



PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 58, No. 16 April 28, 2016 \$1

Bosses attack union jobs Verizon workers fight back

By Kathy Durkin

They had tried hard to reach a fair contract for 10 months and were fed up. So, on April 13, nearly 40,000 Verizon workers went on strike in Washington, D.C., and nine East Coast states from Massachusetts to Virginia. It is the largest work stoppage in the U.S. since the two-week Verizon strike of 2011.

The Communication Workers and the International Electrical Workers, which represent the workers in Verizon's landline and broadband FiOS operations, called the strike. The AFL-CIO has endorsed it and its members, community leaders and other forces are joining rallies and picket lines and sending messages of solidarity. Youthful supporters of presidential candidate Bernie Sanders are backing the strike.

The strike can spark an even wider struggle at a time when many sectors of the multinational working class are in motion, especially low-paid and oppressed workers like those in the "Fight for \$15" campaign and at workers' centers, fast food and big box stores.

A lot is at stake for the workers. At its core, it's job security: preserving good union jobs with livable wages and decent benefits, won by organized workers through hard-fought struggles. In the last decade, Verizon has cut its labor force by 40 percent. Workers hired after 2003 don't have job security and now the company aims to eliminate the "no layoff" clause for workers hired before then.

Verizon aims to tear up the union contract and wrench disastrous concessions from the workers that would drive down their standard of living. Despite record profits of \$39 billion over the last three years, executives seek to cut labor costs by transferring more health care costs to workers and retirees, reducing disability benefits and freezing pensions. Executives won't discuss improving wages and working conditions. Instead, they would reduce overtime protections and make workers toil seven days consecutively.

The company plans to outsource work to low-wage nonunion contractors. Having already sent 5,000 customer service jobs overseas, Verizon seeks to offshore more jobs, exploiting those in the global workforce by paying extremely low wages.

CWA, IBEW say no job transfers!

Verizon plans to close and consolidate call centers, compelling workers to travel long distances daily or be laid off. In a major contract violation, the company aims to relocate workers up to 80 miles away from their current worksites for two months at a time, with no warning or

Continued on page 6



BOSTON Team Solidarity school bus drivers with striking Verizon workers in Boston.

WWW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM



Boston low-wage workers fight for \$15.

PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN



Banner drop in Grand Central Station.

WWW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

• **NO MORE LIES! Protests hit Trump, Clinton** 3

• **African Americans and elections** 4



**EARTH DAY:
 Rising sea levels,
 U.S. and China** 9

• **Editorial: Too big to fail?** 10

**BRAZIL • OBAMA AND CUBA • PENTAGON IN ASIA
 DONBASS • EU, TURKEY & MIGRANTS • IRELAND** 8-11

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Moorehead-Lilly '16

Abolish Capitalism - Black Lives Matter - Fight for Socialism @wwp2016

WORKERS WORLD PARTY.ORG

Monica Moorehead, Candidate for President Lamont Lilly, Candidate for Vice-President
John Parker, Candidate for Senate, California

Workers World Party's 2016 Presidential Election Campaign released the following statement on April 14:

Solidarity with Verizon strikers! WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED!

We stand in full solidarity with the Verizon strike by CWA and IBEW members begun April 13 — the biggest U.S. labor strike in over four years. We also are in this fight for the long haul and will be walking the picket line alongside our union friends for contract justice now! The outrageous company program of layoffs, cutbacks, outsourcing, forced relocation, attacks on injured workers must be stopped in its tracks.

Today, CWA and IBEW workers can win as they build unity across job classifications, nationalities, abilities, sexualities and genders. All Verizon workers — landline and wireless—have the same enemy — Verizon — with its lust for billions in profits, but no love for the people who create Verizon's wealth. And all employed and unemployed workers, in or out of unions, have more in common with striking workers than with corporation heads!

Telecommunications workers know the way to win is by building alliances with communities they serve. CWA President Shelton recognized this in a Black History Month message, saying: "We must end structural racism ... Structural racism has filled our jails, yet we have not prosecuted the biggest criminals of our time — the big banks, the one percent and Wall Street barons who destroyed our economy, and more recently the city officials of Flint, Michigan, responsible for the devastating water crisis." In fact, prisoner-workers are now super-exploited as call-handlers, forced to perform tasks that once were

good-paying jobs for union members.

Working-class and oppressed people are rising up everywhere! The upsurge encompasses both the dynamic Black Lives Matter movement as well as a growing number of strikes like the recent massive Chicago teachers' strikes, last year's oil strike, the Kohler UAW strike, Wisconsin's "Day Without Latinos/as" and "fight for \$15 and a union" low-wage worker actions. As in the Verizon strike, women and workers of color are playing leading roles in all these struggles. Together we are part of a global working-class fight back. We will be victorious if we refuse to be divided.

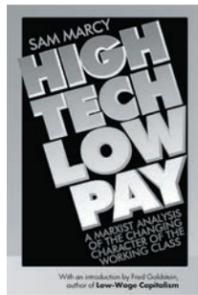
Organized workers can beat back telephone company greed! In the 1970s, NYC telephone operators fought AT&T (Verizon's grandparent) and won affirmative action — access to training for higher-paying skilled jobs, pregnancy disability benefits and Spanish-speaking information services for callers. WWP women members and friends were worker-operators leading those campaigns — and WWP had their back. The union learned the most disenfranchised workers are often the fiercest fighters and belong in the leadership of Labor.

A victory for CWA and IBEW will help everyone fighting for jobs with decent wages, benefits and conditions—and for a decent life free of bigotry and racist violence. For a complete victory we must get rid of the capitalist system of wage-slavery that always puts profits before people.

SOLIDARITY with the rising of the Verizon workers! CONTRACT JUSTICE NOW!

Monica Moorehead, Candidate for President Lamont Lilly, Candidate for Vice-President

John Parker, Candidate for Senate, Calif. We encourage you to learn more about our campaign at WorkersWorldParty.org.



HIGH TECH, LOW PAY A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class
This prophetic book, written in 1986, shows why high technology under capitalism is NOT a path to the "middle class." Instead, what could benefit everyone leads to lower wages and layoffs for the workers. Marcy, a long-time organizer, discusses various forms of fightback.
Available at online major booksellers

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we're fighting for

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

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 58 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

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this week

★ In the U.S.

- Bosses attack union jobs: Verizon workers fight back 1
- Thousands trash Trump's bigoted message..... 3
- Protesters disrupt Clinton spectacle in Baltimore 3
- 'Trump = hate + greed' says upstate NY 3
- Campaigns ignore issues facing African Americans' 4
- Philadelphia Day of Rage held despite arrests 4
- Michigan prisoners continue fight for decent food..... 5
- Palestinian Prisoners' Day: demand divestment..... 5
- A turn towards fighting unionism 5
- Verizon strikers garner solidarity 6
- On the picket line 6
- Low-wage workers strike for \$15 and a union 7
- Victory for public sector unions, for now..... 7

★ Around the world

- Brazil: Behind the impeachment of Rousseff 8
- Obama and the Cuban economy Part 2 8
- China, U.S. and global warming:
What can be done about rising sea levels? 9
- Pentagon revs up war machine in Asia 9
- U.S. hidden war continues in Donbass 10
- EU-Turkey deal puts migrants at risk 11
- Ireland 1916: Rebellion! 11

★ WWP presidential campaign

- Solidarity with Verizon strikers 2

★ Editorial

- Too big to fail? 10

★ Noticias en Español

- Ministro Villegas, ¿el paramilitarismo sí existe! 12
- Reflexiones sobre el juicio político de Dilma Rousseff. 12

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Thousands trash Trump's bigoted message

By WW New York Bureau

Thousands of people, including large contingents of striking Fight for \$15 workers, took to the streets here against racism on April 14.

Protesters stormed the \$1,000-a-plate Republican fundraiser at the Grand Hyatt with disruptions, banner drops and marches throughout the Grand Central complex adjoining the posh hotel, while outside thousands protested the billionaire candidate's bigoted message. It was Donald Trump's only major New York campaign appearance so far in 2016.

That morning, hundreds in Brooklyn demanded justice for Akai Gurley against the prosecution's outrageous no-jail-time recommendation for former New York Police Department member Peter Liang, Gurley's killer. Sentencing was postponed until April 19. Protests to demand that officer Liang and the NYPD be held accountable will continue on that date.

The huge turnout and fighting street tactics made it clear that, even with the Democratic debate scheduled later that

night in Brooklyn, people were not waiting for the presidential candidates to stop the systemic racism embodied by the Trump phenomenon and police killings.

Instead, the rallying cry was "Shut it down!" The diversity of tactics, along with the unity of message, was organized by the Shut Down Trump NYC Coalition, initiated by the International Action Center. The coalition included the People's Power Assembly; Shut It Down NYC; ICE-FREE NYC; Millions March; Pakistan-USA Freedom Forum; Queer Detainee Empowerment Project; Showing Up for Racial Justice; Workers World Party; South-Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship, & Training; Bangladesh American Community Council; May 1 Coalition; We Will Not Be Silent; Answer; Stay WoQ; Black & Pink NYC; Bend the Arc; Global Revolution Media; and Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Famous 42nd Street was packed with anti-Trump demonstrators along a three-block stretch, from Madison Avenue to Lexington Avenue. The Grand Hyatt, where GOP donors were dining, and

Grand Central Station resounded with chants against racism. The rally of thousands in front of the Hyatt included representatives from groups marching from Times Square and groups organizing direct actions.

Solidarity with many forms of resistance

The day was well organized into permitted Green zones and direct action Red zones. There was active solidarity against racist violence and vicious bigotry that has targeted Muslims, immigrants, women and LGBTQ people. There was powerful unity among the thousands of participants engaged in many forms of resistance.

The status of the GOP fundraiser as a private event gave it no protection from multiple disruptions. Before the event started, 10 protesters stormed the hotel mezzanine with a banner that read "NYC rejects the Party of Hate."

Another group of protesters orchestrated a successful banner drop from a tenth-floor window. Underneath, in Grand Central station, protesters with the People's Power Assembly dropped a banner reading "Shut Down Fascism in NYC — Black Lives Matter." They were whisked away by Apple Store security, part of the coordination among the NYPD, Secret Service and many local agencies.

That banner led one of the biggest marches through the station — one of many that crisscrossed the cavernous Grand Central complex. There was also a constant presence at the station's central clock by activists from We Will Not Be Silent, who held up signs that read "Racism Is Deadly," "Shut it Down" and "Silence Is Not an Option."

Outside, the crowd more than doubled when Fight for \$15 workers marched five blocks from their huge rally at 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue. The New



PHOTO: ALAN ROTH

Grand Central Station, NY, April 14.

York rally was part of a nationwide strike by fast food workers in 300 cities.

In addition to showing solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement by protesting for Akai Gurley that morning in Brooklyn, the fast food workers devoted their one-day national strike to Jeffrey Pendleton, a Burger King worker who died in police custody in New Hampshire after he couldn't afford to put up \$100 bail in March.

Akai Gurley's aunt, Hortencia Petersen, addressed Trump and the crowd outside the hotel, saying, "How are you going to make America great again? Is it by buildings? Is it by discriminating against women? White supremacy is not acceptable in New York City."

The fundraiser featured Trump as well as Republican candidates Ted Cruz and John Kasich — all three well known for their anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-woman policies. The NYPD treated protesters of those policies as the criminals. At least 31 were arrested.

A good number were brutalized by the police as well. Among them were Charina Nadura and Juan Carlos Dávila, journalists with the independent radio show Democracy Now! While filming the NYPD beating and arresting people attempting to enter the hotel, Nadura and Dávila were themselves attacked and arrested. They were released after five hours. Others were held until at least 2 p.m. the next day. □

'Trump = hate + greed' Upstate NY speaks truth to power

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, N.Y.

Right-wing presidential candidate and billionaire Donald Trump brought his strategy of hate-and-divide to central and upstate New York. Protesters, however, pushed back at every appearance.

In Rochester on April 10, hundreds lined the approach to Trump's rally with signs like "Trump = Hate + Greed," while young anarchists disrupted inside.

In Albany, Trump's April 11 rally saw around a dozen protesters ejected, with one slugged in the face by a Trump supporter. Shouting protesters stayed in the street for hours after the rally's end.

Two young African-American women, both high school seniors, were ejected from the April 12 rally at an ex-military base in Rome for objecting to racist remarks by Trump supporters.

Syracuse mounted the stiffest resistance to Trump on April 16, in a broad coalition called by Central New Yorkers United for Diversity and Against Hate. Groups backing and organizing the call included Service Employees Union 1199, Black Lives Matter-Syracuse, Palestine Solidarity Collective, Syracuse Peace Council, Veterans for Peace and Workers' Center of Central New York.

Outside the convention site where Trump spoke, 400 people chanted, sang, drummed and gave speeches nonstop for more than four hours. A group of students from Syracuse University and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, some of them affiliated with Black Lives Matter, marched "down the hill" to join the rally. Rainbow flags waved for LGBTQ equality, pink placards supported Planned Parenthood, and three young women in hijabs held a banner against Islamophobia and white supremacy. The Malvinas, a local feminist "riot grrrl" band, kept the crowd energized with punk rock liberation lyrics.

Chants included "White supremacy's got to go" and "No thugs, no KKK, no fascist U.S.A."



PHOTO: RAY TRUDELL

Inside the convention center, a core group of activists waited three hours for Trump to appear so they could mount a major disruption. This writer was a member of that group. As Trump began to speak, several other individuals shouted "Trump is a liar!" or waved small banners with "No Trump" symbols and were ejected.

Resisting hate to the end

Outrage mounted in our group as Trump delivered his standard stump speech — the epitome of a capitalist crime. He began by lying about how many people were in attendance; the hall was actually only two-thirds full. He mendaciously promised jobs, while viciously dividing workers with racist slogans against African-American people, immigrants, Mexico and China.

He pushed the development of drones in the Syracuse area by a complex of university-military-industrial corporations.

Such robotics for war and profit offer nothing but more misery for the people of the world and for Syracuse. That city is the U.S. metropolitan area with the highest level of concentrated poverty for Black and Latino/a people. ("Architecture of Segregation," tinyurl.com/j2u6tep)

Finally, our group unfurled its smuggled banner, "No RACISM," and raised our voices chanting, "The people united will never be defeated!" We were 11 people in ages ranging from early 20s to almost 70, including several veterans, two mothers and at least one lesbian. Our group included people who were African American,

Continued on page 5

BALTIMORE

Protesters disrupt Clinton spectacle

By Carl Lewis
Baltimore

Activists from the People's Power Assembly, the anti-police brutality movement and Workers World Party unfurled banners exposing Hillary Clinton's reactionary policies just as she attempted to begin her speech at an April 10 event here.

The protesters were able to unfurl three banners reading, "Clinton, you are the super predator," "Clinton, what about mass incarceration?" and "Clinton = rich warmonger."

The event was held at the City Garage, a venue founded by venture capital from both the city's coffers and private enterprise. It's located close enough to the trendy Inner Harbor, but not too far from Baltimore's blighted neighborhoods. The rally attracted Clinton supporters from the suburbs, along with interlopers now living in downtown gentrified Baltimore. There were also both Black and white workers, mostly staffers, among the unionists who came from the Service Employees Union, American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association, which officially support Clinton.

A couple of the demonstrators' action teams were able to get into good positions to protest, including seats close to the stage to make sure the protest would be noticed.

The atmosphere was that of an entertainment extravaganza, complete with loud music and large video images of Clinton that connected her with mass mobilizations at progressive events, whether or not she had been at them. None of those shown were anti-war demonstrations.

State and national politicians came out to harangue the audience with histrionic platitudes of Clinton's glorious contributions to the "middle-class," protecting them from Wall Street. The speakers, mostly local Democratic Party politicians, constantly reminded the crowd of the Republican threat to the "middle-class" and claimed that only Clinton could save the day.

When the candidate came to the stage, protesters unfurled their banners, which she obviously noticed, directing her surprised gaze at them. The protest group was immediately confronted by police and security. However, its members were able to hold their banners high and chant on the way out: "Clinton is a war criminal," "Clinton murders Palestinians," "Clinton calls Blacks 'predators'" and "Clinton, rich warmonger."

Programs harmful to the U.S. working class executed in the 1990s — the North American Free Trade Agreement, ending welfare under the cover of "reform," the 1994 crime bill that led to mass incar-

Continued on page 11

Campaigns largely ignore issues facing African Americans

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

Democratic Party candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are both making appeals to win over African-American voters during the final two months of the primary and caucus elections.

Nonetheless, very few specific issues are being addressed during the course of the debates, particularly the New York contest in mid-April. Some of the essential concerns of African Americans requiring attention include:

- The need for jobs and income, considering the continuing astronomical jobless rate and impoverishment among the masses.
- Housing and land, where over the last century African Americans have lost 13 million acres of farmland, largely in the South, and during the previous decade millions have been displaced from their homes due to the foreclosure and eviction crisis and the systematic pushing out of others from core urban areas.
- Education prospects are far dimmer than in the 1960s and 1970s with the abolition of affirmative action, the privatization of schools, the closing of school buildings, mass layoffs of teach-

ers, and cutbacks in academic and extracurricular programs.

- Health care issues persist despite the Affordable Care Act as infant mortality rates remain very high in the cities, as well as the proliferation of treatable diseases requiring prohibitively expensive treatments, and the lack of accessible, affordable clinics and hospitals.
- Communications outlets where the corporate media utilize their influence to systematically demoralize and demobilize the people in an effort to halt movements aimed at social change and revolutionary transformation.

Housing and the cities

African-American communities across the United States have not recovered from the impact of the Great Recession of 2007-08. In the area of housing, the economic crisis has devastated large sections of major urban areas such as Detroit, Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles.

Predatory lending schemes initiated by the banks drained the limited household wealth of African-American working families. This phenomenon, coupled with the loss of jobs and other economic opportunities, forced millions to relocate to suburban areas and other states.

Some of the same financial interests

involved in the massive fraud involving home ownership later moved into buying up rental properties, in part prompting the escalation of rents and fueling the demand for housing in cities and suburbs. Many of the traditional neighborhoods of African Americans and other working-class people have been cleared for “gentrification,” in which community residents are no longer able to afford to live in those areas.

Aggravating the housing crisis even further is the mass incarceration of African Americans and Latinos/as, where existing laws make them ineligible for low – and moderate-income housing in restructured metropolitan areas. There has been discussion about drafting new rules that would make it more difficult for private and public landlords to systematically discriminate against those with criminal justice records.

Such a revised set of guidelines from the Department of Housing and Urban Development could solve problems for those being denied rental properties by prohibiting landlords and real estate agencies from refusing service to those seeking housing only because they have been convicted by the courts.

This initiative, announced April 4 by HUD, suggests that any refusal to rent or sell to people with criminal records is inherently discriminatory due to the fact that the nationally oppressed – African Americans and Latinos/as specifically – are disproportionately profiled, arrested, convicted and imprisoned. (nbcnews.com, April 5)

Jobs and Income

During the last year of his life, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and a leading proponent of civil rights, human rights and peace in the U.S., advocated for the enactment of legislation to provide jobs to everyone able to work and to set standards for a guaranteed annual income. Such an approach would alleviate poverty and create much-needed employment in the public sector.

To implement such a policy would require a major redistribution of wealth from the ruling class to the working masses, jobless and farmers. Also needed would be slashing the Pentagon and Homeland Security budgets, which are largely designed to oppress the peoples of Africa, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific and dominate over the formerly socialist states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Organizations based in oppressed nations inside the U.S. should demand in exchange for their electoral support a well-defined economic program for full employment and a minimum yearly income. A plan for the reconstruction of the cities and the rural areas historically inhabited by African Americans should be the focus of a development program based on the rehabilitation and building of new housing and livable communities.

Based on the historical legacy of enslavement, legalized segregation and modern-day underdevelopment and super-exploitation of African-American labor, the banks, corporations, federal and state governments must be compelled to provide funding for these projects. Existing public policies that facilitate the forced removal of oppressed and poor people from prime districts in urban areas must be immediately halted.

In cities like Detroit, the infant mortality rate far exceeds that in countries in

the so-called developing world. Socialist Cuba, despite enduring a U.S.-imposed economic blockade for over five decades, has a far superior health care system for its people than the U.S., which is considered the leading economic power internationally.

Education and health care

The health care status of oppressed communities impacts educational achievements. The lack of prenatal care and exposure to high levels of lead and harmful metals and chemicals can have a detrimental effect on children’s psychological and physical well-being.

Public schools in many urban areas and suburbs are currently under siege, with school buildings in extreme disrepair and subject to closings. Students are taught in overcrowded classrooms by educators whose salaries and benefits are being reduced. Public funds allocated for student education are in many cases channeled to private corporations and their agents within the school system, leaving the bare minimum for student learning.

Under the guise of a “business model” of governance being forced on public schools and municipalities, working people are being denied the bourgeois democratic right to elect members of their school boards and make decisions about how educational curriculums and programs are to be implemented.

Mass communications and political mobilization

Perhaps one of the most critical methods used to maintain the class dominance of the wealthy is the way in which the corporate media reinforce the status quo. Oppressed and working people are blamed for their own social plight, while the rich are portrayed as having some inherent right to govern, absent any semblance of democratic practice and accountability.

During the course of the debates in both the Republican and Democratic parties, these important issues affecting African Americans and other oppressed and working people are never addressed in a substantive manner. Clinton and Sanders are spending considerable time attempting to win the support of the workers and the oppressed, and Sanders is now seen by many as an opponent of Wall Street. Yet it is not clear what programs they are committed to carry out if elected, especially with regard to the acute needs of African Americans.

Both Donald Trump and Ted Cruz make no pretense of soliciting African-American voters. The battle among the Republicans is to fashion a far right-wing, even neofascist agenda without being labelled as such.

However, all the major challenges gripping African-American communities around the country have been brought to the fore through demonstrations and other forms of self-mobilization and – organization aimed at building mass support for the eradication of racism and economic exploitation.

The call for a \$15 minimum wage, the movement against police violence, the struggles against school privatization and for quality housing are largely centered in the streets, workplaces and educational institutions. Irrespective of who is elected president in November, the opposition to bourgeois class rule will continue to be a focal point for the majority of the people in the U.S. □

Day of Rage held despite arrests

Philadelphia

Despite heavy-handed police repression against three leading organizers, members of the Philadelphia Coalition for R.E.A.L. (Racial, Economic And Legal) Justice and several hundred supporters marched through the city’s central business district on April 14, locking down traffic at rush hour.

Dubbed the “Day of Rage,” the protest demanded Black community control of police, reparations, an end to the racist police practice of “stop and frisk,” and the removal of Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney from office after he reneged on his campaign promise to end stop and frisk.

The marchers were joined en route by contingents from “Stadium Stompers,” who demanded an end to Temple University’s gentrification of North Philadelphia, and “Fight for \$15” organizers, who tied the issues of gentrification and poverty wages to racist police violence.

In a blatant attempt to suppress the protest, Philly cops arrested three prominent REAL Justice organizers several hours before it began. In an early morning action, protesters had been demonstrating outside the FOX TV news studio to call attention to the network’s racist bias when one activist was struck by a moving car. The driver of the car, who appeared to be white, was allowed by police to leave the scene almost immediately without being charged, while three Black protesters, including the one who had just been hit, were promptly arrested. No serious injuries were reported. Police held the protesters in custody for approximately 28 hours despite only minor charges being filed against just one of the three.

News of the politically motivated ar-



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

rests spread quickly among members of the REAL Justice Coalition, who released a statement promising that there would be “no peace in Philadelphia until these comrades are released.”

The coalition also announced that, rather than cancelling the Day of Rage march, it would instead bring the march directly to the police station where the three were being held. At 6 p.m., marchers from the participating organizations descended on the Ninth Police District headquarters, occupying the street outside. Police formed a wall in front of the station, outnumbering the protesters as many as three-to-one at times.

Despite near-freezing temperatures, the protesters continued to hold the street for the rest of the night, dividing into rotating five-hour shifts until the political prisoners were finally released the next day.

The Philly Police Department’s shameless attempt to break the movement by arresting three leaders failed, as the coalition’s militant response shows that power is in the people, and not in individual leaders.

— **Matty Starrdust**

MICHIGAN

Prisoners continue fight for decent food

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

April 18 — For three weeks, food protests in three Michigan prisons have been over 95 percent successful. The latest took place in Cotton Correctional Facility, about 85 miles west of Detroit. On April 12, the facility's Level II security prisoners stayed in their cells during lunch and dinner, with only a few dozen turning up for meals.

Michigan prisoners staged their first meal boycotts on March 20-21 at the Kinross prison in the state's Upper Peninsula. The second protests occurred March 26-28 at the Chippewa facility near Kinross. In both prisons, only a handful of inmates reported for meals in protest over the quality of the food and meager portion size. Chippewa prisoners also used the act of skipping meals to draw attention to malfunctioning toilets and other issues.

A turn towards fighting unionism

By Martha Grevatt
Chicago

For decades now, going back to the Cold War era when most left-wing leaders were purged from the U.S. labor movement, unions have practiced what is called "business unionism." Workers have tended to view their unions as a service provider: they pay their dues every month and the leadership "delivers the goods," i.e., better wages and benefits, pensions, grievance handling and so forth. Dues are likened to attorneys' fees.

In the past, union leaders could make good on their promises by not rocking the boat, not striking and thus not interrupting the flow of profits. Words like "jointness" and "partnership" defined the cooperation between labor and capital. Many rank-and-file workers grew apathetic about their unions.

This trend has eroded the "social" or "old-school unionism" identified with the militant class battles of the 1930s, when sit-down strikes and other struggles forced hitherto intransigent bosses to recognize unions and union density grew to over 35 percent countrywide.

Now, union members make up only 12 percent of all workers, with the percentage in the private sector even smaller. In the 1930s, unions were engaged with the broader social movements of their time, from the case of the Scottsboro Nine to the fight for jobs to standing with Spanish anti-fascists. Today, many unions limit themselves to the economic concerns of their own members and, even on that front, are quick to sell concessionary contracts as "the best we're going to get without a strike."

There are many signs, however, that this negative trend is being reversed. One sign was the record participation in the recent Labor Notes conference in Chicago. This biennial conference, sponsored by a monthly paper of the same name, is an opportunity for militant union activists who are looking to make a break with business unionism to network. Well over 2,000 people attended from around the country, of all nationalities and occupations, including many young low-wage workers. There were over 100 international guests.

The target of all three protests was food provider Trinity, which took over the contract from Aramark. Aramark moved into Michigan's prisons in 2013, when prison food operations were privatized and 370 union workers got the axe. Aramark's contract was terminated early over complaints that food was rotten, maggot infested and in contact with rodents.

The Michigan Department of Corrections then chose another scandal-ridden company. "Like its predecessor in Michigan, Trinity underfed inmates in Georgia to the point that one person resorted to eating toothpaste and a second man trembled in a cell from hunger," wrote criminal justice journalist Carimah Townes. "Lingering concerns among Michigan prisoners have to do with the privatization of prison food services nationwide. Companies like Trinity and Aramark, which are concerned with their bottom lines, are unwilling to shell out money for enough food and to maintain fully staffed, clean kitchen."

The conference hosted over 125 workshops. Those on Latin America, Asia, Palestine, allying with Black Lives Matter, fighting LGBTQ oppression, young workers and "What is socialism" were well attended. Autoworkers, transit workers, health care workers, teachers and other workforce sectors had lively discussions.

Leaders of Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers, rocked the house when they told other transit workers of their victory against Veolia/Transdev.

Autoworkers raised almost \$700 for their superexploited counterparts in Colombia and Brazil who have been unjustly fired. In a moving display of solidarity, the Brazilian autoworkers present gave their half of the collection to support the organization of injured General Motors workers who have been fired in Colombia.

Many at the conference sported shirts and buttons supporting Bernie Sanders. While Sanders' brand of socialism does not go beyond capitalist reforms, the fact that many unions are bucking the Democratic Party establishment and backing a self-proclaimed socialist is another sign that a section of the labor movement is looking to return to its radical roots. There were many militant young workers at the conference wanting to learn more about socialism, beyond what Sanders is talking about.

Workers looking to revive labor's fighting tradition have wonderful models to study. The Boston School Bus Drivers union has not only beat Veolia/Transdev, but in the midst of the fight of their lives the membership engaged in solidarity actions and passed resolutions to support the oil strike, locked-out steelworkers, the LGBTQ community, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Rev. Edward Pinkney, Verizon workers and others.

Another important workers' organization is the Southern Workers Assembly, which is bringing together union and worker activists throughout the U.S. South on an anti-capitalist and anti-racist basis to unionize this exploited region of the country.

A good theme for the emerging movement towards social unionism is "If you don't have a union, fight to organize one. If you have a union, fight to make it fight." □

ens." (Think Progress, April 14)

This is the backdrop to courageous protests that have made authorities nervous. "It's definitely something the facilities took seriously," said DOC spokesman Chris Gautz. "It is unusual in a high school or a prison, because there are different groups or cliques that form, to have everybody on the same page. It takes some coordination." (detroitcbslocal.com, March 31)

Authorities tried to pin the food protests at Chippewa on a prisoner sent there from Kinross, after being accused of assaulting one of the few men who did not support the food action there. Inmates

transferred for disciplinary reasons are sent to Chippewa.

Michigan has a number of prisons in the Upper Peninsula that are hundreds of miles from the families of most African-American prisoners. Michigan political prisoner the Rev. Edward Pinkney has been unable to obtain a transfer out of Marquette prison, which is over 500 miles from his spouse's home in Benton Harbor. When Rev. Pinkney received a recent copy of this newspaper, a previous article on the Kinross protest had been clipped out by prison authorities. But no amount of censorship can stem the nationwide tide of prisoner resistance. □

On Palestinian Prisoners' Day Activists demand divestment, protest Clinton

By Joe Catron
New York

Several dozen activists, including large numbers of students, rallied in Brooklyn's Cadman Plaza Park on April 17 to mark the 42nd annual Palestinian Prisoners' Day and launch the second Prison Divestment National Week of Action. They then marched to Hillary Clinton's nearby campaign headquarters, where they joined a larger protest against the Democratic presidential candidate's pro-war political record.

Palestinian Prisoners' Day commemorates the 1974 release of Mahmoud Baker Hijazi, the first Palestinian prisoner freed by Israel in a prisoner exchange with resistance groups, and shows solidarity with 7,000 current detainees, including 700 "administrative detainees," 438 children and six elected members of the Palestinian parliament. The "detainees" are imprisoned without even going through Israeli military trials, known for their 99.74 percent conviction rate against Palestinian defendants.

Marches, rallies and strikes have marked the day throughout the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1948 and 1967, while growing numbers of Palestinian and solidarity groups elsewhere hold protests and educational events.

This year, the day coincided with a nationwide mobilization against Real Estate Investment Trust tax breaks used by the Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO Group to avoid property taxes on their private prisons.

This de facto subsidy, critics charge,



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

not only increases the profitability of private imprisonment but also allows prison companies to pour donations into the campaigns of politicians whose policies of criminalization benefit them.

Speakers in Cadman Plaza included representatives of Cop Watch, HDK New York, the International Action Center, Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, Students for Justice in Palestine, Students Without Borders and Queens Neighborhoods United. Many of the speakers connected domestic struggles against mass incarceration and police repression, as well as liberation movements in Kurdistan and elsewhere, with the Palestinian prisoners' movement and the fight for a free Palestine.

Following a march, with chants of "Smash the settler Zionist state!" and "Hillary, Obama: You will feel the Intifada!" the group joined 100 picketers from the Committee Opposed to Hillary Clinton's Interventionism outside the Clinton headquarters.

Chants and speakers criticized Clinton's record of intervention, from Haiti and Honduras to Ukraine, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Palestine.

Catron is a member of Al-Awda New York: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

Upstate NY speaks truth to power

Continued from page 3

East Asian, Latina, pro-Palestinian Jewish and anti-racist white. Among us were a health-care worker, a low-wage worker, a public school teacher, a retiree, a professional football player, students, immigrants and a disability rights activist. The group included members of Black Lives Matter, Palestine Solidarity Collective, Workers Center of New York, the Answer Coalition, Workers World Party and more.

Bringing the power of all our movements into action with us, we battled against the screaming audience and eventually were shoved by Trump security guards onto the street, our banner

jerked from our hands, but our voices still raised for justice and liberation.

We were met with jubilation from those at the outside rally and joined them in resistance until the demonstration ended. Protesters stayed until Trump's hate-painted campaign 16-wheeler drove away, not a single Trump supporter was left and only our signs remained on the barricades.

Buffalo activists are protesting Trump on April 18, followed by "Building an Antifascist Movement" on April 19, a forum sponsored by the Buffalo International Action Center.

Video footage of the Syracuse protest is posted on facebook.com/minniebruce.pratt

Verizon strikers garner solidarity

By Workers World Staff

On April 13, 40,000 Verizon wireline workers, represented by the Communications Workers (CWA) and International Electrical Workers (IBEW), went out on strike against the company and its anti-union demands for cutbacks and concessions while it banks \$1.5 billion per month in profits. Here are reports from some picket lines in Virginia and Boston.

VIRGINIA: 'United is how we roll!'

Members of CWA Local 2204, on the picket lines throughout Virginia, are standing strong against Verizon's greed.

Beginning with rallies in over a dozen locations at 6 a.m. on the first day of the strike, CWA members from around the state — Arlington to Roanoke to Wise — came out to picket. The rallies looked like a sea of red T-shirts and strike signs.

"This strike is very important, not only for Verizon workers but all workers," said Deb Casey, Norton Area Vice President, CWA Local 2204. "Verizon is a prime example of what is wrong in America and what is killing our economy. They are making \$1.5 billion profit a month off the backs of their employees but want to freeze pensions, force retirees and workers to pay more for health care, outsource jobs, close call centers and transfer workers away from home and families for months at a time."

Picketers have been out from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day. Strikers have been joined daily by a variety of labor and community supporters. In Roanoke, members of 15 Now Roanoke, Roanoke Education Association, Citizens' Convention, Food and Commercial Workers, firefighters, postal workers and bus drivers' unions are among those picketing and providing other support.

A statement on CWA Local 2204's Facebook page on April 17 read in part:

"As we enter Day 6 of this strike against the corporate greed at Verizon, we are humbled and thankful for the support we continue to receive at all of our picket lines. The kind gestures of food, coffee, water, honks and standing the line with us bolster our spirits and strengthen our resolve.

"The biggest of these gestures is the public stopping at our sites to ask exactly what we are fighting for because they want to hear directly from us. They are



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

with us because they understand Verizon's corporate greed and they know our fight is their fight.

"As upper management visited some of our picket lines yesterday they got a clear message that we want a fair contract that addresses our concerns. We continue to see the support of our fellow sisters and brothers from the labor movement who also understand our fight is their fight. They come to our picket lines and walk with us and offer their heartfelt support as Union family standing alongside us in our cause. We have entire families walking our picket lines together because they know we are all part of the CWA Local 2204 family. United in Solidarity Is How We Roll!!!"

BOSTON: 'No union can go it alone'

"Our message is resonating, that's for sure. Our members are strong."

That was the conclusion reached by Myles Calvey, business agent for IBEW Local 2222, five days into the strike against Verizon. Calvey, who represents thousands of telecommunications workers in Greater Boston, explained the strike issues in great detail in an hour-long interview with WMBR radio on April 17.

Local 2222 members, along with all 40,000 striking Verizon workers, are angry about the company's outrageous concessionary demands. They have seen the anti-union attitudes of the company intensify since the last Verizon strike in 2011. For the current management, including CEO Lowell McAdams, "The

union has now become the poison within the company," reported Calvey. "Every bad thing that happens, it is the union that caused it." Union members are fighting for their jobs because Verizon wants "to converge on jobs. They want to cut, cut more jobs. We are just asking them to maintain jobs."

Militant pickets have been seen all over the Boston area. Many union members have come out to show solidarity with the strikers, including firefighters, nurses and Teamsters. The Teamsters union sent all United Parcel Service drivers a text message instructing them not to cross picket lines. Honks of solidarity have been non-stop. Local 2222 is asking for community support, with the understanding that in 2016 no union can go it alone without support from the communities they serve.

Local 2222 has been joined on the lines every day by members of Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union. By joining the picket lines the drivers are expressing their heartfelt solidarity, love and gratitude. During Local 8751's bitter, 26-month fight to win reinstatement of four fired union leaders, as well as contract justice, Local 2222 turned over part of its union hall to Team Solidarity, the Voice of the United School Bus Workers — rent free. Nor has it been forgotten that leaders of Local 8751 were arrested while on the picket line supporting phone strikers in 1989.

"I wish all unions would be here to show solidarity and shut the city down," said Local 8751 President Andre Francois. □

On the pic

Calif. "temp" warehouse workers strike again

Warehouse workers at the Port of Los Angeles went on strike April 6 for the third time in seven months to protest the company's ongoing violation of U.S. labor laws under the National Labor Relations Act. Over 200 workers employed through "temp" staffing agency AMR/SSI at California Cartage, the major warehouse for Amazon, Lowe's and Kmart/Sears, were told April 4 their jobs were ending April 30. They countered by demanding the firm make them direct employees.

Working with the Warehouse Workers Resource Center, the workers' concerns about health, safety and hostile working conditions were summarized in a 2014 class action lawsuit citing violations of Los Angeles' living wage law. In November, they got the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue citations against the company. "The retaliation we are experiencing has been ongoing," said longtime worker Victor Gonzales, adding, "but our fight will go on, past May 1, until we win." (warehouseworkers.org, April 6)

Threat of CSU strike leads to fair contract

When 26,000 faculty members in the 23-campus California State University system organized to strike in mid-April for higher pay in a three-year contract, administrators at CSU blinked. This came after an independent report in late March supported the California Faculty Association's demand for a 5 percent raise in 2014-15, countering the administration's offer of 2 percent. The 5 percent increase takes effect June 30, followed by a 2 percent increase for 2015-16 on July 1. So salaries for tenured-track faculty, lecturers with temporary contracts, librarians, counselors and coaches will increase

Verizon workers fight back

Continued from page 1

right to refuse, disregarding seniority and family ties.

Verizon's goal is to establish a traveling workforce of technicians who can be sent anywhere, anytime, to build FiOS networks and then move on to the next worksite. This is a key issue for the workers; their unions strongly repudiate job transfers. Moreover, dispersing workers dilutes their collective strength.

Verizon workers are angry that the company has stalled on its pledge to build the FiOS network, while discarding workers who install it. The corporation has violated cable franchise "build-out" agreements to set up FiOS throughout New York City and Philadelphia. This has left millions of people, particularly in low-income, African-American and immigrant communities, without access. It has neglected FiOS installations in several states while obstructing repairs of the older, copper network, leaving many customers with poor service.

The CWA says the company refuses to negotiate a fair first contract with better wages and benefits for Verizon Wireless retail workers — even though they formed a union in 2014. These employees bring in high profits, says Verizon — but are among the lowest paid workers at the company.

This is class war

On the strike's second day, the CWA reported that in two separate incidents, three Local 2108 picketers in Maryland had been hit by cars driven by a Verizon attorney and a company manager.

Verizon has threatened to transfer technicians from Massachusetts to Virginia for 60 days if a contract is not ratified by May 20. Moreover, the company is being so intransigent that executives have ignored the unions' offer of \$200 million in concessions.

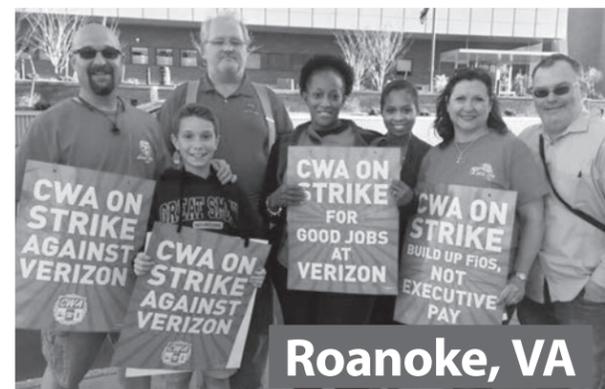
CWA and IBEW organizers met with Verizon representatives on April 15 to discuss the contract covering workers in six states and Washington, D.C. Showing their contempt for the workers, the executives

refused to negotiate, demanded even more concessions from the workers and walked out after 30 minutes.

The federal government is looking to intervene before the strike grows and solidarity broadens. However, mediation after the 2011 strike resulted in a contract unsatisfactory to many workers. Verizon is eager for such intervention again, but the unions have repudiated it, saying that mediation "is a distraction to the real problem: Verizon's corporate greed. CWA and IBEW bargaining teams have been ready, able and willing to bargain. Where's Verizon?" (CWA, April 12)

Workers' labor: source of Verizon's wealth

In its drive for even greater profits, Verizon is squeezing the very workforce whose labor has created the corporation's wealth and enabled its top five executives to receive "compensation" of \$233 million over the last five years. The workers' labor has created, produced and upgraded all the technology at Verizon.



Roanoke, VA

The capitalist economic crisis continues. The bitter competition for profits between corporations at home and abroad is intensifying. In this cutthroat global scenario, bosses scheme to do whatever they can to drive down labor costs. The ruling class is in a war against unions, aiming for a nonunion, low-paid workforce without company-subsidized medical or pension benefits. This "race to the bottom" is a threat to the entire working class.

The Verizon strikers are fighting for their jobs — and in the long run for the rights of all workers to have good jobs with livable wages, benefits and a union. It's time for all unions and other progressive organizations to join their picket lines and show solidarity. □

cket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

7 percent this summer. During 2016-17, teaching staff will receive a 3.5 percent increase, with about half the staff receiving an additional 2.7 percent tied to years of service. The only concession was changing the requirement for vesting in the pension plan from five to 10 years.

“What the CSU faculty have done is historic. We avoided the largest strike in U.S. higher education ever,” said CFA President Jennifer Eagan, referring to CSU’s 460,000 student body. (AP, April 8)

Coal miners march to save jobs, pensions

Some 5,000 active and retired coal miners marched through the streets of Waynesburg, Pa., on April 1 to safeguard their jobs and pensions threatened when five coal companies filed for bankruptcy in 2015. When a company files for bankruptcy, it can petition the court for relief from paying pensions as part of its debt restructuring. This allows firms to back out of collective bargaining agreements, laying off workers and stealing pay they have already earned.

Coal miners, organized by the Mine Workers (UMWA), were bused in from neighboring states to demonstrate the power of organized labor and show solidarity. Mine Workers’ spokesperson Phil Smith said, “Our message is companies can file papers and judges can make decisions, but we’re the ones that make the decision whether to work under an agreement.” (powersource.post-gazette.com, April 1)

An important precedent was set in 2015 when Patriot Coal tried to nullify its collective bargaining contract through bankruptcy. The UMWA threatened to strike, forcing the company to negotiate a new contract with pensions mostly intact. (wvmetronews.com, June 3, 2015)

April 12 Is Equal Pay Day

Equal Pay Day, April 12, marks the extra 103 days the average woman needs to work to earn as much as a white man during the past year. Though women are half the workforce and earn more college degrees than men, the typical full-time, year-round white woman worker only earns 79 cents to a white male worker’s \$1. But women of color and mothers earn even less: Black women earn only 60 cents and Latinas only 55 cents, respectively, while mothers earn only 73 cents compared to fathers. The National Committee on Pay Equity notes that over the course of their working life, women stand to lose at least \$250,000 because of such wage theft, which profoundly affects the quality of life of working families.

Every year women’s, organized labor and legal groups demand an end to this blatant discrimination and outright greed by capitalist companies. Even though the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, employers have not complied, so other bills have been passed, or are pending, to end this inequality. The Economic Policy Institute’s 12-point agenda focuses on the needs of low – and medium-wage women workers (most are women of color) to end this obvious form of ruling-class criminality. □

Low-wage workers strike for \$15 and a union

By Benji Pyles

On Thursday, April 14, workers in Atlanta, Boston, New York, Los Angeles and more than 300 other cities across the U.S. — as well as in 40 other countries, including south Korea, the Philippines, Chile, Panama, Pakistan and Brazil — walked off their jobs and/or joined marches and protests in what organizers said was the largest protest by low-wage workers in history.

Some 60,000 workers took part in the U.S. “Fight for \$15” demonstrations, according to organizers. They called for the right to collectively bargain and a minimum wage of \$15 an hour, more than twice the current U.S. federal minimum of \$7.25 and many times higher than in most countries. Many of the international actions were directed at McDonald’s. McDonald’s CEO Steve Easterbrook raked in \$7.91 million last year — more than tripling the \$1.67 million he “earned” the previous year.

California and New York have both recently passed legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 through a “phase-in” period over several years. Undoubtedly, this is to give the capitalists the time to seek ways to increase their superprofits made from the exploitation of colonized and oppressed nations, so that the wage increases for their workers do not come out of their own pockets. This is why real internationalists must also raise the demand of a global minimum wage or basic minimum income!

New England

Low-wage workers at Boston’s Logan International Airport, home care and child care workers, adjunct professors, religious leaders, immigrant and housing advocates, legislators and the Black Lives Matter movement joined with striking fast food workers for a rally at the Massachusetts State House organized by the #wageactioncoalition, the Service Employees Union and other unions. They marched through downtown Boston to McCormick & Schmick’s and McDonald’s



Massachusetts State House rally for \$15 and justice for Jeffrey Pendleton.

to build solidarity with workers there struggling against poverty wages and poor working conditions.

Bills are pending in Massachusetts to raise wages to \$15 an

hour for about 1,500 service employees at Logan Airport and over 200,000 workers at fast food and “big box” retail chain outlets across the state.

A rally also addressed the struggle for justice for Jeffrey Pendleton, a Black 26-year-old homeless man who had worked for a Burger King in Nashua, N.H. He participated in a fast food worker strike and was active in the Fight for \$15 movement. After Nashua police arrested him on a minor offense, he was sent to the notorious Valley St. Jail in Manchester, N.H., not far from Donald Trump’s campaign headquarters. Pendleton was too poor to afford the \$100 bail that would have set him free.

Pendleton had been harassed by police because he was homeless and had won money settlements from both Hudson, N.H., and Nashua police departments last year, with support from the ACLU, although much of the settlement money went to paying lawyer fees.

Shortly after his imprisonment, Pendleton was mysteriously “found dead” in his jail cell on March 13. The circum-

stances resembled those of the internationally known case of Sandra Bland, a Black woman active in the struggle against police brutality who was “found hung” in a Texas police cell three days after being arrested for failing to signal when changing lanes.

Chicago, Los Angeles

Over 1,000 low-wage workers descended on Chicago’s “Magnificent Mile” on the evening of April 14 after having spent most of the day on the North Side near the Loyola University campus, an action which included a shutdown of an entrance to Lake Shore Drive. They began a second set of marches under heavy police presence in one of the wealthiest areas of Chicago — outside Park Tower, where Ken Griffin, CEO of Citadel LLC and Illinois’ wealthiest person, keeps a penthouse apartment. Citadel has owned and traded millions in McDonald’s stock over the years, raking in huge profits. The workers stopped briefly at a Bank of America office to chant, “Banks got bailed out! We got sold out!” The financial giant controls more than \$2 billion worth of shares in the fast food chain. (chicagoist.com)

In Los Angeles, protesters held aloft large balloons and marched behind a banner that read, “McJobs hurt us all.” In New York, thousands rallied in Times Square and later protested outside a Republican gala featuring the party’s three candidates for the 2016 presidential race.

Howard Rotman contributed the New England portion of this report.

Victory for public sector unions, for now

By Jeremy Baumann

Late in March, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in the long-awaited Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association case. The 4-4 ruling comes as a victory for all oppressed peoples and workers. It followed the sudden death of the racist, sexist and anti-worker Justice Antonin Scalia in February.

The Friedrichs case affects public sector unions that carry out collective bargaining. This decision allows them to continue to receive fair-share fees from nonmembers in exchange for services/benefits; it simply means they have the right to represent their own members.

The case was initially filed in 2013 and made it all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court, which heard oral arguments in January when Scalia still had a seat. A decision in favor of the anti-union plaintiffs

would have overturned the court’s 1977 decision in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education, which allowed unions in states where the public sector collectively bargains to receive from nonunion members fees that are equivalent to members’ dues, since all workers in a fair-share shop receive contractual benefits through union representation.

Fair share fees and collective bargaining still at stake

While this decision is definitely worth celebrating, unions and their supporters should still be on guard. According to NEAToday.org, “Dozens of similar cases are currently working their way through the federal court system, although none will end up on the court’s docket until its next term at the earliest — or not at all, depending greatly on who is sitting on the court.” (Feb. 19)

Workers have been up against union-busting legislation in many states in recent months. Scab bills such as “Right-to-Work” (for less) go hand-in-glove with the recently proposed, right-wing initiatives against LGBTQ people, from Michigan to North Carolina to Mississippi, as well as the racist so-called voter ID laws that have been recently implemented in several other states.

The reactionary and bigoted “Center for Individual Rights,” which has represented the plaintiffs in the Friedrichs case from the very beginning, also announced it is circulating a petition urging the Supreme Court to rehear the case. While it is not likely the CIR will be successful in its request to the highest bourgeois court, it is a reminder that the struggle to save public sector unions is ongoing.

Our class can only win through community-labor unity and fightback! □

BRAZIL

Behind the impeachment of Rousseff

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Late on the night of April 17, the lower chamber of the Brazilian Congress, the House, announced the results of voting for an impeachment process against Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. After approximately six hours of voting, there were 367 “Yes” votes versus 137 “No” votes, with 7 abstentions — more than the two-thirds needed to impeach.

This means the process will continue in the upper house, the Senate, in a few weeks. There a simple majority will decide whether to continue the process, which will decide the future of Rousseff’s presidency. While the case against her is discussed in the Senate, President Rousseff must be removed from her position. Vice President Michel Temer will assume the presidency during that process.

Rousseff could appeal to the Supreme Court. Yet, since that court rejected consideration of impeachment before, it is doubtful it would rule on her behalf.

Circus atmosphere

The long voting process in the House was reminiscent of a circus or a sporting event. Every legislator had 10 seconds to make a statement after casting his or her vote aloud, and they did. The entire event was covered live and could be watched on several websites. Like winning actors on Oscar night, the majority mentioned their relatives, their loved ones, their cities, their country or god as the reason for their vote. Those voting “Yes” made no mention of the legitimacy of the impeachment.

Applause and shouts were heard. Confrontation was even fired from a toy gun after a “Yes” vote, while silence followed “No” votes. It definitely appeared to be an anti-Rousseff gladiator circus.

Behind the spectacle, a more disturbing action was taking place: the absolute illegitimacy of the impeachment. Even Secretary General Luis Almagro, of the Organization of American States, itself far from a progressive organization, wrote in a statement: “Our Organization has made a detailed analysis of the impeachment process against Dilma, and has concluded that it does not fit within the rules that govern this process.”

“There is no criminal accusation against the president; rather she has been accused of the poor administration of public resources in 2014. This is an accusation that is political in character, and that does not merit an impeachment process.” (OAS.org)

Worst yet, Vice President Temer, of the conservative Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) and instigator of the impeachment against Rousseff, together with Congress President Eduardo Cunha, has himself been implicated in the corruption scandal known as Lava Jato.

The president of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, a right-wing Evangelical politician who opened the impeachment process, is under investigation by the Supreme Court for corruption and money laundering. Cunha is accused of receiving \$5 million in bribes from a construction company related to Petrobras, the semi-public Brazilian pe-

troleum company.

Many other legislators as well are subject to investigation. In the eyes of many of the Brazilian people, the credibility of the Parliament is zero.

Severe crisis

The government and the country itself are in the midst of a severe political, economic and social crisis.

The impeachment has been followed closely not only by the country’s residents, but by the global market as well. A Bloomberg article on April 17 reported, “Investors have piled into Brazilian assets this year on speculation Rousseff’s ouster will allow a new government to push through measures aimed at pulling Latin America’s biggest economy out of its worst recession in a century and tackling an exploding budget deficit. But the severity of the problems means her likely successor — Vice President Michel Temer — will have little margin for error.”

Some of the Rousseff administration’s policies have affected the population negatively. These include neoliberal measures of privatization and cutbacks. The Workers Party (PT), Rousseff and ex-President Lula da Silva’s party, has weakened its ties with the masses even during Lula’s administration.

The economy, however, was in much better health during Lula’s government and although he made compromises with Brazil’s wealthy capitalist class, his administration was able to implement programs that uplifted the living standard of millions of people who lived in abject poverty.

While there is still support for the PT among workers and poor people, it is not sufficient to counter the right-wing attack.

In an interview with the Argentinian virtual magazine Página 12, João Pedro Stédile, the coordinator of the Landless Movement (MST), said: “A government of Michel Temer and his party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, represents the agenda of the elites. What is at stake is the return to neoliberalism. They need to overthrow Dilma to make this neoliberal restoration: that is the key element of this class struggle that has intensified.”

“The vote on the impeachment is essential because it evidences the interests of the dominant classes and their decision to dump on the working classes the negative consequences of the world economic crisis.” (tinyurl.com/hgd6bty)

This impeachment process might bring a resurgence of the left in a progressive movement. This would include both forces aligned with Rousseff, Lula and the PT, and those who remain critical but who oppose the right wing. Their goal would be the construction of a truly democratic proposal for the country, one that has the people in the center and not the financiers and corporations.

That such a movement might have support was shown in protests against the impeachment in many cities and in the plaza outside the Congress in the days leading to the lower chamber vote.

As Stédile said in the same interview, “There must be a reorganization [of the people] to create a great mass movement that’s able to propose new alternatives.” □

Obama and the Cuban economy

Understanding what wasn’t said

PART 2

This is the second part of an article by Agustín Lage Dávila, director of the Center of Molecular Immunology in Cuba since 1991 and a member of the Cuban National Assembly of the Popular Power (Parliament) since 1993, published in CubaDebate on April 7. Lage met with the U.S. delegation visiting Cuba. Part 2 discusses differences between the Cuban and U.S. points of view. The complete article is available at tinyurl.com/hxcvjb3.

We disagree on the role that this non-state sector should have in our economy:

- They [the U.S.] see it as the main component of the economy; we see it as a complement to its main component, the socialist state enterprise. As a matter of fact, today the non-state sector, although providing nearly 30 percent of jobs, contributes less than 12 percent of the country’s GDP [gross domestic product], an indication of its limitations in terms of value added.
- They pose [the non-state sector] as equivalent to “innovation”; we see it as a sector with relatively low value added. Innovation is found in high tech and science and their links with the socialist state enterprise. Cubans’ innovative spirit has been expressed over these past few years in many other ways, such as the development of biotechnology, its medicines and vaccines; massive training in new information technologies at the University of Informatics Sciences; urban agriculture; the energy revolution; and many other achievements during the Special Period [of profound economic crisis], none of which were

mentioned in our visitors’ speeches.

- They see private initiative as “empowering the people”; we see it as “empowering one part” of the people, and a relatively small part. The people’s role as protagonists is found in the state enterprises, and in our large publicly funded sector (including health, education, sports and public safety), where the real work is done for all the people and where most of the wealth is created. We can’t accept the implicit message that the non-state sector is equivalent to “the Cuban people.” This wasn’t stated so brutally, but is quite clearly inferred from the discourse.
- They tacitly separate the concept of “initiative” from state ownership. We see in the state sector our main opportunities for productive initiatives. That’s how I explained it in the Business Forum, using the example of the Molecular Immunology Center where I work, which I described as “a company with 11 million stockholders.” [Cuba’s population — WW]
- They see the non-state sector as a source of social development; we see it as a double-edged sword, also a source of social inequalities (of which we already see evidence in such things as the recent debates on food prices), inequalities that will have to be controlled by fiscal policies that reflect our values.
- They believe in the driving force of competition (although this concept has been questioned even by serious ideologues of capitalist economies). We are familiar with its rapacious nature,

eroding social cohesion, and we believe more in the dynamic, the driving force, that emerges from programs that consider the whole nation.

- They believe that the market efficiently distributes investments in response to demand; we believe the market doesn’t respond to real demand, but rather to “demand by those with money in their pockets,” and deepens social inequalities.
- They base their case on the history of corporate development in the United States, a country whose economy took off in the 19th century, under global economic conditions unrepeatable today. We know that underdeveloped nations with dependent economies face different realities, especially in the 21st century; they won’t develop their economies, or their science and technology, based on small private, competitive initiatives, or by trying to reproduce the path of today’s industrialized countries 300 years later. That would be a recipe for perpetuating underdevelopment and dependence, with an economy designed as an appendage and complement to the U.S. economy, something which Cubans already saw in the 19th century when such dependence submerged us in a single-crop economy and closed the door to industrialization. Understanding this comes from looking at history, and thus, history is something we can’t forget.

Taking the road to civilized coexistence “with our differences” means the whole Cuban people need to arrive at a deep understanding of those differences,

to keep specific and apparently rational decisions on tactical economic questions from leading to strategic errors, and worse still, allowing others to push us toward such errors, by virtue of what is said and what is left unsaid.

We knew how to avoid such errors at the beginning of the Special Period, when the European socialist camp disappeared and the world was awash in the neoliberal ideology of the nineties. We will know how to do this even better now.

‘Battling in the field of ideas’

Civilized coexistence certainly distances us from the risk and barbarity of war (both military and economic), but it doesn’t exonerate us from battling in the field of ideas.

We need to win this battle of ideas in order to win the economic battle.

Cuba’s 21st-century economic battle will be fought on three main fronts:

1. The socialist state enterprise’s efficiency and growth capacity, as well as its insertion in the global economy.
2. The link between science and the economy, through high-tech companies, with products and services of high value added, that expand our export portfolio.
3. Conscious limitation on the extension of social inequalities, through action by the socialist state.

On these fronts the Cubans’ 21st century will be decided.

The battle of ideas consists of consolidating our thinking and consensus about

Continued on the next page

China, U.S. and global warming

What can be done about rising sea levels?

By Deirdre Griswold

It has been more than a third of a century since climate scientists in both the United States and Britain began to publish papers showing that accumulating greenhouse gases in the atmosphere were raising temperatures around the world. (“Climate Impact of Increasing Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide,” James E. Hansen et al., *Science*, 1981; “Variations of Surface Air Temperatures. Part I: Northern Hemisphere, 1881-1980,” P.D. Jones et al., *Monthly Weather Review*, 1982)

Today, this view is universally accepted in the scientific community. The disastrous impact of global warming has been documented and made evident in more destructive storms, the melting of the polar icecaps and glaciers, heat waves and desertification.

where we want to go and, in concrete terms, how to get there.

The Florida Straits’ waters shouldn’t be the scenario for war, and it’s very good for everyone that this be so. But for a long time, those waters will continue to separate two different conceptions of how human beings should live together, of the way people organize themselves to work and live in society, and of the distribution of the fruits of their labor. And it’s also very good that this be so. Our ideal for human society is rooted in our historical experience and in the collective soul of Cubans, brilliantly synthesized in José Martí’s thinking. He studied and understood U.S. society better than anyone of his time, and said: “Our life has no resemblance to it, nor should it at too many points.”

Capitalism’s essential belief, even among those who sincerely think so, is that material prosperity is constructed on the basis of private property and competition. Ours is that creativity is motivated by ideals of social equity and solidarity among people, including future generations. Our concept of society represents the future ... even if the future takes some time in coming, conditioned objectively by the present. It still represents the future for which we have to struggle.

Private property and competition represent the past, and although this past still necessarily exists within the present, it continues to be the past.

You always have to see the concepts behind the words spoken, and the reasons why other words are left unspoken.

The battle for our ideal of how human beings should live together will be in the hands of today’s generations of young Cubans, who in their time will confront challenges different from the ones faced by 20th-century revolutionaries, but all the same great, transcendental and also more complex.

Analyzing these challenges’ complexities, I have to confess I’d like to enlist once again in the Union of Communist Youth, whose membership card (No. 7784 of 1963) sits on the desk in front of me. I’m still a communist, but I’ve had to accept that I’m no longer “young.” Yet what I can do is share with young people an analysis of what is being said today and what has been left unsaid, and together with them construct the intellectual tools we need for the battles ahead.

José Martí wrote in April 1895: “The biggest war unleashed against us will be in the realm of ideas: so we will win it with ideas.” □

Many attempts have been made to reach binding agreements to slow down and ultimately reverse this warming trend. The first was the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, which was signed by the Clinton administration in 1998 but never submitted to Congress. Former President George W. Bush in March 2001 rejected the protocol, leaving the accord dead in the water.

Last year came the Paris Accords, which President Barack Obama has endorsed but has also not submitted to Congress, which would likely shoot them down.

Now comes a projection by a group of climate scientists, led by Hansen, saying that a continued rise in temperatures will lead to a collapse in polar ice sheets and a subsequent rise in global sea levels that would put major coastal cities of the world under water by the end of this century. (“Ice Melt, Sea Level Rise and Superstorms,” Hansen et al., *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*, March 22)

At this moment the U.S. is fighting several wars in West Asia and parts of Africa where oil — a major source of greenhouse gas — is the ultimate prize. Its closest allies in the area, in addition to other imperialist NATO countries and Israel, are Saudi Arabia, Egypt and U.S.-imposed regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. These costly wars for oil have taken a terrible toll on the peoples of the region — and also on the environment.

U.S. governments — both Democratic and Republican — claim to be part of the worldwide push to cut CO2 emissions and save the planet, yet have done very little. The current election campaign carries this forward. The Republican candidates, of course, have nothing useful to say about the looming dangers, if they



even address the question. The Clinton camp wants to sound pro-environmental but has no concrete proposals.

The Sanders campaign says the most about environmental issues. To be implemented, its solutions would require a massive, revolutionary restructuring of the U.S. economy. The “political revolution” Bernie Sanders talks about would require a social revolution — meaning the workers and oppressed taking over the means of production — to accomplish this.

China planning for greener world

Does that mean there’s no hope? No, climate change CAN be reversed. It is possible.

Take, for example, this report by NBC News on March 31 entitled “China Unveils Proposal for \$50 Trillion Global Electricity Network”:

“China has unveiled a proposal for a \$50 trillion global electricity network that would help fight pollution and the effects of climate change.

“The plan envisions linking existing and future solar farms, wind turbines and electricity plants in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas, according to the head of State Grid Corporation of China. The proposal is in its initial stages and would require huge investment from around the world. If it goes ahead, it would be the world’s largest infrastruc-

ture project. It could be operational by 2050, according to backers. ...

“The State Grid Corporation of China envisions a future ‘global village’ of efficient transmission lines to tap and distribute electricity from giant solar farms around the equator and wind stations in the Arctic, according to its website. [State Grid President] Liu [Zhenya] estimated that the global network could mean clean energy comprising 80 percent of global consumption, displacing fossil fuels as Earth’s principal energy source.

“China’s government invests more than any other country in wind and solar energy. Energy transmission technology ‘has matured and clean energy is becoming more economical, so the conditions for building global power interconnection already exist,’ Liu said in a statement on the company’s website.”

Sanders’ energy program calls for making clean energy 80 percent of all energy consumed by 2050 in the U.S. If Sanders is serious about tackling global warming, then his camp should welcome this proposal by the government-owned State Grid Corporation of China, which has a plan to make that happen on a global scale. But Sanders’ program regarding China is extremely negative, blaming China, not U.S. capitalist billionaires, for job losses in the U.S., while criticizing China’s “military buildup” and “human rights” record. (See Sanders’ website on China; tinyurl.com/jpnnrsc)

It is possible to turn back global warming. China has come up with a concrete plan; it has the resources and the will to spearhead such an effort. But other countries need to unite with China for that to happen. Can anything less than a real revolution make the United States join the rest of the world in saving the planet? □

Pentagon revs up war machine in Asia

By Chris Fry

The U.S. has begun to implement its Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), recently signed with the Philippines, by building up its forces in the island country for military intervention directed at all of East Asia and the Pacific.

The following quote from U.S. Army Sergeant Riley contained in the “Lodge Committee Report Summary: Secretary Root’s Record of ‘Marked Severities in Philippine Warfare,’” based on the committee’s 1902 hearings on U.S. war crimes, shows what increased U.S. military presence in the island country has really meant:

“Arriving at Igaras at daylight, we found everything peaceful; but it shortly developed that we were really ‘treading on a volcano.’ The Presidente (or chief), the priest, and another leading man were assembled, and put on the rack of inquiry. The presidente evaded some questions, and was soon bound and given the ‘water cure.’ This was done by throwing him on his back beneath a tank of water and running a stream into his mouth, a man kneading his stomach meanwhile to prevent his drowning. The ordeal proved a tongue-loosener, and the crafty old fellow soon begged for mercy and made full confession. ... The presidente was asked for more information, and had to take a second dose of ‘water cure’ before he would divulge.” (tinyurl.com/zosgbk8)

This form of horrendous torture, today called “waterboarding,” may be treated in the media as a departure from otherwise “humane” methods of warfare used by the U.S. military. But this exposure of the ugly truth came out more than 110 years ago, after the U.S. Army seized the Philippines from Spain. There, the U.S. carried out a ruthless “scorched earth” campaign to suppress an independence struggle led by Emilio Aguinaldo.

That U.S. war in the Philippines cost as many as 220,000 Filipino casualties, according to U.S. records; some reports say many more. It was part of the opening salvo by U.S. imperialism in its overall strategy to dominate the entire Pacific basin. It is a strategy that has also cost millions of lives in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia. And it is a strategy that remains in full force today.

On April 14, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that the Pentagon is sending troops and weapons on “regular rotations” to the Philippines and that the U.S. and the Philippine military will conduct “joint patrols” in the South China Sea. The Pentagon has also been holding joint maneuvers with the Japanese military. (reuters.com, April 14)

The Pentagon’s “initial contingent” of military aircraft in the Philippines will include five A-10C Thunderbolt II ground attack aircraft, three HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters and a MC-130H special operations aircraft. Some 200 U.S.

airmen will service the aircraft through the end of the month, Carter said. In addition, 75 U.S. Marines will be stationed permanently in the Philippines to support “increased operations in the region.”

The U.S. military kept large naval and air bases in the Philippines after taking the country back from Japanese imperialism toward the end of World War II. A massive struggle by the Filipino people forced the U.S. to close all its huge military bases in 1991. Washington has now pressured the Philippine government to reverse that hard-won policy.

Washington argues it will use these joint patrols and permanent stationing of U.S. troops to defend Philippine sovereignty, as opposed to China’s presence in waters and islands near the Philippines. While it is true that Washington’s military maneuvers target China as well as north Korea, its goals have nothing to do with Philippine sovereignty.

These joint maneuvers have sparked opposition by progressive Filipino organizations. On April 4, hundreds of people demonstrated against them in front of the U.S. Embassy in Manila. Inside the U.S., the organization Bayan-USA organized phone calls opposing the EDCA, starting in January. Its suggested script pointed out that “The EDCA violates Philippine sovereignty, and will result in the return of U.S. military bases, devastation of the environment, and more violence against Filipino people, including women and children.” □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Too big to fail?

“Too big to fail.” How often have we heard that recently? The Federal Reserve Board says that five U.S. banks are too big to fail: JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Bank of New York Mellon and State Street. Not all are household names, but they’re big, all right. Together, they have almost \$9 trillion in assets.

Where did all that wealth come from? After all, it’s just paper, or gold bars, or electronic numbers, that wouldn’t be worth anything if there weren’t hundreds of millions of workers all over the globe creating the products and services that money can buy.

Yet somehow these banks can claim it’s theirs. And they’re scared silly that a lot of it could evaporate. The products that can be bought with the money can’t evaporate. But they can sit a long time in warehouses if people can’t afford them. And the people who provide services can’t evaporate. But they can be out of a job.

How could this happen? If a financial crisis leads to gridlock in the economy. It happened in 2008-2009 and it could happen again. And if it did, these banks and a lot of other capitalist entities “too big to fail” would turn to the U.S. government to bail them out — again.

That’s what the politicians in Washington and the financiers on Wall Street are worrying about right now. It took trillions of dollars last time to get the capitalist economy working again — and it hasn’t worked very well, except for the billionaires. Not here, not in the rest of the capitalist world either. Unemployment remains high, especially among the oppressed and young people. Wages are still low.

As we’ve written before, capitalism in this high-tech, globalized era is at a dead end. To function, it needs to expand. To expand, it needs cus-

tomers. But production that is more and more robotized and high-tech doesn’t need many workers. In fact, for the workers this has been an era of layoffs and low wages, not the transition from working class to “middle class.” So who’s going to buy everything? Capitalism is facing a dead end, with nowhere to go.

All kinds of artificial means have been tried to pump up the economy. Mainly this has meant amassing huge amounts of debt in the hope this will give the system the needed jolt. Instead, it has become an albatross around their necks. The bigger the debt, the harder the fall.

The obvious failings of capitalism are fueling two political movements in the U.S. The far-right, who are behind Trump for now but are likely to swing behind Cruz, want to increase repression in the face of looming disaster. The more liberal, and even left, movement is looking to Sanders to take on Wall Street, at least to regulate the big banks. Nothing like the Sanders movement has happened in this country for a long, long time, and shows the severity of the crisis that already exists.

Come a financial crisis, what will happen? Would any U.S. president, conservative or liberal, resist the pressure to keep the big banks from going under, which would require feeding them more trillions of the people’s hard-earned dollars?

Regulation of the banks is not enough. It’s a bandaid on a gaping wound. What is really needed is for a government run by the people to seize the banks and the corporations and use the wealth they have stolen from the workers to rebuild our cities, the infrastructure, and the environment that has been so destroyed by the for-profit system. For that we need to look beyond the elections and build a revolutionary movement against capitalism and for socialism. □

Tax refund? Invest in Workers World!

Where do your federal taxes go? Largely to pay for the U.S. war machine, which gobbles up over half the national budget. You don’t want to, but your money helps the superrich launch military adventures to control the global economy. Big Oil and Fortune 500 companies like General Electric reap the benefits, but they don’t even pay taxes year after year. Your taxes also subsidize billion-dollar-merchandisers like Walmart and McDonald’s, whose workers get paid so little they’re forced to rely on government services to keep their families alive.

Sick of a blank check for the Pentagon while food stamp cuts send kids to bed hungry? You can do something about it.

Revolutionary socialism is the only alternative to this rigged system that rewards the rich and oppresses poor and working people, especially Black

and Brown youth. Fighting for socialism is the only way to really unseat the racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ bosses, bankers and brass. That revolutionary fight is what drives Workers World.

If you appreciate our powerful Marxist analysis and coverage that exposes the 1% while asserting the needs of the 99%, it’s time to invest your tax return in Workers World. Join the WW Supporter Program, which was set up 39 years ago to help us publish anti-war, anti-racist, working-class truth and build the many campaigns needed to crush capitalism and usher in socialism.

We invite you — sign up today! Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. And thanks for helping to grow the revolutionary media in the U.S. □

U.S. hidden war continues in Donbass

By Greg Butterfield

Ukrainian Army and paramilitary battalions on the night of April 17-18 attacked the northern and western outskirts of the capital city of Donetsk, the towns of Dokuchayevsk and Sakhanka in Zaytsevo, and other locations in the Donetsk People’s Republic. All the attacks violated the Minsk Accords ceasefire agreed to by Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France in February 2015.

A Zaytsevo village official reported that several houses were also damaged as the Kiev regime’s forces shelled the area with dozens of 82mm and 120mm rounds, along with tank shells, grenade launchers, large-caliber machine guns and small arms fire. (DONi News, April 18)

Similar attacks on the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics happen nightly and casualties are frequent. The Western-backed regime consistently violates the ceasefire, with incidents steadily growing since January.

The U.S. corporate media hide the injuries, deaths and destruction of homes, schools and hospitals, for which Washington and its masters on Wall Street are ultimately responsible.

The Donetsk Ministry of Defense reported that during the week of April 9-15, Ukrainian forces violated the ceasefire 283 times, firing 2,197 shells, including using 1,402 heavy weapons explicitly forbidden from the area under the Minsk ceasefire. Four civilians were wounded, including a 74-year-old resident of Zaytsevo. Four soldiers of the Donetsk people’s militia were killed. (DAN News, April 15)

Meanwhile, in neighboring Lugansk, four people’s militia were killed and eight wounded in Ukrainian attacks on a single day, April 15. (Lugansk Commentary)

Donetsk Defense Ministry Vice-Commander Eduard Basurin noted that international observers repeatedly confirm violations by Kiev of its obligations regarding withdrawal of heavy weapons. The Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe documented and published a list of the Ukrainian side’s violations of the Minsk Agreements on April 14.

Basurin charged the OSCE mission with covering for the Kiev war criminals, who, he said, “continue a policy of genocide against their own people for the sake of their Western masters and with the connivance of the international community.” (DONi News, April 15)

Washington behind two years of war

Ukraine’s war against residents of Donetsk and Lugansk, in the Donbass coal-mining region, began on April 15, 2014, less than two months after a U.S.-backed coup in Kiev brought to power a coalition of capitalist oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and outright neo-Nazis.

U.S. officials were front and center in the Euromaidan movement that carried out the coup. State Department officer Victoria Nuland, Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt and Senator John McCain rushed to offer their solidarity to the pro-Western, anti-Russia demonstrators, who were fueled by Western money and politically dominated by fascist parties and paramilitary gangs.

Wall Street was eager to profit by stanching the flow of Russian fuel to Europe and seizing Ukraine’s rich agricultural land. Most importantly, the U.S. and NATO saw Ukraine as a dagger pointed at the heart of their main target — Russia.

When the new regime in Kiev immediately sought to ban the Russian language and implement other measures against the mainly Russian-speaking residents of southeastern Ukraine, it spurred the rise of an anti-fascist protest movement in Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk.

In March 2014, the people of Crimea voted in a referendum to reunite with the Russian Federation, preventing NATO from occupying the longstanding Russian military base there. Russia’s integration of Crimea served as the pretext for international sanctions against Russia and an escalation of NATO military activity throughout eastern Europe.

As the anti-fascist movement spread across the Southeast, protesters took control of government buildings in Donetsk and Lugansk. In response, Ukraine’s interim President Oleksandr Turchynov and Interior Minister Arsen Avakov launched the so-called “Anti-Terrorist Operation,” a U.S.-backed military offensive. They blamed the upheaval on Russia.

People in Donbass armed themselves and formed local militias for self-defense. They were joined by volunteers from Russia and other former Soviet republics and later by other internationalist volunteers. The people’s militias set back the attacks of the disorganized Ukrainian forces.

On May 11, 2014, Donbass residents voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ukraine, establishing the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics. Despite suffering numerous defeats by the better organized and motivated Donbass militias, the Kiev regime continued to wage war on Donbass.

The U.S., meanwhile, continues to fund Kiev as it totters toward bankruptcy. Ukraine banned the Communist Party of Ukraine and holds thousands of opponents as political prisoners. Washington supplies military equipment both directly and indirectly through third countries. Today the Pentagon is training fascist paramilitaries at bases in both western and southeastern Ukraine.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden pledged an additional \$335 million in military assistance to Ukraine on April 1. Then on April 15, after a new government was formed under Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman, Biden phoned former leader Petro Poroshenko to assure him that the next \$1 billion loan guarantee was forthcoming. He also condemned “pro-Russian militants” for escalating the conflict in Donbass. (Interfax Ukraine)

Humanitarian crisis

On April 16, Alain Aeschlimann, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Ukraine and Donbass, blamed “the ongoing shellings and limited number of checkpoints for entrance and departure” for cutting off essential humanitarian help for civilians. (DONi News)

Earlier, the U.N. World Food Program reported that the war had left 1.5 million people hungry, including 300,000 in need of immediate help. (New York Times, April 4)

For two years, many international human rights organizations have tried to ignore the crimes of official Kiev and Ukrainian troops, charges Donetsk Ombudsman Daria Morozova. They overlook the children, women and elderly who are killed along the contact line. Morozova said her office has submitted over 700 cases documenting violations by the Ukrainian forces to the European Court of Human Rights.

This ongoing war and humanitarian crisis in Donbass, the plight of anti-fascists inside Ukraine and Western media censorship will be some of the topics taken up at the Fourth International Anti-fascist Conference to be held in Krasnodon, Lugansk People’s Republic, on May 7.

Activists from the Donbass republics, the former Soviet Union and around the world will map out a plan of action to intensify anti-war solidarity and break the media blockade. The U.S.-based International Action Center is one of the convening organizations. □

EU-Turkey deal puts migrants at risk

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

Thousands of migrants in Greece from the Middle East, Africa and Asia are being sent to Turkey in an effort to curtail and reduce the number of people flooding into Europe.

Uncertainty about the status of those who have reached Greece contributed to clashes on April 10 as Macedonian security forces used tear gas and rubber bullets to contain crowds they claimed had attempted to break through the Idomeni border between the two countries. Some 300 migrants and 23 security officers were injured.

The Greek government denounced the Macedonian police for their actions, saying, “[T]he indiscriminate use of chemicals, rubber bullets and stun grenades against vulnerable populations, and particularly without reasons for such force, is a dangerous and deplorable act.” (Reuters, April 10)

This latest repression occurred just one day after four women and a child drowned off the Greek island of Samos. These were the first officially reported deaths in the Aegean Sea after the European Union began sending migrants from Greece to Turkey on April 4.

In response, the security forces involved in the attacks on migrants attempted to justify their repressive measures: “A large group of refugees attempted to destroy the razor fence and enter Macedonia. They threw stones, metal things and other objects toward police.” (Irish Times, April 10)

At least 11,000 migrants have camped out at the Idomeni village crossing since mid-February after the Balkan states closed their borders as major entry points into Central Europe. Reports say that approximately 50,000 migrants in Greece face possible deportation to Turkey.

Europe divided

Over the last year more than 1 million people have entered Europe, creating tensions among EU member-states and

within their societies. Right-wing-led governments and political parties have utilized the migration crisis to build electoral support and escalate violence against those seeking asylum.

To normalize intra-Europe relations and curb migration, EU leaders reached an agreement with Turkey on April 5. Ankara will take back all refugees and migrants who enter Greece through irregular routes, like boats across the Aegean Sea. In return, the EU will accept thousands of Syrian refugees directly from Turkey via official immigration channels. The purported rationale behind this policy is to discourage migrants from entering Greece and its islands through passage provided by human traffickers.

Humanitarian organizations have criticized the plan, saying it will create even more problems related to the growing need to provide food, water, shelter and medical treatment for the hundreds of thousands still in need of assistance. The deteriorating conditions in the Idomeni border camp demonstrate this.

Agencies dealing with migration and displacement issues such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have also pointed out that the EU agreement violates international legal

conventions for the processing of migrants and refugees. On April 1 several people were hurt on the island of Chios, which reportedly holds 600 more migrants than what the Greek authorities and international organizations have the capacity to handle.

The UNHCR’s humanitarian division observed that instability and anxiety were also escalating at the Moria facility on the island of Lesbos. Officially, 2,300 migrants are being housed there, exceeding the stated capacity of 2,000.

An April 1 statement from the UNHCR stressed: “[We are] urging parties to the recent EU-Turkey agreement on refugees and migrants to ensure all safeguards are in place before any returns begin. This is in light of continued serious gaps in both countries. Across Greece, which has been compelled to host people because of closed borders elsewhere in Europe, numerous aspects of the systems for receiving and dealing with people who may need international protection are still either not working or absent.”

Imperialism caused the migration crisis

What is not mentioned in many instances by corporate – and government-controlled Western media outlets are the

reasons behind the flood of migrants and refugees. Those fleeing face dangers on a daily basis, after being trafficked through Libya and other countries, across the Mediterranean and into Europe.

At the root of the crisis are the United States and NATO wars of regime-change and occupation, along with the recent collapse of the economies throughout Africa, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific.

Washington has led these interventions beginning with the Gulf war in 1991 and continuing through the occupations of both Afghanistan and Iraq since the start of this century.

Since 2011, the U.S. and its allies have waged new wars of destruction and occupation against Libya, Syria and Yemen. These wars have caused the dislocation, deaths and injuries of tens of millions of people. They have created the worst humanitarian crisis of internal and external displacement since the conclusion of World War II.

In addition, the wars have wrecked the economies of these targeted states and their neighbors. These wars of imperialist intrigue and domination are continuing amid the failure of a full economic recovery from the global capitalist crisis of 2008 and subsequent years. □

Ireland 1916: REBELLION!

By **Sue Kelly**
Dublin, Ireland

A century ago, on April 24, 1916 — Easter Monday — a few hundred Irish men and women mounted an armed rebellion against the immense and brutal British Empire. They rose up in Dublin at St. Stephen’s Green, the Four Courts and various other key locations around the city, and in the countryside at Wexford, Louth, Meath, Cork and Galway, among other places.

During the hundreds of years of British colonialist domination of Ireland, the Irish people had been starved and denied basic rights like voting and holding office, owning property, practicing their religion or even speaking their own language. Their churches were destroyed, they were denied schooling, and many were forced to eke out an existence on small pieces of rocky ground.

Easter 1916 was not the first time the Irish had taken up arms to fight their oppressor. It was preceded by the Rebellion of 1798, Emmet’s Rising in 1803, the Young Irelanders of 1848, the Fenian Rising of 1867, the agrarian struggles of the 1880s and the Lockout of 1913. More recently, we should not forget the Hunger Strikers of 1981 and countless other acts of resistance and rebellion. But as President Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein said, “Few touch the mind and the heart as deeply as the Easter Rising of 1916.”

The year 1916 saw the coming together of socialists, republicans, nationalists, suffragists and Irish culture activists into a revolutionary movement to establish a democratic and egalitarian republic. Masterminded by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the fighting included the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers Force.

The General Post Office became their headquarters. Shortly after noon on Easter Monday, Padraig Pearse, leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and a key leader of the Rebellion, read the “Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic” from the front steps of the GPO. It is a significant document for many reasons, not the least of which is its

inclusion of women throughout. While women and their supporters in other nations of the world were struggling to achieve the right to vote, the Proclamation was a radical endorsement of equal rights for women in Irish society.

Pearse read from the Proclamation: “The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally.”

More than 100 women took part in the Rising, many of whom were members of the Republican women’s organization Cumann na mBan, which had in its constitution, alongside its equality agenda, an explicit commitment to the use of force by arms against British force in Ireland.

Brutal suppression and secret executions

The British quickly declared martial law and ordered reinforcements, leaving the Volunteers vastly outnumbered and outgunned. The siege lasted six days. On Saturday, 29 April, rather than see further bloodshed from the overwhelming firepower of the British Empire, the Volunteers surrendered. The day before, Pearse had seen British soldiers shoot down a group of women in the street, and a family holding a white flag mowed down while escaping their burning house.

Perhaps 1,600 Volunteers had risen up. In Dublin, 450 people were killed, including 230 civilians; 2,614 people were injured, and nine remained missing. Much of Dublin was demolished. Only the façade of the GPO remained.

Many who had been prepared to join the uprising did not, believing the action had been cancelled when Volunteers leader Eoin MacNeill called it off, due to the failure to arrive of a shipment of



Kilmainham Jail

arms. But the fighting of April 1916 had far-reaching impact.

Much of the population of Dublin (300,000+) was lukewarm to the Rebellion at first. It was the brutal response of the British to the leaders that changed the population’s attitude and set the stage for the next developments.

Secret courts under martial law tried 186 men and one woman: Countess Markiewicz, who played a significant role in the Rebellion. Over two weeks, all seven signatories of the Proclamation and nine others were executed at Kilmainham Jail. Socialist James Connolly, who had been badly wounded at the GPO, had to be tied to a chair in order to be shot. All showed great bravery and resistance to the end.

The secrecy of the trials and quick executions, by firing squad at dawn, had the opposite effect from that which the British had intended.

The Irish public was outraged and the Rebellion’s leaders became heroes and martyrs as public opinion moved toward the goal of a sovereign Irish republic. The years following saw the growth of Sinn Fein, more war with the British, civil war, partition — with six counties in the north remaining part of Britain — and ultimately the independence of 26 of the 32 counties that constitute the Irish island becoming the independent Republic of Ireland.

This year, the Irish celebrate the centennial of the courageous actions of 1916 and say, as they did then, “Tíocfaidh ar la!” (“Our day will come!”) □

Protesters disrupt Clinton in Baltimore

Continued from page 3

nation, especially of people of color — are all the responsibility of the Democratic Party and the Bill Clinton administration. Hillary Clinton has never separated herself from them.

As secretary of state her record is even more heinous, promoting the bombing and subsequent destruction of Libya and backing terrorist attempts to topple the Syrian government and demonize President Bashar al-Assad. She also backed the reactionary coup in Honduras, and still defends that action, which includes murders of many working people there. Not to mention the Clintons’ role in the pillage of Haiti.

It is only because Clinton is being challenged by Bernie Sanders’ verbal attacks on Wall Street that she has adopted some left-sounding phrases. But the Democratic Party, despite its support from unions and from people of color, remains a party of U.S. imperialism that serves big capital, just as the Republican Party does. Hillary Clinton is its favored candidate. Exposing her role and that of the two-capitalist-party system at her rallies is a step forward. □



Lucha por \$15
Massachusetts,
14 de abril

FOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN

Ministro Villegas, ¡el paramilitarismo sí existe!

Por Olga Lucía Marín,
guerrillera de las FARC-EP

Todos los días me levanto con la esperanza que el presidente Santos y sus ministros al fin decidan acabar con la Teoría de la Seguridad Nacional como estrategia de defensa y las FFMM jueguen su papel constitucional: Proteger las fronteras patrias, el más importante. Voy a la computadora a leer las noticias con esa ilusión. Nada. Al contrario, la prensa alternativa colombiana informa de más asesinatos de dirigentes sociales, defensores de derechos humanos o militantes de Marcha Patriótica y otros movimientos de la resistencia.

La responsabilidad de estos asesinatos es del paramilitarismo, fenómeno que sigue vigente y que es resultado de esa Teoría de defensa impuesta por la Escuela de las Américas. Las cifras y las circunstancias en las que han muerto tantas y tantos colombianos confirman que el gobierno de Álvaro Uribe no los acabó como quiso hacer creer a la comunidad nacional e internacional. En el gobierno de Juan Manuel Santos van 346 crímenes de Estado. "...no es ningún fantasma invocado por la insurgencia. Ni una elucubración dilatoria para pos-

tergar la paz".

El paramilitarismo no puede considerarse únicamente como una máquina que mata a su oponente político, es una concepción estratégica, "un pensamiento y una corriente política que ha hecho de la guerra y el terror, su principal medio de enriquecimiento" de un sector muy poderoso de colombianos y colombianas que utiliza el asesinato y el miedo para mantener sus privilegios de clase.

No puede ser casualidad, ahora que avanza el acuerdo de paz en La Habana, reaparece el paramilitarismo en varios lugares del país. Regiones como Putumayo, área de la "Brigada Móvil N°13 con una larga lista de hombres y mujeres[1], algunos ejemplos son: en Mapiripán-Meta, las comunidades indígenas y campesinas denuncia el asesinato de Sikuaní, Luis Rodríguez Castro, uno de sus líderes como una nueva arremetida paramilitar; en Santander del Norte, en el municipio de Hacaré, el líder Orangel Galvis de Ascamcat, recibió amenazas telefónicas por parte las Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia. En la región, como siempre, hay un batallón que nunca se entera de nada.

Y no podía faltar, estos señores si no logran sus objetivos con el compañero

a quien amenazan le advierten que le pueden matar a "su señora y a sus hijos".

La semana pasada, el país conoció el famoso "paro forzado" desarrollado por los paramilitares en varios departamentos: Antioquia, Córdoba, Chocó, Sucre y Magdalena, entre otros. Demostrada está su capacidad de aterrorizar y horrorizar con el apoyo evidente de importantes sectores políticos, económicos y militares, y lo más vergonzoso, de sectores del mismo gobierno colombiano.

Como era de esperarse el jefe del Centro Democrático, senador y ex presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez, y sus partidario no trinaron, ni hablaron del "Proselitismo armado", evidente en este paro, ni mucho menos alzaron voz alguna "en repudio por los crímenes recientes de militantes de la izquierda y activistas de derechos humanos".

Y el Ministro de Defensa, Luis Carlos Villegas en entrevista con Semana dijo: "Es irresponsable calificar a estas bandas de paramilitarismo...En el país no hay paramilitarismo ni permitiremos que vuelva a aparecer". Si eso es así, ¿por qué ante la toma de las carreteras, y algunos barrios de Medellín con actos vandálicos, no aparecieron ni la policía, ni el ejército o el ESMAD siempre pres-

tos en los paros agrarios o estudiantiles?

Se queda corto el ministro de defensa al negar la existencia de esta política por parte de las instituciones del Estado y del paro reciente por las AGC, la gente le recuerda la frase del Presidente, "el tal paro no existe". Que raro, un fantasma que deja muertos de carne y hueso ¿no existe?

Y luego de una enterarse de la realidad, auscultando entre la prensa alternativa, pues los grandes medios de desinformación, sobre esto poco dice, no queda más que decirle al señor Villegas, Ministro abra el ojo, porque ¡el paramilitarismo sí existe!

Llamamos por tanto a la población colombiana a cerrarle el paso a los enemigos de la paz con la movilización activa en defensa de los diálogos y a exigirle al gobierno cumplimiento de los acuerdos firmados tanto en La Habana como en el país, si de verdad está comprometido con la paz para Colombia. Porque mientras continúe el paramilitarismo la paz solo será un hermoso sueño.

[1] Lista de asesinados en el Putumayo: Duber Vélez, Luis Donado, Héctor Gómez, Luis Obando, Sabulon Burbano, Ana María Rendón, Jonatán Torres, Óscar Arango y Gonzalo Rodríguez. □

Algunas reflexiones sobre el juicio político de Dilma Rousseff

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Tarde en la noche del domingo 18 de abril, se dieron a conocer los resultados de la votación para un proceso de destitución contra la presidente de Brasil, Dilma Rousseff. Después de aproximadamente seis horas de votación, la cámara baja del Congreso tuvo 367 votos "Sí" contra 137 "No" y 7 abstenciones, más de los dos tercios necesarios para proceder con el juicio.

Esto significa que el proceso continuará en el Senado en unas pocas semanas, donde una mayoría simple debe decidir el resultado final, y por lo tanto, el futuro de la presidencia de Rousseff. Mientras el caso se ve en el Senado, la presidente Rousseff debe ser removida de su posición y el vicepresidente, Michel Temer, asumiría la presidencia.

Ella podría apelar a la Corte Suprema, pero teniendo en cuenta que la misma Corte rechazó anteriormente anular la consideración del juicio político, no es seguro que decidiría a su favor.

Atmósfera de circo

El largo proceso de votación del domingo evocaba la atmósfera de un circo o un evento deportivo. Cada legislador/a tenía 10 segundos para hacer una declaración después de emitir su voto en voz alta. Había cobertura en vivo y podía ser visto a través de varios sitios web.

Como actores ganadoras/es en una noche de los Oscar, la mayoría mencionó sus familiares, sus seres queridos, ciudades, dios o su país como la razón de su voto. Las/os que votaron "Sí" no hicieron mención alguna sobre de la legitimidad del juicio político.

Aplausos y gritos se escucharon e incluso confeti fue disparado con una pistola de juguete después de un voto "Sí", mientras que el silencio seguía a los "No". Definitivamente semejaba a un circo de gladiadores contra Rousseff.

Detrás del espectáculo, una acción más preocupante se llevaba a cabo: la absoluta ilegitimidad del juicio político. Incluso Luis Almagro, el secretario general de la OEA, no precisamente una organización progresista, escribió en una declaración: "Nuestra Organización ha realizado un análisis detallado del proceso de juicio político en contra de Dilma, y ha llegado a la conclusión de que no se ajusta a las normas que rigen este proceso.

No hay ninguna acusación penal contra la Presidente; más bien ha sido acusada de mala administración de los recursos públicos en 2014. Esta es una acusación que es de carácter político, y que no merece un proceso de destitución". (OAS.org)

Peor aún, el mismo vicepresidente Temer, del conservador Partido del Movimiento Democrático Brasileño, e instigador del juicio político contra Rousseff junto al presidente del Congreso Eduardo Cunha, ha sido implicado en el escándalo de corrupción conocido como Lava Jato.

Y Eduardo Cunha, el Presidente de la Cámara de Diputados, un político evangélico derechista que abrió el proceso de juicio político, está siendo investigado por el Tribunal Supremo por corrupción y lavado de dinero, acusado de recibir \$5 millones en sobornos de una empresa de construcción relacionada con Petrobras, la empresa petrolera brasileña.

Muchos otros legisladores también son objeto de investigación. A los ojos de

muchas/os brasileños, la credibilidad del Parlamento es cero.

Severa crisis

El gobierno y el propio país se encuentran en una crisis política, económica y social grave.

El proceso para la destitución se ha seguido de cerca no sólo por las/os residentes del país, sino por el mercado global. Un artículo de Bloomberg del 17 de abril, titulado "Brazil Investor Impeachment Euphoria Fades as Quickly as It Came" (La euforia del impeachment de los inversores en Brasil se desvanece tan rápidamente como vino), declaró que "Los inversores han acumulado activos brasileños este año esperando que la destitución de Rousseff permita a un nuevo gobierno aprobar medidas dirigidas a sacar la mayor economía de América Latina de su peor recesión en un siglo y hacer frente a un explosivo déficit presupuestario. Pero la gravedad de los problemas significa que su probable sucesor - el vicepresidente Michel Temer - tendrá poco margen de error".

Algunas de las políticas del gobierno de Rousseff han afectado negativamente a la población. Estas incluyen medidas neoliberales de privatización y recortes. El Partido de los Trabajadores ha debilitado sus lazos con las masas, incluso desde la administración del ex presidente Lula da Silva. La economía, sin embargo, estaba en mejor salud en ese tiempo y mientras hacía alianzas con la clase capitalista rica de Brasil, su administración fue capaz de poner en práctica programas que mejoraron el nivel de vida de millones de personas que vivían en extrema pobreza.

Y aunque aún hay apoyo para el PT, no es suficiente para contrarrestar el ataque de la derecha.

En una entrevista de la revista virtual argentina, Página 12, João Pedro Stédile, coordinador del Movimiento de los Sin Tierra, MST, dijo:

"Un gobierno de Michel Temer y su partido, el Partido Movimiento Democrático Brasileño, representa el proyecto de las elites. Lo que está en juego el regreso al neoliberalismo. Ellos necesitan voltear a Dilma para esa restauración neoliberal, es ese el elemento central de este momento de la lucha de clases que se intensificó. La votación del impeachment es fundamental porque explicita los intereses de las clases dominantes y su decisión de descargar en las clases trabajadoras los perjuicios de la crisis económica mundial".

Este proceso de destitución podría traer un resurgimiento de la izquierda en un movimiento progresista. Esto incluiría tanto las fuerzas alineadas con Rousseff, Lula y el PT, como a quienes siguen siendo críticos, pero se oponen a la derecha. Su objetivo sería la construcción de una propuesta verdaderamente democrática para el país, que tenga al pueblo en el centro y no a los financieros y las corporaciones.

Que tal movimiento podría tener apoyo se muestra en las protestas contra el juicio político llevadas a cabo los días previos a la votación en muchas ciudades y en la plaza frente al Congreso.

Y como dijo Stédile en la entrevista anterior, "Se deben rearticular y producir un gigantesco movimiento de masas para formular nuevas alternativas". (pagina12.com.ar) □