



WWP at anti-Klan protest in Georgia.

# LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

## Migrant upsurge and MAY DAY

By Teresa Gutierrez

May Day actions this year mark the tenth anniversary of the upsurge of immigrant workers that gave birth to today's national immigrant rights movement.

Legislation introduced by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis) in December 2005 had been one of the most racist and reactionary bills to pass in the House.

The Sensenbrenner bill would not only have made it a felony to be in the United States without documents, it would have made any relative, employer, coworker, clergy, lawyer or friend of an undocumented immigrant into an "alien smuggler" and also a criminal.

This threat sparked an explosive reaction from immigrant workers.

Throughout the spring of 2006, tens of thousands of immigrants and their supporters poured into the streets, not just once but several times. Mexicans, who make up the bulk of the immigrant population, brought out their flags in a show of pride and coined the phrase heard many times in the days to come: "Sí, se puede." (Yes, we can).

Mexican immigrants were joined in many cities by Caribbean, Asian and African migrants who also came out to fight for their right to be in the U.S.

The actions culminated on May Day 2006, which amazingly was one of the largest days of protest ever in this country's history and revived International Workers' Day in the U.S.

At least 2 million people marched on May 1, 2006. It was a general strike and a boycott, as workers and students walked out of their jobs and schools in a show of militant defiance in "A Day Without Immigrants."

Businesses were forced to shut down across the country. Cargill and Perdue Farms closed more than two dozen plants, employing over 20,000 people. In Arizona protesters formed a human chain and blocked off Wal-Mart and Home Depot. Workers shut the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in a stunning blow to capitalism.

Also in Los Angeles, almost 75,000 students were absent from school. Cities like Dallas, Phoenix and Las Vegas had the largest demonstrations in their entire his-



Teresa Gutierrez has been a co-coordinator of the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights for a decade and is currently campaign manager for the Workers World Party 2016 election campaign.



### A message from WWP candidates

## Moorehead-Lilly '16

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

## WORKERS WORLD PARTY.ORG



John Parker for U.S. Senate

The following joint statement was issued by three 2016 election campaign candidates of **Workers World Party: Monica Moorehead, presidential candidate; Lamont Lilly, vice presidential candidate; and John Parker, candidate for U.S. Senate from California.** Parker is also the Peace and Freedom senatorial candidate. For more information, go to [workers.org/wwp](http://workers.org/wwp).

Monica Moorehead for U.S. President Lamont Lilly for U.S. Vice President

As national electoral candidates of Workers World Party, May Day — International Workers Day — to us means a demand for dignity and unconditional liberation for the multinational working class from the yoke of global capitalism or imperialism around the world.

We salute the millions of workers in poor and rich countries who take to the streets in protests, strikes and shutdowns on May Day to call attention to all forms of injustices, as well as triumphs, against a system that puts corporate profits before human needs. We salute the Cuban revolution where millions of workers march on May Day to commemorate 57 years of socialist progress in the form of free health care, free education and other basic needs for all its population.

**ORIGINS OF MAY DAY** This year, 2016, marks the 130th anniversary of May Day when on May 1, 1886, the American Federation of Workers called a nationwide strike to demand the right of workers to an eight-hour day. As Martha Grevatt, a WW contributing editor and long-time Chrysler autoworker, wrote in a March 23, 2012, article on the origins of May Day: "About a quarter of a million took part in many cities, but Chicago, with its militant, left-wing labor movement, had the largest demonstration. There, tens of thousands laid down their tools, and women and men poured into the streets. The demonstrations continued past May 1, and on May 3 police attacked and six workers were killed.

"The next day a protest over the killings was held in Haymarket Square. A bomb was thrown, a policeman was killed, and a struggle

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## WWP ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, STAFF

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Andre Powell, left, and Sharon Black are two of the leading activists in the People's Power Assembly and Workers World Party in Baltimore. Both are running in this fall's election as revolutionaries and socialists. They have been organizing support for the Black Lives Matter movement for the past two years. Powell is running for mayor of Baltimore and Black for City Council president. The two plan to use their campaigns to promote the BLM movement and to demand that Baltimore put people's interests before those of banks and big business.



Garrett Dicembre (center) | New England coordinator



L.T. Pham (above) and Ben Carroll (right) | Social Media

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# Rev. Pinkney’s appeal set for May 11

By David Sole
Marquette Branch Prison, Mich.

A three-judge panel of Michigan’s Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments in the case of political prisoner the Rev. Edward Pinkney on May 11. Rev. Pinkney has already served 17 months in prison following his conviction in December 2014 in Berrien County on the western end of Michigan.

Rev. Pinkney’s attorney, Tim Holloway, filed an appeal in September 2015. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Lawyers Guild then submitted amicus briefs supporting the appeal.

On April 15, this writer drove almost 500 miles north from Detroit to visit Rev. Pinkney in Marquette Branch Prison. He was in good spirits and looking forward to having his case heard. “If there is any justice, any attention to the facts and the law, I will win this appeal,” he said. But he was also very aware that justice is often a rare commodity in the court system.

Pinkney had led a recall campaign against then Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower, in 2014, gathering and turning in more than enough signatures. Taking his spouse out of town for her birthday on April 24 he got a call from friends. “They told me that my house was surrounded by police with automatic weapons and armored vehicles,” Rev. Pinkney said. Several days later, he turned himself in to face charges that five dates on the petitions appeared to have been altered!

During his trial for five counts of felony forgery it came out that there was no evidence connecting Pinkney to the alleged changes. No witnesses, no handwriting testimony, no confession and no chain of custody implicated him.

The all-white jury was told by the prosecutor and the judge, “You don’t need evidence to convict Pinkney.” They were instructed that evidence that Rev. Pinkney had led the movement, spoke at press conferences and organized peaceful protests was enough to show he had the most to gain from the alleged alterations. Convicted, Rev. Pinkney was sentenced to 2.5 to 10 years. Judge Schrock said he was going to “make an example” of Rev. Pinkney.

Life inside prison has been hard and stressful on this 67-year-old political prisoner. On Oct. 6, 2015, he was transferred from Lakeland Correctional Facility, just a few hour’s drive from his home, to Marquette Prison in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. As a practical matter, this



drastically cut the number of visits he could receive from family and friends. Rev. Pinkney immediately faced threats and harassment from the remote prison’s guards.

At the end of October, his telephone privileges were cancelled for six months. He faced verbal and physical threats daily. Over the months, Rev. Pinkney was “ticketed” for “having a Bible on his bed,” “having too many legal documents in his cell” and “smuggling,” among other bogus charges. He was able to beat many of these charges at internal prison hearings.

Fearing for his life, his supporters held an “Emergency Conference to Save Rev. Pinkney” in Detroit in December 2015.

A national campaign flooded Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder’s office and Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington’s office with phone calls and letters demanding safety for Rev. Pinkney. Several state senators and representatives got their legislative corrections ombudsman, Keith Barber, to make official inquiries.

The Court of Appeals will meet in Grand Rapids, Mich., on May 11 to consider whether to uphold or overturn Rev. Pinkney’s conviction after hearing short oral arguments that supplement the lengthy legal briefs. The ACLU brief focuses on the unconstitutional prosecution of Rev. Pinkney for engaging “in the political and civic life of his community. In addition, his trial was tainted by improper references to his controversial, but lawful First Amendment activities” (ACLU brief, p.2).

The original prosecutor was allowed to argue that Pinkney “was an outspoken critic of the Harbor Shores development, the Senior PGA [golf course built on land taken from a public park], Whirlpool. He has T-shirts with judges’ names on them described as ‘crimes against humanity.’ He’s a minister of the people. He’s brought Hollywood celebrities to town; Jesse Jackson.”

The ACLU urges the appeals court that “a citizen should not be concerned that his or her unpopular political views will be accepted by a court as the basis for criminal liability. Yet, the prosecutor was permitted to argue during closing that Rev. Pinkney’s protected political speech somehow made him more likely to commit a crime” (ACLU brief, p.7).

Supporters of Rev. Pinkney are planning to come from around the state to fill the courtroom during the May 11 oral arguments. □

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E-mail: ww@workers.org  
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Vol. 58, No. 16 • May 5, 2016  
Closing date: April 26, 2016

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly  
except the first week of January by WW Publishers,  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone:  
212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institu-  
tions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and  
edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to  
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY  
10011. Back issues and individual articles are available  
on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing,  
Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A  
searchable archive is available on the Web at www.  
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A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.  
Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.  
Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
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### 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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# Youth protest defies cops, rejects KKK

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Stone Mountain, Ga.

April 23 — Today, hundreds of anti-racist youth and others met the challenge of a “white power” rally called by the Ku Klux Klan. It was on top of Georgia’s Stone Mountain, a massive granite outcropping, where the KKK was revived in 1915 with a cross-burning ritual.

The white supremacists predicted as many as 2,000 of their fellow bigots would attend, coming from across the country. Instead, it was the opponents of racism and fascism that far outnumbered the proponents of hate by as much as 20 to 1.

The call for action came mainly from two Atlanta-based groups, “All Out Atlanta,” a coalition formed in January of 2016 to organize for April 23, and “Rise Up,” a grassroots formation led by Black, queer and women activists who have been instrumental in empowering low-wage workers and bringing justice for Anthony Hill, murdered by police.

Individuals and organizations responded to the call from far and wide, with “Students for a Democratic Society” coming from Florida, “Huey P. Newton Gun Club” members from Alabama, multiple chapters of anti-fascist and anti-authoritarian groups from across the southeast, “Fight for \$15” and immigrant rights activists, clergy and faith leaders, political organizations such as Workers World Party, and scores of people of all ages, races and backgrounds who were determined to stand against racist terrorism.

## Confrontation with police

On Saturday morning, April 23, two separate actions took place almost simultaneously: a march from Stone Mountain Village to the west entrance to the park,

organized by All Out Atlanta, and a blockade at the main gates, shutting down traffic for about 25 minutes, initiated by Rise Up.

The march was stopped inside the park by dozens of police in riot gear, who arrested several youth for wearing bandanas over their faces. There is an anti-Klan law against wearing masks that seems to only be used against progressive protesters.

This attack on the people’s right to oppose racism prompted additional skirmishes with the police, including some rock throwing by the angry, multinational crowd.

With all the paved roads to the site of the Klan rally blocked by police vehicles, baton-wielding cops and others with military-grade guns, the anti-racist forces from both actions dispersed into the surrounding woods, trekking through underbrush and jumping creeks until finally emerging at the edge of the parking lot where the two dozen or so Confederate-flag-waving racists were congregated inside a fenced area.

A police helicopter circled overhead. A line of perhaps 75 to 100 black-uniformed riot police ringed the fence to protect the racists. At the curb of the parking lot where eventually hundreds of militant, chanting demonstrators amassed was a similar line of SWAT cops wearing gas masks with their finger on their gun triggers, as well as many members of the six police agencies on hand.

The grassy slope and the sidewalk filled with the youthful, diverse crowd inching ever so determinedly onto the parking lot pavement, forcing the police line back. With chants of “The cops and the Klan work hand in hand!” dozens were literally inches from the faces of the



Youths from Tallahassee, Fla., SDS confront KKK at Stone Mountain, Ga.

PHOTO: STEVE EBERHARDT

repressive police.

The white supremacists ended their rally early. The anti-racists celebrated their departure.

## Stone Mountain’s history

The land that makes up Stone Mountain Park has been owned by the state of Georgia since 1958, during the height of the “Massive Resistance” period of Southern refusal to abide by the 1954 Supreme Court decision and other civil rights rulings.

It continues to be operated as a Confederate memorial and is a major tourist attraction. Confederate flags representing the secessionist, slave-holding states ring a plaza at the base of the mountain.

Park officials closed all the attractions and amusement rides for the day and canceled the laser light show for that evening. This multimedia event promotes the “heroism” of the Confederate leaders Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson, whose images astride their horses are carved into the mountain side.

This was a project supported by the KKK and initiated by the Daughters of the Confederacy in 1916, although it

wasn’t completed until the park came under state control in 1972. State law prevents any alteration to the bas-relief images without legislative approval.

Some visitors who had been unaware of the racist rally taking place and were shocked at the overwhelming presence of heavily armed police and blocked roads demanded their entrance fee back.

While the corporate media focused on the arrests of anti-racist demonstrators, describing them as “violent,” there was no reporting of the hate-filled, violent rhetoric and actions of the white supremacists while inside their secured pen or as they roamed the park, yelling their vile threats.

April 23 falls between German Nazi leader Adolf Hitler’s birthday and Confederate Memorial Day at Stone Mountain Park. The same day, in Rome, Ga., some 80 or so black-uniformed Nazis and their supporters, including several in Klan robes, marched in what was billed as a “national” rally marking Hitler’s birthday.

Hundreds of residents of the city turned out to oppose their fascist and racist platform and demanded they leave and never come back. □

# Protests demand hep C cure for Mumia and Pa. prisoners

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Family, friends and supporters of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal took to the streets of Philadelphia in actions on April 22 and April 23 to raise awareness of the dangerous impact of untreated hepatitis C on Abu-Jamal and thousands of others across Pennsylvania. The weekend wrapped up with a celebration of Abu-Jamal’s 62nd birthday on April 24.

On April 22, protesters rallied outside Philadelphia City Hall and marched to the local office of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. The event was originally planned to deliver thousands of petitions calling on Wolf to make the hep C cure available to Abu-Jamal, 10,000 thousand others imprisoned by the state and 50,000 mainly Black Philadelphia residents suffering from this deadly but curable disease.

Earlier in the week organizers learned that despite repeated requests, Wolf’s office refused to assign a representative to meet with Abu-Jamal supporters, under a phony pretext that sufficient time wasn’t given for the request. They were told they could deliver the petitions to “an office manager,” but no official meet-



From left, Dr. Suzanne Ross and Keith Cook (Mumia’s brother) give governor’s office manager Jalila Parker the open letter.

ing would take place.

Considering that Wolf’s office has been inundated with calls and emails voicing concern over Abu-Jamal’s condition for over a year and that registered letters about the meeting were sent twice to Wolf, yet received no response, organizers sent Wolf a letter challenging his excuse for delaying his response on this life-and-death matter and made it public through a press release.

The letter placed Abu-Jamal’s dire circumstances in the context of former President Bill Clinton’s passage of the 1994 crime bill and his signing of the Anti-Terrorism

and Effective Death Penalty Act in 1996, which dramatically eroded the right of prisoners to file writs of habeas corpus. The latter bill, signed 20 years ago on April 24, Abu-Jamal’s birthday, eliminated the possibility that evidence of his innocence would be reviewed by higher courts.

Shortly after taking office in January 2015, Wolf signed a moratorium against the death penalty in Pennsylvania. The letter pointed out that his refusal to provide an available cure for

prisoners with hep C contradicts his public position on the death penalty and amounts to “execution through medical neglect.”

The letter also put Wolf on notice that the bold protests that have challenged Hillary Clinton’s primary campaign would continue in July at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. Wolf is the top ranking Democratic politician in the state.

When the delegation reached Wolf’s office, people outside read the letter to Wolf for all to hear. Wolf’s staff was assured that demonstrators would be back next time in Harrisburg to deliver the pe-

titions in person to the governor.

From Wolf’s office the demonstration marched to FOX News to deliver a press release, which included the letter, to the station.

## March through the ‘hood’

The next day rainy weather forced a rally originally planned for Malcolm X Park to gather indoors at a youth activity center in West Philadelphia. When the rain finally cleared, a spirited march and car caravan took to the streets to bring the message that “everyone deserves the hep C cure” to residents in this predominantly African-American community.

The action received broad support from people on the streets who pumped fists in the air as they received informational fliers and took the opportunity to sign the petition for Abu-Jamal. The march, led by a contingent of youth, ended with an outdoor rally at Clark Park.

The final event of the weekend was a fundraising concert at the historic Church of the Advocate on April 24 featuring Taina Asili, along with Xilomen, Shyster aka Mrs. Betty’s Son, Sa-Roc, Dominique London and Reyes. MOVE youth groups L.I.F.E. (Life is for Everyone) and R.A.W. (Revolt Against Wrong) also performed. Participants shared a birthday cake for Mumia after everyone gathered on stage to sing him “Happy Birthday” with Stevie Wonder lyrics. □



# More water cutoffs in Detroit

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

While the business media call it “revitalization,” the actual program of dislocation and underdevelopment aimed at long-time residents of Detroit is slated to embark on a new round of massive water shutoffs.

Many scheduled to be terminated may not be aware of the imminent crisis they are facing. An April 15 report from Michigan Public Radio indicated that the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is no longer placing notices on the doors of homes in arrears on their bills.

The water department says that customers should look for termination notices on their bills, either sent out in the mail or posted online. This represents a departure from years past when the DWSD would send “collectors” to households to inform them that their water would be shut off in five days unless arrangements to pay were made. Spokesman for DWSD Bryan Peckinpagh said the department stopped using door tags as a budgetary matter.

### A tale of two classes

While the newspapers are filled with stories of economic revival in Detroit, joblessness, poverty and homelessness remain.

In a revealing story on April 1, the Detroit News, considered a more conservative publication than the Free Press,

pointed to the contrast between the treatment of largely working-class and poor households that routinely lose their water services and the thousands of businesses that remain behind in their bills but are not shut off.

Journalist Joel Kurth wrote: “Detroit last year shut water service to 23,300 homes — the equivalent of every household in the city of Pontiac — but left the taps running at thousands of businesses that owe millions of dollars, city documents show. Businesses and government-owned properties owe nearly twice as much as residences, \$41 million compared with \$26 million for homes, but only 680 were shut off in 2015, according to records obtained by The Detroit News through the Freedom of Information Act.”

Over 10 percent of the city’s 200,000 residential accounts were shut off in 2015, whereas approximately 0.3 percent of the city’s 25,000 nonresidential accounts suffered the same fate. Since 2014, when the termination of services gained national and international attention due to protests outside the DWSD headquarters and the blocking of Hom-rich wrecking company facilities on the eastside, over 50,000 shutoffs have been carried out.

“City records claim the state owes more than \$1 million — \$648,000 for the Detroit Reentry Center prison and \$473,000 for Belle Isle, which the state Department of Natural Resources has managed since 2014,” wrote Kurth. “Both

are more than 60 days overdue and eligible for shutoffs, records show.”

The real targets of water shutoffs are the majority African-American, proletarian and impoverished residents of the city. Cutting off their water is tantamount to an “illegal lockout,” since it becomes almost impossible to live in a home or apartment without this essential service.

This has forced tens of thousands to leave Detroit, the largest majority African-American municipality in the U.S. In the last census period, 2000 to 2010, Detroit lost nearly 25 percent of its residents.

Detroit homes with minor children are subject to intervention by Child Protective Services if there’s no water, under the guise that the household is dangerous and unfit to live in.

### Mass struggle to end corporatization

During the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history, Detroit was forced by mass action two years ago to declare a moratorium on water shutoffs for several months.

However, payment plans set up since then have failed to keep tens of thousands of households from shutoff status. Yet another plan was introduced in March through the Great Lakes Regional Water Authority, which ostensibly provides assistance to those in low-income households.

This plan allocates only \$4 million to assist those unable to pay their bills, many of which are questionable and

under dispute. In fact, the plan falls far short of the tens of millions in arrears. One factor rarely noted in this water crisis is the interest rate swaps on bonds associated with the DWSD which have drained at least \$537 million from the system since 2012.

The problem of rising water rates and shutoffs is national in scope. Carrie Sloan, senior research analyst at the Re-fund America Project, places the blame where it should be — on Wall Street.

“Detroit water customers have seen their rates spike by nearly 120 percent in the last decade; almost half of their payments now go toward paying down the debt on the swap termination fees,” Sloan emphasized. “In a city where nearly 40 percent of residents live below the poverty line, it’s not surprising that many have fallen behind on their skyrocketing bills.” (The Nation, March 11)

Sloan also pointed out, “In 2008, when Wall Street crashed the economy, and the massive risks associated with these deals [toxic interest rate swaps] came to light, cities across the country found themselves owing banks millions of dollars.”

The billions needed to rebuild the declining infrastructure of the cities are being expropriated by some of the leading financial institutions, such as Chase Bank, UBS and Morgan Stanley.

These factors must take center stage in the struggle for the right of working people, the nationally oppressed and the poor to remain in the cities. □

# Labor, environmentalists stand up for Flint

By **Martha Grevatt**

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette announced on April 20 that criminal charges had been brought against three individuals in relation to the Flint water crisis. Two are mid-level functionaries of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The third is former Flint Utilities administrator Mike Glasgow.

Flint residents are puzzled by the charging of Glasgow, who actually tried to discourage the state from approving the toxic decision to draw water from the polluted Flint River. He warned the MDEQ in the summer of 2015 that some Flint homes had high lead levels in their water. Yet he faces one felony and one misdemeanor count for tampering with evidence and willful neglect of duty.

Without hinting at any names, Schuette indicated that additional individuals would be charged. One might hope that the investigation into the lead poisoning of Flint would start at the top and work its way down. Yet Gov. Rick Snyder, who is now the subject of a recall petition, has not even been interviewed. Will any of his appointees — from the top MDEQ officials who repeatedly claimed the water was safe to drink, to the three successive emergency managers under whom Flint residents were delivered poison water — face justice?

Schuette, a Tea Party Republican, spent more funds and time trying to keep same-sex marriage illegal in Michigan than he has devoted thus far to assessing guilt in the crimes against Flint.

Snyder’s latest blunder is a publicity stunt gone bad. He pledged that he and his wife would drink Flint water at home and at work for a month. This was filtered water from Detroit, not the untreated,

unfiltered water that residents were told for 18 months was safe. Within a few days of declaring his penance, the governor announced plans to travel abroad — with no Flint water in his luggage.

Meanwhile, the people of Flint continue to face obstacles, delays and denials when it comes to getting the massive state and federal aid needed to repair the water infrastructure and confront the health crisis caused by lead and other toxins. Even the governor’s hand-picked Flint task force says the delivery of funds needs to be accelerated.

### Keep Veolia out of Flint!

Veolia, the infamous French transnational company engaged in everything from union-busting to protecting polluters to expropriating public water, was paid \$40,000 a year ago by the city of Flint to conduct a water quality study. This exorbitant fee was approved by the Snyder-appointed emergency manager. What the city got from Veolia was an 11-page report that said the water was safe to drink.

On April 21, a demonstration was held by the Flint Democracy Defense League; Water You Fighting For; Flint Rising; the Flint AFL-CIO; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25; and the Plumbers union outside the city’s water treatment plant, where a “pre-proposal meeting” was being held to consider bids from the private water industry to take over Flint water. “Keep Veolia out” and “No privatization” were among the demands.

A news release stated: “Representatives from Veolia may attend the pre-proposal meeting, despite the fact that the corporation is currently being sued for professional negligence. Veolia failed to sound the alarm for lead contamination

during its evaluation of the city’s water system, leaving residents exposed to it for months.”

Flint has joined the growing worldwide movement to shut down Veolia’s attacks on unions, public transportation, water resources and the environment.

### Another lie — and a new alliance for justice

The same governmental bodies that said the smelly, brown-colored, foul-tasting water was safe to drink are now saying it is safe to shower and bathe in. Just as before, they are ignoring Flint residents’ complaints of breathing trouble, skin rashes and hair falling out after showering. The water quality, they say, meets government standards. The catch is that no state or federal standards exist for wash water. Yet experts know that some toxins can be inhaled in steam or mist and absorbed through the skin.

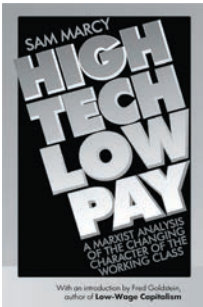
In the face of continued government inaction, the environmental group Water Defense has stepped in to defend Flint residents. The organization, founded by actor Mark Ruffalo, has sent scientist Scott Smith to test shower water for toxins. Water Defense is committed to scientifically ascertaining what chemicals are making the simple act of bathing so intolerable. Smith believes that any number

of byproducts created when disinfectants added to water interact with organic matter could be the cause.

The goal is for Flint to become a pilot for a national standard for water quality that goes beyond drinking water. Flint has another ally: the United Alliance of Plumbers, Pipefitters, Sprinklerfitters and Service Technicians (UA). Harold Harrington, a master plumber and Flint resident, represented UA on April 22 at a joint press conference with Scott Smith, Melissa Mays of Water You Fighting For and Flint City Council member Eric Mays.

For months, hundreds of union plumbers have been volunteering their time, helping Flint residents install water filters and retrofitting their faucets when the filters would not fit. Now, in partnership with Water Defense, all 343,000 UA members across the country will be trained by the union in “the best available water testing technology which enables us to better protect the communities we serve” and “detect problems before they become irreversible,” said UA General Secretary Mark McManus.

Thus, while state and federal governments drag their feet in sending needed assistance to Flint, the solidarity of labor, community and environmental movements is bringing justice. □



### 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



# Verizon strike solidarity: Sea of red from Massachusetts to Virginia

By Martha Grevatt

After 10 months of trying to negotiate a contract with their anti-union bosses, 40,000 Verizon landline and FIOS workers in nine states and Washington, D.C., struck the company April 13. The two striking unions, the Communication Workers and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, are up against an antagonistic, intransigent company demanding outrageous concessions.

As CWA District 1, which includes New York, reports, “The company has not moved off of any of their retrogressive proposals.” However, the 30,000 CWA members and 10,000 IBEW members are showing no signs of backing down either.

New York striker “Fitz,” a CWA Local 1101 shop steward, explained to WW, “We’re currently on strike because Verizon is trying to institute a system of breaking our union through different techniques. They want to be able to move us up to 200 miles away for a period of time. As a father and a husband, [that would mean] I can’t be there for my family, and it’s just wrong. Here in New York less than 40 percent of the city is wired up for FiOS [fiber optic system for high-speed internet]. There is enough work for us to do here in New York so that we can stay and do the job that Verizon promised to its customers.

“Also they want to freeze our pensions at 30 years,” Fitz continued. This means that when workers who start working at

age 21 reach 51, they won’t see any more pension increases no matter how many years they continue working.

Fitz added, “The company has pretty much waived its responsibilities for us. They’re also talking about moving our call centers from the United States to the Philippines. All of these things are detrimental to us. Last, we’re trying to unionize Verizon wireless because their technicians make about half of what we make and they have no benefits. They have no job security, and we’re trying to help them bring their standard of living up as well.”

Another issue is cuts to health insurance for both active workers and retirees.

On top of all the givebacks Verizon is demanding, strikers were further incensed when they learned about the new high-tech spying phone app the company created. It allows the company immediate access to photos and videos of strikers “engaged in misconduct” taken by strike-breaking managers and line-crossers.

This is 21st century strikebreaking, serving the same capitalist agenda as the notorious Pinkerton goons of the last two centuries who were hired by bosses to break up work stoppages and other labor protests.

**Unions say: ‘We have their attention now!’**

New York strikers had a huge rally of 8,000 on April 18. Aerial photos show a unified sea of red, the color of CWA and

## ‘We’re going to win,’ say Bronx workers



The Laundry Workers Center launched a new campaign, “Titlanice” or “We’re going to win,” to defend restaurant workers faced with wage theft and abusive working conditions. LWC activists and supporters gathered inside New Capital Restaurant on April 23 in the Bronx, N.Y., pretending to prepare for a birthday celebration. When a cake was presented, people started singing, accompanied by a guitar.

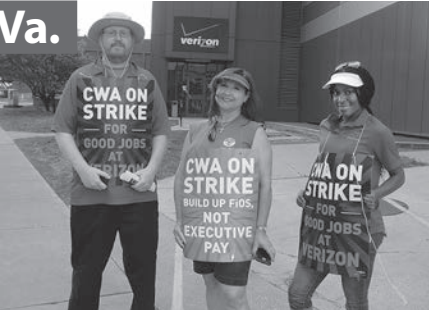
One of the restaurant owners joined the singing until she understood the song’s message: “The way you treat your workers has gone on for too long/The threats and the abuses and no safety on

the job/And the wages of your workers that the owners have robbed. It stops here and it stops now, is what we’re here to sing because ‘Titlanice’ means that the workers will win.”

Other protesters came inside the restaurant with signs, chanting against the treatment of workers. They marched through the restaurant and everyone then held a spirited rally outside, joined by the Rude Mechanical Orchestra. After training with the LWC’s Leadership Institute, the workers are fighting to break their chains of exploitation.

— Report and photo by Brenda Ryan

Roanoke, Va.



WW PHOTO



WW PHOTOS: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

IBEW strike T-shirts. Their picket lines are strong.

The strikers won a huge victory when three major Manhattan hotels cancelled Verizon’s room rentals and threw out the strikebreakers who were staying in them — and agreed not to rent rooms to them again. This was due to quick action and picketing outside the hotels by CWA strikers and solidarity from the hotel workers’ union and Teamsters Local 814.

In all nine struck states — Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, — and Washington, D.C., there were rallies during the week beginning with April 18. There was a big rally in Wise, Va., where the population is 3,300. Picket lines throughout Virginia remain solid. The “sea of red” is flowing up and down the East Coast..

IBEW Local 2222 held a mass rally at Copley Square in downtown Boston on April 21. Speakers included the presidents of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Fire Fighters union and CWA. Verizon strikers blasted the company’s union busting.

Steve Kirschbaum, vice president of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, Steelworkers Local 8751, said the strikers’ “fightback spirit sets the gold standard for standing up to corporate greed as exemplified by Verizon, the worst of



capitalist parasites.” He pointed out, “No union in 2016 can go it alone without the solidarity of the communities we serve as well as the entire working class.”

Following the Boston rally, thousands of strikers and supporters marched to a nearby Verizon Wireless store on Boylston Street. Union members occupied the street and tied up traffic in downtown Boston’s busiest shopping street for over an hour. IBEW’s successful show of strength of its troops was covered by all major Boston media.

Local 2222 Business Agent Myles Calvey, who led the April 21 rally, plans to meet with African-American community leaders and speak on the community radio station TOUCH 106.1.

In its post-rally electronic newsletter, Local 2222 stated, “They did not think we had the courage to strike, but make no mistake, we have their attention now. We will not stop until we have the contract we deserve!”

*Johnnie Stevens and WW staff in Virginia and Boston contributed to this article.*

## Low-wage autoworkers win union

By Martha Grevatt

On April 14, low-wage workers had a nationwide strike demanding “\$15 and a union.”

Now, workers at Detroit Chassis in Avon, Ohio, at least have a union. The 58 workers, who assemble axles for a nearby Ford plant that builds heavy-duty trucks, were all temporary contract workers employed by a staffing agency. Not a single one worked directly for Detroit Chassis, a Detroit-based company that recently opened the Avon factory.

It did not take long for the workers to realize they needed a union. Knowing that they could shut down the Ford assembly plant that they supplied in less than a day, on April 17 the workers voted unanimously to strike for union recognition. Before the strike had even begun, however, Detroit Chassis agreed to recognize the United Auto Workers as the workers’ bargaining representative.

Their hourly wages range from \$9.50 to \$11.50 and they get no paid holidays, vacations, sick time or health insurance. They had falsely been led to believe that once they got their foot in the door, there

would be a path to permanent, full-time employment. Now, with a union, that is finally happening.

Over the past decade, “real wages” — wages adjusted for inflation — have fallen nine times faster in the auto parts industry than in the economy as a whole. Now, one of every 10 autoworkers makes \$9.60 an hour or less, according to a report by the National Employment Law Project. The census statistics do not include workers hired by temporary agencies, who are often at the bottom of the pay scale and receive no benefits. By forcing down wages while auto sales are at an all-time high, Ford and General Motors are making the biggest profits in their many decades of existence.

Unionizing the auto parts sector is critical to the UAW. Over 70 percent of this country’s autoworkers now make parts; only 30 percent actually assemble vehicles. Less than 30 percent of parts workers are unionized. Following organizing gains at Alabama and Michigan parts plants, winning recognition at Detroit Chassis is a huge and much-needed victory. □



# WWP candidates kick off California campaign

By Judy Greenspan  
Oakland, Calif.



Monica Moorehead, Workers World Party candidate for U.S. president, speaking at campaign rally in Oakland on April 16.

PHOTO: DANIEL ARAUZ

Two meetings in Oakland this weekend kicked off the Bay Area Workers World Party presidential election campaign. The first meeting was a WW rally held April 16 at the West Oakland Public Library. The second was a debate April 17 between the three candidates contending for presidential ballot status on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. Monica Moorehead, the WWP presidential candidate, and John Parker, WWP California candidate for the U.S. Senate, spoke at both events.

Parker, also the Peace & Freedom Party candidate for the U.S. Senate, appearing on the statewide ballot in the upcoming June 7 California primary, opened the Saturday meeting. He gave a historical analysis of the relationship between the profits from the slave system and the wealth of the early capitalists in this country.

Parker outlined what he would do first if elected to the U.S. Senate. "I would introduce the 'Oscar Grant Bill' to give Black and Brown communities, who are the most victimized by police terror, the ability to remove their police departments and use those resources to enable

community-organized self-policing and self-defense," he stated.

The U.S. Senate candidate went on to explain, "Now I can say these things because I am not a Democrat or a Republican. I am a communist." I am running to amplify the demands of the people. I am not running to save capitalism. I am running to abolish it."

Monica Moorehead continued the theme of the candidates' meeting by exposing the racist, terrorist nature of the capitalist system. She spoke about her early involvement in anti-racist struggles and how the fight continues today. Moorehead also tied in the struggle of immigrants against deportations and Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids with the overall fight against racist terror in the U.S. "These struggles are part of our larger fight to bring down the capitalist system. As revolutionary socialists, we believe that this brutal capitalist system cannot be reformed. It must be abolished," Moorehead stated.

Moorehead expressed her solidarity with the families who have lost their



Lamont Lilly, Workers World Party candidate for U.S. vice president.

PHOTO: MEEKO ELLIOT

loved ones to police terror. She pointed to one of the mothers in the audience, and said, "I want to pay tribute to my sister Dionne Smith, who is such an inspiration to all of us. Her son, James, was murdered by the police in Stockton. She continues to fight for justice for her son and all victims of police terrorism."

The following day, Moorehead joined two other presidential candidates, Gloria LaRiva, of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, and Lynn Khan, an independent candidate, at a debate sponsored by the Alameda County Peace and Freedom Party. All three candidates will also be on the June 7 primary ballot.

Parker, who is also a leader of the Los Angeles branch of Workers World Party, gave an impassioned talk about the need to abolish the capitalist system. Moorehead presented the key points of the Workers World Party presidential campaign, including the demand for reparations now for Black people still enduring the legacy of slavery.

Moorehead ended her opening remarks by making a clarion call to left forces in light of the looming, deepening, global economic crisis, especially after the November elections, stating, "It is so important that the true socialist revolutionaries struggle for a new level of unity, free of sectarianism, free of small-minded behavior so that we can prepare for the revolutionary period that we are entering. We have more in common than we think."

Moorehead also spoke at a Berkeley high school civics class on April 15 and did a radio interview for the progressive Pacifica radio station, KPDK. □

## Students win gender-neutral bathroom

By Teresa Gutierrez  
Los Angeles

Transgender and queer students at a high school here scored a victory for the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer community on April 21 when they won the right to have the first gender-neutral bathroom in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

For several months, the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at the Santee Education Complex in historic South Central LA has been organizing for a gender-neutral bathroom after trans\* student Alonzo Hernandez, 16, faced problems when trying to go into the girls' bathroom.

Alonzo transitioned from female to male and said they\* were uncomfortable going to the boys' room since students and staff mainly recognized them as female. (\*The pronoun that some transgender people choose to be identified by is they/them.) Alonzo said they often waited all day to use the bathroom because of the difficulties.

Santee Education Complex has a history of activism. Many of its teachers and staff are political and even revolutionaries. So it was a no-brainer for many of the staff to support trans\* and queer students for the right to "pee in peace."

When news came out that this LA high school would be the first school in history to let students of different genders use the same bathroom and that a sign would be hung saying "All-Gender Restroom," right-wing homophobes mobilized. On April 19, these bigots and reactionaries protested outside the school and even attacked some of the students.

However, the students, teachers and community were quick to respond and called a counterdemonstration in support of the GSA for the following day. One of the key organizations they called for support was Union del Barrio, a community-based, revolutionary, grass-roots organization that takes up many working-class issues. Spokespeople Ron Gochez and Benjamin Prado applauded the students' militant work and expressed their firm al-



*Teresa Gutierrez is campaign manager for Workers World Party's 2016 presidential ticket and a long-time lesbian and immigrant rights activist.*

LGBTQ students celebrate victory at Santee school. John Parker, Workers World Party candidate for U.S. Senate opened their rally.

WW PHOTO: TERESA GUTIERREZ

liance with the LGBTQ students.

A Union del Barrio member told WW, "I have three children, and one of them may be gay, so I have to come out for non-straight people now to send a message to my family where I stand."

Hundreds of students, teachers, community groups and even elected officials came out to support the queer students. It was a wonderful show of progress on this issue. The victory in South Central LA demonstrates that despite reactionary attempts to push queer people back into the closet, like efforts in North Carolina, the LGBTQ community and its straight supporters are more advanced than ever; revolutionary and forward-thinking ideas on gender will prevail.

John Parker, Workers World Party candidate for U.S. Senate on the Peace and Freedom ballot in California, attended the event and was asked to open the rally. Parker said, "Whether it's police terror or anti-gay attacks, we have to take the example of these courageous students who, like the Black Lives Matter movement, are fighting back against the attacks that aim to divide and weaken our movement."

The Gay-Straight Alliance at Santee is urging the movement to use the hashtag #itsjustatoilet.

Trans\* is used with an asterisk to indicate the spectrum of all the different genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of male/female or masculine/feminine.

## LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL W

*Continued from page 1*

broke out that left seven police and four workers dead. Eight workers' leaders were convicted of murder, five of them sentenced to death. Four were hanged and one reportedly committed suicide. The other three were eventually pardoned."

The significance of May Day goes well beyond the economic demands of workers for better working conditions, including the right to organize, a livable wage, benefits and a pension — which are all important. May Day is also about workers making political demands, including the right to abolish capitalism. The capitalist economic system drives a tiny billionaire ruling class to super-exploit the working class by taking the workers' unpaid wages as their profits. The capitalist rulers utilize a repressive state apparatus — consisting of police terror, mass incarceration, biased laws and courts, all built on racism or white supremacy — to maintain their class rule and keep workers divided and impoverished.

**Black and Brown workers revitalize May Day**

In 2005, the Million Worker March Movement, founded in 2004 by class-conscious Black labor unionists on the West Coast, East Coast and U.S. South, made a conscious effort, among other groups

including Workers World, to target May 1 to show the need for workers to break away from the chains of the two capitalist parties of the Democrats and Republicans and for workers to fight independently in their own name. Special mention should be given to the International Longshore and Warehouse Workers Local 10 — a predominantly African-American rank-and-file union in the Bay Area, California — which has initiated port shutdowns on May Day to support occupied Palestine and to oppose police brutality and apartheid South Africa.

In 2006, migrant workers used May Day as the time to make it recognized, not only within the United States but worldwide, as the day of militant struggle for workers in the U.S. and the only true political worker's day, as opposed to Labor Day.

Millions came out across the U.S. in organized protest of the extremely racist anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner Bill. That protest and boycott caused the loss of billions of dollars in corporate profits and sentenced that bill to an early death, never to be heard from again.

It's no surprise this historic action was carried out by the immigrant community, especially from Mexico and Central America, whose native countries have been raided by U.S. imperialism with "free trade" agreements that favor the financial



# Migrant upsurge and MAY DAY

Continued from page 1

tory. Wall Street and Washington were stunned by the defiance.

### Two steps forward, one step back

The Sensenbrenner legislation was defeated. But in the years to follow, a backlash ensued.

Because of the economic downturn after the stock market crash of 2008, the bosses were no longer in need of a large vulnerable supply of surplus labor. The ruling class launched a complex, intense anti-immigrant campaign that aimed to not only push undocumented workers back into the shadows but many out of this country altogether.

At the root of this backlash was not just a crisis in the economy but the age-old racist frenzy used to accomplish the bosses' goals.

The fear of the "browning of America" took hold as the existence of more workers of color threatened the ruling class's social peace.

Arizona and states in the South became ground zero for racist repression as Washington imposed measures such as the 287(g) Program. Started in North Carolina, these measures gave states the right to enforce immigration law. It gave local law officials like Phoenix's fascist Sheriff Joe Arpaio — who has now endorsed Donald Trump — the green light to racially profile and check the immigration status of anyone in jail.

In this election year it is important to point out that the foundation of 287(g) was established under the administration of President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, when rotten anti-immigrant legislation was passed.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, "Today's explosion in detention is fueled in large part by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Enacted during the 'tough on crime' years of the Clinton administration,

## WORKERS' DAY

and industrial monopolies at the expense of workers in their home countries worldwide. Economic ruin forced these workers to try to make a living in the U.S., where they faced racist discrimination, violence and death from both police and border patrol, with the constant threat and anxiety of having parents or children deported during the dead of night.

A similar form of racist repression in the form of police brutality and mass incarceration is also being resisted by the Black Lives Matter movement .

This reality is a reflection of the world capitalist crisis of overproduction that drives the imperialist governments to impose even more destructive imperialist trade policies, like the Trans Pacific Partnership bill, along with austerity and decreasing workers' social services. These governments represent the same multinational monopolies that have destroyed predominantly Black cities like Detroit and Flint, Mich.

The immigrant workers' struggle inside the U.S. is a reflection of the economic and military violence by U.S. imperialism around the world that will continue to intensify, especially against Black, Brown, Muslim, Asian and Indigenous workers but also against white workers — making the building of unity and solidarity among all workers essential.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

IIRIRA is based on the false premise that we need mass detention and deportation to keep dangerous 'criminal aliens' off our streets." (aclu.org, Oct. 20, 2011)

In 1994, the Clinton administration began Operation Gatekeeper, which aimed to stop immigrants at the southern border between San Diego, Calif., and Tijuana, Mexico. The goal was to push migrants further east into the cruel deserts of Arizona or Texas.

Called the "funnel effect," it is estimated that because of these steps "over 6,600 migrants have died on the U.S. side of the southern border, and the remains of another 1,000 migrants have been unidentified." (telesurtv.net, April 18)

On the 15th anniversary of Operation Gatekeeper it was reported that it was "being observed with outrage by humanitarian activists on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border." (NBC San Diego, Sept. 30, 2009)



### Long live May Day!

May Day is a celebration of the workers' resistance movement, a people's movement against capitalist exploitation — against racism, sexism and white supremacy. It is a time to reflect on the gains and sacrifices of workers before us — a time to reflect on the battles yet to be won.

For example, in North Carolina, House Bill 2 is the exact kind of policy that seeks to divide the working class with anti-lesbian, -gay, -bisexual, -trans\* and -queer discrimination. In Alabama, HB 56 seeks to marginalize the immigrant community, with the goal of paralyzing the entire working class of that state. Only through unified struggle, not elections, will these kinds of bigoted laws be defeated.

May Day is a reminder to all workers that solidarity is our best weapon, a reminder that every struggle is a workers' struggle, including equal pay for equal work for women workers, the right to \$15 an hour for low-wage workers as well as student-athletes, the right to a healthy planet and a permanent end of war and occupation.

Most importantly, May Day is an international call to abolish capitalism and replace it by a socialist system that will empower all workers regardless of nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, abilities, age and skills. □

Notably, it was also under Clinton that the mass incarceration of Black youth began that led to the U.S. jailing more people than any other country in the world.

The capitalist state decentralized immigration policy, despite the clamor for a national humane and just reform. Democrats allowed Republicans, especially the Tea Party, to create a stalemate in Washington.

No proposed legislation on Capitol Hill, however, ever addressed the desperate needs of the undocumented. No proposed legislation ever granted legalization to the over 12 million undocumented people, despite workers having earned it a hundred times over.

No proposed legislation ever recognized the root cause of migration — U.S. government foreign and economic policies — that forced workers to leave their homelands in the first place.

### In the courts, out of sight

Today, a highly political juggling act is taking place in Washington. Immigrants are the objects thrown into the air. Immigration reform has been forced on the courts.

On April 18, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in the case of United States v. Texas, otherwise known as the "DAPA/DACA" (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans/Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) case.

At stake is the implementation of two parts of President Barack Obama's November 2014 executive action. DAPA/DACA aimed to provide some administrative relief from deportation but is temporary and could be reversed by the next president.

This minor but important relief has been blocked by a heartless — and legally unsubstantiated — lawsuit initiated by Texas and 25 other states.

On April 20 a New York Times editorial described the current Supreme Court debate as "momentous" where "the lives of millions hang in the balance." The Huffington Post said it was dubbed the "biggest immigration case of the century."

Yet a decision is not expected until June.

Where is the outcry by the Democratic Party, which is right now aggressively courting the Latina/o and Black vote, to get DAPA/DACA passed and give it some real teeth? Where is the outrage over the violation of the rights of families who have toiled for decades in the shadows selling their labor, only to be told "Wait, wait, vote for me and maybe I'll set you free next year, or the year after that."

How can anyone respect the words of leaders of the Democratic Party when President Obama has deported more immigrants than any other president in U.S. history!

If the Democrats really care about Black and Brown people, why not call for an emergency demonstration of millions and demand that Congress walk out in anger not only for the lives of immigrants but for the families of Black youth who have lost their children at the hands of law enforcement? Why not force the jailing of killer cops?

Where is the program that will genuinely bring back jobs for all, instead of going along with the lie that blames migrants for unemployment? It is not migrants who close factories, laying off workers, and go to other countries where labor is cheaper, but the very corporations that donate to the Democratic Party!

The Supreme Court case, like the elections, is a game to divert workers from the real issues and from the fact that immigration policy is implemented every moment.

Case in point: While this alleged historic case is being considered, a New York-based immigrant rights group reports an ominous development.

In a March 24 press release, DRUM South Asian Organizing Center reported that "Immigration authorities have begun transporting South Asian detainees to Florence, Ariz., as a staging ground for impending mass deportation. Many of the Muslim migrants from Bangladesh were participants in ... hunger strikes at the end of 2015 ... and brought attention to the prolonged, unjustified, and discriminatory detention of Muslim and South Asian migrants.

"As candidates Trump and Cruz stir anti-Muslim sentiment ... the Department of Homeland Security under the Obama administration is already racially profiling against Muslim migrants, by holding detainees for indefinite ... periods of time, setting unusually high bond amounts, and now preparing to deport Muslim detainees en masse to their potential deaths."

### Lessons learned: Look to the youth

In 2006, at many of the massive demonstrations, workers brought the U.S. flag — in defiance, for protection, and for a myriad of other reasons. Legalization and "We are not criminals" were the main slogans.

In the past 10 years, it has been demonstrated that the workers cannot count on Washington for any relief. In fact, it is Washington that puts them in harm's way.

They cannot count on the Democrats who, despite the good intentions of some, wear the complex shackles of the capitalist system that will rein them in every time.

That is why, in this period, it is important to look to the youth. Black and Brown youth are especially upping the ante and are challenging and shutting down not only Trump events but challenging the Democrats as well. Black and Brown youth have seen the truth and are coming to realize it is they who have the power, not the elected officials.

Immigrant youth are coming to protests demanding not legalization but LIBERATION. Revolutionary attempts are being made to unite the immigrant rights struggle with the Black Lives Matter movement.

The masses can be confident that the next upheaval around the corner will be an escalation that will bring real change.

Immigrant workers are permanent members of the U.S. working class, despite the ruling class's attempts to expel them. As workers, they are the gravediggers of our oppressors. □





On April 24, Workers World newspaper spoke with John Parker, the Workers World Party candidate for the U.S. Senate from the state of California, who is on the ballot in that state on the Peace and Freedom Party line.

**Workers World:** What do you expect to accomplish with your campaign for the U.S. Senate?

**John Parker:** I'm not expecting to win. Since the hundreds of millions of dollars that monopoly industries donate is only earmarked for the Democratic and Republican Party campaigns, our votes are "trumped" — pun intended — by the dollars of the ruling class. And, that's one of the reasons for this Senate campaign: to expose how undemocratic the capitalist system is. Whatever democracy exists is reserved for the ruling class, who decide the priorities of society, the distribution of wealth in society and the level of repression necessary to maintain an unjust society.

I live in working-class South Central Los Angeles, a community mainly consisting of Black and Brown people. On my block there was a Ralphs supermarket, which is a large grocery chain. A corporate decision replaced large grocery chains with smaller stores. CVS Pharmacy replaced Ralphs and now I'm pay-

Interview

# John Parker, WWP candidate for U.S. Senate

ing almost twice what I used to pay and have an inferior selection of groceries. Our community had no say in that decision, just like the people of Flint had no say in whether GM would be allowed to contaminate the water children would be drinking with lead.

**WW:** What are the issues you are raising regarding police killings?

**JP:** Our campaign has joined nationally and will continue to join all protests of police killings and all failures to prosecute killer cops. We will also build solidarity between all sectors of the working class with the movements like Black Lives Matter.

The Los Angeles Times reported in February that in six southern California counties there has been a police shooting every other day since 2004. The primary targets of this police terror are Black and Brown people. Plus many Mexicans and Central Americans have been hunted down and killed by racist vigilantes or the Border Patrol.

The criminal justice system in fact encourages murder by law enforcement by refusing to prosecute, especially in the six southern counties of California. Even former Los Angeles District Attorney Gil Garcetti said the near certainty that local prosecutors won't file charges against cops means it is time to take the decision out of their hands and give it to the state attorney general.

By the way, my main opponent in this Senate race is Attorney General Kamala Harris, in the Democratic Party, who opposed a bill like the one Garcetti proposed. Harris has done absolutely nothing to combat this genocide in California. Politicians like Harris want to maintain their career path in politics, so they had better not start challenging the tools of oppression — like the cops, ICE [U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and the private, for-profit prisons that warehouse especially Black and Brown youth.

I'm neither Democrat or Republican. I'm a communist, so I don't have to worry about losing the funding of the ruling class — and my career path is towards revolution, not the White House.

**WW:** How will your campaign relate to the large immigrant communities in California?

**JP:** Like Workers World Party's national campaign, my efforts here in California will be to end all deportations and roundups nationwide and to support full rights for all immigrants, including Muslim immigrants.

People should first understand that it is the imperialist economic wars — especially by the U.S. — creating unfair trade policies that destroy the livelihoods of peasants and workers in other countries, that drive people to emigrate from their countries. For example, the NAFTA agreement drove millions of poor peasants and working-class people out of Mexico and Central America.

A recent study found that the Border Patrol is allowed to get away with murder and an alarming number are engaged in criminal collusion with drug cartels. Their killings are even less monitored than those committed by police terror. The Mexican and Central American immigrants face murder when attempting to cross the border and here they face the daily fear of deportation.

Then there are the imperialist wars and proxy wars like the 2009 coup in Honduras that the Obama administration orchestrated, replacing an elected government with a pro-U.S. military regime and making Honduras one of the most dangerous places in the world. Par-

ents there send their children alone to this country in order to save their lives.

In California, Filipinos are the second largest immigrant community, and, likewise, they are forced to work here and endure the racism, discrimination and police terror.

This repression is a reflection of the world capitalist crisis of overproduction that makes for even more severe imperialist trade policies, like the "Trans-Pacific Partnership," along with austerity and the squeezing out of workers' social services. Austerity is a common demand from the imperialist governments that represent the same multinational monopolies that have destroyed predominantly Black cities like Detroit and Flint, Michigan.

The immigrant workers' struggle, therefore, is a reflection of the economic and military violence by U.S. imperialism around the world that makes the building of working-class unity and solidarity essential.

**WW:** How do you stand on U.S. foreign policy?

**JP:** All imperialist wars are for the purpose of enriching the ruling class. They are never in the interests of working people. The trillions of dollars that go towards enriching the military-industrial complex players like Raytheon, Lockheed, Boeing, etc., are directly taken from the monies that would go towards health and human services.

We must support the national liberation struggles, especially against U.S. imperialism. We stand in solidarity with those fighting the drones and endless war, we must be in solidarity with the LGBTQ communities here fighting for basic respect and equality, we must be for the Palestinians fighting U.S.-supported Israeli apartheid. □

Philadelphia

# ‘Don’t vote for Hillary — she’s killing Black people’

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Members of the Racial, Economic and Legal Justice Coalition and Black Lives Matter disrupted a Hillary Clinton campaign event here, chanting, "Don't vote for Hillary! She's killing Black people!" seven minutes into her speech at the Fillmore Theater on April 20.

The R.E.A.L. Justice Coalition demonstrators foiled security and appeared in the audience with signs strung together that read, "You're not welcome here" and "Stop killing Black people."

Security quickly escorted the protesters out, along with credentialed reporters, including Malcolm Burnley with PhillyMag.com. Burnley was told to leave the building while he was trying to interview demonstrator Jason Farmer, whose brother Rufus Farmer successfully challenged Bill Clinton at a campaign event in Philadelphia on April 7.

Farmer told Burnley, "No one is challenging Hillary Clinton to do anything about the harm that she has created. The 1994 crime bill — the president has the power to pardon any federal prisoner. If you look at her racial justice platform, if you look at her criminal justice platform, there is nothing that she mentions about pardoning all of

the victims who were wrongly convicted or sentenced under the 1994 criminal justice bill." (Phillymag.com, April 20)

The video of the demonstrators' April 7 confrontation with Bill Clinton in Philadelphia about his administration's racist agenda has been viewed widely. (tinyurl.com/zbggfpo) Hillary Clinton tried to prevent more problems for her campaign by inviting members of R.E.A.L. Justice and mothers whose sons died at the hands of area police to hold an invitation-only meeting with her and former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder at the historic St. Paul's Baptist Church in a North Philadelphia Black community.

When it became evident that the event was really just a public relations stunt to imply support for her campaign, R.E.A.L. Justice members boycotted and picketed outside.

Outside the church, speakers addressed the impact of Bill Clinton's 1994 crime bill on African-American communities, as well as Hillary Clinton's statements calling Black youth "superpredators." Megan Malachi with R.E.A.L. Justice called out Clinton's opportunism. "The only reason she is here today is because members of our coalition shut her husband down a few weeks ago."

"When police come out here and do

anything they can get away with to you, Hillary Clinton will not be here to stand up for you, but the young people in our coalition will," Malachi told neighborhood residents gathered outside hoping to catch a glimpse of Clinton.

Pam Africa, minister of confrontation for the MOVE organization, noted that when Hillary Clinton first ran for president against Barack Obama in 2008 she had a lot to say about Black people and "it wasn't pretty."

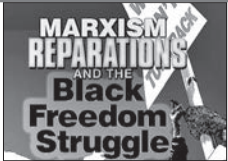
Deandra Price, a Temple University student and R.E.A.L. Justice Coalition member, was blocked from entering the hall even though she was an "invited guest" on Clinton's list. Price called Hillary Clinton's brand of feminism "oppor-

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# Solidarity still needed to break blockade of Cuba

By Carl Lewis  
Washington, D.C.

A forum at the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clark School of Law, entitled "Through Cuban Eyes," discussed the blockade and current status of U.S.-Cuban relations, and what solidarity activists can do to fully normalize relations between the two countries. This April 22 event concluded the 2016 Days of Action Against the Blockade of Cuba in Washington, D.C., which took place starting April 18.

Keynote speaker, Cuban Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez, stressed the need for solidarity: "In order to create the vision of the future, we all need solidarity." Cuba is mourning the three Cuban physicians killed in Ecuador's earthquake, but will not withdraw aid, but instead send even more doctors and experts to help.

The earthquake killed more than 600 people and injured thousands in Ecuador.

"For those who have doubts about the need for solidarity, we have to see what is happening around us," Cabanas continued. "And in those first world countries, most of the problems are fixed from an economic point of view. You have those who own a lot and those who have no resources for a decent life. With those people we need to create solidarity."

"Cubans of the last three or four generations have been born and educated with the principle that we have to show solidarity for others, because we have received a lot of solidarity from you, from many countries and many societies."

"One thing I want to emphasize, the blockade is still in place. ... The core issue is still there. Large regulations and limits have to be overcome if we really want to have a normal relationship with the United States. ... The sanction regime from 1962 and what the Helms-Burton law established — by the way, 30 years ago this year — is still there."

## Solidarity with Cuba and in Cuba

Among the forum panelists were Venceremos Brigade representative Jennifer Bryant and Interreligious Foun-

dation for Community Organization Executive Director Gail Walker. Their organizations, as well as the Institute for Policy Studies, and the National Network on Cuba carried out grassroots activities and advocacy on Capitol Hill; they also held informational forums at American University and the University of the District of Columbia. The 2016 Days of Action was initiated by the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity. Alicia Jrapko moderated the concluding forum.

Others on the panel were attorney José Pertierra, noted author Stephen Kimber and two U.S. graduates from Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM): Vanessa Avila and Alicia Steele. Both Latina doctors expressed their admiration and gratitude for the opportunity to become medical doctors, which they otherwise could not have afforded in the class-based elite U.S. medical schools. They emphasized Cuba's holistic approach to medical practice, which emphasizes prevention and education as well as the mental, physical and social aspects of patient care.

As if to underline what the ambassador said of the unfinished normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations, only one of five Cuban speakers invited to the Days of Action — journalism student Jorge



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Cuban Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas with Alicia Jrapko who facilitated the "Through Cuban Eyes" forum. Her organization, International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity, coordinated the 2016 Days of Action.

"Jorgito" Jerez — received a U.S. visa in time to participate in Washington on April 22, after missing earlier events in New York City.

A documentary film, "The Power of the Weak," by German filmmaker Tobias Kriele, was premiered in the U.S. The film presents the biographical profile of Jerez, who was born with severe cerebral palsy in 1993, at the height of Cuba's Special Period, when Cuba lost its economic trade and aid following the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European socialist countries.

In short, the film emphasizes how a

society built on socialism can provide health care and education free for all Cuban citizens. Such was the life of Jorgito, who is now a self-sufficient journalist in Cuba. His presentation and moving testimony at the forum illustrated the support Cuba provides for people with disabilities. Jorgito concluded his presentation, without reservation and with a strong note of conviction: "Without Cuba and its history, I wouldn't be Jorgito."

A full report and extensive photos of the 2016 Days of Action to end the blockade of Cuba will be posted at [TheInternationalCommittee.org](http://TheInternationalCommittee.org) and [NNOC.info](http://NNOC.info). □

## 'Oscar is our Nelson Mandela!'



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

By Anne Pruden  
New York

Thirty-four Latinas who gathered in New York City's Union Square Park carried signs reading, "Hasta regreso!" ["Until the return"], as they led another protest for 73-year-old Oscar López Rivera, on April 24. This political prisoner has been incarcerated for 34 years. This is why 34 women organizers — "34 women x 34 minutos x 34 years for Oscar in NYC," their sign said in Spanish — called for this action. Many supporters filled the park.

The women led English and Spanish chants, including, "No justice, no peace!" "Set Oscar López free!" and "34! 34! Not another year more!" These and more bilingual demands were made for 34 minutes; each minute represented a year of time he has served. This spirited, strong rally got attention from passersby. Many stopped to sign letters and petitions calling for the political prisoner's freedom.

López Rivera was active with the Puerto Rican community in Chicago to resist racist violence and the brutality of colonialism and exploitation. The people fought for community control, and supported national liberation movements for independence and self-determination.

During this era, several armed clandestine political organizations formed in Puerto Rico, including the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN). López Rivera worked with them. In 1980, 11 FALN members were charged with the overtly political crime of seditious conspiracy — conspiring to oppose U.S. authority over Puerto Rico by force.

A year later, López Rivera was arrested and became a co-defendant. He also faced charges of weapons possession. But López Rivera was actually punished for fighting for his beliefs and for the freedom of his country. He was never accused of hurting anyone or participating in violent crime.

Of his 34 years imprisonment, and his many years in isolation, López Rivera says: "The U.S. government categorically denies it has political prisoners in its gulags. ... It uses the denial as its license to violate our most basic human rights by subjecting us to isolation and sensory deprivation regimens that are nothing less than cruel and unusual punishment."

"It uses it to hoodwink its own citizens to believe that it doesn't criminalize dissenters or opponents of its wars and other imperialist practices ... to disconnect us from our families, communities, supporters and the just and noble causes we served and try to continue serving." ("The Case of Oscar López Rivera," [peopleslawoffice.com](http://peopleslawoffice.com))

Supporters of López Rivera have included 10 Nobel Peace Prize winners, Coretta Scott King, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former President Jimmy Carter, the United Methodist Church, the Catholic Archbishop of San Juan, New York state politicians, Puerto Rico's Gov. Alejandro García Padilla, popstar Ricky Martin and international human rights coalitions.

Important follow up plans include the International Day of Solidarity with Oscar López Rivera on June 20, when activists from 35 countries will demand his freedom at the United Nations. Everyone is invited to join with freedom fighters for this event. Come to Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza for a rally from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. For information, email [info@ObamaFreeOscar.org](mailto:info@ObamaFreeOscar.org) □

## U.S. invades Dominican Republic

By Michael Kramer  
Jersey City, N.J.

1965

April 24 — The community group NJ Action 21 held a meeting today in Jersey City to remember and learn from the revolutionary events that took place in the Dominican Republic in April 1965. Members of the Dominican community, Anakbayan NJ, the Jersey City Peace Movement and Veterans For Peace took part.

Organizers showed a 90-minute documentary produced in the Dominican Republic, "La Trincherá del Honor" ("The Trench of Honor"). After that, the audience held a discussion that included eyewitnesses of the April 1965 events.

In 1965 a group of anti-imperialist military officers in the Dominican Republic's Armed Forces, headed by Col. Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deñó, led a broad movement of workers, peasants, youth and progressives to take state power. On April 24, they made their move by seizing

a major radio station, distributing weapons to civilian supporters and arresting the pro-U.S. Dominican president the following day.

The U.S. responded with Operation Power Pack: an invasion and occupation of the Dominican Republic by over 40,000 ground, air and navy personnel, including the 82nd Airborne Division and the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade. Thousands of Dominican civilians were killed, and the Dominican revolution suffered a setback. The U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic did not end until May 1966.

The meeting in Jersey City was no simple exercise in revolutionary nostalgia. Rather, it was a lesson for today about the necessity for all struggles to fight U.S. imperialism and to understand how it operates. Revolutionary enthusiasm was definitely boosted for those at the meeting who witnessed on the screen the historic revolutionary mobilization of the Dominican people during April 1965. □



# WORKERS WORLD editorial

## Ayotzinapa cover-up

The heart-stabbing news about Mexico reported in the U.S. media is written with an appropriate tone of shock and horror. A special international investigative team assigned to uncover what happened to the 43 missing students of Ayotzinapa has reported that its investigation was stonewalled by both local and national authorities.

Information about the murderous police assault on the students — simply because they tried to commandeer local buses to attend an event, something that had become an annual “prank” — was covered up at every level, says the team. Despite the cover-up, a few bodies have been discovered, and their mutilation is sickening to the core, revealing a sadistic brutality that numbs the mind.

But what is left out of all the reporting in this country? The same basic facts that

are left unsaid when dealing with the desperate mass emigration that has been going on for years now from Mexico and Central America.

The trade agreement imposed on Mexico by U.S. big business, called NAFTA, has ruined the small farmers who used to be able to survive on what they could grow. They could not compete with U.S. agribusiness, which has taken over the market and the land. The resulting desperate poverty fueled the drug trade and the violence that it breeds. The state itself became part of the instrument of “protection” for what it calls illegal but which it feeds on. The customers for the drugs are, of course, largely in the United States.

A people’s investigation into Ayotzinapa cannot leave out the monstrous crimes of U.S. imperialism toward the Mexican people. □

## Court obstructs justice in Gurley case

By Deirdre Griswold  
New York

For a brief time last February, there was hope that, at last, Black lives do matter, when a jury convicted officer Peter Liang of manslaughter and official misconduct in the fatal shooting of 28-year-old Akai Gurley. The New York City police officer was facing a possible 15-year jail sentence for the shooting and his subsequent failure to seek medical help for Gurley. It was reported that, as the young Black man lay dying, the cop, instead of calling 911, was texting the police “union” looking for legal help.

But the jury that had convicted Liang was overruled. First, Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson called for only probation, six months of house arrest and 500 hours of community service for Liang. Then, on April 19, Brooklyn state Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun took the unusual move of reducing the jury’s manslaughter verdict to criminally negligent homicide. He then dropped the house arrest and sentenced the officer to just 800 hours of community service and five years of probation: No jail time or confinement of any kind for taking the life of Akai Gurley.

Gurley was killed on Nov. 21, 2014, when Liang pulled his gun and fired a single shot, accidentally he claimed, and the ricocheting bullet hit the young Black man in the chest. It all happened in the darkened stairwell of a public housing unit in Brooklyn. Gurley and a friend had

been trying to navigate the stairs in the dark because the elevator was out of service — a common occurrence in underfunded low-income housing.

Just two weeks after Gurley was killed, a grand jury in another New York borough, Staten Island, refused to indict a white cop in the chokehold killing of another unarmed Black man, Eric Garner, leading to widespread protests.

So when Liang was indicted and brought to trial, it seemed possible that finally a cop would be jailed for killing a Black man. But then the judge upended the jury’s verdict, leading to anger and more protests.

Gurley’s aunt, Hertencia Petersen, reacted to the judge’s lenient sentence: “Now here it is. Another Black man has been murdered by the hands of a police department and the officer is not being held accountable.”

That night, a crowd went to the neighborhood where DA Thompson lives and demonstrated outside his home, chanting, “If the family of Akai Gurley cannot sleep tonight, Ken Thompson will not sleep tonight!” Police arrested seven of the protesters. It is even possible that the protesters will spend more time in jail than the cop who shot a person and then allowed him to bleed to death.

“Black lives matter” is not just a slogan. It is a demand that the racist system which is falsely called “criminal justice” be uprooted and that true justice be served. Until there’s justice, there will be no peace. □

### Hero City under siege

## International monitors to visit Odessa, Ukraine

By Greg Butterfield

On May 2, 2014, at least 48 anti-fascists and trade unionists were killed when neo-Nazis attacked a protest encampment in Odessa, Ukraine, and set fire to the nearby House of Trade Unions. Hundreds more were injured. Many were forced to flee the country. Others were arrested and put on trial, while the perpetrators walked free.

Since then, the U.S.-backed government in Kiev, which helped unleash the attack against its political opponents in Odessa, has blocked every attempt to investigate the crime and prosecute those responsible.

Now, as the second anniversary of the tragic event approaches, both sides are squaring up for a new confrontation.

Family members and friends of the murdered activists, led by the Mothers Committee for May 2, are determined to hold a memorial event on the Kulikovo Field where their loved ones died.

Delegations from several countries plan to monitor and support the event, including deputies of the European Parliament and activists from the U.S.-based United National Antiwar Coalition.

Neo-Nazi groups like Right Sector, Svoboda, Automaidan and Maidan Self-Defense, which routinely and violently attack such commemorations, have threatened the organizers and vowed to prevent the memorial from taking place.

Behind them, the Ukrainian government headed by President Petro Poroshenko and Odessa Regional Governor Mikhael Saakashvili — a U.S. stooge and former president of the republic of Georgia, on the run from corruption and war crime charges in his own country — are mobilizing police and the fascist-dominated National Guard from all over Ukraine to “maintain order” in Odessa. (Timer-Odessa.net, April 19)

### Hero City under siege

Odessa is one of the “Hero Cities” of the former Soviet Union, honored for the part its residents played in resisting Nazi occupation during World War II.

Hitler’s modern-day successors have special hatred for this city. Like many major seaports, Odessa has long been a diverse, inclusive and multinational city. That was reinforced through decades of socialist development when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union.

It’s no surprise, then, that the forces behind Ukraine’s 2014 coup single out Odessa residents for abuse. And yet, the people of this Hero City keep resisting.

On Jan. 28, when the Security Services of Ukraine (SBU, the Ukrainian FBI) and neo-Nazis targeted a housing complex where many Vietnamese migrants live, busting down residents’ doors and robbing their savings, people fought back and

chased the armed goons into the street. Some youth even tried to commandeer their vehicles. (Timer-Odessa.net)

The raid was also denounced by the Foreign Ministry of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

On April 10, hundreds of Odessa residents, including many elderly veterans of World War II, came out to commemorate the anniversary of the city’s 1944 liberation from fascism by the Red Army and local partisans. Viciously attacked by neo-Nazis, they fought back, chanting “Banderites, get out of Odessa! Fascism will not pass!” “Banderite” refers to Stepan Bandera, an early Nazi collaborator and icon of right-wing Ukrainian nationalists.

The city is plastered with posters, put up at night, urging people to come to the memorial on May 2.

“The neo-Nazis attack seniors and children,” noted Alexey Albu, former Odessa Regional Deputy and survivor of the May 2 massacre, after an assault on family members in March. “But the situation will change. The Ukrainian government, which protects the ultra-nationalists, is bursting at the seams. After its overthrow, those responsible will be identified and punished.” (Fort Russ, March 27)

### International solidarity

The United National Antiwar Coalition is sending a delegation of U.S.-based anti-war and human rights activists to Odessa to join other international groups monitoring the memorial. UNAC is also appealing to people to contact their elected officials, along with local and national media, and demand they pay attention to what is happening in Odessa.

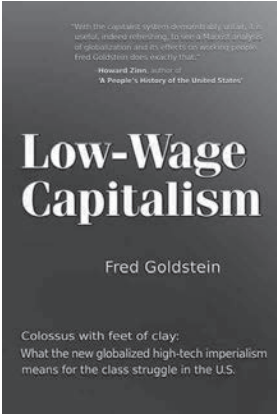
A statement issued by UNAC supporting the memorial and calling for a United Nations investigation of the 2014 events reads in part: “On May 2, 2016, a memorial will be held in Odessa, Ukraine, to honor the memory of scores of pro-democracy activists who were brutally murdered on that date in Odessa two years ago.

“There is no reason for the city authorities to forbid a peaceful memorial, but right-wing radicals — some of whom are believed to have been involved in the events of 2014 — have declared that they will not allow it to proceed. ... We call on the governments of Odessa, Ukraine, and the United States to ensure that the civic rights of those attending the May 2 memorial in Odessa will be respected, including the delegations of international monitors who will be present on that day.

“We further respectfully appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Committee to initiate an international investigation into the events of May 2, 2014, as requested by family members, friends and supporters of those who died on that day.”

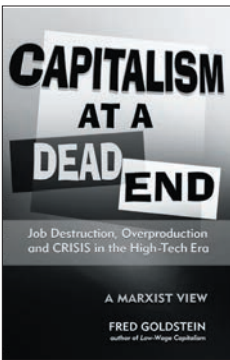
Signers include former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; former U.S. Congressperson and Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney; award-winning journalist John Pilger; U.S. Peace Council; International Action Center Co-Director Sara Flounders; BAYAN-USA Chairperson Bernadette Ellorin; Black Agenda Report editor and senior columnist Margaret Kimberley; UNAC Co-Coordinator Marilyn Levin and Joe Lombardo; and many more.

To read the full statement and list of endorsers, sign on to the statement and get updates, visit [unacpeace.org](http://unacpeace.org).



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# Day of infamy in Dhaka, Bangladesh

By Kathy Durkin

April 24 is a day of infamy for the global garment industry. On that day in 2013, the Rana Plaza complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh, housing five clothing factories, came crashing down. At least 1,138 workers were killed and over 2,000 injured.

This year, thousands of textile workers and victims' families protested at the site of the disaster on its anniversary. They, together with union organizers, called on Bangladesh's government to close all dangerous factories and put on trial all those responsible for the catastrophe.

Union leader Abul Hossain stressed: "Three years have passed and still we don't see any justice. No one has been held to account for one of history's worst man-made disasters." (NPR, April 24)

Alarmed workers had warned of massive cracks in the building's façade but were threatened with losing wages and their jobs if they didn't return to work. Bangladeshi courts took two years to charge the building's owner and 40 others with murder — but 16 are out on bail and 24 have absconded. No further steps towards justice are in sight.

Left off the hook altogether are the global retailers who make a fortune from selling garments produced in Bangladesh while paying low production costs. The country's 4 million textile workers, mostly women, get starvation wages of \$68 a month. Worldwide sales enhance the coffers of the biggest clothing brands.

This exploitation is inherent in capitalist globalization. Corporations search the globe looking for areas where they can maximize profits by paying the



Commemoration of Rana Plaza disaster on April 24 in Dhaka.

lowest wages. In this race to the bottom, factory owners offer the cheapest production costs, deny workers' rights, ignore their safety and repress unionization, all to meet transnational companies' demands.

The Rana Plaza tragedy focused world attention on the exploitative, dangerous conditions under which Bangladeshi garment workers toil. It revealed the cruelty of capitalist globalization: Profits rule, and the lives of the workers, who create all the wealth, are expendable.

International outrage brought about demands for safety measures in the plants and compensation for victims and families. Inspections have found over 100,000 hazards and many unsafe

plants, but owners are stalling on making repairs or even installing fire exits.

Financial compensation has been woefully inadequate for workers so disabled they cannot work again and for families of deceased workers. Paltry contributions from global companies don't even make a dent in imperialist superprofits.

Moreover, despite making modest payouts and agreeing to a few safety measures in order to appear "ethical," the global brands have not fundamentally changed how they function. They keep exploiting these workers and raking in megaprofits without missing a beat.

The European Union, the United States, Canada and the Bangladeshi gov-

ernment all claim they want to improve labor rights and factory safety, but have not agreed to any mandates. They uphold capitalist globalization, but just want to make it appear fairer.

**Build solidarity!**

Garment workers say factory conditions are still "dangerous, unsanitary and exploitative." Wages are delayed and so low they can't cover daily meals. Workdays are often 14 to 16 hours long, with workers coerced into toiling until 3 a.m. Six-day workweeks are usual. Verbal, sexual and physical abuse is rampant. Fighters for workers' rights and unionization are harassed, beaten and fired.

Western brands and local bosses expect Bangladesh's government to keep the workers in line, without union interference. Abuse of organizers goes on unpunished. The murderers of union leader Aminal Islam are still at large, four years after his death.

But government officials, plant owners and global brands cannot stop the class struggle, nor can they stop workers from winning allies worldwide. Bangladeshi garment workers keep fighting back. They need activists in the U.S. and Europe to keep the pressure on global retailers — and they need international solidarity from all workers and progressive movements.

Isn't it time for an international outcry against this "profits before people" system? Isn't it time to hit hard at capitalist super-exploitation of the workers and disregard for their lives? Isn't it time to work hard to get rid of capitalism? Aren't the lives of 1,138 workers enough of a reason? □

# Behind Egypt's gift of islands to Saudi Arabia

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

During the week of April 11, it was revealed that the Egyptian government of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is proposing to turn over the strategic islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia. These islands have been under Egyptian administrative control since 1950, just two years after the founding of the state of Israel.

This Egyptian decision indicates that the existing foreign policy imperatives of Washington and Riyadh take precedence over the liberation of Palestine and the genuine independence of states in North Africa and the Middle East.

Within the military sphere, the Egyptian-Saudi alliance is clearly illustrated through Egypt's cooperation under Saudi and Gulf Cooperation Council leadership in the year-long war against the people of Yemen. This war has resulted in the deaths of at least 10,000 people and the displacement of millions of others.

This decision on the islands, which is subject to approval by the Egyptian parliament, has generated much debate and opposition inside the North African state. In a nationally televised speech on April 14, al-Sisi defended his decision, saying, "We did not surrender our right, and we returned the right back to its people." He added that there are documents that prove the islands are Saudi.

The military leader — turned civilian president in 2013-2014 — argued that Egypt had only two choices in the matter involving the islands: "Either enter into a conflict with Saudi Arabia, or giving Saudi back its land and right. We will not infringe on anyone. Also, we will not give

away our land to anyone, and will not take anyone's land."

Many observers of Egyptian politics believe that the parliament is aligned with the al-Sisi government and will vote in favor of the measure. Recognizing the broad opposition to the announcement, the president has warned Egyptians not to demonstrate against the decision.

**Israel and U.S. approve decision**

An article in the Washington Post on April 13 reported that the decision by the Egyptian government was supported by the state of Israel: "The two countries [Israel and Saudi Arabia] have no formal ties, but there have been hints of quiet cooperation — or at least a strategic dialogue — over certain issues such as Iranian influence in the region. As analysts pondered the implications for Israel of Saudi control of the two islands — at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, an important shipping route for Israelis and Jordanians — Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon told Israeli reporters that he had received official documentation that Saudi Arabia would continue to allow Israelis freedom of passage in the area."

This same article says Yaalon confirmed that Israel had been consulted before the transfer and that the "Israeli daily Haaretz" reported "the transfer plan needed the approval of Israel, the United States (because Washington helped broker the Egypt-Israel peace accord), and a multinational observer mission monitoring the islands."

The islands are important in regard to the contested sovereignty and ownership of the Gulf of Aqaba, a major issue in international law for decades. The Gulf of Aqaba is located at the northern tip of the

Red Sea, east of the Sinai Peninsula and west of the Arabian mainland. The coastline expands across Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The 1967 Six-Day War (June 5-10) between Israel and the regional states of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, was prompted in part due to the President Gamal Abdel Nasser government's exercise of sovereignty. Egypt had blockaded the Straits of Tiran, preventing Israeli shipping from passing through the Gulf of Aqaba beginning on May 23, 1967. Tel Aviv later launched an attack against Egypt, which was backed by the U.S. administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

In a speech to soldiers at an advanced Air Force headquarters in Sinai, President Nasser said that any ships flying Israeli flags or transporting strategic materials would be forbidden to pass in and out of the Gulf past Sharm El Skeikh at the mouth of the Gulf. One week earlier on May 16, 1967, Nasser ordered the removal of the first United Nations Emergency Force from the Sinai.

The UNEF had been established in the aftermath of the Suez crisis of 1956, when the Egyptian government had nationalized the canal, sparking the intervention of Britain, France and Israel in a failed effort to overthrow Nasser.

After the death of Nasser in 1970, another war was fought in October 1973. Egypt under President Anwar Sadat moved in the Sinai to reclaim land that Israel had seized in 1967. In the aftermath of the 1973 war, another UNEF was deployed from October 1973 to July 1979.

During this period, Egypt and Syria's governments supported the liberation of Palestine and the defense of regional

states from Israeli aggression. The Soviet Union supported Egypt politically and militarily in both the 1967 and 1973 wars, while the U.S. backed Israel.

**Egypt dependent on Saudi Arabia and U.S.**

Today, Egypt's military-turned-civilian regime is largely dependent upon economic and political support from Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Washington supplies at least \$1.3 billion in direct aid to the Egyptian government every year, along with military equipment, advisors and intelligence sharing.

A popular uprising in 2011 removed President Hosni Mubarak, who was Sadat's successor after the latter's 1981 assassination. Three subsequent Egyptian governments have continued their reliance on assistance from Washington and its allies in the region, including the state of Israel.

Saudi Arabia has facilitated U.S. dominance in the area by providing loans to Egypt. According to an article published by Bloomberg on Jan. 4: "Saudi Arabia agreed to provide Egypt with more than \$3 billion in loans and grants to help its dollar-starved economy. ... The loans are on favorable terms." □

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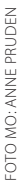
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# Trabajadoras/es de Verizon combaten Patronos atacan trabajos sindicalizados

## Editorial WW-Mundo Obrero

¿De dónde provino toda esa riqueza? Después de todo, es sólo papel, o barrotes de oro, o números electrónicos, que no tendrían valor si no hubiera cientos de millones de trabajadoras/es por todo el mundo creando los productos y servicios que ese dinero puede comprar.

¿Cómo pudo pasar esto? Pasa si una crisis financiera conduce a la parálisis de la economía. Sucedió en 2008-2009 y podría ocurrir de nuevo. Y si pasara, estos bancos y un montón de otras entidades capitalistas “demasiado grandes para caer” le pedirían al gobierno estadounidense que los rescatara – otra vez.

Como hemos escrito antes, el capitalismo en esta era globalizada de alta tecnología, se encuentra en un callejón sin salida. Para que funcione, necesita expandirse. Para expandirse, necesita clientes. Pero la producción, que está cada vez más robotizada y de alta tecnología no necesita de muchos trabajadoras/es. De hecho, para las/os trabajadoras/es esta ha sido una época de despidos y salarios bajos, no la transición de la clase obrera a “clase media”. Entonces, ¿quién va a comprarlo todo? El capitalismo se enfrenta a un callejón sin salida, sin ninguna escapatoria.

Todos los tipos de medios artificiales se han tratado para darle vida a la economía. Principalmente, esto ha significado amasar enormes cantidades de deuda con la esperanza de que esto le dará el sistema la sacudida necesaria. En su lugar, se ha convertido en una horca alrededor de sus cuellos. Cuanto más grande es la deuda, más dura es la caída.

Los defectos evidentes del capitalismo están alimentando dos movimientos políticos en los EUA. La extrema derecha, que está detrás de Trump por ahora,

Los sindicatos Trabajadores de la Comunicación (CWA por las siglas en inglés) y Trabajadores Electricistas Internacionales (IBEW), que representan a las/os trabajadoras en las operaciones de telefonía fija y banda ancha de FiOS de Verizon, convocaron la huelga. La AFL-CIO la ha apoyado y sus miembros, líderes comunitarias/os y otras fuerzas se están uniendo a los mítines y piquetes y han enviado mensajes de solidaridad. Jóvenes partidarias/os del candidato presidencial Bernie Sanders están apoyando la huelga.

La huelga puede encender una lucha aún más amplia en un momento en que muchos sectores de la clase trabajadora multinacional están en movimiento, especialmente las/os trabajadoras con salarios bajos y oprimidas/os como las/os que son parte de la campaña “Lucha por \$15”, en los centros laborales, las/os trabajadoras de restaurantes de comida rápida y de las megatiendas.

Hay mucho en juego para las/os trabajadoras. Al centro está la seguridad laboral: preservar buenos trabajos sindicalizados con salarios dignos y beneficios decentes, logrados por las/os trabajadoras organizados a través de luchas reñidas. En la última década, Verizon ha reducido su fuerza laboral en un 40 por ciento. Las/os trabajadoras contratados después del año 2003 no tienen seguri-

pero que probablemente gire hacia Cruz, quiere aumentar la represión frente al inminente desastre. El movimiento más liberal, e incluso la izquierda, está mirando hacia Sanders para que enfrente a Wall Street, al menos para regular los grandes bancos. Algo como el movimiento de Sanders no había sucedido en este país desde hace mucho, mucho tiempo, y muestra la gravedad de la crisis existente.

Si llega una crisis financiera, ¿que va a pasar? ¿Algún presidente estadounidense, conservador o liberal, podría resistir la presión para evitar que se arruinaran los grandes bancos, lo requeriría infusiones de billones de dólares producto del duro trabajo del pueblo?

La regulación de los bancos no es suficiente. Es un pequeño vendaje en una herida profunda. Lo que realmente se necesita es un gobierno dirigido por el pueblo que se apodere de los bancos y las corporaciones y utilice la riqueza que le han robado a las/os trabajadoras para reconstruir nuestras ciudades, la infraestructura y el medio ambiente que ha sido tan destruido por el sistema de ganancias. Para eso es necesario mirar más allá de las elecciones y construir un movimiento revolucionario contra el capitalismo y por el socialismo. □

Verizon tiene como objetivo romper el contrato sindical y forzar concesiones desastrosas de las/os trabajadoras que reducirían su nivel de vida. A pesar de las ganancias récord de \$39 mil millones en los últimos tres años, los ejecutivos buscan reducir sus costos laborales pasando más costos de los beneficios de salud a las/os trabajadoras y jubilados, reduciendo los beneficios por discapacidad y congelando las pensiones. Los ejecutivos no quieren discutir mejoras de salarios y condiciones de trabajo. En su lugar, disminuirían las protecciones por tiempo extra y harían que las/os trabajadoras trabajen siete días consecutivos.

La compañía tiene previsto subcontratar servicios de contratistas no sindicalizados que trabajan por salarios bajos. Después de haber enviado 5.000 puestos de trabajo de servicio al consumidor al exterior, Verizon intenta continuar exportando más puestos, explotando así a la fuerza laboral mundial pagándoles salarios extremadamente bajos.

## ¡CWA, IBEW dicen no a la transferencia de empleos!

Verizon planea cerrar y consolidar los centros de llamadas, obligando a las/os trabajadoras a viajar largas distancias diariamente o perder el trabajo. Violando una parte importante del contrato, la empresa quiere trasladar a las/os trabajadoras a una distancia de hasta 80 millas lejos de sus lugares actuales cada dos meses, sin previo aviso o derecho a rechazar, sin tener en cuenta la antigüedad o los lazos familiares.

La meta de Verizon es establecer una fuerza laboral de técnicos móviles que se puedan enviar en cualquier momento, a cualquier lugar, para construir redes de FiOS y luego pasar al siguiente lugar de trabajo. Esta es una cuestión clave para las/os trabajadoras; sus sindicatos repudian fuertemente las transferencias de empleo. Además, la dispersión de las/os trabajadoras disminuye su fuerza colectiva.

Las/os trabajadores de Verizon están molestos de que la empresa se ha estancado en su promesa de construir la red FiOS, mientras descartan a las/os trabajadores que la instalan. La corporación ha violado acuerdos con franquicias de instaladores de cables para instalar la red FiOS por toda la ciudad de Nueva York y Filadelfia. Esto ha dejado a millones de personas sin acceso, especialmente en las comunidades de bajos ingresos, afroamericanas e inmigrantes. Ha desatendido las instalaciones de FiOS en varios estados, mientras obstruye las reparaciones de la antigua red de cobre, dejando a muchas/os clientes con un servicio pobre.

La CWA dice que la empresa se niega a negociar un primer contrato justo con mejores salarios y beneficios para las/os trabajadoras del comercio minorista de Verizon Wireless - a pesar de que formaron un sindicato en 2014. Estas/os empleados traen grandes ganancias, dice Verizon - pero están entre las/os traba-

adores peor pagados de la compañía.

## Es lucha de clases

En el segundo día de la huelga, la CWA informó que en dos incidentes separados, tres trabajadores de la Seccional 2108 que piqueteaban en Maryland, fueron golpeados por coches conducidos por un abogado de Verizon y un administrador de la empresa.

Verizon ha amenazado con transferir técnicos de Massachusetts a Virginia durante 60 días si el contrato no está ratificado para el 20 de mayo. Además, la compañía está siendo tan intransigente que los ejecutivos han ignorado la oferta de los sindicatos de dar \$200 millones en concesiones.

Las/os organizadores de la CWA y del IBEW se reunieron con representantes de Verizon el 15 de abril para discutir el contrato que cubre a las/os trabajadoras en seis estados y en Washington-DC. Mostrando su desprecio por las/os trabajadoras, los ejecutivos se negaron a negociar, exigieron incluso más concesiones de las/os trabajadoras y se retiraron después de 30 minutos.

El gobierno federal está tratando de intervenir antes de que el paro crezca y se amplíe la solidaridad. Sin embargo, la mediación después de la huelga del 2011 dio lugar a un contrato insatisfactorio para muchas/os trabajadoras. Verizon quiere esa intervención nuevamente, pero los sindicatos la han repudiado, diciendo que la mediación “es una distracción del problema real: la avaricia corporativa de Verizon. Los equipos de negociación de CWA y IBEW están preparados, capaces y dispuestos a negociar. ¿Dónde está Verizon?” (CWA, 12 de abril)

## Labor de las/os trabajadoras: fuente de riqueza de Verizon

En su afán por aún mayores ganancias, Verizon está exprimiendo la misma mano de obra cuyo trabajo ha creado la riqueza de la corporación y ha permitido a sus cinco altos ejecutivos recibir una “compensación” de \$233 millones durante los últimos cinco años. La mano de obra de las/os trabajadoras ha creado, producido y actualizado toda la tecnología de Verizon.

La crisis económica capitalista continúa. La amarga competencia por ganancias entre las empresas en el país y en el exterior se está intensificando. En este feroz escenario mundial, el esquema de los patronos es hacer todo lo posible para reducir los costos de la mano de obra. La clase dominante está en una guerra contra los sindicatos, con el objetivo de tener mano de obra no sindicalizada, con salarios bajos y sin beneficios médicos o de jubilación subvencionados por la compañía. Esta "carrera hacia el fondo" es una amenaza para toda la clase trabajadora.

Las/os huelguistas de Verizon están luchando por sus puestos de trabajo - y al final, por los derechos de todas/os los trabajadores para que tengan buenos empleos con salarios dignos, beneficios y un sindicato. Es hora de que todos los sindicatos y otras organizaciones progresistas se unan a sus líneas de piquete y muestren solidaridad. □