To battle anti-labor law

Workers in France rise up

By G. Dunkel

Throughout France, 300,000 people poured into the streets on May 26 demanding withdrawal of a reactionary labor law recently rammed through the National Assembly. The law significantly weakens protections French workers have won through decades of struggle.

This was the eighth day of nationally coordinated protests against the law within the last three months. The coalition of militant labor unions calling the demonstration included the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), Workers Force (FO), the Unitary Union Federation (FSU), Solidarity (Solidaire), the National Union of French Students (UNEF), the National High School Union (UNL) and the Independent and Democratic Federation of High Schools (FIDL).

The coalition has issued a call for a single, nationwide demonstration in Paris on June 14, the day the French Senate takes up the law.

The second largest French union, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), has broken with most of the French labor movement, and is supporting the anti-worker law and the government.

Besides protests in the street on May 26, there were numerous strikes, blockades and occupations. One group of marchers in Paris chanted: “All together, general strike! Who are the real hooligans? The state and the bosses.” (Telegram, May 26)

In France, labor unions are permitted to strike over political issues.

All eight French oil refineries were struck. Refinery workers, truck drivers, and dock and unemployed workers blockaded some fuel depots. Forty percent of France’s gas stations went dry, especially stations around Paris and those in the north and west.

Dockworkers went out and French television pointedly showed tankers waiting offshore because they couldn’t be unloaded.

Workers at France’s 19 nuclear power plants struck, which is their constitutional right. The workers did not shut down reactors or leave them unsafely attended. Instead, they dramatically reduced the power produced. The plants generate about 80 percent of French electricity.

Air traffic controllers also struck, shutting down flights at key Paris airports. About a third of French train operators went out, severely limiting train traffic.

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Solidarity, the main union of Paris Metro subway system workers, called for an unlimited strike to start June 10 — the first day of the Euro 2016 soccer competition.

Workers attract staunch support

Despite strikes, blockades, fuel shortages and protests disrupting the lives of millions, 65 to 72 percent of the French people support the protests and oppose the an-

Continued on page 11
Capitalism, in brief

By Gary Wilson

A short primer on capitalism:

1. The current crisis is a crisis of capitalism. It is not a crisis of socialism or any other economic system. Only capitalism has this kind of crisis that leads to people losing their jobs, their homes and even the food on their table.

2. While greedy individuals and corporations are involved, their greed and corruption did not cause the crisis. Capitalist crises are not caused by bad individuals or evil corporations. It is only during a crisis that these bad sorts are exposed, in the scramble to find blame. Why don’t the media blame capitalism? They should, because it is capitalism that causes these economic crises. Crisis is built into the capitalist system.

3. The driving force of capitalism is profits. Profits rule and capitalists must constantly expand their profits or they fail. Everything is produced for profit, not for need. So a crisis is reached when profits fall below the rate demanded by the capitalists or the bankers (the financiers and capitalists).

4. A capitalist crisis is the result of an economic system. This is not a natural force like a flood or a tornado. It can be controlled and even reversed. But not through capitalist measures. Only by replacing capitalism with socialism can this crisis be truly ended.

5. That can be done, but not easily. Not overnight. But throwing out capitalism is the only solution possible. Let’s do it!

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

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

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism, gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right to self-determination. Fighting exploitation is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles and imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

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Verizon strike ends after 45-day workers’ struggle

By Carl Lewis

May 29 — On May 27, some 39,000 union workers at Verizon ended a strike that started on April 13, after almost 10 months. Fruitless negotiations between two unions and the capitalist communica-
tion giant. Verizon made more than $4 billion in profit in the preceding three years.

Both the Communications Workers (CWA) and the International Electrical Workers (IBEW), who called the strike jointly, are saying that the 45-day strike has brought “huge gains” for the workforce as Verizon was forced to back off from nearly all of its concessionary demands.

The strike, which blanketed the East Coast from Massachusetts to Virginia, was one of the longest in recent U.S. labor history. The unions’ defiance of the trans-
national company in demanding their rights and defending their livelihoods has inspired workers around the country. According to the CWA, Verizon dropped its most egregious demands and has committed to creating 1,300 new union positions at key call centers.

A small group of unionized wireless retail workers in New York and Mas-
sachusetts are now covered under the contract. This lays the foundation for organizing the large number of low-paid wireless workers. A significant percent-
age of workers at AT&T wireless retail stores are already under CWA collective bargaining agreements.

In exchange for agreeing to hire new call center workers, the company has greater flexibility in re-routing calls between specific locations. There are changes to the health care plans, which, according to the unions, will save Verizon money. They will increase workers’ costs.

Verizon workers are to return to their jobs on June 1, the date when the agree-
ment will be discussed in full and the ratification vote will begin. It will be im-
portant, in the next few weeks, to listen to workers on the rank and file has to say about the new contract.

Why government intervened

The strike ended with a tentative agreement after the intervention of U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez. The agreement after the intervention of U.S.

The strike was also called over Veri-
zon’s attempts to eliminate the landline business — including forcing consum-
ers to switch to more expensive wireless products — which would drastically re-
duce the amount of work for union tech-
nicians. Verizon has ignored its commit-
ments to install FiOS (fiber optic service), prioritizing instead the expansion of fast-
er-growing, more profitable divisions.

Solidarity and unity

In early May, Verizon cut health ben-
efits for strikers because they did not accept its wide-ranging demands. The unions fought back by picketing Verizon retail stores all over the country — not just in states affected by the strike.

The striking unions reached out to oth-
er unions to build solidarity. Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Driv-
ers Union, for example, walked the picket line and attended every solidarity rally. The CWA supported Food and Com-
merce Local 473 when it voted to strike Kroger’s southern supermarkets.

Offshoring jobs from call centers re-
 mains a big issue. Already, 5,000 call center jobs have been moved overseas, including to the Philippines. Some 13,000 strikers work at call centers.

A CWA delegation that went to the Philippines in May to investigate the outsourcing of call center jobs found out from workers there that they were being paid poverty wages of $8.78 an hour. At Verizon’s headquarters at Alabang, near Manila, an armed security squad with automatic weapons confronted the deleg-
ation, which was traveling with a rep-
resentative of UNI, a global labor federa-
tion, and KUM, a Filipino union.

In a report signed by nine IBEW busi-
ness agents, the union stated, “We have emerged from an ideological war with a corporation that believed that this was their opportunity to break the Union. … When faced with the elimination of our medical coverage the company thought that would be a crushing blow; believ-
ing we’d fall apart. When that didn’t happen the Verizon brass realized that they had severely underestimated our Solidarity.” (Ibewed222.org, May 30)

Thousands march on McDonald’s for $15/hr and a union

By Workers World Staff

Communication Workers Local 2204 hosted a rally May 28 in Roanoke, Va. Union members and labor and community 

Backers held daily picket lines during 

Despite heavy rains and winds, fast 
food workers and their supporters con-
verged May 23 on McDonald’s corporate 
headquarters in Oak Brook, Ill., a 
western suburb of Chicago. Despite the 
storm, 100 tents were set up so McDon-
ald’s workers could occupy the street 
night, in advance of the shareholders 
meeting the following day. 

While executives and shareholders have enjoyed salary hikes and gains in stock dividends, most of the company’s 660,000 front-line workers make far less than a living wage at McDonald’s 14,000 U.S. restaurants.

On the morning of May 26, they were joined by thousands of other low-

wage and community ac-
tivists who had marched to McDonald’s huge Ro-

a restaurant in downtown Chicago in opposition to the 

workers.org June 9, 2016 Page 3
Solitary confinement is ‘no touch’ torture and must be abolished

Army Pvt. Chelsea Manning, the heroic WikiLeaks whistle-blower and transgender activist currently jailed in the U.S. Penitentiary at Quantico, Va., after having been sentenced to 35 years in prison — really for exposing U.S. war crimes in Iraq — recently wrote an op-ed for the British Guardian explaining why solitary confinement is torture. Manning herself was held in solitary confinement in the Marine Corps Brig at Quantico, Va., where she was under 24-hour guard. Her op-ed follows:

By Chelsea Manning

Shortly after arriving at a make-shift military jail, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in May 2010, I was placed into the black hole of solitary confinement for the first time. Within two weeks, I was contemplating suicide.

After a month on suicide watch, I was transferred back to the U.S., to a tiny 6 x 8 foot (roughly 2 x 3.5 meter) cell in a place that will haunt me for the rest of my life: the U.S. Marine Corps Brig in Quantico, Va. I was held there for roughly nine months as a “prevention of injury” prisoner, a designation the Marine Corps and the Navy used to place me in highly restrictive solitary conditions without a psychiatrist’s approval.

For 17 hours a day, I sat on a chair in front of at least 10 Marine Corps guards seated behind a one-way mirror. I was not allowed to lay down. I was not allowed to lean my back against the cell wall. I was not allowed to exercise. Sometimes, to keep from going crazy, I would stand up, walk around, or dance, as “dancing” was not considered exercise by the Marine Corps.

To pass the time, I counted the hundreds of holes between the steel bars in a grid pattern at the front of my empty cell. My eyes traced the gaps between the bricks on the wall. I looked at the rough patterns and stains on the concrete floor — including one that looked like a caricature of a face. I could hear the “drip drop drip” of a leaky pipe somewhere down the hall. I listened to the faint buzz of the fluorescent lights.

For six periods, every other day or so, I was escorted by a team of at least three guards to an empty basketball court-sized area. There, I was shackled and walked around in circles or figure eights for 20 minutes. I was not allowed to stand still, otherwise they would take me back to my cell.

I was only allowed a couple of hours of visitation each month to see my friends, family and lawyers, through a thick glass partition in a tiny 4 x 6 foot room. My hands and feet were shackled the entire time. Federal agents installed recording equipment specifically to monitor my conversations, except with my lawyers.

The United Nations special rapporteur on torture, Juan Méndez, condemned my treatment as “cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment,” describing “the excessive and prolonged isolation” I was placed under for that period of time. However, I didn’t stop there. In a preface to the 2014 Spanish edition of the “Sourcebook on Solitary Confinement,” written by Méndez, he strongly recommends against any use of solitary confinement by any state.

As Méndez explains: “Prolonged solitary confinement raises special concerns, because the risk of grave and irreparable harm to the detained person increases with the length of isolation and the uncertainty regarding its duration. In my public declarations on this theme, I have defined prolonged solitary confinement as any period in excess of 15 days. This definition reflects the fact that most of the scientific literature shows that, after 15 days, certain changes in brain functions occur and the harmful psychological effects of isolation can become irreversible.”

Unfortunately, conditions similar to the ones I experienced in 2010-2011 are hardly unusual for the estimated 80,000 to 100,000 inmates held in these conditions across the U.S. every day. In the time since my confinement at Quantico, public awareness of solitary confinement has improved by orders of magnitude. People across the political spectrum — including some who have never been in solitary or known anyone who has — are now beginning to question whether this practice is a moral and ethical one.

In June 2015, Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy called the prison system “overlooked” and “misunderstood,” stating that he welcomed a case that would allow the court to review whether or not solitary confinement is cruel and unusual under the U.S. Constitution. The evidence is overwhelming that it should be deemed as such: Solitary confinement in the U.S. is arbitrary, abused and unnecessary in many situations. It is cruel, degrading and inhumane, and is effectively a “no touch” torture. We should end the practice quickly and completely.

May 2, 2016

High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of Low Wage Capitalism

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

www.lowwagecapitalism.com

Books are available at major online book sellers.
Farmworkers are bravely and tena-
ciously fighting for the right to organize in New York state. Currently there is no statewide legal protection to prevent em-
ployers from firing workers for collective action to improve working conditions at their jobs.

On May 10, worker Crispin Hernández and two New York workers’ centers—the Workers’ Center of CNY (WCCNY) and the Worker Justice Center (WJC) of Roches-
ter—filed a lawsuit against the state of New York, demanding this right. The suit, which cites the New York State Employment Rela-
tions Act (SEERA) specifically excluded farmworkers from collective bargaining. Even though the state’s 1938 Constitution granted that right to all workers without exception, New York farmworkers had never been legally granted the right to organize because of the SEERA exclusion. Hernández and other workers demanded through the lawsuit that the right to organize be acknowledged as ap-
plying to farmworkers.

At a May 10 press conference in Alba-
ny, Hernández said: “Without farmwork-
ers there would not be milk, fruits or veg-
etables, but we are treated like slaves and worse than the cows. We want to be able to improve our working conditions with-out fear or intimidation. We believe our lives are important and that all human beings deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.” The lawsuit is based on the blatant sup-
pression of lead plaintiff Crispin Hernán-
dez’ right to freely meet with other work-
ers and owners. NyCLU is representing 
Hernández and the workers’ centers in the suit.

Cuomo concedes to farmworkers
On May 11, Gov. Andrew Cuomo an-
nounced that the state would not oppose the lawsuit. This promising development gives hope that there will be a success-
ful ruling in the case and a historic win for the farmworkers. The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) is representing Hernández, the Workers’ Center-CNY and WJC.

WCCNY lead organizer Rebecca Fuen-
tes told Workers World that the farm-
workers whose lawsuit is pending have taken matters into their own hands and leadership and through the Center’s com-
mitment to “educate, agitate, organize” with embattled workers at remote farms over many years. (New York Times, May 5)

Since 2012, when he was still a teenag-
er, Hernández had been working 12-hour days, six days a week at Marks Farm in Lowville, N.Y.—under so much pressure that sometimes he had no time to eat or go to the bathroom all day. He was the sole support of his extended family of nearly a dozen people.

Marks Farm, a leading milk produc-
er in New York, has 10,000 animals and sixty workers. There are 60,000 workers on state dairy farms, which had sales of $6.36 billion in 2014.

In 2013, Hernández and other workers were having conversations with Fuentes about safety at work and setting up En-
glish classes. As they met one evening af-
ter work, Fuentes and workers from a small apartment that one worker had rented from the farm owner, the owner’s son showed up to or-
der Fuentes off “his property.” Fuentes cited the New York Attorney General’s general rule that farmworkers can have invited guests in their living space and refused to go unless the workers asked him to do so.

The workers persisted, saying Fuentes was their guest. That’s when the owner called in both county and state cops, who interrogated Fuentes, Hernández and the other workers. Threatened with arrest, Fuentes again explained the ruling, the work-
ers defied the owner and the police by in-
sisting she stay, and the authorities left.

A week later, Hernández and Saul Pinto, along with Fuentes and other WCCNY volunteers, were walking trail-
er-to-trailer to tell workers about their rights when they were observed by the owner’s son. The next day, both Hernán-
dez and Pinto were fired.

Fuentes told WW that if Cuomo’s concession is confirmed by a positive ruling, then legal pro-
tection will be guaranteed to all New York farmworkers for whom Hernández and others were doing when they were fired. Known as “concerted activity,” this covers workers’ centers’ efforts to discuss work problems or representing co-workers before management to demand better working conditions.

“Concerted activity” might include re-
questing a guaranteed day off each week, repairing faulty machinery or man-
agement providing protective gear. Own-
ers usually make dairy workers pay for shoes, over-length clothes to protect their arms against infection and animal waste. Fuentes added that “concerted activi-
ty” is the tactic being used so effectively by communicating with witnesses like those at McDonald’s or Walmart.

Fuentes said the winning of the legal complaint would gain workers “a tool to resist” — and she stated firmly: “We are resisting!”

A powerful tool
A win would mean that Hernández and other farmworkers have a powerful tool to challenge the wide range of horren-
dous working conditions. Narratives from Hernández and farm-
worker José García, posted by the NYCLU, tell of 12-hour days at low pay with no overtime; working alone without medical care and lack of equipment to protect or prevent injuries; extreme rural poverty and isolation through the lack of transport to connect to resources; and racism, verbal intim-
imation and physical assault by super-
visors and owners.

New York farmworkers have a fatality rate 20 times that of the average worker in the state. Some work 90 to 95 hours a week, operating dangerous equipment under grueling conditions. (nyculo.org, May 10)

For women farmworkers, a win would offer a way to fight back against rape and sexual harassment. Women farmworker are targets of these crimes at a very high rate, according to a 2013 Center for In-
vestigative Reporting study. The women are particularly vulnerable because of documen-
tation status, rural or social iso-
lation or as the primary breadwinner for their children.

The win would give farmworkers a tool to oppose the increasing speedups and demand for more labor at poverty wages that is assembly-line farming, especial-

ly in dairy. In the U.S., technology and specialization have increased dairy farm herd size nine-fold in the last 20 years. In the Northeast, farms with at least 700 cows generated almost 50 percent of the milk produced in 2014.

Farmworkers are typically subjected to threat and intimidation if they demand improved work conditions from bosses. In New York state many are Mexican and Central American, and they face possible deportation or loss of a continuing work visa if they confront farm owners.

Extending the right to organize to New York farmworkers would also shatter an 80-year stretch of racist injustice begun in 1933 when the Wagner Act established the National Labor Relations Board. That act specifically excluded farmworkers from the right to organize and collective-

overly-bargain throughout the U.S.

The exclusion came from pressure from white ruling-class landowners in the segregated U.S. South, determined to keep African-American farmworkers from unionizing. Effective and powerful farmworker and sharecropper organiz-
ing campaigns, like the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, were sweeping the region during the 1930s, often under socialist and communist leadership.

But even with a historic win in the law-

The demonstration coincided with the 
march in support of the bill began in Long Island and will rally on June 1 in Albany demanding a “yes” for the legislation.

In an email to WW, Fox said, “Farm-
workers feed all of us, and it’s time for New York to treat them with dignity and respect.”

PHOTO: TIJUANA MORRIS OF THE MORATORIUM NOW! COALITION IN DETROIT

Members of Workers Center of CNY and striking Verizon workers unite in solidarity.

PHOTO: DEREK MCCRANN

PHOTO: K. DEWITT

PHOTO: GISELA MORALES

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PHOTO: DEREK MCCRANN

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African American Museum of History and Culture in Detroit.

The NMAAHC, a 400,000-square-foot edifice, will be the 95th division of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. President Barack Obama is scheduled to present the official opening. Electrical equipment, artifacts and artistic treasures will be available to promote the developing culture to explore and revolve in this history. Equally important is the opportunity to help all Americans see how our history, their histories, and their cultures are shaped in a myriad of issues impacting American history and culture as a lens into what it means to be an American.

The museum also emphasizes: 'Additionally, the museum will use African American culture as a means to help all Americans see how our history, their histories, and their cultures are shaped and informed by international considerations and how the struggle of African Americans has impacted freedom struggles around the world. Finally, as a 21st century institution, the museum must be a place of collaboration. We must be a true national museum that reaches beyond Washington to engage new audiences and to collaborate with the myriad of museums and educational institutions, both nationally and internationally.'

African-American oppression continues

NMAAHC is steps away from the Washington Monument, the towering obelisk built in commemoration of the nation’s first president who owned slaves. Even though the official narrative sets the U.S. history suggests that the so-called “Reconstruction” War was fought to gain independence from British colonialism, Africans remained enslaved in the U.S. until the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865. That contradiction is startling in light of the racist system’s failure to guarantee a decent life, genuine equality and self-determination to the African-American people, even in the 21st century. African Americans have achieved enormous gains over the last century-and-a-half since the end of slavery. Nonetheless, they remain an extremely exploited and repressed people.

Today African Americans are incarcerated at rates far exceeding those of whites, who continue to represent the overwhelming authority within the state and economic structures of the country. Rates of joblessness and poverty disproportionately affect African Americans, while the world economic recession of the last decade appropriated much of the limited household wealth accumulated since the rise of industrialization in the 20th century.

The policy people, African descent in the U.S. have only made a progressive impact through their own propaganda, petitioning and mass demonstrations. For decades, successive administrations maintained close and fraternal relations with European colonial powers that carried out genocidal counterinsurgency programs across Africa amid broadening mistrust of U.S. intentions among the masses of workers, youth and farmers in the continent. Meanwhile, the volume of trade between the U.S. and emerging African states has declined in the last several years despite the country’s first identified president of African descent.

...
Let’s be honest, Bernie Sanders and his campaign of “democratic socialism” have struck a chord with young people and the millennials. To whatever extent it may be inaccurate; it would be a lie, because it’s true. His primary base is among the young, who are looking and ready right now for something new. They’re not afraid of socialism. They weren’t induct- ed by Ronald Reagan’s propaganda against communism.

By Lamont Lilly

For millennials, just to have a bour- geois presidential candidate actually ut- ter the words “racism, poverty, inequality and police brutality” is enough to offer a glimmer of hope, which is why there are a few factions of the Black Lives Matter movement who do indeed support Ber- nie Sanders. Mind you, this is the same “hope” that Barack Obama spoke of, but never delivered, and had never planned to deliver. The numbers among young peo- ple certainly reflect this “loss of hope.”

Voters aged 18 to 29 who cast ballots in 2008 were a record high at 48 percent. (Washington Post, May 14) By 2012, that number had fallen to 41 percent. Young people began to realize that just because Barack Obama looked Black didn’t mean that he was going to speak to the issues of Black bodies, not only here in the U.S. but internationally.

In 2008, dark nations from all over the world were absolutely thrilled with the Obama win! People of color were cele- brating all over the world: Brazil, Haiti, India, Kenya, Puerto Rico. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face be- came a facelift of U.S. imperialism. India, Kenya, Puerto Rico. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face became a facelift of U.S. imperialism.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Libya, Sri Lanka, South Africa. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face became a facelift of U.S. imperialism.

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Iraq, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Libya, Sri Lanka, South Africa. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face became a facelift of U.S. imperialism.

Border Patrol, never has an agent been summoned by a court of law for the killing of border residents. Over the last decade, police brutality in com- munities of color has become a largely overlooked epidemic. Whether the law enforcement agency is U.S. Customs and Border Protection or the local po- lice force, Black and Brown communities must unite to combat abuse. People at the meeting were encouraged to vote, get involved, join an organization, stay informed and share what they learn with others.

The Southern Border Communities Co- alition recorded the discussion and post- ed a video on their Facebook website.

It happened that the same day as the meeting, Democratic presidential nominee Bernie Sanders was in San Diego for sever- al events. Sanders found time to visit the ugly scar of the border wall that separates San Ysidro and Tijuana with Maria Puga, the widow of Henry Guadalupe Rojas, and sup- porters. Sanders expressed his solidarity with their struggle for justice and with the struggle of a group of U.S. military veter- ans who, because they are undocumented, have been deported to Tijuana.

So here we are, a year and half after. Black Lives Matter and a host of others are shutting these candidates down, Rep- ublicans and the Democrats.

“We scare and talk nonsense, so they don’t vote anymore. That’s a lie,” Sanders of the Democratic Party, said.

The Black, Brown and poor people has al- ways been taken for granted. Black youth have always been written off as “Well, they don’t vote anyway, they’re not that important.”

But, thankfully, the effectiveness of this movement isn’t leaving on the vote because it’s rooted in the streets. It is fueled not only by our constant state of mental and physical oppression, but by direct action and radical resistance — by any means necessary.

If that means interrupting Bill Clinton, so be it. If that means shutting Trump down, so be it. If that means boycotting Christmas sales, so be it. If that means holding official of color like [Cook Coun- ty State’s Attorney] Anita Alvarez ac- ceptable, so be it. And if that means that Black youth need the space and time to organize themselves, as in the Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, Ohio, last year, so be it.

As a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, we have to support that, respect that and get behind it.

Defending a political right

As Workers World Party’s founder, Sam Marcy, declared in a 1971 document entitled “Political and Organizational Problems Facing Our Party,” “Our Party has consistently advocated self-determi- nation under difficult circumstances and has given the liberation struggle its ut- most support as much as circumstances permitted.”

Keep up with this story, support the family of Harris and support Blou- in, whose court case is scheduled in the coming weeks. Follow and spread #JusticeForEricHarrisNOLA on social media.

Police murder is at epidemic levels in “the land of the free.” One indication: “NOLA” (New Orleans, Louisiana) had to continue the streets, on the picket lines, in the class- rooms of college campuses. Revolution- aries should be on the right side and ready to fight with every weapon at our disposal.

Many agree that Black lives will only matter when self-determination matters.

All power to the people!

Lilly is the 2016 vice presidential can- didate of Workers World Party.

By Lamont Lilly

Let’s be honest, Bernie Sanders and his campaign of “democratic socialism” have struck a chord with young people and the millennials. To whatever extent it may be inaccurate; it would be a lie, because it’s true. His primary base is among the young, who are looking and ready right now for something new. They’re not afraid of socialism. They weren’t induct- ed by Ronald Reagan’s propaganda against communism.

For millennials, just to have a bour- geois presidential candidate actually ut- ter the words “racism, poverty, inequality and police brutality” is enough to offer a glimmer of hope, which is why there are a few factions of the Black Lives Matter movement who do indeed support Ber- nie Sanders. Mind you, this is the same “hope” that Barack Obama spoke of, but never delivered, and had never planned to deliver. The numbers among young peo- ple certainly reflect this “loss of hope.”

Voters aged 18 to 29 who cast ballots in 2008 were a record high at 48 percent. (Washington Post, May 14) By 2012, that number had fallen to 41 percent. Young people began to realize that just because Barack Obama looked Black didn’t mean that he was going to speak to the issues of Black bodies, not only here in the U.S. but internationally.

In 2008, dark nations from all over the world were absolutely thrilled with the Obama win! People of color were cele- brating all over the world: Brazil, Haiti, India, Kenya, Puerto Rico. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face became a facelift of U.S. imperialism.

Iraq, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Libya, Sri Lanka, South Africa. Everyone was excited; that is, until this same face became a facelift of U.S. imperialism.

Border Patrol, never has an agent been summoned by a court of law for the killing of border residents. Over the last decade, police brutality in com- munities of color has become a largely overlooked epidemic. Whether the law enforcement agency is U.S. Customs and Border Protection or the local po- lice force, Black and Brown communities must unite to combat abuse. People at the meeting were encouraged to vote, get involved, join an organization, stay informed and share what they learn with others.

The Southern Border Communities Co- alition recorded the discussion and post- ed a video on their Facebook website.

It happened that the same day as the meeting, Democratic presidential nominee Bernie Sanders was in San Diego for sever- al events. Sanders found time to visit the ugly scar of the border wall that separates San Ysidro and Tijuana with Maria Puga, the widow of Henry Guadalupe Rojas, and sup- porters. Sanders expressed his solidarity with their struggle for justice and with the struggle of a group of U.S. military veter- ans who, because they are undocumented, have been deported to Tijuana.

Black Lives Matter, the elections and self-determination

By Lamont Lilly

Let’s be honest, Bernie Sanders and his campaign of “democratic socialism” have struck a chord with young people and the millennials. To whatever extent it may be inaccurate; it would be a lie, because it’s true. His primary base is among the young, who are looking and ready right now for something new. They’re not afraid of socialism. They weren’t induct- in
Interview with the GDR’s Margot Honecker -- ‘The past was brought back’

Margot Honecker, born in 1927, former minister of education of the German Democratic Republic and widow of longtime Socialist Unity Party (SED) Secretary General and GDR State Chairperson Erich Honecker (1912-1994), died on May 6 in Santiago, Chile. The German daily newspaper Jüngle Welt published the complete interview in the German language in November 2015. Workers World thanks both Jüngle Welt and the Greek journalists who conducted the interview for permission to publish it in full at workers.org last December.

The corporate media, in their obituaries, were unanimous in condemning Margot Honecker for her continued defense of communism and of the GDR. This interview makes clear her attitude and analysis. WWII now publishes excerpts here.

MH: How did the events of 1989 come about?

Margot Honecker: If you mean by “the events of 1989,” those of the fall of that year, and particularly the events in the GDR, which I describe as a counterrevolution, one would have to write books about it. Perhaps only this: There was an objective link between foreign and internal political factors. The armies race the United States in the Reagan era forced upon the Soviet Union reached its desired objective: that the Soviet Union armed itself to death. The consequent economic burden for the USSR led to serious social dislocations in the country, which meant that the leading power of the socialist camp could hardly do justice to its domestic and foreign policy responsibilities.

The Soviet Union tried to regain mastery of its situation through reforms, and these were initially well intended. But the result was the surrender of all Soviet achievements. The GDR was involved in this global conflict. It was part of the socialist community. And in the 1980s, the GDR was also faced with the need to develop or correct its economic policies. There were shortcomings in supply, deficits in social life, which led to dissatisfaction. We have not always done our homework properly — partly from our own incapacity, partly we were blocked.

Obviously, we were unable to convince people and make them conscious of the actual social progress we made compared with a capitalist way of life and its pander to exploitation, oppression and war. So many in the GDR believed they could join together the glittering world of commodities under capitalism and the social security of socialism. But, as Erich Honecker said in various speeches, capitalism and socialism are as hard to unite as fire and water.

AP: How do you explain the “uprising” of the East Germans, as it is called in the West?

MH: It was not an “uprising.” There were demonstrations, but the workers were working on their jobs, the children went to school, social life continued. Most people who went into the streets in the fall of 1989 were expressing their dissatisfaction. They wanted to make changes and improvements. They wanted a better GDR. They were not demonstrating for its abolition. Not even the opposition wanted that.

We, that is, all the progressive forces of Germany (in the post-WWII period) wanted the entire Germany to be a democratic, anti-fascist state. We never surrendered this goal, but were unable to reach it. The founding of the GDR was the result. Resurgent German imperialism fought by all means against it, and in 1989, it saw its opportunity to eliminate the GDR, the other Germany. For forty years it had failed to do this. It was only when the Soviet Union, which had allied with us, then dropped the GDR, that the Federal Republic was successful.

What ignited the fuse on the powder keg in 1989 was the increasing exodus of citizens of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany. The West used all means available to fuel this. Of course, the appeal of consumerism, the free travel played a major role. West Germany’s propaganda never tired of claiming that those who left the GDR were voting with their feet against socialism. From 1990 until today, however, there are millions people who moved there from Eastern Germany, although now the same political conditions exist in the East as in the West. Why?

In the GDR there was no blanket, no civil or military poverty or misery, all these reasons why today hundreds of thousands of people are voting with their feet in the Middle East or in Africa to flee to Europe.

AP: In the West it was referred to as a “peaceful revolution.” How can a “peaceful revolution” have been possible at all in a socialist state?

MH: A revolution, as I understand it, is a profound social upheaval aimed at the radical transformation of social relations and the liberation of the masses from exploitation and oppression. In this respect, overcoming the reactionary imperialist relations in Russia in 1917, or the creation of an anti-fascist democratic order in 1945 in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany, were revolutions. Capital was deprived of its power to continue to rule over the people. If a reversal is carried out of the social and production relations that had been overcome earlier, and that’s what happened, that cannot be considered a revolution. It is, on the contrary, a counterrevolution.

Let me remind you that the socialist GDR was a guarantee of peace in Europe. It never sent its armed forces and its borders to war. The Federal Republic of Germany, however, participates in bloody wars that the U.S. and NATO instigate throughout the world. In 1990, the GDR was absorbed into this society, which has caused so much harm in German history. The past was brought back. No one can name that “revolution.”

AP: On Nov. 9, 1989, the “anti-fascist protective wall,” the Berlin Wall, as the buildings called in the West fell. Was the wall’s construction in 1961 necessary or was it a mistake?

MH: The construction of the “wall” was necessary; otherwise, there would have been war. This was no arbitrary measure by the GDR. This border was a result of World War II, in which German imperialism had instigated.

This was not simply a state border, however, let alone an internal German border, as it was always called in the West. It was the western border of the Warsaw Pact, the Eastern defense alliance, and the eastern border of NATO. Those were the two most powerful military blocs in the world, which were carrying out a Cold War. The Political Advisory Committee, which was the governing body of the Warsaw Treaty states, decided in the summer of 1961 to close the border in Berlin and thus end the state border. After they decided a military confrontation could no longer be ruled out. I do not think that one can name the prevention of a possible third world war a mistake.

AP: What was good in the GDR, and what should the socialist government have done better in order to save the “first socialist state on German soil”?

MH: In this state, each person had a place. All children could attend school for free. They received vocational training or studied and were guaranteed a job after training. Work was more than just a means to earn money. Men and women received equal pay for equal work and performance. Equality for women was not just on paper. Care for children and the elderly was the law. Medical care was free, cultural and leisure activities affordable. Social security was a matter of course. We knew no beggars or homelessness. There was a sense of solidarity. People felt responsible not only for themselves, but worked in various democratic bodies on the basis of common interests.

The GDR was not a paradise. There were defects that complicated daily life, shortcomings in supply and deficiencies in everyday political life. There were decisions made at various levels in which the people concerned were not always included. However, compared with the conditions now prevailing in most capitalist countries, it was close to heaven.

AP: Do you remain loyal to Marxism-Leninism and still call yourself a communist, and, if so, why?

MH: I not only consider myself one -- I am a communist. Loyalty is probably not the appropriate term. Marxism-Leninism is an ideology, a method of investigation to understand the world, the laws according to which it moves, so you can orient yourself in the world. Some believe in a divine will, others in a predetermined fate. We communists are materialists. We follow a scientific outlook, which assumes that the society and everything that arises in it are the result of human beings. Exploitation and oppression are neither divinely ordained, nor are these evils inevitable.

We have to fight for a humane, fair, peaceful world, and today that is more urgent than ever. We must refuse to allow that people perish from war, hunger and disease, and that natural resources and the livelihood of the people be depleted or destroyed by ruthless capitalist exploitation, solely for profit. Humanity is to have a future, the power of the banks and corporations must be broken. They will give up their power voluntarily.

Source: www.jungnwelt.de/2015/11/12/099.php.

GAZA Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chacian

Here is the story of the most heroic resistance since 1948 to be undertaken by a people and a resistance design to drive Palestinians from their homeland.

-- Ramsey Clark

GazaResistancebook.com

Both books available at major online booksellers and bookstores around the country.
Wrote by John Catalinotto

It was April of 1974. A popular folk song serving as a secret signal to the captives was: “To arms! Arm the workers. The Armed Forces Movement (MFA) played on Lisbon’s Radio Renascença. Units of the army in and near Lisbon had been scheduled to go out for ordinary maneuvers. Now everything changed.

Sporred on by the growing war weariness, they set up a signal to the weakness of the police-state regime, the inability of Portugal to win the war against the liberation movements in its African colonies, and the isolation of Portugal, the captains acted. They had kept their plans secret from the soldiers, so when they confronted the troops already in their trucks, they read the new orders: Seize the capital, arrest the government and throw out the fascist gang they represented. Many of the soldiers, surprised but ecstatic, carried the new orders, hoping this action might end the wars in Portugal’s African colonies.

Each blow struck by the liberation fighters in Africa had weakened the fascist regime in Lisbon. Each strike by Portugal’s armed forces sent a wave of desertion. The Portuguese soldiers boosted the revolutions in the colonies.

In Portugal itself, a revolt in the armed forces forced overturning the regime. On April 25, 1974, the MFA quickly ended the 48-year-old fascist police state. Still influenced by old habits of respect for power, however, the Portuguese captains politely arrested President Marcelo Cae-

But fascist generals only because he believed that Cunhal described. Despite this depolitically mild beginning, April 25 was no simple replacement of the palace guard. Emboldened by the coup, masses of workers took over the streets and factories. The next 18 months pressed the revolution forward.

Television news in the days following April 25 showed groups of workers surrounding and roughing up some individuals. Workers and revolutionaries recognized their former torturers from the notorious PIDE, the Portuguese political police, and dispensed justice.

Defying Spinola’s commands to leave the prisons in the hands of the crowds, the support of the troops, emptied the prisons of revolutionaries and anti-fascists while putting the PIDE thugs behind bars. This was no day — six days later — hundreds of members of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and other revolutionaries went free on the front or to par-...
Since the capitalist economic crisis struck in 2007-08, hundreds of millions of people around the world have had their lives go “to hell in a handbasket.” There were three news events in Europe last week in May that exposed three levels of misery in capitalist society.

The worst misery is taking place in the once-colonial countries that are still dependent economically on the imperialist centers in the U.S., Europe and Japan. In particular, the imperialists have imposed state repression on Africa and waged war in West Asia. Since May 23, as thousands of peoples lived a life where there are no jobs, food or security, seeking only the outside chance of finding bread and hope in the imperialist centers that scorn them, 700 people died in three shipwrecks.

The next level is in Greece, a country geographically in the Balkans, militarily in NATO, politically in the European Union and economically in hell. Up until a few years ago, workers in Greece were called “hard-working fellow Europeans.” Now the European bankers call them lazy, guilty of 25 percent long-term unemployment and worthy only of being squeezed further by austerity.

The European bankers approved an austerity bailout for Greece’s $333 billion debt on May 23 with terms so onerous that the normally anti-worker New York Times wrote an editorial five days later chiding the bankers for squeezing Greece when “Greece should be squeezed any harder.” It was this same European, mainly German, bankers who, searching for guaranteed profits, pushed the loans on Greek governments during the first decade of this century.

What the European (and U.S.) bankers here are worried about is what is happening across the Atlantic. They are cheering on their class sisters and brothers. Those who know some history are hoping that this battle, like the historic class struggles fought in France in 1789, 1848, 1871 and 1968, will spark a fightback that inspires the world.

Revolutionaries want to take on the ruling class whenever hell is being imposed on the workers. And right now in France there is a chance our side can win. What workers and revolutionaries in the U.S. can do is act in solidarity with the French working class. The next ‘day of action’ across the ocean is June 14, and any act of solidarity from here will surely encourage the French working class. When you’re fighting in hell, such solidarity might help lift and turn the battle in favor of our global class.

And now, France

Now we reach the third level. France is a relatively prosperous capitalist country with a long past as a colonial power and continued economic dominance in much of West Africa, where workers struggle to survive, however, wrested many concessions from its imperialist ruling class. Now the capitalist class wants to take it all back — all the wealth the workers create.

The French government is currently in the hands of a party that calls itself Socialist. This is a gross misnomer, as this party has served French imperialism faithfully for over 80 years. Currently it has taken on the task of pushing the law down the throats of the workers.

Under this new law, France will be hell for the workers and the regime and the imperialists have imposed to restrict and ultimately take away the rights of the unions — to break unions and jail their leaders.

The workers in France are in turn giving the bosses hell, shutting down factories, railroads and gas stations. The class battle is on. (See article, page 1.) These workers have roots from all over Europe, Africa, West Asia and the Caribbean — wherever French colonialism conquered — as well as from within its borders.

A look at Facebook pages of unions in the United States shows that workers here are worried about what is happening across the Atlantic. They are cheering on their class sisters and brothers. Those who know some history are hoping that this battle, like the historic class struggles fought in France in 1789, 1848, 1871 and 1968, will spark a fightback that inspires the world.

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And now, France

Now we reach the third level. France is a relatively prosperous capitalist country

If you’re sick and tired of bankers and bosses making workers pay for the crisis they didn’t create

If you’re tired of the capitalist crisis isn’t going away anytime soon

If you want to fight for a better way of doing economic planning

If you’re lucky enough to still have a job But have you ever wondered where your hard-earned dollars go?

Workers World is a newspaper that has been building a revolutionary socialist movement to free the workers of the world, so that the vast majority of the banks and major industry into the hands of the people, so that the vast majority of the banks and major industry into the hands of the people, so that

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Workers rise up to battle anti-labor law in France

Continued from page 2

anti-labor law, according to the CGT.

The government had pushed the law through the National Assembly without a vote, using an obscure procedure in the French Constitution. Had there been a vote, the law would most likely have lost, since the Socialist Party now running the French state is split, and many of its members might have voted against it. Though this party calls itself “socialist,” it firmly defends the interests of the French capitalists and is actively intervening in the Middle East and Africa in tandem with U.S. imperialism.

Jean Lassalle, from the small centrist party called MoDem, is a National As-
sembley member who did not get to vote on the new labor law because of the govern-
ment’s no-vote maneuver. From the floor 14a; a local news station reported that some 50 undercover police also mingled with protesters.

The new report didn’t state it was if those 50 undercover officers were pos-
tioned only among our protest crowd, if they were dispersed evenly on both sides of the barrier called “free speech area” or if they were the Trump supporters whom we witnessed throwing water bottles, hitting us with their signs and encouraging and ridiculing us in organizing them into attacking the anti-Trump protesters. Sheriff’s personnel stood by with rubber bullets and pepper spray.

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By Zola Rice-Muhammad

San Diego

May 27 — Thirty-five anti-Trump pro-
testers were arrested at a Trump rally here this evening, including 27-year-old Au-
cader running for city attorney.

Pease later told the Times of San Diego: “I was tackled by several police officers for filming their riot (Friday) following the Trump protest, when they forced all protesters all the way to Barrio Logan ... Message: go home to Barrio Logan. ... I was then held for 10 hours in a cramped, filthy jail cell with 20 other individuals similarly falsely arrested until our bail of $800 each was processed.”

At the protest the largest presence of police and sheriffs this writer has seen at a San Diego rally. A wall of police wore riot gear; a local news station reported that some 30 undercover police also mingled with protesters.

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Emergencia en Venezuela

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Desde el Salón Ayacucho del Palacio de Maira- flores, el presidente de Venezuela Nicolás Maduro conoció una rueda de prensa el 17 de mayo para informar sobre la situación de emergencia y desastres que enfrenta el país. Desde las ultimas horas, se han producido varios hechos que han generado una gran preocupación y temor en la población. Entre ellos, el cierre de fronteras con los países vecinos, la escasez de combustible y la falta de electricidad. También hay informes sobre la posible intervención militar de Estados Unidos.

Mientras el Congreso estadounidense dote cientos de miles de millones de dólares a los programas de salud pública y militar, el gobierno de Venezuela está pasando por una verdadera emergencia. Según el ministro de Salud, el país está en riesgo de una epidemia de enfermedades como el Ébola y el Zika. La Casa Blanca ha anunciado un plan para luchar contra el Zika, pero el gobierno de Venezuela no ha tomado medidas para prevenir el brote. En este contexto, es fundamental que las organizaciones internacionales se unan para apoyar a los venezolanos en su lucha contra el desastre.

Paraguay paralizado mientras Zika azota

Mientras los venezolanos se preparan para enfrentar la mayor crisis de salud pública en su historia, los paraguayos están viviendo una situación similar en su país. La enfermedad del Zika ha invadido Paraguay y es motivo de preocupación en el gobierno. Según el secretario de Salud Pública, el país ha registrado más de 1.000 casos de la enfermedad, lo que representa un aumento significativo en comparación con los años anteriores. Aunque el virus del Zika es considerado menos grave que el Ébola, todavía representa un peligro para la salud pública en Paraguay.

El gobierno paraguayo ha implementado medidas de prevención y control, pero aún así, el virus sigue circulando en el país. Los expertos en salud pública advierten que el problema seguirá aumentando en los próximos meses si no se toman medidas inmediatas. En este sentido, es importante que el gobierno continúe con los esfuerzos de prevención y que la población se informe sobre los riesgos de la enfermedad.

Medicina para personas, no para ganancias

El acceso a la medicina es un derecho humano fundamental que debe ser garantizado por los gobiernos. En muchos países, sin embargo, los programas de salud pública están en peligro debido a la crisis económica y política. En Estados Unidos, por ejemplo, se ha producido una reducción significativa en los fondos destinados a los programas de salud pública, lo que ha llevado a una disminución en el número de personas atendidas y en los servicios prestados.

En este contexto, es fundamental que los gobiernos se esfuerren por garantizar el acceso a la medicina para todos, y no permitan que la empresa privada corra con la mayor parte de los costos. En lugar de ello, es necesario investir en programas de salud pública que sean accesibles para todas las personas, sin importar su situación económica. Además, es esencial que los gobiernos aborden las causas estructurales de la crisis, como la desigualdad económica y la injusticia social, para poder abordar de manera efectiva el problema de la salud pública en nuestros países.