to propagate.

For example, the lie that they offer money to Greece to help the Greek people. No, nearly all the money goes to rescuing the banks so

they don't have to write off the loans as unpayable. That's one Big Lie.

Another Big Lie is that the conflict is between German and Greek workers, that German workers "resent" bailing out allegedly laid-back Greek workers. This is a lie on two counts. First, it's not the Greek workers but the banks that have been bailed out. Second, according to figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Greeks, when they have jobs, work on average more than 2,000 hours a year, while Germans work less than 1,400. This ignores the fact that 10 percent of the workforce in Greece are migrants, who work harder still, just as migrant workers do in Germany.

The truth is that the battle is between the German imperialist banks -- plus the French, Dutch, British and U.S. big banks -- and the working people of Greece.

What this means is that all labor union members, all unemployed youth, from the European Union to the United States, should find a way to show their complete support for and solidarity with the working class in Greece.

It's a struggle that involves all of us. □

Debt means having the same enemy

What do working people in Greece, Ghana, Detroit and Puerto Rico have in common?

They are all exploited by imperialist finance capital. Now, in 2015, all are targets of big capital's class war. From Wall Street to London, Paris and Frankfurt, the banks and the national states that ride shotgun for their interests are using the debt crisis to squeeze every last ounce of profit out of workers' labor power.

Workers all over the capitalist globe face severe cutbacks in whatever social programs still exist. At the same time, workers still feel the economic disaster of the capitalist crisis that exploded during 2007 and 2008 and continues without relief. This means high unemployment rates and an increase of those living in extreme poverty.

In each of the four places named above, the workers face both class and national oppression, the latter taking the form of a lack of both national sovereignty and economic self-determination.

According to ghanaweb.com on July 8, the International Monetary Fund insisted that Ghana's government reduce spending for salaries of public workers. Health workers who had successfully completed two- and three-year education programs and served for a year in the national health service are now unemployed. Dictating that decision to Ghana hurts both the health workers and most of the 27 million people living there.

The United States is the major decider in the IMF — which makes up one-third of the European Union's "Troika" that has been persecuting Greek workers.

Detroit was once the model for a working-class city in the U.S., home to the country's automobile industry where the United Auto Workers set the tone for the best union contracts. Since restructuring and outsourcing, a weakened UAW and the "Great Recession," this now 83 percent Black city has lost half its population, plunging it into poverty. Unable to repay the debt that pred-

atory banks foisted on it and headed toward bankruptcy, Detroit's city government was forced to cede rule to a state-appointed manager. His role was to assure that repaying the banks had priority over saving pensions, city jobs, education and social services.

As Berta Joubert-Ceci wrote in the July 16 issue of this newspaper, workers in Puerto Rico — a country that has been a colony of U.S. imperialism for the past 117 years — face a similar debt attack to that haunting Greece, Ghana and Detroit, despite its different political status. Puerto Rico now owes \$72 billion to its creditors, and its colonial governor admits the country is unable to pay it.

The colonial laws controlling Puerto Rico forbid it from declaring bankruptcy. That means it can't even do what Detroit did to write down some of the debt — not that this helped Detroit's workers. Those who would "manage" Puerto Rico's debt have more or less the same recipe as those imposing "austerity" all over the globe: Lower the \$7.25 minimum wage; privatize public property; cut education, health care and social services; and prioritize paying the predatory banks. Puerto Rico is tied to the dollar like Greece is to the euro — unable to control its own currency. Additionally, it has the added burden of U.S. political domination.

Greece has been the focus of attention worldwide these past few weeks. An announced deal — which hasn't yet been ratified in either Athens or Berlin — imposes even more sacrifices and hardships on the Greek working class. As in the other areas, this is done with the collaboration of the local ruling class, which is as anti-worker as are the foreign banks.

These four examples in four different parts of the world clearly show that the bosses and bankers have used the debt to wage war on the working class. The first step toward a successful fightback is the realization that workers all over the world face the same enemy and have the same interests in defeating that enemy. □

Greece

Migrants find solidarity as well as repression

By John Catalinotto

Jobless in a depression-era society, targeted by fascists like those in the Golden Dawn party and seeing benefits cut even for workers who are citizens, immigrant workers are near the bottom of Greek society, with perhaps only the refugees from ongoing wars below them. Immigrants find only the toughest jobs needing the least skills that pay little. Nearly all are excluded from Greek electoral life.

All workers in Greece need solidarity in their struggle against the big bankers of Europe and the United States. Greece's migrant workers need an extra dose.

Because Greek workers also emigrate and the birthrate is low, immigrants help keep the population steady at nearly 11 million. Migrants make up about 8 percent of the total population and more than 10 percent of the workforce. Most come from neighboring Albania, with overall more than 80 percent from the Balkan states and the former USSR. The newest refugee surge is mainly from Syria and Afghanistan.

While all migrants face government repression and fascist xenophobia, a singularly savage assault took place in April 2013 against undocumented mostly Bangladeshi agricultural workers who were hired to pick strawberries during the growing and harvesting season. This class attack aimed at robbing the workers' wages. The ensuing legal case exposed xenophobia directed at South Asian workers.

The strawberry pickers were supposed to receive 22 euros per day, less six euros for room and board. But

after five months' work, they hadn't been paid anything, so they refused to go on working. Three gangsters who had been overseeing the workers for the boss opened fire, injuring 35 workers, four critically.

In June 2014, despite union and anti-fascist demonstrations supporting the farmworkers, and a strong legal defense backed by left forces in Greece, a Greek court found the shooters not guilty. The Bangladeshi workers remain hungry and are being held in a camp.

Solidarity with migrants

Before this January's elections, a rightist government was in power. It built a fence blocking the Greek-Turkish border and ordered its Coast Guard to keep migrant ships out at sea. But this year, some 77,000 migrants have already landed in Greece by sea.

Nasim Lomani, an immigrant and member of the Network for Social Support for Refugees and Migrants, has lived 15 years in Greece. He told the German daily newspaper Junge Welt of July 11 that the Syriza government had ordered the Coast Guard to stand down from expelling the migrants, and that this order has held so far.

Lomani said, however, that despite the improvements since Syriza was elected, conditions are still terrible for the migrants. Near the town of Moria, on the island of Lesbos just off the Turkish coast, for example, there is a camp built to hold 250 refugees that is now housing 1,000. "What is gratifying," he added, "is that unbelievably many of the islanders are taking care of the refugees in a way that shows their solidarity." □

WORKERS WORLD MUNDO OBRERO

Recetas neoliberales para Puerto Rico

Continúa de página 12

alcaldes, legisladores, sectores de la sociedad y sindicatos, oyeran la presentación del informe por la misma Krueger. Pedraza Leduc mencionó el papel jugado por la Ley 66, la cual el Informe Krueger avala. Esta "Ley de Sostenibilidad Fiscal y Operacional del Gobierno del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, permite al gobierno hacer los ajustes necesarios para atender la crisis fiscal que enfrenta el país". (aldia.microjuris.com) Ha sido la base utilizada para atacar a los sindicatos.

Dice Pedraza Leduc: "el planteamiento es de extender la Ley 66, significa no negociación colectiva y es eliminar beneficios. En el caso nuestro, de PROSOL, que estamos representando a los empleados de la Autoridad de Carreteras, que es una corporación pública, el lunes 29 de junio comenzamos en el tribunal un recurso de interdicto en contra de esta ley. Planteamos que esa ley es inconstitucional, porque va contra el derecho constitucional a la negocia-

ción colectiva y por lo tanto, a la libre asociación.

"Esa es una medida que estamos tomando desde el punto de vista legal. La otra más urgente que está tomando la UTIER y el movimiento sindical, que es lo que vamos a estar haciendo en todos los sectores, es una discusión con los delegados y con la base de los sindicatos, de toda esta problemática. Que la gente se empape y discuta todo lo que está pasando para que tengamos una base de apoyo para las acciones de lucha. Porque no es una lucha (a nivel legal) y de discusión con esta gente, pues ellos (gobierno y consultores) ya tienen una decisión tomada".

Esta semana se celebrarán varias reuniones a ese efecto.

Puerto Rico se encuentra en una encrucijada donde el movimiento progresista puertorriqueño, tanto en las islas como en la diáspora, necesitan de amplios debates y movilizaciones. El futuro de Borinken está en juego.

Joubert-Ceci es puertorriqueña residente en el estado de Pensilvania

On the road with the Cuba caravan

By Cheryl LaBash

Yellow school buses are a common sight in the U.S. Usually the rides are shorter than the 2,300 miles we just covered in 10 days on a very special bus. Ours was just one of the latest to have traversed the North American continent since the early 1990s, to be donated to the revolutionary people of Cuba as a gift of love and solidarity. It was part of the Friendship Caravans, organized by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace.

This year's 26th Caravan is traveling through 50 cities and 38 states to take 10 tons of material aid to Cuba, including sewing machines and mobility aids in addition to the two full-size school buses, another small bus and a box truck. Fifty caravanistas will arrive in Cuba just days before the Cuban flag is raised in Washington, D.C., on July 20, signaling the renewal of formal diplomatic relations, which had been broken by the U.S. on Jan. 3, 1961.

This summer, participants in both the Friendship Caravan and the Venceremos Brigade will once again challenge the illegal, unilateral and internationally condemned U.S. blockade of Cuba.

This personal and organizational solidarity dramatizes the fact that the U.S. fi-



nancial, commercial and economic blockade of Cuba still exists, notwithstanding the intent to restore diplomatic relations announced seven months ago. The 2015 challenges highlight the fact that travel, trade and credit restrictions are still in place, that Guantánamo is still illegally occupied by a U.S. naval base against the will of the Cuban people and their government and even in violation of the imperialist treaty imposed on Cuba, and that regime change programs are still fully funded through the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, Radio Martí, TV Martí and others.

Graduates and current students at

Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine participated in many meetings. In Albuquerque, N.M., Dr. Joanna Souers, recently returned from internationalist work in Liberia, explained the origins of the scholarship program that Cuba has offered to students from underserved communities in the U.S. Ten new students will begin their medical school studies this year. Twenty-three others will graduate in July.

In Santa Fe, N.M., Kathryn Hall-Trujillo, founding director of Birthing Project USA, showed statistically that for Black babies of any nationality, Cuba is the best place to be born for survival and development. Also participating was a member

of Cuba's National Assembly, Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega Suarez from Matanzas.

Many organizers of caravan stops embraced the call to organize local support actions during "End the Blockade of Cuba" days set for Washington, D.C. — Sept. 16 through 18, initiated by The International Committee's Campaign for a Just Policy toward Cuba, IFCO/Pastors for Peace and the Institute for Policy Studies. (TheInternationalCommittee.org)

In the U.S., some 77 percent of amputations due to diabetic foot ulcers could be avoided using a treatment developed in Cuba, but it is barred from U.S. residents by the blockade. Cuba's infant mortality is around four per 1,000 live births, while in Detroit and other oppressed communities in the U.S. it is three times that.

Cuba has shown that free education and universal preventive health care for all can be achieved, even in a poor and blockaded country. The resistance of the U.S. ruling class to normal relations has been because the right wing fears letting the people here know the truth about socialism, socialist ideas and solidarity.

To follow reports from the caravan and find out how to donate, go to IFCOnews.org, IFCO/Pastors for Peace on Facebook, CubaCaravan2015.org. □

LONDON

Transport workers shut down subway system

By Gene Clancy

On July 9, some 20,000 workers on the London Underground railway system, often called "the Tube," walked off the job, shutting down one of the largest transit systems in the world.

The Tube stretches for 250 miles under the streets of London and its environs, and carries 4 million passengers per day. All four unions representing the workers in the system voted in favor of the strike by a 90 percent margin. Participation in

the 24-hour walkout was nearly 100 percent. The Tube was completely shut down.

The dramatic impact of the strike has already led the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to say that he is reconsidering the date of implementation of the controversial "Night Tube" program, one of the main points of contention with the workers. (theguardian.com, July 9)

Despite other immediate issues, the underlying cause of the strike is the austerity program of the Conservative (Tory) government of Prime Minister David

Cameron. Like other countries in the European Union, it has pursued a harsh government policy of cutbacks and higher costs on the poor and working classes of Britain.

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers says: "Our action is in response to the impact of a 4.2 billion pounds cuts program imposed by the government and mayor of London." (mirror.co.uk, July 8)

The London Underground is administered by Transport for London (TfL), a semipublic authority supported mostly by fares but under the jurisdiction of the central government.

Immediately before the strike, the TfL threw down a "take it or leave it" offer to the unions. In addition to an inadequate pay proposal, it failed to address the serious disruptions of the new Night Tube program, scheduled to begin in September. The new schedules would lay off 850 workers, close all the ticket offices at

night, and lead to enormous disruptions in the schedules of night workers.

The cutbacks would not only endanger overall safety and convenience, but lessen the services available for disabled passengers. Because of past struggles, as this writer can personally attest, the London transportation system has a relatively high level of support for disabled people compared to most U.S. cities. These rights for the disabled are now under attack. □



Underground station during strike.

'Caminata de Justicia' por el agua

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bios de Oakland, Macomb y al condado de Wayne, que están fuera de Detroit.

El acuerdo para establecer la autoridad regional tiene una disposición para elevar las tasas por encima del 10 por ciento en los suburbios y otras ciudades. Hay resistencia a este plan, que incluye la petición para poner la venta del DWSD en referéndum en la boleta electoral. Un aumento de la tarifa fue rechazado por el Concejo de la Ciudad de Detroit el 30 de junio.

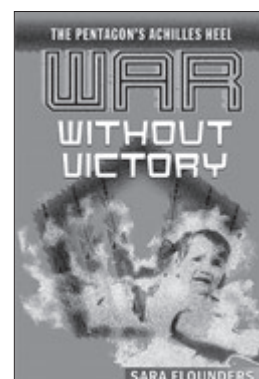
Dentro de los límites de la ciudad de Detroit está la ciudad de Highland Park. Al igual que Detroit, la población de Highland Park es mayormente afroamericana, la tasa de pobreza se sitúa cerca del 40 por ciento. Esa ciudad tenía su propia estación de bombeo de agua hasta 2012 cuando el alcalde la cerró para reparaciones temporales. Pero luego hizo que la ciudad se conectara al DWSD permanentemente, por lo que las/os residentes

de Highland Park tuvieron que pagar a Detroit por su agua.

Ahora, residentes y pequeños negocios que no fueron facturados por dos años, están siendo golpeados con cuentas de miles de dólares e incluso decenas de miles. El DWSD amenaza con cortar el servicio a todas/os en Highland Park porque dice que la ciudad debe a Detroit millones de dólares. ¡El Concejo Municipal de Highland Park votó a favor de aumentar las tarifas de agua un 138 por ciento en junio!

Flint, a 70 millas al norte de Detroit, históricamente obtenía su agua del altamente contaminado Río Flint. Esto ha causado erupciones en la piel, pérdida de cabello, trastornos autoinmunes y envenenamiento por plomo en las/os niños, junto con las tasas impagables.

Activistas de Flint, Highland Park y Detroit están unidas/os y decididos a llegar hasta el final, declarando que "El agua es un derecho humano". □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,

President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;

Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

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PentagonAchillesHeel.com



Recetas neoliberales para Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El gobernador de Puerto Rico Alejandro García Padilla, sorprendió cuando le declaró al pueblo en mensaje televisado, que la deuda pública de PR es “impagable” y que “no se trata de política. Se trata de matemáticas”. Aceptar de pronto lo que el movimiento independentista y progresista de las islas - Puerto Rico es un archipiélago - viene diciendo desde hace bastante tiempo, es desconcertante. ¿Cuál es el propósito?

Como mero administrador del gobierno colonial, García Padilla obedece, no a las necesidades del pueblo, sino a sus amos en Washington y Wall Street. Cuando dice que es impagable, no lo hace para proteger al pueblo, sino a los bonistas estadounidenses.

La enorme crisis de PR, enmarcada dentro de la crisis del capitalismo en callejón sin salida a nivel global y en particular con la de Estados Unidos, ha puesto en escena una compleja trama para tratar de cobrarle al pueblo puertorriqueño el más mínimo centavo por los bonos municipales vendidos por los sucesivos gobiernos para cumplir con el funcionamiento del país y mantener a flote sus agencias públicas.

La deuda, que ya ronda sobre los 72 mil millones de dólares, representa más de \$20.000 por persona en PR, más que el ingreso medio de \$19.518. (“Puerto Rico’s Fiscal Crisis is America’s Colonial Crisis”, por Angelo Falcon)

El dinero prestado al gobierno solo ha sido utilizado para pagar las deudas locales o los enormes intereses que de PR recaudan los bonistas. Aunque Moody’s y otras agencias han ido bajando progresivamente las calificaciones de estos bonos a estado “chatarra”, estos bonos han sido apetecidos por las grandes firmas de tenedores de bonos por ser libres de impuestos y tener el rendimiento más alto existente.

Aparte de los rendimientos, las tarifas cobradas por Wall Street son astronómicas. Un artículo de Forbes en 2013 titulado “How Wall Street Has Profited From Puerto Rico’s Misery” (“Cómo Wall Street se ha beneficiado de la miseria de PR”), reporta que “Las tarifas cobradas fueron mayores que las calculadas en



otros estados y ciudades con problemas financieros de EUA. De hecho, de acuerdo con Reuters, a los bancos como UBS, se les pagaron en promedio márgenes brutos de un 31 por ciento más alto que los márgenes cobrados a Detroit”.

El artículo concluye con lo que también se puede concluir ahora: “Para entender cómo Puerto Rico está en tales condiciones extremas, simplemente siga el dinero a Wall Street”. (Forbes.com)

Hoy, el gobierno de PR se encuentra en bancarrota y sin ningún crecimiento económico. A pesar de haber implantado medidas desesperadas para balancear el presupuesto desde incluso antes de la crisis económica del 2008. Medidas como la imposición de impuesto de ventas en 2006, los despidos de empleadas/os públicos en 2009, la reforma de pensiones en 2013, hasta el nuevo impuesto a la gasolina y el reciente IVU (impuesto de ventas y uso) entre otras. Nada ha mejorado la economía y el gobierno se encuentra sin posibilidades de continuar los pagos a la deuda.

Reporte Krueger, receta neoliberal del FMI

García Padilla no hacía sino preparar al pueblo para la imposición de desas-

tradas medidas neoliberales contenidas en el reporte Krueger. El reporte de 30 páginas recoge un estudio detallado de la economía de la colonia y sus prácticas por 10 años consecutivos realizado por Anne O. Krueger, Ranjit Teja y Andrew Wolfe, ex economistas nada menos que del Fondo Monetario Internacional.

Si bien el propósito de este estudio, titulado “Puerto Rico, un camino a seguir,” era el de buscar la forma de extraer más ganancias a la colonia, tuvo por necesidad que abordar la verdadera crisis del país: el colonialismo, aunque no lo verbalice así. Refleja la realidad colonial que no tiene la capacidad de poder resolver los problemas financieros con una política soberana.

Pero, ¿cuáles son esas recetas para sacar a PR del atolladero? El mismo informe resalta que son medidas difíciles que no tienen acogida popular, sobre todo de los sindicatos.

Algunas medidas de este plan de cinco años son: Eliminar el salario mínimo de \$7,25 la hora, el cual dice que es muy alto para PR y que se debe bajar hasta que la situación de PR se acerque a la del estado más pobre de EUA. Fin al bono de fin de año o de Navidad; reducción de vacaciones de 30 a 15 días; redefinir las horas

extras a partir de 40 horas semanales y no como se hace ahora, a partir de las ocho horas al día; “reducir requisitos onerosos para demostrar causa justificada en despidos”; reducción de maestras/os y consolidación – léase cierre - de escuelas; reducción de las asignaciones a la Universidad de Puerto Rico, etc.

Incluye además privatizaciones de agencias públicas como la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica, y otras agencias eficientes del gobierno que generan ingresos como el Fondo del Seguro del Estado.

Algo novedoso en la propuesta es el pedido al congreso de EUA que excluya a PR de la imposibilidad de someterse a la Ley de Quiebra y así poder “renegociar” la deuda; y la suspensión de la Ley Jones, o Ley de Cabotaje que hace que todo producto que llegue a la isla desde dondequiera que venga, sea trasladado en embarcaciones EUA con personal EUA, lo que encarece el producto en más del doble.

Una consecuencia de este informe es que involuntariamente, echa abajo algunas de las razones que quienes abogan por la estadidad utilizan para tratar de convencer que bajo la estadidad se estaría mejor y se tendrían más derechos. Cuando en el reporte se mencionan algunas de estas medidas, como por ejemplo, la reducción de vacaciones y de los requisitos para demostrar despidos injustificados, y redefinir las horas extras, argumenta que deben ser como los niveles en la “mainland” (EUA), donde se han perdido tantos derechos laborales.

En PR, a pesar de ser colonia, la lucha sindical ha logrado avances que se han perdido en la “mainland”. Otra comparación la hace con la educación, diciendo que hay que reducir el presupuesto de la UPR porque es muy barata y debe encararse como en EUA.

Resistencia es educación y lucha

Workers World-Mundo Obrero habló con Luis Pedraza Leduc, portavoz de la Coordinadora Sindical y Coordinador de PROSOL, el Programa de Solidaridad de la UTIER, Unión de Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego, quien asistió a la reunión convocada el pasado 29 de junio por el gobernador para que

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Comienza ‘Caminata de Justicia’ por el agua

Por Martha Grevatt
Detroit

La Caminata de Justicia por el Agua, una caminata de 70 millas en ocho días desde Detroit a Flint-Michigan, comenzó el 3 de julio con un encuentro en las orillas del río Detroit, el suministro principal de agua para millones en todo el sureste de Michigan.

El primer día de la caminata terminó justo al norte de Detroit en el bullicioso centro de Ferndale, donde la Brigada de Luz de Detroit expuso el mensaje: ¡“Agua limpia y económica ya!” El Consejo Popular de Aguas organizó la caminata para llamar la atención sobre la crisis del agua en el sureste de Michigan.

Decenas de miles de hogares de Detroit,

junto a todas/os los más de 10.000 residentes de Highland Park, se enfrentan al corte de su servicio de agua. Sin agua corriente en sus hogares, madres y padres están perdiendo la custodia de sus hijas/os. Existe otra crisis en Flint, donde el agua no es potable ni apta para lavar y bañarse.

Esta situación de emergencia era completamente prevenible.

Los culpables son los bancos, las empresas y el Estado capitalista. Como dijo Jerry Goldberg, representante de la Coalición ¡Moratoria AHORA! para Acabar con Ejecuciones Hipotecarias, Desahucios y Cierres de Servicios en el acto inicial, “Las tasas de terminación de los swaps de los intereses representan \$537 millones de los \$1100 millones prestados para la reparación y mantenimiento de la

infraestructura. Sin esta alza de ganancias para los bancos más ricos, el DWSD [Departamento de Aguas y Alcantarillado de Detroit] estaría en buenas condiciones financieras”.

El verano pasado, los cortes de agua en Detroit llamaron la atención mundial. Dos relatores de las Naciones Unidas vinieron aquí y publicaron un informe criticando al DWSD y a funcionarios de la ciudad de Detroit por privar a las/os ciudadanas del derecho al agua. El alcalde Mike Duggan, en lugar de tomar medidas para prevenir los cortes y restaurar el servicio, tachó la opinión de los relatores como mal informados.

Para mantener el servicio, las/os residentes firmaron planes de pago, pero los términos establecidos por el DWSD

imposibilitaron mantenerse al día con el pago. Ahora, la mayoría de quienes tienen planes de pago pueden perder el servicio, pues el corte ha comenzado para cualquier persona que adeude más de \$150 o lleve dos meses sin pagar.

Crisis se expande fuera de Detroit

Teniendo la calidad del agua entre las mejores de EUA, el DWSD proporciona agua para los condados de Wayne, Oakland e incluso comunidades tan lejanas como Flint. Parte del saqueo racista de los bienes de Detroit durante la quiebra municipal fue el plan para vender el DWSD a la Autoridad de Aguas de los Grandes Lagos, GLWA, un grupo regional, dándole un mayor control a los subur-

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