

MAY DAY IN PUERTO RICO

Mass marches combat
austerity & privatization

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On May Day, the extreme political devastation in the Puerto Rican archipelago was clearly shown. The lines of combat were drawn. The interests that the administration of Gov. Ricardo Roselló — and those of his predecessors from the Popular and the New Progressive parties — have sought to disguise became evident. The face of the colony — which is at the mercy of the empire's interests — was crudely exposed.

National strike a success!

In the early morning on May 1, a typical workday in Puerto Rico, the streets of San Juan were deserted. Plaza Las Americas, the most important commercial center of the metropolitan area, was closed down. So were the businesses and banks in the Golden Mile, the financial center. The deserted streets verified that the national strike was a resounding success.

Then thousands of Puerto Ricans converged throughout the morning on the Golden Mile from feeder marches in response to the call issued weeks before by United People against Sale and Privatization of Public Services.

People came from Culebra and Vieques. Students came and mothers, fathers, children, seniors — entire families — as well as teachers and members of labor unions, women's groups and environmental communities. All sectors of the Puerto Rican population were united.

In the island's southern and western areas, demonstrations were organized for those who could not travel to the metropolitan area.

Those who did not attend the demonstrations still followed the guidelines of the convening organizations: Do not go to work or to school; do not buy anything; do not make any bank transactions. In short, try to paralyze the economy for a day.

All-out police attack

All of the marches were spirited as well as orderly, with militant chants and music. However, some eyewitnesses re-

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The Teachers' Federation of Puerto Rico (FMPR) continued its militant opposition to the government closing of public schools (left) during May Day in San Juan. Contingents from all regions and sectors of the people united against the assaults of U.S.-imposed austerity.



On International Workers' Day, ILWU Local 10 held an eight-hour shutdown at the port of Oakland, continuing its 85-year history of progressive work actions.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

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WW PHOTO

Workers World Party celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx on May 6 as today's revolutionaries delivered dynamic talks. Then the crowd attending 'Marx@200: Class Struggle in the Age of Trump' applied Marx's legacy to

the working-class struggle by marching out into New York City streets to nearby New School. Students there were occupying the cafeteria and mobilizing support for workers under attack by the administration. See page 3 for related story.

John Parker for U.S. Senate: Vote for Revolutionary Change

By Lyn Neeley

John Parker, longtime socialist and member of Workers World Party, announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate during a May 4 press conference in Los Angeles. Parker, who is running on the Peace and Freedom ticket, is an anti-imperialist, anti-war activist. He wants to end capitalism and calls for a referendum to convert vital industry from private to public ownership.

Also speaking at the conference were Takiyah Thompson and Kil Sang Yoon of the American National Coordinating Council, who called on people to vote for Parker. Thompson is a freedom fighter and student at North Carolina Central University who climbed a Confederate statue in Durham, N.C., in 2017. She began the act of taking it down two days after white supremacists in Charlottesville, Va., attacked anti-racist activists.

Thompson said, “The Parker campaign pushes questions that are relevant to the people. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat running against Parker, talks about gun violence. But as a Black woman, I’m more afraid of being gunned down by the police than by a mass shooter.”

Parker’s campaign platform, detailed in campaign leaflets, includes demands to stop deportations and attacks on migrant workers. He is proposing an Oscar Grant bill to empower Black and Brown communities with the means to remove local police departments and use the resources to enable community-organized self-policing and self-defense. He supports the fight to end white supremacy, sexism, misogyny, anti-LGBTQ violence and discrimination.

“Homelessness is on the rise in Los Angeles, ICE is creating terror in the migrant communities, and police continue to kill Black and Brown people with impunity. This is why we need revolutionary change,” said Parker.

Parker’s goals also include defunding the military, ending U.S. imperialist and proxy wars, and using the trillions going to the Pentagon to fund jobs, homes, free



WW PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO



Standing in front of the courthouse for the Central Judicial District of Los Angeles, Parker asserted: “This campaign is about not accepting the unacceptable, which includes the symbols of slavery and genocide. And this is why we are by this statue of this war criminal, Columbus, who is guilty of genocide against Indigenous peoples, and why we stand here accompanied by anti-racist freedom fighter Takiyah Thompson.” (at left)

health care and education, and to stop global warming.

Donate to Parker’s campaign at Socialist4senate.org. For more information and to volunteer: facebook.com/parkerforsenate or call (323) 306-6240.

Endorsers of the John Parker campaign include Unión del Barrio-LA; the California Green Party; Clarence Thomas, secretary treasurer of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 10, retired; Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general; Cindy Sheehan, anti-capitalist peace activist whose son was killed in Iraq in 2004; the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front-LA (FMLN-LA); the Sandinista National Liberation Front-LA (FSLN-LA); Frank Dorrel, veteran and peace activist; and Chris Silvera, secretary treasurer, Teamsters Local 808, and former chair of the Teamsters National Black Caucus.



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

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Student-worker solidarity occupies The New School

Since May 1, there has been an ongoing occupation of the cafeteria at The New School in New York City. Students and workers there seized the cafeteria on May Day and have been holding it in protest of the university's attempt to layoff 35 members of UNITE HERE Local 100. The school wants to replace these union workers — all of whom are Black and Brown workers — with nonunion or student workers or “rehire” the workers — with no health benefits or pension plans.

The New School is traditionally known as a left-leaning school, so the anti-worker administration's plans have reverberated in the student body. The Communist Student Group organized the cafeteria occupation, with more than 50 multinational and multigender students currently holding the space and asking for support at #OccupyTNS.

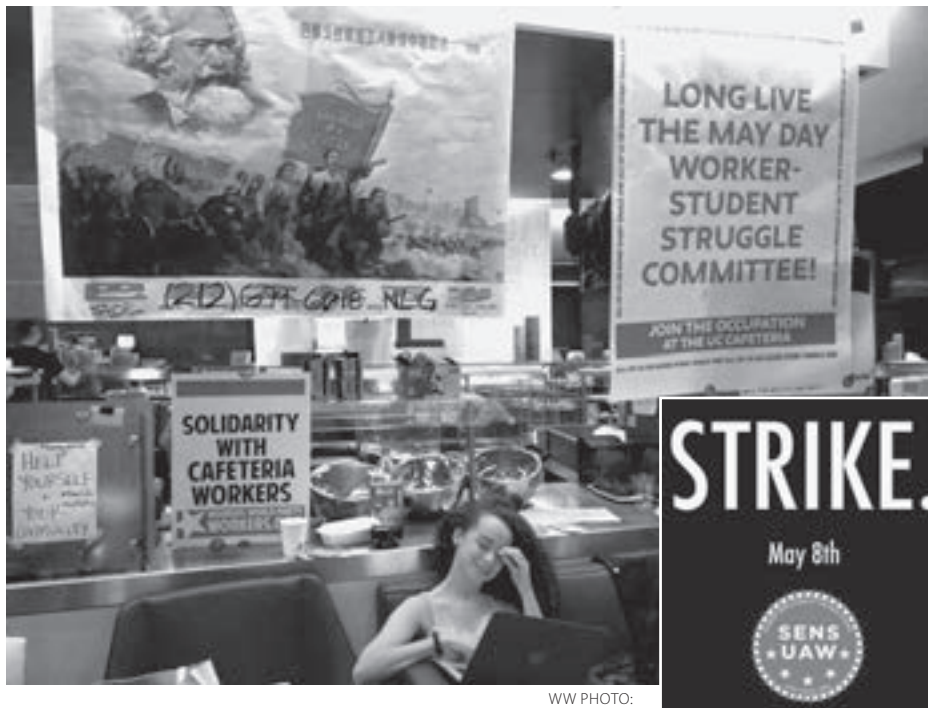
Students are demanding every cafeteria worker's job be saved, at higher wages, along with benefits, pensions and tuition

vouchers for workers and their families. Other demands include resignations of key New School management, worker-student control of the cafeteria management, and full reimbursement of workers' wages withheld during the occupation.

The Student Employees at the New School-United Auto Workers (SENS-UAW) has declared a strike for May 8. Beginning at 10 a.m., a picket line is set for 63rd St. and Fifth Ave.

The union's bargaining committee announced that teaching assistants, teaching fellows, research assistants, course assistants and tutors at The New School will stop performing their job duties that day. The union demands that the school administration respect the workers' economic needs. See more information at sensuaw.org/strike/.

SENS-UAW has also announced that the occupied cafeteria will begin to function as a strike kitchen on May 8. In addition to food and coffee, the cafeteria



WW PHOTO:

space will have general assembly meetings, committee reports, civil disobedience workshops, and training for street medics and demonstration marshals.

Teamsters Local 1205 has informed the university administration that its members will not cross the SENS-UAW picket lines.

— WW NYC bureau

Rev. Pinkney convictions overturned!

By David Sole

On May 1, the Michigan Supreme Court unanimously overturned the conviction of former political prisoner the Rev. Edward Pinkney, who served 30 months behind bars until his release in June 2017. Pinkney was framed up on five felony counts for allegedly changing some dates on a recall petition in Benton Harbor, Mich.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Rev Edward Pinkney

on. He spent much of his sentence in Marquette Branch Prison, about 500 miles from his spouse and friends.

At the isolated Marquette facility, Rev. Pinkney's life was threatened by racist guards. A national campaign

was carried out to deluge Michigan's

governor, the prison warden and the Department of Corrections with calls and letters demanding that steps be taken to insure his safety.

Thousands of letters and cards to the political prisoner flooded into the prisons to boost his morale and serve as a warning that the public was watching out for his welfare. Two wonderful local activists visited Rev. Pinkney weekly while he was in Marquette Prison. Many believe that it was this widespread and sustained support that kept the (now) 69-year-old leader alive.

Lawyers from both the National Lawyers Guild and the ACLU took Pinkney's case to the Michigan Court of Appeals in 2016. That three-judge panel not only upheld his conviction but also refused to grant bond pending appeal.

Pinkney's original trial in 2014 was remarkable for the lack of any witnesses or actual evidence against the community activist. The all-white jury was told that “you don't need evidence to convict Edward Pinkney.” The prosecutor, with the approval of the judge, introduced Rev. Pinkney's political activism, protected by the Constitution, in order to prejudice the jurors.

Pinkney's walking a picket line, his inviting the Rev. Jesse Jackson to speak in Benton Harbor and his outspoken radio broadcasts were all allowed as “evidence” of his likelihood to commit forgery on recall petitions.

Jailed immediately after being sentenced to 2.5 to 10 years in prison in December 2014, for the next 30 months Pinkney was moved from prison to pris-

Harvard grad student workers unionize

In a Harvard Crimson interview on May Day, President Drew Faust said she would bargain with its new graduate student union. This decision, affecting 5,000 graduate and undergraduate teaching and research assistants, comes after eligible students voted to unionize on April 18-19.

Now Harvard Graduate Student Union — United Auto Workers is soliciting nominations for its bargaining committee.

What is the plight of these workers? In the past the university has unilaterally imposed hardships like increased teaching loads and inadequate medical coverage on top of health care rate hikes

without any discussion. Now the grad students can negotiate for improved benefits and working conditions and help set the terms of their employment.

This stability will allow them to focus on research and teaching and also “build a stronger political voice beyond Harvard on issues that matter to us as academics.” (HGSU-UAW.org) This refers to the activism of other Harvard workers, like those who recently formed the TPS (temporary protected status) Coalition to force President Faust to protect rights of im/migrant workers. (WW, Feb. 5)

— Report by Alex Bolchi

Rev. Pinkney served his full 30 months. The appeal to the Supreme Court of Michigan was filed while Pinkney was still behind bars, yet its decision didn't come down until almost a year after his release.

While the grounds for striking down all convictions were quite technical, the conclusion was an unmistakable victory for Pinkney and his supporters. It stated the “defendant was not properly charged under Paragraph 937 with a substantive offense of election-law forgery. Therefore,

his convictions must be vacated and the charges dismissed.”

Rev. Pinkney has continued to organize for justice outside the walls, just as he did inside the prisons. Currently, he is organizing a march and rally in Benton Harbor for May 26 to protest the Senior PGA golf tournament held on parkland stolen from the people of that city by private developers and corrupt politicians.

For more information, go to bhbanco.org. □

Remember Odessa, demand justice

By Workers World New York City bureau

On May 2, the fourth anniversary of the Odessa massacre in Ukraine, the International Action Center held a protest and memorial outside the U.S. Military Recruiting Center in New York's Times Square.

Those attending took turns reading the names of activists who died in 2014 when Nazi gangs invaded the multinational seaside city of Odessa, torched a protest encampment and then set fire to the nearby House of Trade Unions, where people had fled.

Protesters chanted, “U.S.-backed fascists kill! From Odessa to Charlottesville!” and handed out informational leaflets, drawing the attention of many people passing through the busy area during evening rush hour.

Kayla Popuchet of the IAC denounced U.S. collaboration with neo-Nazi gangs. “The U.S. government helped overturn the elected government of Ukraine, then murdered 48 anti-fascists in Odessa. Actually, we believe many more died,” she said.

Taryn Fivek of Workers World Party recalled: “I cried when I heard about what happened four years ago in Odessa. I didn't imagine then that a few years later I'd be in Charlottesville, Va., facing a similar situation,” when white supremacists drove a car into anti-fascist counter-protesters, killing Heather Heyer.

“We need to stay in the streets and keep fighting the fascists,” Fivek declared.

Anna Rebrii, a native of Lugansk rep-



WW PHOTO: JULIE VARUGHESE

A rally against fascist attacks in Odessa and in the U.S., outside the U.S. Military Recruiting Center in New York's Times Square, May 2.

resenting the United National Antiwar Coalition, explained that families of Odessa massacre victims continue to be persecuted by Ukrainian authorities and right-wing goons. She said May 2 actions throughout the world were honoring the fallen anti-fascists and demanding protection for their families.

Popuchet read a statement from Alexey Albu, a survivor of the massacre and coordinator of the banned Marxist organization Borotba: “We declare that we remember every deceased defender of the city and do not intend to forgive those responsible.

“Four years have passed of brainwashing, imposing alien ideological values on our children, disfiguring the city with

Continued on page 5

Columbia Graduate Workers’ strike

New era of struggle

By John Steffin

Teaching and research assistants at Columbia University went on strike April 24, demanding the university recognize and bargain with the Graduate Workers Union. This was the first strike authorized by the GWU since it formed in 2014. The strike vote, taken earlier in April, passed with an overwhelming 1,832 to 136 majority.

The GWU planned to strike during the last week of classes, April 24-30. While the Columbia administration has not yet capitulated to its demands, next steps for recognition and a decent contract are already underway.

Class struggle at Columbia

That a strike happened at Columbia is no small victory.

Contrary to its reputation as a progressive institution, Columbia is a private university managed for profit by a board of trustees comprised of real estate tycoons, banking directors, hedge fund managers, venture capitalists and their lap-dog lawyers.

This rogue’s gallery of the ruling class does not run Columbia in the interest of its workers. Not once in his 15 years in office has Columbia president Lee Bollinger sat down with any campus unions, which include United Auto Workers Local 2110, 1199SEIU and Transit Workers Union Local 241.

Ruled by Bollinger and his bourgeois board of trustees, Columbia has waged a silent war on unions by eliminating unionized positions as workers quit or retire. This has reduced the number of unionized positions by the hundreds and weakened union power on campus.

Despite these conditions, over the last several months events on campus and across the country have created momentum for workers’ rights at Columbia, reaching a boiling point with the GWU strike.

The struggle cycle began Jan. 30, when, after three years of legal delays, Columbia officially announced it would not recognize the Graduate Workers Union and would not even recognize teaching and research assistants as workers.

The university claimed its main con-

cern is “training scholars” and that bringing in a third party like the United Auto Workers would reduce the relationship between graduate workers and faculty to “ordinary terms of employment.”

However, teaching and research assistants’ labor is vital to the functioning of the school. They perform research that secures grants and funding, and teach classes to undergraduates whose tuition is the financial bread-and-butter of the university.

The struggle for recognition as workers is one of the unique aspects of GWU’s struggle. The significance of a slogan like “Graduate Students are Workers!” in raising class consciousness on Columbia’s campus cannot be overestimated.

Union busting by the university

As Columbia was maneuvering to destroy the GWU, it was also waging another battle against another union on campus.

For two years, 1199SEIU has struggled with Columbia to get eight medical assistants included in its contract. Over the course of 31 bargaining meetings, 1199SEIU fought attempts to erode the quality of the contract for these workers — including lowering pay, slashing health care and eliminating provisions that provide protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.

In February, the Columbia University College Republicans invited Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Foundation, to speak. Mix and his foundation are responsible for much of the union-busting legislation that has barreled through the U.S. in recent years. They are key players in the Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees case currently being heard by the Supreme Court. Mix was set to speak on campus just before the first oral arguments were heard.

1199SEIU and UAW Local 2110 took this as an opportunity to connect their struggles and raise awareness about union busting. They organized a protest against Mix, the first joint action by unions on campus in years. (WW, Feb. 22)

The GWU raised that the National Right to Work Foundation had actually submitted an amicus brief on behalf of



Graduate student workers demonstrate in front of Columbia University’s library during the April strike days.

PHOTO: JAMIE DANIES/ COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

Columbia in its attempt to crush their union. That connection cut through Columbia’s façade of progressive liberalism and revealed its reactionary core.

As the struggle at Columbia developed, there was a surge of working-class resistance across the country — from the Working People’s Day of Action in February to the wave of teachers’ strikes rippling out from West Virginia to Oklahoma, Arizona, and including Puerto Rico. Conditions for a strike at Columbia University were ripe.

Days of the strike

Almost immediately after the Graduate Workers’ mid-April strike vote, the university administration tried to rally the community against the workers. In an email, the university argued that unionizing would force rank-and-file members to pay dues to an organization — like the UAW — whose positions they may not all agree with.

This is the argument being made against unions in Janus v. AFSCME and was a clear example of the National Right to Work Foundation’s role in helping Columbia fight the GWU.

The email also drew on the age-old bosses’ argument that workers are greedy, claiming graduate workers already receive \$82,000 a year in “tuition and other benefits” — as if tuition pays the rent. In reality, teaching assistants receive far less in pay — sometimes as low as \$18,000 a year.

The administration also pointed to the Trump administration’s recent reversal of a 2016 National Labor Relations Board decision to recognize graduate students as workers — as if that added legitimacy to its argument.

Despite this hostile move, a large swath of the community saw through the slander and joined the picket line throughout the strike.

Solidarity came from campus unions, including 1199SEIU, TWU Local 241 and Barnard Contingent Faculty (UAW Local 2110), as well as from workers and unions

such as Communications Workers Local 1104 and several building trade laborers working on campus. Teamsters Joint Council 16 refused to deliver packages to the university during the strike.

GWU won the support of Columbia students by raising the struggles against racism and sexual assault that have seen militant battles during the last year. In October 2017, protesting students shut down two white supremacists scheduled to speak on campus. Shortly before the GWU strike, students occupied a building demanding more support for survivors of sexual assault.

Representatives from these struggles spoke at pro-union rallies of hundreds of striking graduate workers. The community effort in the GWU strike resembled the solidarity seen in other education strikes this year.

The struggle continues

During the strike week, attempts were made to extend or deepen the strike. Some graduate workers set up tents and tried to start an occupation on campus on April 24, but it lacked rank-and-file support and the administration swiftly shut it down. However, as the end of the strike drew near with no bargaining with the administration in sight, support for extending the struggle grew.

A petition circulated calling for an indefinite extension of the strike until a contract was won. By April 30, it had 639 signatures. On May 1, the GWU joined Workers World and a coalition of im/migrant and workers’ groups celebrating May Day in Union Square.

The contracts of the UAW and SEIU campus locals are up at the end of 2018. It remains to be seen what the impact of the GWU strike will have played on their negotiations or on future labor actions on campus.

Undoubtedly, the class solidarity that is being built on campus will provide the necessary infrastructure for greater victories to come. □

Workers’ Memorial Day in Iowa

Mike Kühlenbeck
Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa workers gathered in the Hawkeye State to commemorate Workers’ Memorial Day and continue the fight for safer working conditions. Workers’ Memorial Day on April 28 is an international day of remembrance for workers killed or injured on the job. To mark this somber occasion, Iowans assembled in Bettendorf, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Sioux City and Waterloo for ceremonies from April 26 to April 28.

In 2017, 32 Iowans lost their lives in the workplace. These tales of tragedy include construction workers, steelworkers, farmers, grain operators, firefighters and other laborers sacrificed for the sake of profit. Their stories serve as grim reminders of the losses suffered by the working class in the name of capitalist greed. (tinyurl.com/y952bl6d)

The Des Moines ceremony at the Capitol building on April 27 was marred by the appearance of right-wing Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, who said: “I hope you find peace in the memory of their service and their deep commitment to others. Their legacies live on through the people they touched by their selflessness throughout the years.” (whotv.com)

Reynolds’ words were soaked in crocodile tears, for it is her policies and those of her cohorts that endanger workers by attacking unions and supporting deregulation policies. If Reynolds and fellow “right-to-work” (for less!) devotees continue to have their way, more workers will risk their lives, and this will have devastating consequences for their communities.

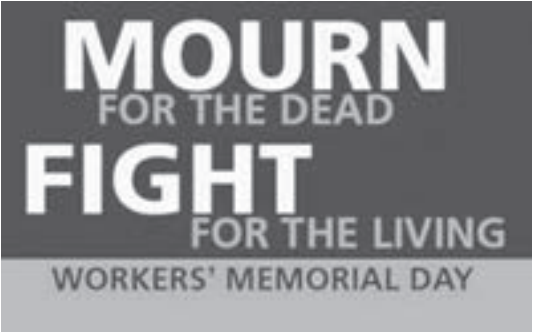
A recent AFL-CIO report titled “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect” found that “150 workers died on the job each day from preventable, hazardous workplace conditions” and called that “a national

crisis.” The “Death Toll” report concluded that the most dangerous sectors of industry are in agriculture, construction and transportation.

It has been shown that “right-to-work” states put workers at bigger risk for injuries and death. As noted by the Center for American Progress, “Right-to-work laws lower worker pay and benefits and make workplaces more dangerous for all workers — whether unionized or not — by weakening unions.”

In December 2017, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a 7 percent increase in fatal work injuries in 2016 compared to that in 2015, with “a total of 5,190 fatal work injuries recorded in the U.S.” As noted by the AFL-CIO, “This does not include those workers who die from occupational diseases, estimated to be 50,000–60,000 each year.”

It is not surprising that President Donald Trump, an iron-fisted defender of the exploiting class of millionaires and bil-



lionaires, did not acknowledge or make reference to the occasion of Workers’ Memorial Day.

As reported by the AFL-CIO, “The Trump administration has launched an all-out assault on regulations. The president has ordered that for every new protection, two existing safeguards must be removed.”

Workers cannot rely on the empty promises of Democrats or Republicans made on the campaign trail, or on the “good will” of those in elected office. Only when workers stand up to take power into their own hands can they secure safer working conditions and a higher standard of living. □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

First U.S. fast food union sizzles in Oregon

Workers at a Burgerville restaurant in Portland, Ore., won a momentous victory on April 23. With the National Labor Relations Board overseeing their election, they are now in the first federally recognized fast food union in U.S. history.

Burgerville is a regional chain owned by The Holland Inc. with over 1,500 workers in Oregon and southern Washington. (The Oregonian, April 25) Allied with the Industrial Workers of the World, the workers began their struggle in 2016 for better pay, health care and more. Despite the company doling out anti-union propaganda and retaliating against individual organizers, the Burgerville Workers Union was soon in action. But the company refused to negotiate without an NLRB election, even though six of the company's 42 locations had publicly active unions and several in Portland held walkouts and three-day strikes in February. Then the NLRB agreed to the election, resulting in an 82 percent vote to unionize.

After the election, Burgerville's senior vice president was forced to say the company would bargain in good faith. The week of April 16, workers at a second Burgerville location in Oregon filed for a federal election. Mark Medina, Burgerville worker and union organizer, told the Oregonian: "A lot of us are poor, hungry and even homeless. [This will be] the beginning of the end to poverty wages."

This is a landmark victory for all fast food workers and shows the impact of the Fight for \$15 campaign that erupted in 2012.

Legal Aid lawyers protest ICE courthouse arrests in NYC

Since mid-March, the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, United Auto Workers Local 2325, has been protesting Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests in New York City courthouses. On March 15, it rallied a broad coalition of unions, immigrant rights advocates and community groups to demand justice and due process for im/migrant defendants and their communities. The week of April 9, ALAA and Queens Law Associates staged three walkouts from Queens, Manhattan and Bronx courthouses after two immigrants were seized in Queens on minor charges.

On April 25, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is running for a third term, signed an executive order prohibiting federal immigration agents from making arrests in state government buildings without valid judicial warrants.

The Legal Aid Society and ALAA posted a statement May 7 on alaa.org applauding Cuomo's action, stating: "ICE's presence in our courts undermines our ability to represent our clients and safeguard their Constitutional rights. Immigrant defendants and witnesses are terrified to appear in court, knowing that ICE is indiscriminately targeting anyone who is not a U.S. citizen [and taking actions to prevent] our clients' ability to seek relief from removal in immigration court." The statement also appealed to New York Court of Appeals Chief Judge Janet DiFiore to join chief justices in California, Connecticut, Washington, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington who have called for ICE to stay out of courthouses and stop undermining the struggle for justice.

Arizona unions show solidarity with #RedForEd

When Arizona teachers and other education workers began a statewide walkout April 26, they weren't alone. Not only were they joined at the Capitol in Phoenix by students, parents and community members, but labor unions came to show solidarity. Though only 4 percent of workers in the "right-to-work" (for less) state were members of a union in 2017 — down from a peak of 8.8 percent in 2008 — those in unions jumped at the opportunity to show support.

As Communications Workers member Paul Castañeda told radio station KJZZ, "[T]his is a perfect opportunity to really teach the millennials, those in high school, what labor is about. It's coming out and supporting each other." Jordan Harb, a Mountain View High School junior, addressed Gov. Doug Ducey at the April 26 rally: "The children who you have ignored through marches, meetings and eight-hour sit-ins stand with teachers."

Fred Yamashita, chair of the Pima Area Labor Federation in Tucson, noted that "standing with teachers is a way for unions to educate the public on the merits of organized labor" and "remind people of labor's role in society." Yamashita pointed out that some unions are also bucking anti-union pressure in the state. Not only does Local 99 of the Food and Commercial Workers have its highest membership — more than 23,000 — but apprenticeships in the building trades are growing. (kjzz.org, May 1) □

Lessons of the Arizona educators' strike



PHOTO: AZCENTRAL

Special education teachers march for public schools in Phoenix, April 26.

By Otis Grotewohl

Arizona education workers ended a six-day strike on May 3. The work stoppage involved more than 75,000 education workers throughout the state.

The arch-reactionary governor and Republican-led legislature were forced to pass a budget that will tentatively give some teachers a 10 percent raise next fall, though that could be lower if the budget total is distributed to all school workers. A 5 percent raise is promised in the next two years, but that will only happen if each legislature votes to include it in that year's budget. Arizona public schools may receive a \$200 million increase in funding.

Unions in the strike were the Arizona Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. Playing perhaps an even more important role was the recently created Facebook group, Arizona Educators United, which started the #RedForEd movement through social media.

The strike was significant because Arizona has suffered from privatization of public education more than most U.S. states. In 1994, Arizona became one of the first to open for-profit charter schools. Very few charter schools are unionized, while most pay less than public schools and workers have very few to no benefits.

The state was also the first to create Empowerment Scholarship Accounts, prepaid bank cards that parents use for tuition at private, religious or charter schools. ESAs steal money from public school districts. West Virginia education workers were successful in defeating ESAs in their strike.

While the Arizona school workers' action officially ended May 3, the results are complex. The #RedForEd walkout was a direct blow to the right-wing state government and forced huge concessions. As with West Virginia, the Arizona strike did unite teachers and other school workers, as well as students and parents.

But not all Arizona workers went back to school happy. It is hard to call the action a complete victory.

Rank and file see only partial victory

On May 1 — International Workers' Day or May Day — union officials of AEA and AFT, along with leaders of AEU, urged the Arizona strikers to go back to classrooms on May 3. Union officials assured members that "a deal is going to be made."

School strikers saw the same thing in West Virginia when union leaders made a similar promise. But, like the West Virginia strikers, Arizona education workers were not ready to go back to work until the governor's proposal was signed.

During current school worker strikes, union heads have encouraged the rank and file to shift their militant energy to focus on the bourgeois election process. The same strategy was used in Wisconsin in 2011 — and then the union busters were voted back in.

Unity was strong during the Arizona strike, but not everyone who participated will get a salary increase. While most teachers will receive a 10 percent pay raise next year, many support staff employees, including counselors and librarians, will not.

The corporate media are falsely claiming that everyone is going to get a "20 percent pay raise" because of how the money seems to be allotted. While right-wing legislators are upset, they now have to set aside \$200 million for public schools. That figure is not comparable to state funding prior to 2008.

Many strikers strongly believe that if they had stayed out a little longer, as West Virginia school workers did, they could have gotten more of their demands met.

Gov. Doug Ducey and his corporate-controlled legislature did not want to give one penny to fund educators or public schools. Their contempt for school employees and the majority Latinx, Indigenous and Black student population is apparent in legislation they have pushed for the last three decades. Charter schools and vouchers have led to massive segregation of nationally oppressed students. Charter schools also discriminate against LGBTQ students and students with disabilities.

Though the strike may be a partial victory, education workers in Arizona and elsewhere are learning about the power they hold as workers. Teachers and support staff may go out again, especially if they do not get what was promised to them. □

Remember Odessa

Continued from page 3

ultra-nationalist symbols. Despite this, Odessa has survived. Odessa has not broken down. Odessa did not take on nationalistic ideas!"

Chanting "New York Times lies! People die! From Odessa to Palestine!" activists then marched down 42nd Street to the headquarters of the U.S. "newspaper of record."

"There is an enormous amount of video, photographic and eyewitness evidence of those responsible for the massacre," said Greg Butterfield, coordinator of the IAC's Solidarity with Novorosiya and Antifascists in Ukraine. "The New York Times and other corporate media choose to ignore it. They deliberately aid the cover-up by the U.S. government and its Ukrainian puppets."

Butterfield also denounced the Trump administration's recent sale of \$47 million of Javelin anti-tank weapons to Ukraine. "More than 10,000 people have already been killed in Kiev's bloody war against the liberated territories of Donetsk and Lugansk. While the Times claims Russia is the aggressor in Ukraine, it is really Washington pouring fuel on the fire." □

MAY DAY 2018: A DAY OF SOLIDARITY W

By Kathy Durkin

May Day — International Workers’ Day — is a time when workers show their strength, demand their rights and forge global solidarity. Its roots are in the 1886 struggle for the eight-hour day in Chicago. At this year’s U.S. marches and rallies, solidarity with im/migrants was key. Activists hailed the migrant caravan from Central America, which the Trump administration stopped at the U.S.-Mexico border. The White House has whipped up racist hostility to the families, mostly mothers and children, making it nearly impossible for them to enter the U.S. Demands for im/migrant rights and an end to ICE assaults and deportations rang out loud and clear.

Another major theme was support for the growing wave of education worker walkouts demanding higher pay, collective bargaining rights and funding for public schools.

Many marches called for workplace safety, unionization and higher pay for all low-wage workers. They supported Black Lives Matter, opposed racist police violence and called for an end to mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline. There were demands to end racist gentrification, evictions and utility shutoffs. Others also affirmed the rights of people with disabilities, women and LGBTQ people.

Global solidarity against U.S. imperialism was another focus. Marchers expressed support for the people of Puerto Rico and denounced repression in the Philippines.

Here are highlights of actions in which Workers World Party participated.

NORTHEAST

Hundreds of workers gathered in **East Boston** to fight for migrants’ and workers’ rights. They marched to Chelsea and were joined by contingents from local organizations and then jointly marched to a rally in Everett. Signs and banners focused on the connected struggles of undocumented im/migrants and the need to defend temporary protected status (TPS) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). They also demanded a living wage, workplace safety and unions.

The May 1 Coalition of labor unions and Latinx community organizations organized and led the march, as in previous years. Chants called out Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the White House bigot in chief and Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker.

Union contingents in the march included the New England Carpenters Union; United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers; UNITE HERE Local 26; Boston Teachers Union; and Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445.

— Belladonna Ashman

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, Workers World Party organized a May Day rally in support of im/migrant struggles, including the caravan organized by Pueblos Sin Fronteras awaiting asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. The rally targeted ICE headquarters in Buffalo, drawing attention to its role in repression and terror against undocumented im/migrants.

— Nigel Bouvart



WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Union Square has traditionally been the left pole of May Day celebrations in **New York City**. An unprecedented number of police made arrests a year ago; nevertheless, a coalition of over 60 groups gathered there again this year.

Included were BAYAN USA, 1804 Movement for All Immigrants, WWP, Teamsters Local 808, Nodutdol for Korean Community Development, Comedores Sociales, Within Our Lifetime-United for Palestine, Almighty Latin Kings and Queens, Columbia Graduate Workers Union and Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

It was an uphill battle. The NYC Parks Department had refused a permit for the south side of the square, where May Day commemorations have been held since the late 1800’s. Ultimately, over 1,000 people joined together on the north side to raise struggles against white supremacy, exploitation here and across the country, and U.S. imperialism.

— John Steffin

MID-ATLANTIC/SOUTH

Two major demonstrations took over **Philadelphia**. Stadium Stompers and community organizations based in North Philadelphia targeted Temple University’s racist gentrification plans to destroy the Black neighborhood adjacent to the campus. Around 200 marchers shut down traffic, calling for the end of Temple’s proposed \$130 million football stadium, chanting, “No stadium! No deal!”

Juntos, Decarcerate PA and other organizations hosted a May Day rally titled “Break the cages! Fund the people!” at City Hall where 500 activists and community members opposed ICE’s aggressive increase in raids and deportations here and targeted the school-to-prison pipeline. Philadelphia ICE agents arrest and deport more im/migrants without criminal convictions than in any other U.S. city.

WWP attended both actions and also raised solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico facing genocidal austerity.

— Scott Michael



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Community, union, student and youth activists marked May Day with a downtown march in **Baltimore** to the offices of ICE and the housing commission, police headquarters and finally to City Hall, to highlight the many issues impacting workers and the unemployed in the city. Police tried but failed to prevent the group from marching.

At the first rally, teacher Sara Benjamin displayed a homemade piece of artwork with a May Day message from her students. At the end of the march, the group unfurled a banner supporting the people of Puerto Rico, especially the striking teachers, and demanding reparations for the island.

The march was sponsored by the Peoples Power Assembly, Women and Oppressed Genders Fightback Network, Youth Against War & Racism, BMORE, Hopkins Tzedek, WWP, Students for a Democratic Society/Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore Bus Riders Union, Baltimore city and county Green Party, and Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America.

— WW Baltimore bureau

The WWP D.C. branch joined in **Washington’s** May Day Festival, put on by groups like Democracy at Work, DSA, Socialist Alternative, Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Party of DC. They set up a table with great placards, sign-up sheets, newspapers and snacks. The group got a lot of sign-ups and was very well received.

— Andrew Mayton

Local grassroots organizations in **Durham, N.C.**, including the Durham Workers’ Assembly, WWP-Durham, Black Youth Project 100, DSA, IWW, United



Union Square, New York City



Washington, D.C.



WW PHOTO

Electrical Workers Local 150, Durham Beyond Policing and Comité Popular Somos Raleigh, gathered at the old Durham police station to demand a \$15 hourly wage and unionization and an end to ICE raids, deportations and police brutality.

The crowd of 200 marched to the jail downtown across from the Durham Performing Arts Center, where a musical about the service industry was taking place. Speakers told confused ticket holders waiting in line what real workers’ struggles look like. Next, a march to a McDonald’s downtown drew the connections among the bosses, police and jails.

— WW Durham bureau

MIDWEST

Rallies and a march took place in the Latinx community in **Detroit’s** southwest side. Participants rallied first at Clark Park and then marched through the neighborhood in support of im/migrant rights, civil rights, self-determination for oppressed peoples, Black and Brown unity, rights for disabled people, workers’ struggles for a living wage and other issues.

The closing rally at Clark Park called for a halt to all water shut-offs, home foreclosures and evictions. Speakers expressed solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples worldwide. It was organized by a broad



Buffalo, N.Y.



Baltimore

WW PHOTO: GARRETT DICEMBRE

WW PHOTO: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

WITH IM/MIGRANTS AND ALL WORKERS

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Durham, N.C.

WW PHOTO

PHOTO: UNION DEL BARRIO

Tucson, Ariz.



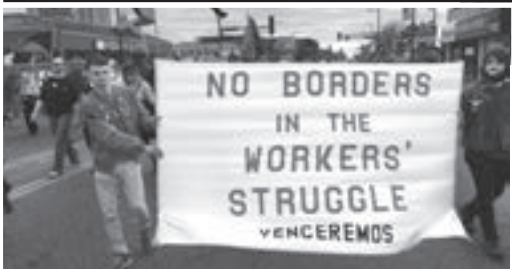
Los Angeles

Chicago May Day outside of ICE headquarters.



WW PHOTO: ANDI SHIHADDEH

Members of Twin Cities WWP march in Minneapolis.



WW PHOTO

coalition of forces, including the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Michigan United, the Poor Peoples' Campaign, Detroit Active and Retired Employees Association and others.

— **Abayomi Azikiwe**

In **Chicago**, hundreds gathered at Haymarket Square where in 1886 police killed workers fighting for an eight-hour workday. Speakers from labor unions, im/migrants' rights groups, socialist organizations and faith-based leaders demanded a living wage for all workers, an end to racist deportations and police murders.

Everyone marched to Chicago's Federal Building, the operations base for ICE, where speakers denounced the agency's role in splitting up families, terrorizing communities and repressing im/migrant workers. Then religious leaders from predominantly im/migrant communities began the first leg of a planned walk from Chicago to Washington, D.C., to protest the repeal of DACA and deportation policies.

— **Andi Shihadeh**

WWP had a robust presence this year in massive solidarity events in **Waukesha, Wis.**, hosted by Youth Empowered in the Struggle and Voces de la Frontera. They protested the local sheriff's plan to have his deputies start detaining im/migrants for ICE in June.

— **WWP Wisconsin bureau**



Detroit

PHOTO: HERON X NKRU MAH

Some 500 people marched through the heart of **Minneapolis** to repudiate the racist imperialist system of the U.S. A coalition of groups attended, including Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee, IWW and union locals. The newly formed WWP Twin Cities branch carried a banner stressing that the workers' struggle has no borders. Onlookers responded enthusiastically to protest slogans like "No Trump! No KKK! No racist USA!"

— **WW Twin Cities bureau**

SOUTHWEST

May Day in **Tucson, Ariz.**, was dedicated to #RedForEd. Thousands gathered in downtown's Armory Park for a rally demanding increased funding for education. Speakers condemned the school-to-prison pipeline, state funding of prisons and the outrageous sums spent militarizing the border. They connected the teachers' struggle to many other struggles for justice, including Black Lives Matter and supporting im/migrants against hostile federal and state agencies and policies. They also pointed out that any disruption to students caused by the teacher walkout is nothing compared to the disruption caused by the ever-present terror of ICE and Border Patrol agents, who cruise Tucson streets and daily tear families apart. The rally was followed by a spirited march through the streets of downtown Tucson.

— **Paul Teitelbaum**

WEST COAST

In **San Diego**, 500 people gathered around the famous Aztec kiosk in historic Chicano Park for an evening rally where teachers, union organizers and other workers spoke about the history and importance of May Day and the wave of teachers' strikes that has hit the country. Chants of



San Diego.

WW PHOTO: CODIE DAVIS

"¡Sí, se puede!" and "Shut it down!" rang out between speeches, led by Unión Del Barrio, initiator of the rally and march.

San Diego's Azteca dancers performed and then led everyone in a march through Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights. The program ended with a performance by Ballet Folklórico and music.

Participating organizations included WWP, the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Committee Against Police Brutality, San Diego Educators Association, Party for Socialism and Liberation, IWW, DSA, Democratic Autonomy Federation, Redneck Revolt, United Domestic Workers of America, UNITE HERE Local 30, and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

— **Rahui Suré Saldivar-Soto**

Hundreds, mostly im/migrants, rallied at MacArthur Park in **Los Angeles** and then marched to City Hall. Unión del Barrio and anti-war and social justice organizations initiated the demonstration.

WWP organizer and Brazilian immigrant Jefferson Azevedo was almost arrested. Security forces from Unión del Barrio, California for Progress and WWP had surrounded a Trump supporter who tried to get onto the stage-truck and who then attacked a woman member of California for Progress, as well as Azevedo. The police handcuffed Azevedo, but demonstrators surrounded him, chanting,



Oakland, Calif.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

"Let him go!" The cops finally removed the handcuffs but wouldn't release him. Organizers moved the truck across Wilshire Boulevard, one of the busiest traffic corridors in the U.S., and blocked this kidnapping. Within five minutes, Azevedo was freed and the march took the streets all the way to City Hall for a great rally.

— **Scott Scheffer**

In a day highlighted by the unity of labor and im/migrant communities, over 1,000 people demanded, "No ban! No raids! No wall! Sanctuary for all!" "Stop police repression!" and "Workers' rights for all!" Actions began at the **Port of Oakland**, in California, where ILWU Local 10 held an eight-hour shutdown. Their members and community supporters rallied at the Matson Terminal, then marched to Little Bobby Hutton Park.

Speakers included actor Danny Glover; Oakland mayoral candidate Cat Brooks, Anti Police-Terror Project; Sequita Thompson, grandmother of Stephon Clark, killed by police; Yolanda Banks Reed, mother of Shaleem Tindle, slain by police; and Sagnicthe Salazar of the Oakland Sin Fronteras im/migrant rights May Day coalition. Producer Ryan Coogler's video message was played.

Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 retiree, chanted: "Immigrant rights are workers' rights and workers' rights are immigrant rights!"

Later a Sin Fronteras rally and march began at Oscar Grant Plaza in **downtown Oakland**. Large contingents from Bay Area im/migrant communities carried colorful banners showing diversity. The coalition's unity statement emphasized that "we march in solidarity with working people across all borders fighting against economic and social inequality."

— **Terri Kay**

In **Portland, Ore.**, a community-focused event in Lents Park included Filipino groups BAYAN, ICHRP-US and Gabriela, as well as members of the Stop the Killings speaking tour 2018, which is protesting the brutal Duterte regime in the Philippines. Members of Indigenous and im/migrant rights groups spoke and performed dances and songs. Free food was distributed to participants. WWP members set up a booth, distributed literature and formed closer ties with left organizations in the Portland area.

— **Josh Hanks**

MAY DAY IN PUERTO RICO

Mass marches combat austerity & privatization

Continued from page 1

ported — and multiple videos played on social media showed — that police tried to change agreed-upon routes and block free passage of the demonstrators. The police were hostile and insulted protesters from the beginning to the end of the action. In fact, days before, the capitalist press had tried to instill fear and intimidation among the population to prevent people from participating in the marches.

For weeks the police had complained that they had not been paid since Hurricane Maria and the authorities had abandoned them. They appealed to the people for solidarity and in large numbers called out sick with what’s known as the “blue flu.” While neglecting the wave of petty crimes, due to desperate conditions that plague the island, the police attended May Day in large numbers to fulfill their true role as agents of the state and protectors of the capitalists’ interests. More than 1,000 heavily armed agents were deployed. Masked riot squads were present.

At the march’s end, police provocatively and unjustifiably prevented the contingent of the Promises Are Over Collective, composed mostly of youth, from passing the building that houses the Fiscal Control Board’s office, on their way to the main stage. Some protesters responded by throwing marbles and bottles.

When Scot Barbés, the contingent’s leader, saw that the police were in attack formation, he began to negotiate with them. Officers promised to let the young people pass if they stopped throwing objects. The protesters complied — but an

hour later the police lashed out furiously against the crowd, throwing tear gas and hitting people with their batons.

Multiple photos and videos show elderly and young women with bloody heads, girls and boys who had been sprayed with pepper gas, and hundreds of police chasing youth to a residential area where they illegally invaded a house to arrest two students.

Several civil rights organizations are currently investigating the unconstitutional excessive presence of police and their actions — blocking routes, using chemical agents affecting children and the elderly, assaulting innocent people with rubber bullets, throwing pepper gas in residential areas, and arresting at least a dozen people without disclosing the location of where they were taken.

In the face of accusations of police violence, U.S. District Judge Gustavo Gelpi appointed a retired special agent to investigate the day’s events. Significantly, the Puerto Rican police force has been accused of recent abuses, and is currently undergoing a reform process conducted by the same judge.

Police entrapment has been part of the political history of Puerto Rico’s state agencies against the independence movement. It evokes the massacre of Cerro Maravilla in 1978, when an undercover officer, under false premises, took two young independentistas to that site. In an ambush, police shot them.

Background to May Day events

The unsustainable crisis of a bankrupt colony that decadent capitalism seeks

to restructure to satisfy its interests has provoked a resistance that is constantly showing signs of life — even though it has not yet fully cohered. U.S. and local powers in Puerto Rico have prepared their repressive forces to stifle that resistance.

That is the reason why former FBI agent Héctor Pesquera was hired — with a yearly salary of \$250,000 — as the leader of the new “National Security” umbrella in Puerto Rico. It includes police, fire, emergency and other agencies. Pesquera, who was totally ineffective in solving the civilian security crisis after the hurricane, has orchestrated these repressive operations against the people.

The fiscal plans presented on April 19 by the Fiscal Control Board amounted to a declaration of war against the Puerto Rican people.

Wars have sides. The island’s people cannot be expected to silently and passively comply with the draconian measures imposed by the U.S. Congress under the PROMESA law and its Fiscal Control Board, which represents U.S. millionaires.

FCB President José Carrion warned: “The new proposed Fiscal Plans outline the agenda for the transformative change that Puerto Rico needs.” (Noticel, April 19) However, Sergio Marxuach, director of Public Policy at the Center for a New Economy, says, “The Plan seems to underestimate the negative impact of the fiscal reform and overestimate the positive impact of the structural reforms.” (“The social cost of the Fiscal Plan,” 80grados.net)

‘Reforms’ = disaster for the Puerto Rican people

To carry out these reforms, the FCB presented fiscal plans for the government and agencies, including the Electric Power Authority, the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, and the University of Puerto Rico. The board proposed a 5-year plan with an estimated increase of \$2.3 billion in collections and spending cuts of \$9.9 billion.

Among the proposed measures are privatization of government agencies; closing schools and reducing payroll expenses in education; decreasing the subsidy to the University of Puerto Rico by more than \$200 million; consolidating offices and eliminating police headquarters; closing prisons and sending inmates to jails in the U.S.; and cutting economic

transfers to municipalities by more than \$175 million. There are many other measures, in addition to “consolidating” 114 agencies into 22.

Cruelly, the board would impose work requirements for poor people, including students, seniors and those with disabilities, to obtain Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. For government workers, the FCB would eliminate Christmas bonuses and payments for unjustified firings; reduce paid days for vacation or illness; and cut retirees’ pensions by at least 10 percent. Above all, the board seeks to repeal labor protection laws.

The effects would be disastrous for the future of the Puerto Rican nation. Marxuach’s article explains: “The six members of the Board that approved the Plan believe, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that Puerto Rico will become a neoliberal paradise. This is unlikely. It is more likely that we end up with an infernal dystopia: with more social polarization, unemployment, extreme poverty, criminality, child abuse, gender violence, abuse of controlled substances and suicides, and less schooling, life expectancy and social mobility.”

Carlos Alá Santiago Rivera, professor at the Graduate School of Public Administration and former director of the Institute of Labor Relations of the University of Puerto Rico, analyzed aspects of the FCB plan in a May 2 article, “Institutional Violence as a Governmental Proposal.” (claridadpuertorico.com)

Referring to the proposed labor reform that terminates collective bargaining, he wrote: “The systematic abandonment by the government of Puerto Rico of the traditional methods of collective conflict resolution, among them that of collective bargaining, is a call for the renewal of violence. ... If disputes between employers and workers can no longer be negotiated, then what remains is the confrontation of the parties in a conflict of difficult solution, violent, chaotic and endless.”

Additionally, Santiago Rivera stated: “Collective bargaining was understood as the appropriate means to peacefully resolve the causes that caused the war between the parties. In the absence of this instrument or its suspension and degradation today to a mere referent to the past: How exactly do we want to solve the labor and social problems that will arise?” □

Hep A outbreak amid water shutoffs



National march in Detroit against water shutoffs, June 2014.

By Kris Balderas Hamel
Detroit

The ongoing fight to stop mass water shutoffs has stepped up with a series of “Solidarity Saturdays” protests at the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department building.

Over 100,000 homes have had water services terminated since mass shutoffs started in 2014 during Detroit’s federal bankruptcy proceedings. In May the city began the process of shutting off water to another 17,000 residential homes. People’s organizations in Detroit are demanding an immediate stop to the denial of water and sanitation to thousands of families.

An outbreak of hepatitis A, spread by fecal-oral contamination, has hit Michigan since August 2016. Public health officials say it is one of the largest outbreaks in the U.S. since a vaccine was developed 20 years ago.

Over 500 cases were reported in the state in 2017, the highest number in the country. More than 800 cases and 25 deaths have occurred since the outbreak began. Health officials in Indiana have warned residents not to travel to neighboring Michigan without getting vaccinated for hep A.

Against this backdrop, organizations including the Moratorium Now! Coalition, People’s Water Board, Michigan Poor People’s Campaign and Michigan Welfare Rights Organization are calling on city officials to impose an immediate moratorium on all water shutoffs.

Solidarity Saturdays start at noon outside the DWSD building at 735 Randolph St. in downtown Detroit, with a short march to Campus Martius Park near Dan Gilbert’s Quicken Loans. Gilbert is the city’s main gentrifier and a chief architect of the destruction of Detroit’s neighborhoods due to mass home foreclosures caused by usurious and racist loans. □

HONOR ALL WORKERS IN MAY!

Build Workers World!

We marched on May 1, International Workers’ Day, to:

- Honor workers all over the globe
- Invite all workers to come out of the shadows
- Celebrate workers’ myriad contributions to our lives
- Unite in the struggle for our rights
- Claim our right to freedom from oppression and exploitation
- Say that capitalist greed, austerity and misery must be banished forever, along with the racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry that the bosses use to divide us
- Affirm the need for a revolutionary socialist future

If this is your vision, then join Workers World newspaper in creating that future. Join us as we continue to build a strong, independent voice that speaks loud and clear for the workers and oppressed around the world. We need your financial

support to grow the paper from a modest 12-page printed weekly edition, with daily web updates, into a robust paper with color photos, widespread national distribution and greater online capability.

We established the Workers World Supporter Program 41 years ago so readers could help promote working-class truth needed to make revolutionary change. Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give others for a donation of \$75 a year. For \$100 you also get a new publication or book from World View Forum. For \$300 (\$25 a month) or more, you get your pick of five books.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. □

PART 3

Indigenous women, the land vs. settler colonialism

This is Part 3 of a talk by Mahtowin Munro, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, at an International Working Women's Day forum on March 17 sponsored by the Boston branch of Workers World Party.

Some of you may have heard of an issue that Indigenous women have been raising throughout North America, which is that of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirits. That issue was named in Canada more than a dozen years ago. However, it has been the reality for Indigenous women throughout this hemisphere since the invaders first came here, but I don't have time to go into the long history of that here. Indigenous women and families have been trying to increase awareness of this issue by many means, ranging from campus awareness days to testifying at government hearings, to bringing information about this issue to women's marches.

When talking about missing and murdered Indigenous women, I want to note that it is really hard to come up with enough statistics. Indigenous people are often not counted for many things. The state of Massachusetts, for instance, does not count Native opioid deaths or many other things. There is no database of U.S. national statistics for missing and murdered Indigenous women, even though statistics are compiled for women of other races.

But I can give you some information: In the U.S., 84 percent of Native women experience violence and at least 56 percent of Native women experience sexual violence. (I think that number is actually much higher in reality.) While the government and cops often say that this is due to the violence of Native men, in fact it is non-Natives who commit the vast majority of this violence.

In Canada, First Nations, Metis and Inuit women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than other women. Indigenous women there believe there are likely over 6,000 missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, but do not have an exact number because there is still no national database. We do know that Indigenous women there are 4.3 percent of the population, but at least 16 percent of the murdered. In Manitoba, they are half of the murdered women.

The police often fail to investigate adequately, and many believe that the police themselves are sometimes the culprits. In the absence of proper investigations, families end up doing the best they can to search for and find missing family members, even dragging the Red River for bodies themselves. Many Indigenous youth in cities such as Winnipeg are at particular risk of violence because of the conditions of their being removed from their families and stuck into a dangerous and broken foster care system.

In the 1990s, it became clear that Mexican women in the Ciudad Juárez and El Paso area were being murdered in large numbers, many of them teens. The authorities did not care. Femicide — the killing of women — is a huge issue throughout what is now called "Latin America," and is all too common against women who are trying to protect their lands and water.

Violence against Indigenous women is rampant at "man camps" that pop up to house short-term workers in areas where there is intense resource extraction activity, such as at oil pipeline sites, fracking areas, mining camps, etc. As a result, the number of sexual assault, domestic

violence and sex trafficking incidents in North Dakota has tripled since 2008 because of all the man camps that sprang up there along the Bakken formation.

Melissa Merrick from Spirit Lake and Sadie Young Bird from Fort Berthold wrote recently: "Pipeline companies and the banks supporting them are essentially gambling Indigenous women for short-term profits. While bank and oil company executives worry about whether their children are going to make it into an Ivy League school, we worry about whether our children are going to make it home." ["How Banks Fund Oil Pipelines," Teen Vogue, March 14]

There's a lot of linkage between pipelines and these man camps and the violence that takes place against Indigenous women. This is something that has been raised very strongly as Indigenous movements have struggled against the Tar Sands or pipelines such as Dakota Access, Keystone XL or any of these other projects.

#metoo #timesup

Monica Moorehead mentioned tonight that a Black woman originated #MeToo years ago, although now Black women have been placed on the periphery, and that has also been on my mind. Whose stories are being centered right now in media coverage of #MeToo? Actresses certainly should not be assaulted. But I noticed Hollywood and the media were not talking about the fact that a young, very talented Blackfeet actress named Misty Upham was raped at the [2013] Golden Globe Awards — literally raped there by one of Weinstein's people, who was cheered on by other men. She ended up dying under suspicious circumstances in 2014. [tinyurl.com/y9ygp20]

There's little coverage about sexual assault in oppressed and working-class communities, where this has been part of our lives for generations. So when people are having these discussions, we need to raise all of this, including the sexualized exploitation of immigrant workers.

I hear some so-called feminists call for more police and prisons when they talk



WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Mahtowin Munro speaking.

about how to end gender violence. People who call for these solutions are not my leaders, and I don't think they are your leaders either. We need to say that eradicating rape culture and organizing against gender violence does not need to mean fighting for more cops and prisons, because we know what the ramifications of that are. We need to point out the role of imperialism in gender violence worldwide and call bullshit when settler countries such as the U.S. say they are going to war to liberate women.

Decolonization

I believe that ending settler colonialism as well as capitalism needs to be a key part of ending gender violence, too.

Our bodies are our homes that we have a right to protect, just as we have every right to defend the land and water. To stop being commodified and exploited, we need more than reforms. We need to overthrow capitalism so that we and the Earth can stop being commodified in the pursuit of profits. I personally believe we need socialism as an economic system and that we also must decolonize from settler colonialism.

Anytime there has been a socialist revolution, one of the most important things that should happen is to begin to look at everything within the society, whether it is education, farming, child care, housing or health care — every aspect of society — and think about how people's views and practices have been informed by the previous economic and social systems. There's always been what should be an ongoing process of trying to change those things and clear out people's minds from

all the nonsense that capitalism has put into our brains. We need also to look at how every aspect of our lives has been influenced by settler colonialism.

Decolonization is already beginning to happen now for Indigenous peoples. It is about "resisting the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies and lands. It is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation." (Waziyatawin and Michael Yellow Bird) And, I would say, liberation for all of us, because all of us are poisoned by settler colonization and capitalism. Every aspect of our lives and thought has been impacted.

Decolonization is something that Indigenous people are talking about a lot as the path to recovering ourselves, our land and escaping settler colonialism. It is about taking back our cultures and laws, minds and families, relationships with our lands and each other, and not collaborating with settler colonialism.

Fighting against gender violence including violence against trans and Two Spirit people is an important part of decolonization. Within our own communities, we have important work to do to bring Two Spirit people back into the center where they belong.

Ultimately, decolonization is going to lead to the return of control of the land to Indigenous peoples. It has to. You can't have a revolution and not deal with the land question. The land question has primacy. It's also important to understand that different Indigenous nations may make different choices about what they choose to do economically and politically.

This may not necessarily mean everybody non-Indigenous needs to leave. Sometimes settlers panic about the return of the land and ask, "Are we all going to be herded onto reservations?" No.

But the return of control of the land does mean that Indigenous nations can finally exercise the right to decide what happens. It does mean there's going to be an end to pipelines and fracking and all this other destruction, and we might have at least a hope of saving our Earth. And I assure you that Indigenous women will continue to be leading the way. □

PHILADELPHIA

Protest grows against Israeli apartheid

This week the campaign to stop The Philadelphia Orchestra from performing in apartheid Israel was debated on the letters page of this city's mainstream newspaper, the Philadelphia Inquirer. On May 5, the fifth weekly protest in front of the Kimmel Center was larger than ever.

In addition to signs, banners and chants, some participants enlivened the protest with a Dabke dance. "Philly Don't Orchestrate Apartheid" and other slogans were chalked on the side-



walk for concertgoers to read as they entered the venue. Some demonstrators came after attending a panel discussion hosted by Philly Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions on the University of Pennsylvania campus. For more info: tinyurl.com/yde6rvbt/.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Central & South American crises made in USA

The reactionary, imperialist U.S. government is creating a new crisis for countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Part of it comes from Washington's intention to end temporary protected status for hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled civil war, state violence and natural disasters.

TPS status allowed them to stay in this country due to the dire conditions they would face if forced to return to their homelands. The average length of time they have lived in the U.S. is 22 years, meaning they have put down roots that would be terribly painful and disruptive to sever.

For instance, Hondurans living here under TPS have given birth to about 50,000 children, who automatically became citizens. Forcing their parents to leave would tear apart many families.

Immigration rights groups say that ending TPS will affect 57,000 Hondurans. Already, 200,000 Salvadorans have had their status revoked, as have tens of thousands of Nicaraguans and Haitians. Once a person's status is revoked, the time by which they have to leave varies by their country of origin.

Actions by the U.S., including support for right-wing governments and military forces in the region, have made returning home terribly dangerous for many exiles.

This is nothing new. Washington and the Pentagon have for over a century promoted right-wing dictatorships in the region that take their cut of the huge profits U.S. corporations reap from oil, other minerals and crops like bananas.

Historically, Honduras has been under the heel of United Fruit Co., which morphed into United Brands and is now Chiquita Brands — all carrying out the same murderous exploitation of Honduran banana workers.

And in 1956, two years after the CIA overthrew the Jacobo Arbenz government in Guatemala, Juan José Arévalo, the previous president, wrote this to the people of the U.S.:

"From our southern lands, the river of millions began to flow northward, and every year it increased. The United States became great while progress in Latin America was brought to a halt. And when anything or anyone tried to interfere with the bankers or the companies, use was made of the Marines. Panama, 1903. Nicaragua, 1909. Mexico and Haiti, 1914. Santo Domingo, 1916.

"Along with the military apparatus, a new system of local 'revolutions' was manipulated — financed by the White House or by Wall Street, which were now the same. This procedure continued right up to the internation-



PHOTO: LIDA PERDOMO

May Day, Union Square, New York City

al scandal of the assault on Guatemala in 1954, an assault direct by Mr. Foster Dulles, with the okay of Mr. Foster Dulles, with the okay of Mr. Eisenhower, who was your President at that time. ...

"We do not want to continue down this slope that takes us straight to colonial status, however it may be disguised. ... The North American example has been disastrous to us and has horrified us. We know that a government intimately linked to business and receiving favors from business loses its capacity to strive for the greatest possible happiness for the greatest number of its people. When businessmen become rulers, it is no longer possible to speak of social justice. ..." (From Arévalo's book, "The Shark and the Sardines.")

How familiar this sounds! U.S. imperialism's relations with most of South America have not changed since then.

Washington is still subsidizing counterrevolutionaries in Venezuela and Nicaragua. Vice President Pence is calling for the Organization of American States to suspend Venezuela, while sabotaging their economy and telling the country not to hold upcoming elections. Honduras is in the grips of a violent, U.S.-supported regime that rigged the recent election and has unleashed terror against progressives, workers and the Indigenous peoples.

Only Cuba has been able to decisively defeat both internal and external counterrevolution, thanks to its socialist revolution that completely smashed the Batista dictatorship and built organs of people's power.

More than ever, for ourselves and for the millions of people suffering in the Americas, we must fight to expose and eradicate the insidious plots hatched by Wall Street profiteers and carried out by their attack dogs in Washington. □

Green Berets fight proxy war against Yemen

By Chris Fry

The New York Times published an explosive report May 3 that the Pentagon has stationed a unit of Green Berets in Saudi Arabia on the Yemen border. Their mission is to "locate and destroy caches of ballistic missiles and launch sites that Houthi rebels in Yemen are using to attack Riyadh and other Saudi cities."

Since the missile launchers are small and mobile, it is likely that the U.S. Special Forces unit will enter Yemen to battle Houthi units if they have not already done so, despite Pentagon denials. A May 1 report in IHS Jane's Defence Weekly states: "The United States Transportation Command issued a request for information on 30 April for third parties that are capable of undertaking aircraft- and helicopter-based personnel recovery, casualty evacuation, and medical evacuation duties within the Central Command area of responsibility in general, and within Yemen in particular."

Why would the Pentagon contract with corporations to evacuate troops from Yemen if it did not plan to send forces into that embattled country?

The Houthis are a Shiite Muslim grouping in Yemen that took over the government center in the city of Sanaa in 2014. They ousted pro-U.S. President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled to Saudi Arabia.

This new escalation, states the Times report, appears "to contradict Pentagon statements that American military assistance to the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen is limited to aircraft refueling, logistics and general intelligence sharing." Once again the Pentagon and the White House have launched a secret illegal war without congressional approval.

Saudi Arabia began a devastating air war against the people of Yemen in 2015 after the U.S. gave its support, according to the Times: "Officials said American support for the Saudi-led coalition against Houthi rebels, a campaign that includes the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt, was initially outlined in a 2015 document known as the Rice memo, named after Susan E. Rice, who was then Mr. Obama's national security adviser."

Lasting more than three years, that bombing campaign has killed at least 10,000 people and injured more than 50,000. The Saudi regime, with its Gulf State allies, has prevented vital food and medical supplies from reaching Yemen's 28 million people by blockading or capturing that country's ports.

Reuters corporate news agency opines: "Winning and keeping control of Yemen's ports in the Red Sea, no matter how small, is of paramount importance to the UAE, a key partner in the Saudi-led coalition that has overseen the effort to wrest the coast from the Iran-aligned Houthis as part of a strategy to box them in around the capital, Sana.

"Dotted along one of the most important trade routes for oil tankers heading from the Middle East to Europe, the ports — also vital entry points for Yemen's food imports and aid — are too strategic to lose." (reuters.com, April 9)

In December 2017 the Saudi regime promised to ease the blockade of Yemen, but that has proved to be a lie. "Yemen's rebel-held port of Hodeidah, a lifeline for the war-ravaged country dependent on food imports, remains 'a wasteland' three months after a Saudi-led coalition alleged to have lifted its long-running blockade." (alarby.co.uk, March 25)

This war has caused unbelievable suf-

fering for the people of Yemen, one of the poorest countries on the planet. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are 17.8 million food-insecure people in Yemen and around 7 million people on the brink of famine.

OCHA's Humanitarian Needs Overview found that an average of 65 people have been killed or injured daily since the escalation of the conflict, with children making up 13 percent of the Yemeni casualties. According to the agency, 16 million Yemenis lack access to "safe water and sanitation" resulting in an estimated 1 million cases of cholera. There are 2 million internally displaced people. (axios.com, Jan. 23)

Yemen's Houthi President Salah al-Samad was assassinated April 21 by a Saudi air strike. Since the U.S. refuses to recognize the Houthi government, corporate media gave this little attention, even though Pentagon complicity with this attack would violate U.S. and international law.

Increase in secret deployments of U.S. Special Forces

Stationing Green Berets at the Saudi border is the latest in an increase in secret deployments of U.S. Special Forces. These are now stationed in 149 countries, 75 percent of the world's nations. "General Raymond Thomas, the chief of U.S. Special Operations Command, offered some clues about the planetwide reach of America's most elite troops. 'We operate and fight in every corner of the world,' he boasted. 'Rather than a mere "break-glass-in-case-of-war" force, we are now proactively engaged across the "battle space" of the Geographic Combatant Commands providing key integrating and enabling capabilities to support their campaigns and operations.'" (truthdig.com, Dec. 18, 2017)

In May 2017, while visiting Saudi Arabia, Trump signed a whopping \$110 billion weapons deal with the Saudi regime. This March, the Pentagon added a \$670 million sale in anti-tank missiles and spare parts for aircraft and helicopters. (presstv.com, May 3)

When analyzing this new escalation by U.S. imperialism, it should be remembered that the purpose stated by al-Qaida for its 9/11 attacks was to remove U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia.

U.S. out of the Middle East! □

Hundreds rally

By Dawn O'Neal
Decatur, Ga.

Hundreds turned out April 21 at the courthouse here to rally for Anthony Hill. The march and rally were called by the recently formed coalition, Alliance for Black Lives, which includes the Atlanta Black Lives Matter chapter, the NAACP, Georgia Alliance for Social Justice, teens from March for Our Lives as well as other organizations.

The goal was to remind the community of Hill's violent death at the hands of police. Hill had served two tours of duty in Afghanistan in the U.S. Air Force. As a result, he developed post-traumatic stress disorder and was also diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

He turned to the Veterans Administration for help, but his prescribed medications brought on terrible side effects. Hill's creative and outgoing personality, which made him a favorite with the children who lived in his apartment complex, was



Find it at: www.workers.org/books

A VOICE FROM HARPERS FERRY

Osborne P. Anderson's account of the raid on Harper's Ferry appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War. Includes essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland.



UE welcomes Korean peace declaration

Pittsburgh
April 28, 2018

UE [United Electrical Workers] welcomes the “Panmunjom Declaration” agreement between the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), in which the two countries agreed to a goal of formally ending the Korean War with a peace treaty by the end of this year, immediately ending all hostilities on the Korean Peninsula, and complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

In the early 1950s, delegates to UE conventions called for negotiations to

end the Korean War. Today we urge the U.S. government, which along with China will be a party to formal talks to end the war, to pursue the path of peace and diplomacy, withdraw its nuclear pre-emptive strike policy, and discontinue military exercises in the region involving nuclear strategic assets. UE delegates have consistently supported this approach as part of our convention resolution, “For Jobs, Peace, and a Pro-Worker Foreign Policy.”

The current South Korean government has been instrumental in achieving this declaration. It was elected as a result of vibrant but peaceful demonstrations against the previous corrupt president

led largely by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). We salute the KCTU for their role in this triumph of diplomacy over warmongering.

In this moment of peace and reconciliation, we call on South Korean President Moon Jae-in to release KCTU President Han Sang-gyun from prison. Such an act will demonstrate the South Korean commitment to democratic freedoms, such as the freedom of assembly, for which President Han was jailed by the previous administration. Only with President Han’s release can a democratic trade union movement thrive as part of a peaceful Korean Peninsula.

The decades of military tensions in the

Korean Peninsula have diverted resources away from meeting urgent human needs, not only in the Koreas but in the U.S. and Japan as well. We agree with the Japanese union federation Zenroren, with whom we have had a decadeslong relationship of solidarity, that war is the biggest threat to the labor movement’s historic task of protecting decent work and living for all working people.

For peace, jobs, and justice for all!
Peter Knowlton, General President;
Andrew Dinkelaker, Secretary-Treasurer;
Gene Elk, Director of Organization.

MAY 14

Poor People’s Campaign begins Days of Action

By Kris Balderas Hamel
Detroit

The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, initiated by the Rev. William J. Barber II from North Carolina, kicks off on May 14. On that date, and on the following five Mondays, activists in 32 states will descend on their state capitals for Days of Action with mass rallies and civil disobedience.

Each Monday’s action will focus on a different aspect of the war on the workers and the poor. The themes for the Days of Action are:

- **May 14:** Women, the “Me Too” movement, LGBTQ+ struggle, people with disabilities, youth and child poverty, and the right to education for all.
- **May 21:** Connecting systemic racism and economic justice with voting rights and just immigration.
- **May 28:** Veterans, the war economy, militarism and gun violence.
- **June 4:** Right to health, and justice in health care, ecological devastation, climate change, water and fracking.
- **June 11:** “Everybody’s got the right to live” — jobs, living wages, guaranteed income, housing, education and social services.

- **June 18:** “A New and Unsettling Force” — challenging the country’s moral narrative with a fusion movement rising up.

In Michigan, different organizations are assuming responsibility for organizing a particular Day of Action. For example, the Moratorium Now! Coalition is pulling together groups to organize events on June 11 for “Everybody’s got the right to live.”

An important aspect of the Poor People’s Campaign has been the use of people’s culture to advance the struggle. In Michigan, weekly meetings of the Art Is Resistance Committee have taken place, with musicians, poets and other cultural workers bringing their contributions to the struggle.

The Poor People’s Campaign has published a comprehensive list of demands in its “Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Poor People’s Moral Agenda.” These include the right to a job at a living wage; defense of unions; an end to all welfare cuts; and guarantee of the right to housing for all.

The program is anti-racist and encompasses the rights of im/migrants, women, the LGBTQ community and people



Poor People’s Campaign at Detroit May Day rally, May 1.

WWW PHOTO: KRIS BALDERAS HAMEL

with disabilities. It is against war and militarism and for using Pentagon funds for human needs.

The declaration calls for expansion of Medicaid and Medicare until national health care is achieved. It avows that education is a right and calls for free tuition at colleges and universities and cancellation of all student debt.

For more information on the Poor People’s Campaign and to join the actions in your state, go to poorpeoplescampaign.org. □

National caravan to stop the killings in the Philippines

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

A delegation of Philippine educators, activists and survivors of human rights violations is traveling through the U.S. with the “Stop the Killings” Caravan. Their goal is to educate people and develop broad support against the atrocities and deaths of over 14,000 Filipino people carried out by the U.S.-backed dictatorship of President Rodrigo Duterte.

The delegation is calling for social and economic equity, a return of farmers’ land, freedom from foreign intervention, and an end to all forms of U.S. military aid and support for fascism in the Philippines.

About 100 demonstrators joined Portland’s Stop the Killings Caravan rally at Waterfront Park on May 4. Speakers called for an end to the brutal atrocities and murder of Filipino people. They marched to the federal courthouse and across the Hawthorne Bridge, where they dropped “Stop the Killings” banners on both sides.

The caravan began in Washington,



PHOTO: DIEGO G DIAZ

Demonstrators joined Portland’s Stop the Killings Caravan rally at Waterfront Park on May 4 to protest Philippines President Duterte’s U.S.-backed dictatorship.

D.C., stopping in five major cities and completing the tour in the Bay Area from May 6 through May 9 and in Los Angeles on May 10-11.

For more information, contact the U.S. International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines & Malaya Movement at ichrp@gmail.com. Donations can be made at gofundme.com/stop-the-killings-caravan. □

GEORGIA for Anthony Hill

severely impacted. He had a long awaited appointment at the VA on March 10, 2015, to review his meds and treatment.

A day before that appointment, Robert Olsen of the DeKalb County Police Department arrived at a Chamblee apartment complex following a call from Hill’s neighbors asking for help for Anthony. He was seen naked, climbing down from his second floor balcony and crawling in the parking lot in front of his building.

Within two minutes of arriving on the scene, Olsen shot and killed Hill. Witnesses say Hill had his hands up and outstretched as he walked toward Olsen.

Although equipped with pepper spray, a taser, billy club and, of course, his police cruiser, Olsen claimed he feared for his life when he shot and killed the unarmed young Black vet.

Olsen was indicted by a DeKalb County grand jury in January 2016 on multiple charges, including felony murder.

Hill’s family and friends have been waiting for over two years for the trial



PHOTO: DAWN O’NEAL

to be scheduled. Pretrial motions were set to begin on April 23, and the April 21 rally was intended to help pack the court. It was announced the day before the solidarity event, however, that legal proceedings have been postponed until late May.

Undeterred, the supporters of justice for Anthony Hill took to the streets of downtown Decatur, ending their march at the courthouse where Olsen will face murder charges.

In another act of anti-racist solidarity, the march stopped for a short protest and took a knee in front of a local Starbucks, highlighting the recent examples of racial profiling that took place at not just one but several Starbucks stores around the country. □

PUERTO RICO EN 1RO DE MAYO:



PHOTO: BRYANT MARTINEZ

el Pueblo Unido traza las líneas de combate

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

El pasado 1ro de mayo se expuso claramente la extrema situación de devastación política en el archipiélago puertorriqueño. Se trazaron las líneas de combate. Se hicieron patentes los intereses que la administración del gobernador Ricardo Roselló – y la de sus antecesores tanto Populares como Penepeístas – han querido disfrazar. Crudamente se mostró la cara de la colonia a merced de los intereses del imperio.

Exitoso Paro Nacional

Desde temprano en la mañana del martes –un día corriente de trabajo en Puerto Rico - se veían las calles desiertas. Plaza Las Américas, el centro comercial más importante del área metropolitana cerró, así como todos los negocios y bancos en el centro financiero la Milla de Oro, lugar donde se concentrarían miles de boricuas respondiendo al llamado que el Pueblo Unido en Contra de la Venta y Privatización de los Servicios Públicos hiciera semanas antes. Ya esas calles desiertas pudieron constatar que el Paro Nacional fue un rotundo éxito. Quienes no acudieron a las manifestaciones, siguieron las orientaciones de las organizaciones convocantes: No ir al trabajo, ni a la escuela, no comprar, no hacer ninguna transacción bancaria, en fin, intentar paralizar la economía por un día.

Desde varios lugares salieron marchas que confluían en la Milla de Oro. Llegaron incluso desde Culebra y Vieques. Estudiantes, maestras/os, colectivos de mujeres, trabajadores de diversos sindicatos, madres, padres, comunidades ambientalistas, niñas y niños, ciudadanas/os de la tercera edad, familias enteras, en fin, todos los sectores de la población puertorriqueña se unieron. En el sur y en el oeste de la isla se convocaron manifestaciones para quienes no pudieran viajar hasta la zona metropolitana.

Actuación criminal de la policía

Todas las marchas se condujeron animadas, con militantes consignas coreadas y en completo orden. Sin embargo, según los informes de varias personas en el lugar y de múltiples videos propagados por las redes sociales, la policía intentó cambiar rutas e imposibilitar el paso de las/os marchantes. Todo con una actitud hostil e insultando a las/os manifestantes desde el principio hasta el final. De hecho, ya días anteriores, la prensa capitalista había estado tratando de infundir miedo para intimidar a la población a que tomara parte en las marchas.

La policía por semanas ha estado quejándose de que desde el huracán María no se les paga y se les tiene abandonados, apelando a la solidaridad del pueblo y ausentándose masivamente con lo que se ha con-

ocido como el “blue flú”, descuidando la ola de criminalidad que azota la isla. Ese 1ro de mayo se presentó en cantidades para cumplir con su verdadero papel: protector de los intereses capitalistas. Más de mil agentes fuertemente armados fueron desplegados, incluyendo diferentes escuadrones de fuerza de choque enmascarados.

Al final de la marcha, cuando el contingente del Colectivo Se Acabaron las Promesas, compuesto mayormente de jóvenes, trataron de pasar frente al edificio que alberga la Junta de Supervisión Fiscal y llegar a la tarima principal, la policía injustificadamente les impidió el paso con actitud provocadora. A lo cual algunos manifestantes respondieron tirándoles canicas y botellas. Al ver que la policía se puso en formación de ataque, el principal dirigente del contingente, Scot Barbés, inició negociaciones con el cuerpo policial que prometió dejarles pasar si cesaban de arrojarles objetos, lo cual hicieron los manifestantes. Pese a esto, la policía, luego de casi una hora, arremetió furiosamente contra la multitud, lanzándole gases lacrimógenos y dando macanazos.

En múltiples fotos y videos se veían mujeres mayores y jóvenes con cabezas ensangrentadas, niñas y niños rociados con gases, cientos de policías persiguiendo a jóvenes hasta una urbanización donde ilegalmente invadieron una casa para detener a dos estudiantes.

Varias organizaciones de derechos civiles ahora están investigando esta actuación de la policía. Entre las violaciones cometidas indican: exceso de presencia policial, lo que es inconstitucional; bloqueando rutas; uso de agentes químicos afectando a niños y personas mayores;

agrediendo con balas de gomas a personas que no cometían delito alguno; lanzando gases en zonas residenciales y arrestando al menos a una docena de personas sin divulgar a dónde les llevaban.

Ante acusaciones por varios sectores, el juez federal Gustavo Gelpi ha designado a un agente especial retirado para que lleve a cabo la investigación de los sucesos ocurridos ese día. Es importante destacar que la Policía de Puerto Rico ha estado acusada de abusos en el pasado reciente y actualmente está bajo un proceso de reforma a cargo de este mismo juez.

Este entrampamiento policial ha sido parte de la historia política de Puerto Rico en contra del movimiento independentista y hace recordar los sucesos del Cerro Maravilla en 1978 cuando dos jóvenes independentistas fueron llevados allí por un oficial encubierto bajo falsas premisas, y en emboscada, fueron asesinados a tiros por la policía.

¿Por qué? ¿Cuales son los antecedentes?

La insostenible crisis de una colonia en bancarota, que el capitalismo en decadencia quiere reestructurar para satisfacer sus intereses, ha provocado una resistencia que, si bien aún no se ha aglutinado del todo, está dando constantes señales de vida. Para ahogar esa resistencia, los poderes fácticos criollos y estadounidenses han preparado sus fuerzas represivas. Esa es la razón de la contratación del ex-agente del FBI, Héctor Pesquera, como dirigente de la nueva sombrilla de “Seguridad Nacional” que abarca desde la policía, bomberos, emergencias, etc., con un sueldo de \$250.000. Pesquera, totalmente ineffectivo para solucionar las crisis de seguridad ciudadana pos María, ha sido sin embargo el cerebro de estas operaciones de represión del pueblo.

Los planes fiscales presentados el 19 de abril por la Junta de Control Fiscal han sido una verdadera declaración de guerra contra el pueblo boricua. Y las guerras tienen bandos. No se puede esperar que el pueblo acate silenciosa y pasivamente unas medidas tan draconianas impuestas por el Congreso de los EUA bajo la ley PROMESA y su Junta de Control Fiscal, representando a millonarios estadounidenses.

El mismo presidente de la JCF, José Carrión advirtió: “Los Nuevos Planes Fiscales propuestos trazan la agenda para el cambio transformador que Puerto Rico necesita”. (Noticel, 19 de abril) Sin embargo, a juicio de Sergio Marxuach, director de Política Pública del Centro para una Nueva Economía, “el Plan parece subestimar el impacto negativo de la reforma fiscal y sobreestimar el impacto positivo de las reformas

estructurales”. (El costo social del Plan Fiscal, 80grados.net)

Pero, ¿a qué cambios se refiere? Para estas reformas, la JCF presentó los planes fiscales para el gobierno y agencias como la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica, Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados, la Universidad de Puerto Rico y otras. Proponen una planificación a cinco años donde estiman un aumento en recaudos de \$2.296 millones y recortes en gastos por \$9.972 millones.

Entre las medidas propuestas están: privatizaciones de agencias, eliminar bono de navidad y las mesadas por despido injustificado; reducir días por vacaciones o enfermedad; condicionar el beneficio del Programa de Asistencia Nutricional al trabajo; condicionar alza de salario mínimo; cerrar escuelas y reducir gastos de nómina en educación; consolidar oficinas y eliminar cuarteles de la policía; cerrar prisiones y enviar confinados a cárceles en EUA; reducir (al menos) 10 por ciento en la nómina de los jubilados; reducir en más de \$200 millones la aportación a la Universidad de Puerto Rico; reducir en más de \$175 millones las transferencias a municipios, y muchas otras medidas más, además de “consolidar” 114 agencias en 22 y sobre todo, derogar las leyes de protección laboral.

De más está decir los nefastos efectos que esto supondría para el futuro de la nación boricua. Citando el artículo de Marxuach, “Los seis miembros de la Junta que aprobaron el Plan creen, a pesar de toda la evidencia al contrario, que Puerto Rico se convertirá en un paraíso neoliberal. Eso es poco probable. Más factible es que acabemos con una distopía infernal: con más polarización social, desempleo, pobreza extrema, criminalidad, maltrato de menores, violencia de género, abuso de sustancias controladas y suicidios; y menos escolaridad, expectativa de vida y movilidad social”.

Y podemos terminar con estas reflexiones que Carlos Alá Santiago Rivera, Catedrático de la Escuela Graduada de Administración Pública y Ex-Director del Instituto de Relaciones del Trabajo de la UPR escribió el 2 de mayo en el periódico Claridad. En el interesante artículo “Violencia Institucional como propuesta gubernamental”, refiriéndose sobre todo a la propuesta Reforma Laboral que anula la negociación colectiva, dijo: “El abandono sistemático del gobierno de Puerto Rico de los métodos tradicionales de resolución de conflictos colectivos, entre estos el de la negociación colectiva, es un llamado a la renovación de la violencia..... Si las controversias entre los patronos y los trabajadores ya no se pueden negociar, entonces lo que resta es la confrontación de las partes en un conflicto de difícil solución, violento, caótico e interminable.... La negociación colectiva se entendía como el medio adecuado para resolver pacíficamente las causas que provocaban la guerra entre las partes. En ausencia de ese instrumento o ante su suspensión y degradación hoy a un mero referente del pasado: ¿cómo exactamente se quieren resolver los problemas laborales y sociales que surgirán?”. (claridadpuertorico.com) □

TRIBUNAL INTERNACIONAL
sobre
los Crímenes de EUA contra
PUERTO RICO

27 de octubre de 2018

HOLYROOD CHURCH – IGLESIA SANTA CRUZ
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Tribunal para presentar cargos contra EUA
por 120 años de colonialismo, con todas
las manifestaciones de ese crimen inicial.

Acusamos a EUA:

De la destrucción de la economía de PR; de la represión de su lucha histórica de liberación,
del movimiento independentista y sus héroes y heroínas libertarias;

De la imposición de un modelo económico parasitario que no intentaba desarrollar la auto-
suficiencia, incluyendo la alimentaria tan básica para el mínimo sustento;

De la imposición de una ciudadanía que
facilitaba el flujo de mano de obra barata y
carne de cañón en sus cruentas guerras;

De la imposición de una deuda ilegal y
una Junta de Control Fiscal que representa
a los mismos que causaron esta debacle,
como lobos cuidando ovejas;

De la crisis actual – luego de los devastadores
huracanes Irma y María – que ha sido
incrementada enormemente por las políticas coloniales
que priorizan el capital antes que las necesidades
humanas básicas y la salud del planeta;

Acusamos al gobierno de EUA de negligencia
criminal por su respuesta a la devastación de los
huracanes, forzando a un pueblo a emigrar de su patria,
con un siniestro plan de reestructurar Puerto Rico.

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