Low-wage workers lead the way as immigrants fight for justice

By Deirdre Griswold and Minnie Bruce Pratt

Scapegoating immigrants for the problems facing workers in the U.S. is not an invention of the Trump administration, although this bunch of lying and hypocritical politicians has taken it to a new low.

Beginning with the rise of labor unions in the late 19th century, the silk-suited moneymen blamed immigrants for creating chaos and bringing in “alien ideas” — like the right to join together and strike for higher wages and better conditions.

Immigrant bashing was then, and remains today, a trump card (no pun intended) in the deck of techniques to divide the working class and thereby enhance the profits of the very, very rich.

It was wars and repression in Europe that drove most migration to the U.S. then.

It is wars and repression in countries exploited by Western colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism that make people risk their lives in order to migrate today.

Then, as now, many of those who fought hardest for the interests of the working class were immigrants.

One such person was Mary Harris “Mother” Jones. Born in Cork, Ireland, she devoted most of her life in the U.S. to building the labor movement, helping to organize coal miners for more than 30 years.

Harry Bridges, founder of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in 1937, was born in Australia. His memory is alive today in the majority African-American ILWU Local 10, one of the most militant unions in the country.

Clara Lemlich, born in Czarist-oppressed Ukraine, became a leader of the “Uprising of the 20,000” by women garment workers in New York. Mostly Jewish and Italian immigrants, they organized the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and conducted a general strike against sweatshop conditions for three months over the winter of 1909-10.

There were, of course, many great leaders of the workers’ movement born in the U.S. But the bosses’ fury and racism against the “foreign-born” has been especially fierce. With ruling-class determination they unleash attacks against immigrants, African Americans, In-
Detroiters: ‘Save homes, don’t destroy them!’

By Mike Shane

Despite glowing corporate media reports of Detroit’s comeback, large numbers of people continue to face tax foreclosures by the thousands. As of June 2017, over 3,400 occupied homes were in foreclosure, while tens of thousands of families were in unsustainably payment plans and subject to loss of their homes when a payment is missed.

An Aug. 1 hearing in the Michigan Court of Appeals was held to determine the appropriate court for a class-action lawsuit challenging the tens of thousands of illegal and racist tax foreclosures in recent years. The lawsuit was initiated in June 2016 by the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, and others on behalf of several neighborhood associations and residents.

The lawsuit charges that Wayne County, which contains Detroit, violated the federal Fair Housing Act through the disparate impact of foreclosures on people of color in a city where 80 percent of the residents are African American. The lawsuit also charges that the city of Detroit assessed homes at more than 50 percent of their market value, in violation of the state constitution. In fact, some homes are assessed at 10 times the market value.

A June 15 conference before the hearing, residents expressed support for the lawsuit. The speak-out was organized by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and supported by the Coalition to Stop Unconstitutional Tax Foreclosures and Detroit Eviction Defense.

Errol Jennings, past president of the historic Russell Woods-Sullivan Area Association, described the magnitude of the program of mass foreclosures in his neighborhood. Yvonne Jones, a retired city worker and lifelong resident of Detroit, decried the tremendous loss of more than 50 percent of African-American wealth in the city as a result of the foreclosure crisis of the past decade. Jones demanded that the foreclosures stop now.

Jerry Cullers, whose family almost lost their home to Bank of America, described the community fightback to stop his family’s eviction and demanded that the banks pay for the destruction of the neighborhoods. Jennine Spencer, vice president of the Charles Village Association, emphasized that federal Hardest Hit funds be used to tear down homes, not to force families to pay for the destruction of the neighborhoods.

Lifelong Detroit resident and retired City worker, Yvonne Jones, speaks out.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you.

Workers World is a revolutionary Marx-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 austereism 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 been guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party has a long history of fighting for the rights of the poor and oppressed. Since 1959, we are the only organization that has been steadfast in its commitment to fighting for socialism. We believe that only by working together can we create a world where everyone has access to basic human needs.

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in the hands of the people, not in the hands of the capitalist class. The working class should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the working people and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you.

Thank you for standing with us as we fight for a socialist world!

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Lifelong Detroit resident and retired City worker, Yvonne Jones, speaks out.

The Hardest Hit Fund, created by the notorious bank bailout of 2008 (known as TARP), was set up to assist families impacted by the bank-caused housing crisis that began in 2007. The fund was intended to provide assistance for foreclosure prevention and neighborhood stabilization.

Since 2010, Michigan has received more than $761 million in HHF money. But instead of providing any significant assistance with mortgage payments or property taxes, in 2014 the Hardest Hit funds were used to pay for tearing down abandoned and blighted foreclosed homes while Detroit was in bankruptcy.

For the cost of tearing down one empty home, approximately three to ten occupied homes could be saved.

A delegation from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition spoke on July 31 at the monthly meeting of the Detroit Financial Review Commission during public comments. When Detroit exited bankruptcy in December 2014, the FRC was created with the power to overrule decisions by the mayor and City Council that, for example, might negatively impact the bond ratings and offend Wall Street.

The speakers, including Moratorium NOW! members, objected to the irresponsible use of HHF monies for destroying instead of saving homes. Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan accused the speakers of spreading misinformation by claiming that rules requiring HHF be used to tear down homes.

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**In the U.S.**
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in Michigan vs. anti-war conference

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Protest vs. anti-woman conference

By Chip Jangel
Sterling Heights, Mich.

The so-called Church Militant held a men-only “Strength and Honor” conference July 28 in Ferndale, Mich., outside CM’s headquarters, to make the hate group’s presence known in Mich., outside CM’s headquarters, to announce a press conference July 28 in Ferndale, Michigan People’s Defense Network held the community.

Trump focused on attacking and scapegoating “outside agitators” while, unsurprisingly, ignoring the violence of the police and the ongoing attacks waged on oppressed people by wretched politicians.

Supporters show up for 220 protestor stalked by state in Greensboro, N.C.

Over 250 community members came out on Aug. 3 to protest Donald Trump’s visit to Huntington, W.Va. The protest included organizations such as the Service Employees Union, the local branch of Workers World Party, Students for a Democratic Society, March for Science Huntington, Refuse Fascism, Planned Parenthood, WV Progressive Alliance and WV Citizen Action Group.

The majority of protesters were local workers, students and oppressed peoples. Chants included “No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA!” and “From Palestine to Haiti, no fascist USA!” and “From Palestine to Haiti, no fascist USA!”

In his speech, white supremacist Trump focused on attacking and scapegoating the most oppressed sections of workers and nations both inside the United States and globally.

On stolen Haudenosaunee land, Trump bragged about his approval of the Dakota Access and Keystone pipelines that especially endanger Indigenous lives and that especially endanger Indigenous lives. He similarly misled when he represented — the parasitism of capitalist profit over the health of nations, not environmental destruction and racialized drug war. Justice demands reparations and the return of Native land restoration and return to Native land restoration and return to Native territories, not environmental destruction.

Incarcerated for 39 years, the MOVE 9 have been incarcerated since Aug. 8, 1978, when police carried out a massive, violent attack on their Philadelphia home. Police shot bullets into the house and sprayed tear gas and 10,000 pounds of water pressure per minute from each of four fire hoses. Forced out of their home, the 9 were beaten and arrested. None was charged with having a weapon, but they were falsely charged, convicted and sentenced to inhumane, long prison terms, allegedly for killing a cop.

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The Philadelphia police are so hostile to MOVE members that on May 13, 1985, they dropped a bomb on the MOVE house, killing 11 people, including five children.

The MOVE Organization asks supporters to sign a petition to pressure the U.S. Department of Justice into opening an investigation of the unjust imprisonment of the MOVE 9. It is critical that everyone stand up for them as they have stood for us all! See onamove.com and Justice for the MOVE 9 on Facebook.
Company threatened workers

Mississippi union organizers at Nissan vow to fight on

By Martha Grevatt

In July, union organizers at the Canton, Miss., Nissan vehicle assembly plant took a historic step toward becoming the first unionized plant of a foreign auto company in the U.S. The United Auto Workers filed a petition asking the National Labor Relations Board to hold an election to determine if workers wanted the UAW to represent them. The election, the first in the 11-year organizing drive, took place on Aug. 3-4.

Late on the night of Aug. 4, organizers learned they had lost the election by a wide margin. Ernest Whitfield, a member of the union’s Volunteer Organizing Committee, was a poll watcher and witness to the vote counting. It was “heartbreaking,” he told Workers World, to see all the ballots marked “no” being counted. With over 3,500 out of 3,700 Nissan workers voting, the final result was 62 percent against union representation.

The vote does not mean, as Nissan would have the public believe, that workers love the company. There is anger on the floor over unsafe conditions, the growing use of lower-paid temporary workers and widespread racism directed at a workforce that is majority African American. “Labor rights are civil rights” was the theme of a solidarity march that drew 5,000 supporters earlier this year and gave a shot in the arm to the organizing drive.

Anti-union intimidation

Understanding the pressure that workers were under, organizers are not throwing in the towel. Scape tactics were ratcheted up the moment the election petition was filed. Workers were bombarded with anti-union propaganda at every turn – from a PowerPoint presentation shown round-the-clock on televisions in the break areas to anti-UAW commercials on television, radio and the internet. Mandatory daily shift-start meetings featured company videos attacking the union.

The main threat was possible closure of the plant if the UAW came in. Workers were also threatened with losing their vehicles, leased under an employee program that Nissan said it would terminate if the union won, and with cuts in pay and benefits.

Letters were mailed to the homes of “Pathway” workers – Nissan workers who began work in the plant as employees of temporary agencies such as Kelly, Menact Yates, Onin and Excelia. The letters said those workers could lose their jobs if the union won. Company messages blamed the UAW for General Motors plants closing down and warned workers that having a union would force them to take their problems to a union steward – as if they had a better chance of resolving a grievance by talking to their boss one-on-one!

Nissan management also exploited an unfortunate corruption scandal in the UAW involving a deceased senior official and his widow taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from Fiat Chrysler. News of federal indictments for the illegal bribery scheme was leaked right after UAW supporters working at Nissan filed with the NLRB.

Anti-union intimidation culminated the Tuesday before the election. Nissan rented a big tent, seating 1,000 people, in which every worker on every shift was forced to attend a captive audience meeting. They were addressed by the plant manager and other management higher-ups. All the same threats were reiterated and combined with a feel-good message from former bosses. School buses were used to transport workers from remote areas of the plant to the tent. The company gave out free bottled water with custom “Nissan” labels.

Whitfield, the volunteer union organizer, estimates Nissan spent between $5 million and $10 million on its campaign of fear. Nissan has flosted labor laws repeatedly, leading the NLRB to file an unfair labor practice charge against the company. The UAW filed another seven charges over the illegal intimidation that took place in the weeks leading up to the election. The NLRB could declare the election results invalid and order another election.

“Is this the length to which the company went to essentially scare the hell out of everybody to get a no vote,” Whitfield explained. “We’ll take a moral victory,” he added, from the fact that almost 40 percent still backed the union.

Organize the South!

The ongoing organizing campaign at Nissan has ramifications beyond the 6,000 workers inside the Canton plant. There are over two dozen auto “transplants” – U.S. plants of foreign auto companies – in this country, with all but a handful in the southern states. They have deliberately chosen to locate in so-called “right-to-work” states where union strength is lowest; only 6.6 percent of Mississippi workers belong to a union.

The UAW has been unable to organize a single transplant. In 2014 the union lost a representation election at Volkswagen’s Chattanooga, Tenn., plant. There, too, fear and intimidation affected the vote outcome. In that case the right-wing, racist political establishment led the anti-union drive. Sen. Bob Corker raised the specter of a plant closing just days before the election.

Since then the UAW has won an election to represent 160 Volkswagen skilled trades workers, but VW refuses to recognize them as a bargaining unit while the vast majority of plant workers remain unrepresented.

The UAW’s organizing efforts have also been hampered by its own failings. For too long the international leadership has sold concessions – from multi-tier pay schemes to oppressive work schedules to cutting retiree health care – to the membership.

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Immigrants and low wage workers fight for justice

Continued from page 1
dignified peoples, Latinx workers and other people of color, attempting to halt the development of work-
ing-class solidarity. Today, in many areas of the country, it is immi-
grant workers, especially from Mexico, Central America and the Carib-
bean, who are on the cut-
ing edge of organizing the most oppressed. They may be confronting small business owners or farmers over working con-
tions, but their struggle is always in the context of a U.S. economy dominated by
large companies and other corpora-
tions that then outsource many jobs. Big business sets the super-exploitative stan-
dards for low wages, harsh working con-
tions and hostility to unions.

Immigrant workers are breathing new
life into the struggle to or-
ganize and lift up the most
exploited. Some examples of their fierce daily fight for both
survival and justice are in the following report from
central New York state.

Farmworkers fight back

The Workers’ Center of Cen-
tral New York, based in Syra-
cuse, is building resistance to stepped-up attacks on immi-
grant workers in the region. The attacks include illegal ar-
rests by police as well as wage theft, ille-
gal paycheck deductions, and verbal and workplace violence by bosses.

A militant rally by the WCNY on July 27 in the rural village of Fabius put Frazie

The Los Angeles Branch of Workers World Party held a successful fundraiser
on July 2 in support of their four Che Brigadistas who will travel to Cuba in
October. The organizers served mojitos and a buffet of home cooked specialties, as a sound track
of music rang through the room.

Workers’ Center rally opposes
the ‘polimigra’ at Penn Yan, N.Y., Aug. 2.

Continued from page 4

The Los Angeles Branch of Workers World Party held a successful fundraiser
on July 2 in support of their four Che Brigadistas who will travel to Cuba in
October. The organizers served mojitos and a buffet of home cooked specialties, as a sound track
of Cuban music played. There was wonderful live poetry and a conga performance.

Hundreds of people from around the world will assemble in Cuba in Oct. 1-15 for
the Footsteps of Che Brigade. This will be an opportunity for new, young activists
to learn about Cuba’s revolutionary process and share experiences with the Cuban
people. They will also participate in the Day of the Heroic Guerrilla on Oct. 8 —
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Mississippi union organizers at
Nissan vow to fight on

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By Cheryl LaBash

When the 48th Venceremos Brigade contingent arrived at the U.S. border
crossing at the Buf-
falo/Fort Erie Peace Bridge on Aug. 5, they responded to Customs and Bor-
ed Patrol questions with the usual reply, “I am an attorney, I decline
to answer that.” The customs agent re-
plied, “I can’t let you cross.”

Many people challenging the U.S. blockade and travel ban against Cuba were arrested across the Peace Bridge into that same Customs building —
returning from unlicensed travel with banners flying and chants resounding.

This year, however, the VB had returned to Aug. 4, flying by a new U.S. policy
of to increase the number of Cuban visitors. The U.S. government has
taken steps to limit travel to Cuba, but there is an exception for Cubans who have
not been denied entry to the U.S.

Last Saturday, 48th Venceremos Brigade (VB) members crossed the Peace Bridge into Canada to protest the closure of the Peace Bridge to the U.S. government.

They marched through Buffalo, N.Y., Aug. 2, emphasizing the need for a safe
door to immigrants fighting this
discrimination and power. Other unions, especially the
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations to victory after
victory in the 1930s. Labor must be part of an entire social movement and orient itself toward rank-and-file self-organiza-
tion and power.

The organization committee can be-
come — and is already to some extent — a pre-majority organization in the plant
that fights for all the workers even with-
out having formal collective bargain-
ing power. Other unions, especially the
United Electrical Workers, have rich ex-
pertise with this model. Rank-and-file workers need to establish industrywide
networks to share information and strat-
egize collectively. The Southern Workers
>

PHOTO:  WORKERS’ CENTER OF CNY

The Los Angeles
Che Brigadistas on
July 29 (R-L): Nathan Norris, Rasika Ruwanpathirana, Rebeeca Jackson, Timothy Biutt.

As they crossed there, they successful-
ly upheld our right to travel and associate with the Cuban people, freely without a
license. As Frederick Douglass famously said, “Power concedes nothing without a
demand. It never has and never will.”
James Arthur Baldwin: word warrior

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

He was born in Harlem Hospital, New York, on Aug. 2, 1924; oddly enough, the life was lived.

As a man of his time, he traveled widely and lived to see life lived in different places, under different suns, so to speak. He met Africans abroad (more likely than not in France), and tried to learn from them many of the things which weren’t real to U.S. Blacks. For they may look alike, or remarkably similar to one another, but how they see and perceive the world is quite different. For one seeks entry into the White State; the other seeks freedom from the White Invader.

In his essay “Encounter on the Seine,” Baldwin notes how Francophone Africans regard the French:

“The French African comes from a region and a way of life which — at least from the American point of view — is exceedingly primitive, and where exploitation takes a more naked form. In Paris, the African Negro’s status, conscious and subtly inconvenient, is that of a colonized, and he leads here the intangibly precarious life of someone abruptly and recently uprooted. His bitterness is unlike that of his American kinsman in that it is not so treacherously likely to be turned against himself. He has, not so many miles away, a homeland to which his relatives may look alike, or remarkably similar to one another, but how they see and perceive the world is quite different. For one seeks entry into the White State; the other seeks freedom from the White Invader.

This bitter ambition is shared by blacks who was called “Negro” during Baldwin’s early days) is so profoundly alienated from the lands, languages and faiths of his fathers — not to mention a keen alienation from the forces in power in the land of his/her birth — that s/he is, in Baldwin’s prescient phrase (written several years before Ralph W. Ellison’s classic work) an “invisible man,” whether in Paris or in Harlem.

Baldwin’s brilliant observations and analyses reveal an utterly alienated soul, in truth nowhere at home, able to dwell anywhere but to find safety, solace and true community nowhere. But Baldwin, ever striving to be the exception rather than the rule, returned incessantly to Paris, where he could live, work and play in a way that the U.S. didn’t make possible. Baldwin’s gift is this relentless truth telling about Americans, both black and white, who are locked, for centuries, in a fatal, repellent, loveless and sometimes loving embrace: each a stranger to the others from other.

This bitter ambition is shared by his fellow colonials, with whom he has a common language, and whom he has no wish whatever to avoid; without whose sustenance, indeed, he would be almost altogether lost in Paris.”

By contrast, he reasons, U.S. Blacks rush to disaffiliates themselves from other Blacks, making them lonely, isolated and quite lost in such places as Paris. For the U.S. Black (who was called “Negro” during Baldwin’s early days) is so profoundly alienated from the lands, languages and faiths of his fathers — not to mention a keen alienation from the forces in power in the land of his/her birth — that s/he is, in Baldwin’s prescient phrase (written several years before Ralph W. Ellison’s classic work) an “invisible man,” whether in Paris or in Harlem.

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Poems by Lamont Lilly

**HONOR IN THE GHETTO**

Sister amina

(ton /səˈmīnə/)

She was amazing, stunning, actually.

Beautiful like the kind you don’t see very often.

Even with that iron dish towel, heavy vacuum cleaner, even with that broom and dust pan in her left hand.

Black. Proud.

Working.

Cleaning for Ms. Jane cuz she was too dang lazy.

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er, each knowing that which is unsaid, but thought deeply of, the other.

Truth teller

From his earliest critic days, to his life as a successful novelist, Baldwin tells uncomfortable truths about what America means, and who she is not.

His eye is unerring, for he cites true.

His words, his brilliance, his courage and his fearlessness have lived on.

By Erinn Mezger

Culture eroded by capitalism

Poisonous swine waste from corporate farms in North Carolina.

Continued on page 10
By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Claiming “The people united will never be defeated,” a huge crowd accompanied the 543 delegates elected to Venezuela’s new National Constituent Assembly as they made their way to the Legislative Palace in Caracas on Aug. 4.

They carried pictures of Venezuela’s two great libertators, Simón Bolívar and Hugo Chávez, and they put up red flags, hung the Assembly hall. The right-wing opposition, MUD, had removed them when they took office in January 2016. As the delegates entered the building, they chanted “Volví, volvó, volvó!” (“Returned, returned, returned!).”

It was the same slogan the masses had shouted when they brought Chávez back from having been kidnapped, after the failure of a right-wing coup on April 13, 2002.

Their destination was the Elliptical Room, which from now on will be the headquarters for the NCA, which cancels out the previous National Assembly. That body had had an opposition majority and had been in contempt of the Constitution since its very beginning, when it illegally swore in several assemblies who had not been validated by a popular vote.

The NCA assumed its duties by electing the main leadership body that will help guide its work and will last for two years. By unanimity, Delcy Rodríguez, the previously combative exterior minister, was elected president. Aristóbulo Istúriz and Isasalis Rodríguez became first and second vice presidents, in that order. Fidel Vásquez was elected as secretary and Carolín Pérez as sub-secretary.

This NCA has a large representation of youth; in fact, 60 percent of its members are age 35 or younger. The size of the assembly is also noteworthy. The NCA elected in 1999 had 135 delegates, this one has 543, representing the great diversity of the population.

Goals of National Constituent Assembly

It is important to remember that in this recent unprecedented election, more than 8 million Venezuelans voted, risking their lives in the middle of a counter-revolutionary war. The nine main goals of this NCA are:

1. Achievement of peace;
2. Establishment of a new economic model;
3. Secure the social programs;
4. Broaden the justice system to eradicate impunity and corruption;
5. Secure and recognize the new forms of participatory democracy and their communal organizations;
6. Defense of the nation;
7. Recognize the multicultural character of the nation;
8. Right to access technology, work, etc., for young generations; and

It is also important to highlight that not all the 8 million voters were poor and Chavistas. In fact, many were from the middle class courted by the opposition — if they voted to implement the NCA because they did not want any more murderous street barricades and killings.

The NCA now has the people mandate to solve the critical situation in their country, addressing above all the war by the counterrevolutionary opposition, which has been expressed in violent fascist and terroristic actions in the streets as well as in a dire economic war through enormous increased prices of basic products and other anti-people maneuvers.

While the NCA will engage the people throughout the nation in discussions on these topics, it can also take immediate action on crucial and urgent situations affecting the people and the country. In Venezuela, the power resides in the people, who can change and reform the current Constitution of 1999 in order to secure their country’s stability and a better future.

NCA replaces attorney general

Immediate action was taken on the first NCA’s working session on Aug. 5, when it removed Attorney General Luisa Ortega Díaz from her post and replaced her with Tarek William Saab, who until then had been the head of the Citizen Power. This is an entity to which belong the public advocate, the attorney general (Public Ministry) and the general comptroller, who work to guarantee citizens’ rights and ethical conduct in government.

Ortega Díaz was removed after the Venezuelan Supreme Court of Justice initiated an investigation of alleged serious offenses during her mandate. Even more important, for several months she had shielded those on the right from prosecution for their terrorist actions.

The Public Ministry is the independent body in charge of establishing the criteria for political or criminal prosecution within the state and is under the jurisdiction of the Citizen Power. But it failed to find cause for judicial action against the violent counterrevolutionaries, and Ortega Díaz publicly sided with it by denouncing — without any real base — the Venezuelan government. She accused it of acting outside the constitutional framework while she ignored the terrorist actions of the right wing.

To further the investigation of violent acts, a Truth Commission was set up on the second day of the NCA sessions on Aug. 6.

The days following the July 30 elections have been the most peaceful since April. The counterrevolutionaries have received the message given by the votes, and de-moralization has spread to their base. The right has lost its capacity to call people into the streets. Even the opposition media can’t hide the poor attendance to their calls — less than a dozen people could be seen in pictures of several of their rallies.

However, by no means is the Bolivarian Revolution out of danger. The victory group was a low-ranking ex-officer who had been expelled from the BNAF because of treason and was living in Miami, Fla. The rest were paid civilians.

This is by no means accidental. It is a well-known fact that the U.S. hosts many Latin American counterrevolutionaries, as the history of Cuba amply can attest. Was this Carabobo action directed by the U.S. State Department? It would be no surprise. In fact, the State Department released a statement on Aug. 3 condemning the NCA’s head, former ExconMo-bili executive Rex Tillerson, said: “We are evaluating all our policy options (as) to what we can do to create a change of conditions, where either Maduro decides he does not have a future and wants to leave on his own accord, or we can return the government processes back to the constitution.”

The U.S. also funds the opposition through several channels. It is clear that U.S. dollars are funding violence against the people of Venezuela in the name of “democracy.”

Now more than ever, the international progressive movement needs to strongly and urgently defend the Bolivarian Revolution, regardless of whether they are in complete agreement or not with President Nicolás Maduro. It is not about defending one person, but defending a peoples’ revolution to achieve true democracy and social justice in Venezuela.

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At a tale of two votes and what democracy looks like

By John Steffin

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro called on May 1 for a National Constituent Assembly to resolve the crisis in the country. Everyone was invited to participate and develop a comprehensive solution. But on June 30, the day of the election, many at home refused to participate. Can you guess why?

It was the opposition forces that have been leading protests and riots in the streets of Caracas for the last several months.

Why wouldn’t this opposition, which calls for “more democracy,” participate in such an election? Since April 1, they had been in the streets demanding early presidential elections. By participating in the National Constituent Assembly, however, they could have helped rewrite the highest political document in the country, to which every elected president is beholden.

The opposition claims it represents the majority of Venezuela. So this seemed like a prime opportunity for them to achieve their demands on a much grander scale than they had envisioned. It is a legal process — provided for in Articles 347 and 348 of the Venezuelan Constitution — and a highly democratic opportunity. Voters in the U.S., by contrast, are given no such opportunity to rewrite the basic laws of the country.

In the last election the opposition refused to participate because they do not represent the majority, and more importantly, because the class the opposition represents really hates democracy.

National Constituent Assembly election vs. opposition plebiscite

Days before the National Constituent Assembly election, the opposition had its own plebiscite, offering Venezuelans a chance to vote for the assembly. The opposition claimed that 7,186,170 voted for the plebiscite, which has less than half the eligible voting population and less than the 7.7 million votes the opposition had won in the 2013 vote for the National Assembly.

In other words, the opposition doesn’t represent the majority and they are losing support. But even these numbers should be viewed with great suspicion, because there is actually no way to verify them.

A register of eligible voters for the plebiscite was never created, and as an investigative report showed, people could easily vote multiple times — and did. Voters were asked to produce an ID card, but this was not checked against a list on front of the people running the booth, and the vote was slipped into a ballot box. The process was far from standard practice or secret ballot. At the end of the day, some opposition forces even burned the ballot boxes, making a recount impossible.

Now compare this to the National Constituent Assembly electoral process. A delegation of union leaders from the United Steel Workers was invited to observe the voting, including Estela Vazquez, executive vice president of the 1.9 million-member United Steelworkers.

In interviews with Telesur, the three observers painted a very different picture than that given by the U.S. corporate media.

First, a list of eligible voters had been compiled. Those voting were verified by signature and by fingerprint. They then cast their votes electronically and were asked to confirm once finished. If desired, a voter could have their vote printed out to confirm that their ballot had been properly cast.

As Vazquez said, “It was a more advanced system than anything I have seen in New York.”

The 8 million votes cast this way, however, do not tell the whole story. Across Venezuela, blockades were created by the opposition to prevent people from voting. This didn’t stop everyone. Some traveled miles out of their way to reach another voting station or, in one heroic case, crossed a river to circumvent a highway blockade. But that emphasizes the fact that not everyone who wanted to vote could do so easily.

Another deterrent was the threat of violence. At a dry run of the election held days earlier, armed gangs of bikers had attacked polling stations, killing one person and injuring three others. On the day of the election, 200 centers were attacked, killing 10 people. (tinyurl.com/y3cd0vnm)

Ruling class hates democracy

It’s clear which of these processes is democratic and which is a real sham.

Nevertheless, the U.S. capitalist media and others promoted the plebiscite as a sign of Maduro’s illegitimacy, while also attacking the National Constituent Assembly election as unfair and the assembly itself as the end of democracy.

Not once does the corporate media go over how the National Constituent Assembly actually works. If they did, their readers would probably start questioning what all the noise is about.

The National Constituent Assembly was convened to represent the people and to mobilize widespread support, the constitutionality of which the U.S. encouraged an invasion by the Venezuelan military, but it only showed the desperation of the opposition.

The Bolivarian Revolution, however, is alive and well. Despite all the frenzy, the government is in control of the situation, as all three U.S. observers discovered after leaving Venezuela. The troops were not filled with blood, but with people celebrating the opportunity to deepen the gains of their revolution.

When Jimmy Carter was in the Oval Office, the U.S. encouraged an invasion by the government of then-President Hamed Siad Barre against the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. The waning days of the George H.W. Bush administration were marked by the invasion of 12,000 Marines into Somalia in the failed “Operation Restore Hope” beginning in December 1992, a plan inherited by Bill Clinton, which ended in disaster when the people rose up against the occupation.

One of the most decisive actions was then-President George W. Bush’s, encouraged and sponsored intervention into Somali national affairs. First by seeking to em- power the military, then through the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and, after 2009, by recruiting elements of the UIC into the interim federal region, Washington sought to guide political events in the oil-rich state.

Several neighboring states have been drawn into the African Union Mission to Somalia, including Ethiopia and Kenya. Somalia faces a continued threat from al-Shabab. The government of President Abdiweli Farah Ahmed is working to bring the al-Shabab to an end so that the country can focus on development and the fight against poverty.

In Ethiopia, the government continues to crack down on the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been active in Tigray since 1991. The TPLF has controlled Tigray since 1991 and has been fighting for independence from Ethiopia.

In Kenya, the government has been battling al-Shabab and other extremist groups in the country. The government has also been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Somalia and Ethiopia.

In South Sudan, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Ethiopia and Kenya. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce corruption.

In Uganda, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Kenya and Rwanda. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce poverty.

In Tanzania, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Rwanda and Burundi. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce corruption.

In Malawi, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Mozambique and Zambia. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce poverty.

In Zambia, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including Angola and South Africa. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce corruption.

In Botswana, the government has been working to improve relations with its neighbors, including South Africa and Namibia. The government has also been working to improve the economy and reduce poverty.

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By Abayomi Azikiwe

This article is excerpted from a paper presented at the 2017 Left Forum panel hosted by the United National Anticapitalist Coalition, on which the author serves as an administrative committee member. It is reprinted from Pambazuka News.

Africa policies of the U.S. have consistently remained destabilizing and predatorial over the decades, despite the well-established post facto pretenses. This is imperialism that has impeded the capacity of African nations to direct their future.

With the ascendancy of President Donald Trump to the White House, a strong focus has been placed on his role as a promoter of racism and national oppression domestically, along with warmongering abroad.

We observe keenly the escalation of tensions in the Korean peninsula with the placement of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system. The president’s posture in relationship to the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea threatened the full reversion of an unresolved war just seven years ago.

There have been increasing aerial attacks against purported al-Qaeda targets in Yemen while the people in the Middle Eastern state, the least developed in the region, are suffering immensely from the Pentagon-coordinated war involving Saudi Arabian and Gulf Cooperation Council forces. An estimated 12,000 people and prompting the widespread outbreak of cholera, impacting the health of millions.

The deployment of the Massive Ordinance Air Blast in Afghanistan represents another war in the Central Asian country, which has been the focus of U.S. policy since at least 1979, when Islamist forces were unleashed against the Soviet-backed socialist government then in power. Since 2001, the Pentagon and NATO have laid waste to the country further, with thousands of foreign troops continuing to occupy the area.

Somalia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Libya and beyond

Although the Trump administration’s foreign policy towards Africa has gained far less attention by the Western media, it has continued already existing hostilities on the African continent. Somalia was singled out when Trump ordered the end of the United States’ military presence there on a daily basis since March 2015, killing at least 12,000 people and prompting the widespread outbreak of cholera, impacting millions.

The administration claimed it was doing away with the supposed restrictions on military actions in Somalia imposed by former President Barack Obama, the interventions by the U.S. in Somalia go back as far as the late 1970s.

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July 31, 2017, was Black Women’s Equal Pay Day — the day this year that the average total wages a Black woman worker in the U.S. earned was equal to the average white male pay in 2016. Smith: ‘Equal Pay Day is a moment that’s 19 months a Black woman had to work, on average, to earn the same wages a white man did in 12 months.

Those months are not an abstract quantity. Those are the arduous days and nights of someone like Priscilla Smith, who is a home care worker in North Carolina. Starting in mid-afternoon, she works day and night, duty until midnight, Smith does difficult work, both physically and socially, asisting up to 20 people a day. She is paid $12 an hour, with no paid sick leave or vacation, and then comes home to care for her own four children.

Smith, a leader with We Dream in Black, a program of the National Domestics Workers Alliance, says: “The majority of people who do this kind of work are African-American women.” The world needs to wake up and understand that Black workers need to be acknowledged, respected, and honored for their work.”

More than an equal pay issue, Smith and others argue that equal pay is a public health issue, as the conditions of their work are unhealthy and inherently dangerous.

There are 24 million Black women in the U.S. Smith was surprised to learn that 66 percent of them are part of the workforce. But they have high unemployment, employed job insecurity, a lack of benefits and advancement opportunities, and are the fastest growing U.S. pris-on population. Black women work more hours than white women on average, and half of Black women workers are mothers.

Paid and Unpaid Work

Famed and wealthy tennis star Serena Williams, speaking on pay discrimination against Black women workers, said: “If I had never picked up a tennis racket, I would be one of them. That is never lost on me. The cycles of poverty, discrimination, and sexism are much, much harder to break than the record for Grand Slam titles.”

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Capitalism’s hired killers: Blackwater decision reversed

By Chris Fry

In a split decision on Aug. 4, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals ordered a new trial for a Blackwater mercenary found guilty of murdering 14 Iraqis with his part in the massacre of civilians at Nisoor Square in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2007, along with the wounding of 77 more. The court also overturned new sentences for three other Blackwater mercenaries convicted of manslaughter from that same attack.

There were between 20,000 and 30,000 “security contractors” hired by the U.S. during the height of the Iraqi occupation. The Baghdad massacre was one of the worst, but by no means the only attack on the Iraqi people carried out by these hired guns. By 2007, Blackwater held a billion dollars’ worth of contracts with the U.S. government, most of them no bid.

The U.S.-installed Iraqi government, though dependent on Washington, even demanded a trial of these Blackwater murderers in Iraq, Washington rebuffed its Iraqi clients and insisted on a trial in the U.S.

In 2009, a federal judge threw out the charges that the U.S. had brought against these killers. This aroused tremendous international pressure. In 2011, an appeals court reversed that ruling and reinstated the charges.

When the trial was finally held in 2014, some 30 Iraqis had to make the long journey to Washington to testify. The Iraqis’ testimony was heart wrenching. “Mohammed Hafez Abdul Kinani broke down right after he talked about his 9-year-old son, Ali, who was shot in the head while riding in the back seat of the family car. Mr. Kinani sobbed so uncontrollably that Judge Rose C. Lamback sent the jury out of the room.”

Sarhan Deab Abdul Moniem was a traffic cop. He was driving a car of Blackwater Worldwide trucks pulled into his traffic circle in Baghdad at night, and started shooting.

“There was a lady. She was screaming and weeping about her son and asking for help,” Mr. Moniem said. He showed jurors how she had cradled her son’s head on her shoulder. “I asked her to open up the door so I could help her. But she was paying attention only to her son.” (Quotes from New York Times, June 25, 2014.)

The outcry over Blackwater’s atrocities forced the company to change its name twice. Along with other mercenary corporations, it continues to have the support of the U.S. government.

U.S. to use more mercenaries?

The overturning of these convictions comes at a critical juncture as the Trump administration is crafting its own general over the U.S. military failure in Afghanistan. It enables Trump to press a strategy of bringing in highly paid private armies of mercenaries to train Afghan police and soldiers and, most importantly, to guard metal and rare earth mines that the president wants to open for U.S. companies’ exploitation.

At a July 19 meeting with U.S. generals, Trump berated them for “not winning” the war in Afghanistan, asserted that the U.S. had “gone soft” and asked about the U.S. “getting a piece” of Afghanistan’s mineral wealth. (abc-news.com, Aug. 2)

Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater and a huge donor to the Trump campaign, wrote an article in May for the Wall Street Journal suggesting for the president to install a “viceroy” in Afghanistan, backed up by legions of mercenaries overseen by the CIA. Prince even extolled the East India Company, infamous for its corruption, violence and plunder in India in the British colonial period. (washintonpost.com, July 27)

While Prince’s sister, Betsy DeVos, was then Education Secretary, presses for privatizing schools, Prince is for privatizing troops for U.S. imperialist interventions. He boasts of “spread freedom and democracy” and “humanitarian wars,” the main goal of the Pentagon has always been to enable Wall Street to extract huge profits from every corner of the globe. The military-industrial complex has for many decades amassed huge fortunes from taxpayer-funded contracts. Nations and communities from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Nicaragua to Sudan to Palestine, have faced the “Laos option,” Prince’s strategic proposals are reportedly heavily favored by Trump’s advisers Steve Bannon and Jarrod Kushner. (nytimes.com, July 10)

However, Prince appears to have misread “getting a piece” of Afghanistan as “spreading freedom and democracy” and “humanitarian wars,” the main goal of the Pentagon has always been to enable Wall Street to extract huge profits from every corner of the globe. The military-industrial complex has for many decades amassed huge fortunes from taxpayer-funded contracts. Nations and communities from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Nicaragua to Sudan to Palestine, have faced the “Laos option,” Prince’s strategic proposals are reportedly heavily favored by Trump’s advisers Steve Bannon and Jarrod Kushner. (nytimes.com, July 10)

The situation in Libya is a direct result of the foreign policy orchestrated by the Obama administration. Libya, which under the Jamahiriya system headed by Col. Muammar Gaddafi, was driven from the capital of Tripoli in August 2011 and later captured and brutally murdered by imperialist agents on Oct. 20 of the same year.

Today, Libya is a major source of instability in the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea. It continues to mobilize international allies, in the case of Libya too die on the Mediterranean Sea in at least hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops at Camp Lemonnier.

Imperialism in Africa today is at a critical stage, the impeding success of the continent. The African Union has called for a “Laos option” in Libya to bring in more troops to the African continent.

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U.S. imperialism: Militarism and superexploitation in Africa

Continued from page 9

Somalia (AMISM), which now has approximatley 22,000 troops from Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Burundi and Uganda. Police officers from Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria are also a part of the mission.

In 1998, Britain, the former colonial power, along with the U.S. and the EU, others, began imposing sanctions on the government of the southern African nation of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), led by President Robert Mugabe.

In 2000, when Zimbabwe passed legislation granting the right of the African people to own farms, the sanctions and other forms of economic pressure were increased. The sanctions were backed up by the White House, EU member-states and the United Nations to form a viable government have failed.

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Amenazas y sanciones EUA crecen con aislamiento

Por Sara Flounders

Una nueva ronda de sanciones estadounidenses más fuertes y económicamente devastadora contra Irán y Corea del Sur ha sido anunciada por el presidente Donald Trump. Esta medida tiene como objetivo detener el creciente amenaza militar del imperialismo norteamericano. La burda exhibición de poder por la Casa Blanca, el Congreso y los medios de comunicación ha llevado a una serie de tensiones a escala internacional.

La Cámara de Representantes de EUA el 27 de julio, en un voto casi unánime - 419 a 3 - confirmó lo bipartidista que son tanto los políticos republicanos como los demócratas cuando se trata de una agresión estadounidense. El proyecto de ley fue similar al aprobado el 27 de junio por el Senado, en el que republicanos y demócratas se unieron para aprobar, por 98 a 2, un proyecto de sanciones que castiga a las empresas que hacen negocios con Irán y Rusia a través de una serie de sanciones financieras.

Ambos proyectos de ley requerirían una revisión del Congreso de cualquier intento de aliviar o poner fin a las restricciones impuestas. Esto se considera una posibilidad extremadamente improbable.

Inmediatamente editoriales del Washington Post y del New York Times elogiaron los votos de las sanciones, lo que confirmó la postura agresiva de las principales fuerzas dentro de la clase dominante.

Más dinero para Pentágono

La misma Cámara, incluidos los republicanos y la mayoría de los demócratas, votaron 334-81 para aprobar el mayor proyecto de ley para el presupuesto militar en la historia EUA o mundial.

La Ley de Autorización de Defensa Nacional asignaría $596 mil millones para gastos de "defensa" en el año fiscal 2018. Eso excede incluso la propuesta de $603 mil millones de Trump, que se ha descrito como "un increíble aumento de gasto".

Durante décadas se realizaron es- fuerzos concertados para extraer a Irán del proyecto de petróleo y gas del gas del sur, que pasaría por Turquía, ya ha pasado.

Un comunicado filtrado de la UE in- formó que el presidente de la Comisión Europea, Jean-Claude Juncker, dijo que la UE "debería estar lista para actuar" en el "caso de oficios de las sanciones".

La UE podría imponer una prohibición absoluta de hacer negocios con ciertas compañías de EUA. "Si nuestras precociones no se tienen suficientemente en cuenta, estamos dispuestos a actuar adecuadamente en cuestión de días. "Améri- ca Primero'' no puede significar que los intereses europeos sean últimos", dijo Juncker.

El aumento de las opciones militares, todas/os los políticos saben que, inclu- so los ambiciosos y polémicos gobiernos de la UE y la UE, que crean una serie de tensiones internacionales y extraterritorialías con las compañías europeas, "aunque las multas a las empresas que participan en el proyecto Nord Stream 2, "introducen en una completamente nueva dimensión muy negativa en las relaciones europeo-americanas."

"El suministro energético de Europa es una cuestión para Europa y no para los Esta- dos Unidos de América."