

# In Charlottesville & D.C. Victory for anti-racists

By Workers World Staff

The weekend of Aug. 11-12, the first anniversary of last year’s deadly march by neo-Nazis and hooded Klan members in Charlottesville, Va., confirmed one thing: These fascists don’t control the streets — no way.

Instead, large rallies, marches and protests by progressive forces in both Washington, D.C., and Charlottesville owned the day.

The “alt-right,” as the violent white supremacists are euphemistically called, were encouraged by the racist, misogynist, anti-immigrant Trump presidency to climb out of their klaverns last year and show themselves in public in Charlottesville in an armed torchlight parade carrying fascist symbols.

Even after one of them, at the end of the rally, plowed through a crowd of people with his car, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer, Trump at first refused to condemn them, referring to “hatred, violence and bigotry on many sides.” Only after a storm of protest did he reluctantly amend that and mention racism.

This year, calling themselves “Unite the Right,” the organizers applied for a permit to rally in D.C. on Aug. 12 at Lafayette Square. They estimated that 400 people would attend, including former KKK Grand Dragon David Duke.

On the day, barely two dozen fascists showed up. Only a huge police presence saved them from the anger of the thousands who turned out to stop them. According to ABC10 news, “Unite the Right rally participants said other members were ‘scared’ to attend the rally in D.C., making the group of about 30 vastly outnumbered by the thousands of counter-protesters surrounding the area.”

Earlier, when the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority announced it would close down gates to the general public and let the fascists take special trains to the rally, the system’s largest union, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, refused to go along. The WMATA then publicly rescinded its offer of special trains for the fascists. But on the day it went ahead anyway and closed down gates to the general public, prompting charges from the union that the agency had lied.

While the openly Nazi and white supremacist forces may now be afraid to take to the streets, that doesn’t mean they have been defeated. On the contrary, they are not only in their klaverns and death cults, but many wear the uniforms of local police and Border Patrol.

The slogan “Cops and the Klan work hand in hand” is still valid. And the far-right Trump appointees now in charge of so many federal agencies — like the notorious

Continued on page 7



Elizabeth Ramos,  
presente! 2

Migrant workers,  
migrant children 3



Anti-labor  
law  
quashed 4

Prisoners to strike  
Aug. 21 5

Trump, Marxism  
and the state 6

Behind Kavanaugh’s  
nomination 8

EDITORIAL Drivers beat Wall Street 10

## Subscribe to Workers World

☐ 4 weeks trial \$4 ☐ 1 year subscription \$30  
☐ Sign me up for the WWP Supporter Program:  
workers.org/donate

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Workers World Weekly Newspaper  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl, NY, NY 10011  
workers.org  
212.627.2994

PUERTO RICO 9 RUSSIA 11 IRELAND, MEXICO 11





# Elizabeth Ramos, wheelchair user and disability rights fighter

## Murdered by power failure in Brooklyn

By the New York Disabilities Bureau of Workers World Party

Elizabeth Ramos, 56, beloved activist in the disability community, died early Sunday morning, July 29. She did not die as a result of her disability nor of old age. She died because there was a 5-hour power outage in the Spring Creek Towers housing development where she lived on the 16th floor.

Formerly Starrett City, the Towers is a complex of nearly 50 buildings and 15,000 residents, the largest federally subsidized rental development in the U.S.

Ramos, a wheelchair user since the age of 12 due to scoliosis (curvature of the spine), also had the disability of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), which is chronic bronchitis and emphysema. She had been on a respirator since she was 13.

The apartment electricity went out at 5 a.m., and Ramos’ respirator ran only on electrical power. Daughter Ashley Ramos said she immediately tried to help her mother with oxygen from backup tanks, but her mother passed out. The family performed CPR and called 911.

Ashley said when she told the 911 operator that her mother was dying, she was cruelly admonished to “calm down.” Medical help took so long to arrive, her mother was dead by the time it came. The family disputes the New York City Fire Department’s self-serving claim that Ramos died of causes other than the power failure.

According to her family, Ramos often worried, after being denied use of a backup generator by building management, about what would happen during a power outage. The building complex, which operates its own power plant, has experienced many power outages.

### A tireless fighter for access and disability rights

Elizabeth Ramos was most known for her efforts to expand accessible transportation services for people with

disabilities. Ramos served as a board member for the pioneering advocacy group, Disabled in Action; participated in advocacy work at the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled; and was a member of Independence Care System. She actively participated in the current effort to stop New York Gov. Cuomo’s plan to dismantle ICS, an excellent health insurance program allowing people with disabilities to live independent lives and not be forced into institutions.

“Elizabeth Ramos was a tireless disability rights advocate and pillar of our community,” said commissioner and wheelchair user Victor Calise of the NYC Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. “I am deeply saddened by her passing and extend my condolences to her family and the disability community as I join them in mourning her loss.”

In July 2016, Ramos tried unsuccessfully three times over the course of an hour to get an accessible taxi from her home through the UberWAV app platform. No rides showed up, leaving her no viable access to transportation. There was no level of service, response time or convenience available to her, in contrast to able-bodied passengers seeking on-demand transportation.

On July 29, 2016, she filed suit in Brooklyn State Supreme Court under New York City and New York State human rights laws to get the Uber taxi app classified as a public accommodation like taxis.

Ramos complained to the Daily News then about Uber’s lack of accessible taxis: “[Uber] not having accessible taxis defeats the purpose for people like myself, for people in a wheelchair, to live a normal life.”

On June 6, Ramos won a partial legal victory in her suit. A Brooklyn judge ruled Uber could no longer use the mandatory arbitration clause in its passenger contracts to force customers to accept private dispute arbitration, instead of exercising their right to take legal claims to court.

Ramos vowed: “I am not going to stop until we can go to the app and get a ride as quickly as everyone else.” Ian

*Continued on page 3*

## WORKERS WORLD this week

### ★ In the U.S.

Victory for anti-racists.....	1
Elizabeth Ramos: Murdered by power failure in Brooklyn	2
Migrant farmworkers march for dignity and justice .....	3
Children still held by racist border policies.....	3
On the picket line .....	4
Missouri voters push back anti-union offensive .....	4
Atlanta: Solidarity underway with prison strikers.....	5
Death row prisoner’s hunger strike .....	5
Trump, the Pentagon and the establishment .....	6
Trump nominated Kavanaugh to end legal abortion....	8
Iowa workers fight to save UI Labor Center .....	8
San Diego: Activists’ suspicions confirmed.....	10
Houston: Protest of ICE’s crimes .....	11

### ★ Around the world

Crisis deepens in Puerto Rico as Junta seizes educational system .....	9
Workers across Russia protest plan to raise retirement age .....	11
Ireland and Mexico act to reduce global warming .....	11

### ★ Editorial

Solidarity drives a taxi workers’ win .....	10
---	----

### ★ Noticias en Español

Puerto Rico: La crisis se profundiza .....	12
--	----

Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: [ww@workers.org](mailto:ww@workers.org)  
Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)  
Vol. 60, No. 33 • Aug. 16, 2018  
Closing date: August 14, 2018

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,  
Monica Moorehead, Minnie Bruce Pratt;  
Web Editor Gary Wilson

Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk;  
Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan,  
Sue Davis, Bob McCubbin, Jeff Sorel

Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel,  
K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt,  
Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay,  
Cheryl LaBash, John Parker, Betsey Piette,  
Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci;  
Alberto García, Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

Copyright © 2018 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [workers.org/email.php](http://workers.org/email.php). Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.



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

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

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

### Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

**National Office**  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
212.627.2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)  
**Atlanta**  
PO Box 18123  
Atlanta, GA 30316  
404.627.0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)  
**Baltimore**  
c/o Solidarity Center  
2011 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
443.221.3775  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)  
**Bay Area**  
1305 Franklin St. #411  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510.600.5800  
[bayarea@workers.org](mailto:bayarea@workers.org)

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617.286.6574  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)  
**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
335 Richmond Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14222  
716.883.2534  
[Buffalo@workers.org](mailto:Buffalo@workers.org)  
**Chicago**  
1105 N. Ashland Ave.,  
Chicago, IL 60622  
312.630.2305  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)  
**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 5963  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
216.738.0320  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)  
**Detroit**  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)  
**Durham, N.C.**  
804 Old Fayetteville St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
919.322.9970  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)  
**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)  
**Indiana**  
[Indiana@workers.org](mailto:Indiana@workers.org)  
**Madison**  
[Madison@workers.org](mailto:Madison@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
5278 W Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90019  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)  
323.306.6240  
**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)  
**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610.931.2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)  
**Pittsburgh**  
[pittsburgh@workers.org](mailto:pittsburgh@workers.org)  
**Portland, Ore.**  
[portland@workers.org](mailto:portland@workers.org)  
**Rochester, N.Y.**  
585.436.6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**Rockford, Ill.**  
[rockford@workers.org](mailto:rockford@workers.org)  
**Salt Lake City**  
801.750.0248  
[SLC@workers.org](mailto:SLC@workers.org)  
**San Antonio, Texas**  
[SanAntonioWWP@workers.org](mailto:SanAntonioWWP@workers.org)  
**San Diego**  
P.O. Box 33447  
San Diego, CA 92163  
[sandiego@workers.org](mailto:sandiego@workers.org)  
**Tucson, Ariz.**  
[tucson@workers.org](mailto:tucson@workers.org)  
**Virginia**  
[Virginia@workers.org](mailto:Virginia@workers.org)  
**Washington, D.C.**  
P.O. Box 57300  
Washington, DC 20037  
[dc@workers.org](mailto:dc@workers.org)

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

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 their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create 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 workers 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. □

[workers.org/wwp](http://workers.org/wwp)



## Washington State

# Migrant farmworkers march for dignity and justice

By Roy St. Warren  
Whatcom County, Wash.

A Marcha por la Dignidad (March for Dignity), organized by Community to Community Development (C2C), wound through 15 miles of farmland in Whatcom County in northern Washington state on Aug. 5.

This march honored the life of Honesto Silva Ibarra, an im/migrant farmworker who was worked to death at Sarbanand Farms during wildfires that suffocated the Pacific Northwest in the summer of 2017. Ibarra was a guest worker in the U.S. under the H-2A visa program, a seasonal permit for migrant workers.

FIRE activists and Workers World Party members from Portland, Ore., and Seattle and Federal Way, Wash., joined the march, which ended in a Peoples’ Tribunal in front of the main office of Sarbanand Farms. (FIRE is a national grassroots movement that stands for Fighting for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere.)

The march began at 6 a.m. and went for 12 miles, the number of hours in a typical farmworker’s day. About 300 demonstrators walked single file over many country roads, surrounded by fields being farmed by im/migrant workers. In Spanish, chants of solidarity, “Campesino Power!” rang out: “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!”

The marchers made their way to the Canadian border to highlight the fact that workers at the farms are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Border Patrol, as well as that of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Along the route was an ICE detention center, where community members and activists demanded an



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

Farmworkers and allies on Marcha por la Dignidad (March for Dignity) in Washington state, Aug. 5.

end to ICE terror against farmworkers and rallied the marchers for the tribunal at Sarbanand Farms.

The Peoples’ Tribunal was led by a farmworker organizer and a C2C organizer who introduced the judges and called for witnesses. Among those who came forward was Lucy Suárez, who lives on land that harbored 70 workers fired after protesting Ibarra’s death. Her testimony included the story of a man with an infected foot wound so painful it brought him to tears at the slightest touch, but who was refused treatment at Sarbanand Farms. Many other witnesses came forward with similarly horrific stories of abuse by the farm.

The judges unanimously delivered the verdict that Sarbanand Farms was guilty of the murder of Honesto Silva Ibarra and many other human rights atrocities against its workers. C2C is calling for a boycott of Naturipe Farms, one of the main buyers of Sarbanand berries, and raised a demand for workers at the farm

to be granted a collective bargaining agreement.

Familias Unidas por la Justicia (United Families for Justice), an independent farm workers union representing workers at nearby Sukuma Brothers berry farm, has been supportive of the Sarbanand workers. FUJ has waged two successful boycott campaigns resulting in two companies, Driscoll Berries and Haagen-Dazs, refusing to buy Sarbanand Farm berries.

### ‘Guest workers’ forced from home by U.S. actions

The evening before the march, C2C held a public forum in nearby Bellingham, Wash., to educate community members about the conditions of im/migrant farmworkers and the H-2A visa program.

The first speaker, David Bacon, has written extensively on the subject of how U.S. policy forces migration from the Global South. He praised the 70 H-2A guest workers fired by Sarbanand for going on strike after Ibarra’s death and pointed out that fired guest workers faced deportation. They were able to find refuge on nearby land of a community member, an impromptu encampment dubbed Camp Zapata. After the community organized to pay for transportation, the workers returned to Mexico, without having received their final paycheck.

H-2A guest workers are routinely denied pay or are moved from farm to farm so owners can avoid paying them. Many workers report being relocated and not knowing where they are. The H-2A program mandates that the farms offer liv-

able housing, but C2C organizers assert that as many as 16 people are housed in a single shipping container unit at Sarbanand. Guest workers are only guaranteed 75 percent of the hours promised in their contracts, with potential new legislation reducing that number to 50 percent, leading to gross underpayment of wages.

All the countries of origin for the majority of H-2A guest workers have a common problem — poor conditions created by U.S. foreign policy. From the CIA-backed overthrow of leftist president Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala in the 1950s to NAFTA’s debilitating effects on the Mexican economy in the 1990s, to subsequent destabilization attempts in Central and South American countries, the U.S. has been at the forefront of creating oppressive conditions that force H-2A guest workers to seek economic opportunity beyond the borders of their homeland.

At the present time, over 20,000 H-2A guest workers are in Washington state alone. This figure could be expanded exponentially, since state Rep. Dan Newhouse is pushing for a bill which would include nonseasonal farmworkers in the H-2A program.

U.S. global economic hegemony was first founded on the seizure of the lands of Indigenous peoples and on the unpaid labor of people held and tortured in chattel slavery. Now the U.S. ruling class continues its rapacious injustice through exploitative wage slavery, including such arrangements as H-2A “guest worker” visas.

All who fight for im/migrant rights and against wage slavery should raise up the struggle of these farmworkers.

Support the boycott of Naturipe farms! Honesto Silva Ibarra, ipresente! □

# Children still held by racist border policies

By Kathy Durkin

The effort to reunite all separated im/migrant families continues despite the Trump administration’s obstructionism, leaving many children in federal custody, instead of being rejoined with their parents. The government’s racist “zero tolerance policy” denies entry to im/migrants from Central America at the Texas/Mexico border; it has resulted in confinement of 2,551 separated children.

A global outcry forced the president to publicly withdraw the policy on June 20, as photographs of crying children, some in cages, circulated. Lacking any compassion, Trump gave his reason: the “optics” didn’t look good politically.

Despite Federal Judge Dana Sabraw’s June 26 order that all separated migrant children must be reunited with their parents by July 26, this did not happen.

## Elizabeth Ramos: Murdered by power failure in Brooklyn

Continued from page 2

Poulos, Ramos’ attorney, described the enormous impact this ruling could have as precedent in other lawsuits — to aid in overturning arbitration agreements and suing Uber nationwide.

Ramos was not alone in fighting Uber. In April 2016, the National Federation of the Blind, which is also leading the fight to win minimum wage equity for people with disabilities, sued Uber for numer-

ous instances when drivers would not pick up blind passengers relying on guide dogs. NFB won, and the court ordered Uber to provide rides to blind passengers and their guide dogs.

Addressing this crisis, the furious judge emphasized that “for every parent who is not located, there will be a permanently orphaned child, and that is 100 percent the responsibility of the administration.” (CNN, Aug. 3)

Government lawyers admitted that 559 children, aged 5 to 17, were still in U.S. custody on Aug. 9. Some 386 of their parents were already deported to their home countries; the rest are separated for other reasons. Finding the parents has been a herculean task because government officials and immigration agencies have been no help in reuniting families — and they had no plan to do so.

Trump administration attorneys deliberately put the burden on the American Civil Liberties Union — which brought the legal challenge to family separation — to locate the deported parents, but would not turn over their contact infor-

Elizabeth Ramos is survived by her daughter Ashley and her longtime companion William Clarke, as well as her many friends.

Elizabeth Ramos, ipresente! □

mation or the children’s files. The ACLU told HuffPost on Aug. 9 that Immigration and Customs Enforcement deliberately withheld 400 deported parents’ phone numbers and only handed over this information on Aug. 7 after much pressure was exerted.

The U.S. government is not searching for deportees. But volunteers and contacts for the ACLU and other legal, im-migrant and humanitarian organizations are working with allies in Central America to do the arduous, but crucial work, to find the parents.

### ‘Turn the plane around’

Defying established laws and policies, the U.S. government is callously rushing to deport immigrants at the southern border, no matter their desperate circumstances. Xenophobe Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued new rules in June denying asylum to individuals fleeing domestic and/or gang violence. This flouts U.S. and international law, which recognizes gender-based persecution as grounds for granting asylum. Federal courts have also permitted asylum for people fleeing gang violence.

Sessions’ edict was codified in July in a memo to officials who interview asylum seekers at the southern border. These policies are having an impact; thousands of potential asylum seekers have been denied entry there, said CNN on Aug. 9.

The Center for Gender and Refugee Studies and the ACLU filed a lawsuit challenging this policy on Aug. 7 on be-

half of several immigrant plaintiffs, with the aim of ending the policy altogether. Two days later, while the case was in court, two plaintiffs, a woman who had fled horrific spousal abuse, and her daughter, a target of gang threats, were secretly put on a plane to El Salvador. Although U.S. border interviewers found their stories believable, they still denied these two refugees asylum.

Outraged, District of Columbia District Judge Emmet Sullivan ordered the government to “turn the plane around.” If this was not done, the judge threatened “contempt proceedings” against Sessions and the heads of federal agencies in charge of immigration. The plane returned the two to the U.S. that night. The judge then blocked the deportation of all plaintiffs while the lawsuit is underway. (aclu.org, Aug 9)

Jennifer Chang Newell, ACLU attorney in the case, said, “In its rush to deport as many immigrants as possible, this administration is putting these women and children in grave danger of being raped, beaten or killed.” (NBC News, Aug. 10)

### Profits trump children’s well-being

In its drive to deter immigration, the Trump administration cruelly separated children from their parents. The conditions of many youngsters’ detention have been deliberately cruel, sadistic and, seemingly, racist. Children separated from their parents under these circumstances for even a short time not only suf-

Continued on page 5



# On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

## D.C. transit union refuses to work on Nazi-only trains

After neo-Nazis decided to commemorate last year’s Unite the Right march in Charlottesville, Va., with an Aug. 12 march this year in Washington, D.C., it was leaked that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority would coddle the Nazis with private cars. But Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 immediately fought back. Local President Jackie Jeter said in a statement, “More than 80% of Local 689’s membership are people of color, the very people that the Ku Klux Klan and other white nationalist groups have killed, harassed and violated. The union will not play a role in their special accommodation.” (Washington Post, Aug. 3) The statement went viral, and WAMATA responded Aug. 4 that it was canceling the special train.

But that’s not what happened Aug. 12 between approximately 1:20 and 1:40 p.m. Metro’s management, in conjunction with the police, opened the north entrance of the Vienna station to transport the Unite the Right fascists. The union immediately called out WAMATA for lying to riders and the public: “DC, now you see who was telling the truth about the racist marchers being escorted onto Metro and who lied,” ATU Local 689 tweeted. “[Metro General Manager Paul] Wiedefeld lied to riders and public when the truth was more convenient.” (The Hill, Aug. 12)

Workers World expresses solidarity with ATU Local 689 in denouncing this treachery and cheers the local’s resistance.

## JetBlue pilots sign first contract

JetBlue Airways Corp.’s 3,037 pilots approved the first labor contract in the carrier’s history by 74 percent of those voting, announced the Air Line Pilots Association on July 27. The agreement, which took more than three years of negotiations, “provides significant pay increases, improvements to retirement and enhanced working conditions,” said ALPA President Tim Canoll. This is JetBlue’s first labor agreement since its founding in 1998.

Meanwhile, the company’s flight attendants voted this spring to join the Transport Workers Union, after two previous attempts failed. “This ... is yet another example of the tide turning in America as workers continue to lock arms and fight back to defend their livelihoods,” said TWU President John Samuelson in an April 17 statement. The inflight members’ bargaining team met June 28 to discuss upcoming contract negotiations, which include job security, a grievance procedure, improved wages and benefits, and “a seat at the table in case of possible merger or acquisition.” (TWU.org, June 28)

## Chicago window washers win historic raise

About 260 Chicago window washers — who struck for over a month after their contract expired June 30 — won a historic 27 percent wage hike! This raises the pay that a seasoned window washer earns from \$21 an hour to \$26 over the life of the new five-year contract. An essential demand for these high-risk workers was also met: their life insurance was doubled from \$50,000 to \$100,000. (Chicago Sun Times, July 27) The union overwhelmingly ratified the contract. Washer Cruz Guzman cheered, “We put our livelihood on the line and won the biggest wage increase for Chicago window washers in Local 1 history.”

The bosses at Corporate Cleaning and Service 1, two of the six companies that employ the washers in the city’s downtown buildings, tried to beat the mainly Latinx workers down. The companies threatened that they’d go bankrupt, though they enjoy massive tax breaks. But the workers, represented by Service Employees International Local 1, fought back. They dressed up like superheroes and stopped traffic to bring attention to their low wages. (WW, July 10)

## Disneyland theme park workers win \$15 an hour by 2019

The 9,700 workers at Disneyland Park, Disney California Adventure Park and Downtown Disney, represented by four labor unions in the Master Services Council, ratified a new contract on July 26. (For background, see Workers World article, May 28.) Disneyland Resort officials agreed to a minimum wage rate increase of 40 percent within two years of the agreement. This will put cast members at \$15 per hour by 2019, which will be one of the highest minimum wages in the country and three years ahead of the state’s minimum wage standard.

A full-time cast member who currently earns \$11 an hour would earn an additional \$8,000 per year. Minimum rates for hourly cast members will increase by 20 percent immediately from the current minimum rate of \$11 to a new minimum rate of \$13.25. Even though Disneyland Resort portrays this precedent-setting agreement as recognizing the value of its cast members, it took a well-organized union fightback campaign of many months to end poverty wages. (DisneylandNews.com, July 29) □

# Missouri voters push back anti-union offensive

By Martha Grevatt

Tuesday, Aug. 7, was an election day in five states, mostly primaries or special elections. The most newsworthy vote, however, did not involve candidates for office.

On that day, voters in Missouri overturned union-busting “right-to-work” (for less!) legislation by a 2-to-1 margin.

Union membership skyrocketed during the labor upsurge of the 1930s. The post-World War II strike wave was the biggest in this country’s history. Unions won “union security” clauses in their contracts that made every worker they represented a dues-paying member. In order to weaken organized labor, the U.S. Congress passed the 1947 Taft-Hartley law that has allowed states to ban union shops.

In the last six years, six states — Michigan, West Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin and, most recently, Missouri — have joined mostly Southern states in passing “right-to-work” legislation. Missouri became the 28th state in the country to take this union-busting approach when then-Gov. Eric Greitens signed the legislature’s bill into law in February 2017.

By making union membership optional, these bills give unions less power at the bargaining table. As a result, RTW states have lower average wages, more uninsured workers and higher rates of on-the-job injuries and deaths.

Under RTW, it is illegal to require an employee to be a member of a union, but perfectly legal to make low wages, mandatory overtime, lack of health benefits, supervisor abuse and a whole host of injustices a condition of employment. As the saying goes, “If you don’t like it, there’s the door.”

### A union army fights back

Unions in Missouri fought back. An army of over 1,000 volunteers spread out across the state to collect the 100,000 minimum number of signatures needed to put RTW up for a statewide vote. Over 300,000 signatures were actually collected. After getting the issue on the ballot, union members continued their tireless efforts with phone banking and door knocking.

The Missouri effort paralleled the successful defeat of Senate Bill 5 in Ohio in 2012. That bill would have banned collective bargaining for all public workers, going even further than a similar bill in Wisconsin that contained an exception for police and firefighters. In Ohio, union volunteers collected 1.2 million signatures — almost five times the legal requirement — and defeated SB5 handily. Ohio is still not a RTW state.

Missouri’s Greitens, who resigned in June as governor after an extramarital affair in which he photographed a woman nude without her consent, nevertheless campaigned to keep RTW law through his shadowy group, A New Missouri. Right-wing, corporate-backed, anti-union organizations spent millions to convince workers that they would save a bundle of money by not having to pay union dues. But they were outspent by labor and were crushed at the polls.

Of the state’s 114 counties, 100 voted down RTW. In St. Louis, the vote was 88 percent “no.” A majority of the city’s residents are people of color. When workers have unions, racist and sexist inequality is reduced. While all union workers, on the average, make more money than non-union workers, the benefit is greatest for workers of color and women. Also, for LGBTQ workers, a union contract is often their only legal defense against



discrimination in states where laws do not protect them.

The pushback by the unions, involving members at the grassroots level, came shortly after the reactionary U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Janus v. AFSCME. The high court ruled on June 27 that public sector unions could no longer require nonmembers, whom they are legally obligated to represent, to pay a “fair share fee” in lieu of union dues. This effectively made every state in the country “right-to-work” for public sector employees.

After the Janus ruling, statements from various unions made it clear that they were not throwing in the towel and letting anti-union forces have their way without a fight. In Missouri, labor won this round.

### Union members must dump Trump and dump racism

Commentators in the media are quick to point out that this union win happened in a state that went overwhelmingly for Trump in 2016. The vote was a setback for Trump, who is at war with the labor movement. His attitude was made clear most recently with a series of punishing executive orders aimed at unions such as the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents federal workers.

Yet some workers who voted against RTW in Missouri are still supporting Trump. Reasons given reveal backward attitudes toward migrants and the Black Lives Matter movement. It was the rebellion in Ferguson, Mo., after the racist police killing of Mike Brown, that gave impetus to an upsurge in the BLM movement nationwide. (Washington Post, Aug. 10)

Black Lives Matter is absolutely a union issue. Mike Brown’s mother Lezley McSpadden is a union activist in the Food and Commercial Workers union. Philando Castile, killed by cops in Minneapolis, was a Teamster. Jovan Fresco, killed by security guards in Rockford, Ill., was the son of a United Auto Workers’ Fiat Chrysler worker.

Racism is the number one tool that the bosses use to divide the working class. If union members want to give real meaning to this victory in Missouri, they must dump Trump — and the systemic racism and bigotry he epitomizes — and work to build classwide solidarity. □



From the pages of Workers World newspaper



ATLANTA

# Solidarity underway with prison strikers

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Atlanta organizations responded to a call from the Workers World Party branch here to work cooperatively in support of the 2018 National Prison Strike.

Beginning Aug. 21 and continuing to Sept. 9, prisoners in state institutions and for-profit prison facilities across the U.S. are expected to conduct a series of work stoppages and hunger strikes to bring attention to their demands.

Among the issues driving them to take the risk of severe repression are demands to be paid for their labor; immediate improvements in their living conditions, such as decent food and medical care, access to rehabilitation programs and education; and the end to brutality at the hands of guards.

The first Atlanta support event is a pre-strike cookout on Aug. 18 to reach out to families of prisoners and formerly incarcerated people in an expression of solidarity. When a father, mother, sibling or child is imprisoned, the chains of incarceration wrap around the family and strangle the community.

Women on the Rise, an organization of formerly incarcerated women of color, are key organizers of this gathering, and will be bringing their members and contacts to the neighborhood Westside Park for food, music and socializing.

On Aug. 21, the first day of the strike and the date of the murder of famed prisoner writer and Black Panther Party leader George Jackson, the coalition will direct messages of solidarity through words, music, poetry and drumming to those caged in the Atlanta City Detention Center.

The ACDC is already the target of grassroots organizers demanding an end to its contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hold im/migrants there. Community demands further call for closing the entire facility and using the tens of millions of dollars spent on its operation for services to alleviate home-

lessness, poverty and addiction.

Additional programs planned to expose the inhumanity and class oppression of prisons are a film night and a Sept. 9 teach-in tracing the history of prison rebellions from Attica to the resistance of today’s imprisoned liberation fighters. The Attica Uprising by those imprisoned in the maximum security facility near Buffalo, N.Y., began Sept. 9, 1971.

The organizations taking part in the

## Lucasville Uprising Death row prisoner’s hunger strike

Death row defendant Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan, transferred to solitary confinement on July 21 in the supermax Ohio State Penitentiary, remains on hunger strike. Twenty-five years after the Lucasville prison rebellion, Imam Hasan, Keith Lamar, Namer Mateen, George Skatzes and Jason Robb are still imprisoned and under death sentence. Most of these five attempted to negotiate during the uprising and helped prevent additional loss of life.

The 1993 Lucasville Uprising took place at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility where incarcerated people were struggling with overcrowding; guard violence and guard-instigated, inmate-on-inmate violence; poor sanitation, food and health care; and limits on how they could talk to loved ones by phone. (For more background, see Workers World, April 10.)

Twenty-five years later, these issues are the same ones highlighted in the upcoming National Prison Strike, called by incarcerated people for Aug. 21 through Sept. 9. The dates mark the state killing of Black Panther organizer George Jackson in California’s San Quentin Prison and the Attica Prison uprising in New York state. (See “Prisoners call for national strike,” Workers World, July 29)

The text below is drawn from a press release issued by a network of support for



coalition keep growing and, in addition to Workers World Party, include Georgia Detention Watch, World Without Police, the New Jim Crow Action Group, Up-

lifting People, the Industrial Workers of the World, Black Lives Matter, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Food Not Bombs and The Tear Down. □



Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan

Imam Hasan. To participate in “phone zap” actions for the Imam, go to [tinyurl.com/ydhb48xm](https://tinyurl.com/ydhb48xm).

“Youngstown, Ohio — Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan has been refusing food since the morning of July 28 in protest of a conduct report and new restrictions on his confinement. A conduct report is a summary of an alleged violation committed by a prisoner. (A copy of the report is available at [tinyurl.com/y7pogrsc](https://tinyurl.com/y7pogrsc).)

“The charges against the Imam include rioting or participating in a riot — though no riot occurred. The conduct report will be reviewed by a Serious Misconduct Panel, which will then make recommendations

to the Chief of the Bureau of Classification, Brian Wittrup. However, Brian Wittrup is also the author of the conduct report.

“‘This is the equivalent of a prosecutor first arguing a case, and then putting on a judge’s robes to determine the sentence,’ said Ben Turk, a supporter named in the conduct report who will testify before the panel. ‘There can be no justice in such an arrangement.’

“The conduct report primarily stems from Turk attempting to send publicly available documents about the upcoming national prison strike to Imam Hasan. The prison mailroom intercepted and confiscated the paper copy of these documents, but not the copy sent through the JPay email system. (A copy of the seized material is available at [tinyurl.com/yc53grnl](https://tinyurl.com/yc53grnl).)

“Imam Hasan has stated he regards the seizure as an infringement of his First Amendment rights, as well as that of his supporters. He intends to pursue remedy through the courts. A determined human rights advocate, Hasan has engaged in many hunger strikes over his years at the supermax prison. His commitment to justice and the assertion of his rights in this matter is strong.

“Supporters encourage people to protest the Imam’s treatment by calling Director Gary Mohr, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 614-387-0588.”

## Children held by racist border policies

*Continued from page 3*

fer while they’re apart, but when reunited are often depressed, anxious, distant, fearful and angry. Many will suffer long-term psychological damage.

Journalists, photographers, lawyers and others have not been allowed into facilities to see the conditions of children’s confinement. Reports have circulated of children kept in cages, forced to work, neglected and physically and sexually abused. At Southwest Key facilities, three minors have been sexually abused by an older detainee or employee. The Trump administration is paying the company \$458 million this year to house child migrants in its 26 U.S. facilities. The Nation reported on July 27 that Southwest Key Program Inc. has been charged with hundreds of health and safety violations in its Texas facilities over the last three years.

Federal Judge Dolly Gee ordered government officials on July 30 to stop giving psychotropic medications at the Shiloh Residential Treatment Center in Manvel, Texas, to migrant children without their parents’ permission. (Washington Post, July 31.) She ordered all children removed

from the locked, super-secure facility unless they would harm themselves or others.

Children testified about being daily dosed at Shiloh with drugs and witnessing other children being forcibly medicated, rendering them unable to walk, and being denied phone calls and drinking water — and then brutalized if they tried to access water. Yet the government still contracts with this notorious facility to house migrant children, despite its history of child mistreatment. In December 2014, Texas Rep. Shirley Jackson Lee tried to get Shiloh closed due to forcible drugging, physical abuse and deaths of minor children, based on Houston Chronicle reports. As of Aug. 8, 28 migrant children remain there.

Shiloh is among 71 companies allocated federal funds to house immigrant children, including the 2,551 youngsters detained under the zero tolerance policy. Shiloh has received \$26 million since 2013 to house “unaccompanied minors.” The Center for Investigative Reporting says that “nearly half of the \$3.4 billion paid to those [71] companies in the last four years went to homes with serious allegations of

mistreating children.” After these allegations were publicized, the government continued contracting with many of the facilities. Reveal News, a CIR blog, reports that some of the companies hire employees with histories of sexual abuse.

### Abuse of migrant children not new

The Trump administration’s separation of children and confinement of youngsters, even toddlers and babies alone and in cages, are horrific — the creation of reactionary xenophobes in the White House, Border Patrol and ICE.

But cruel treatment of immigrant children is not new. Detention and abuse of tens of thousands of “unaccompanied minors” have occurred during past administrations.

The ACLU published a report on May 22 about the government’s abuse of migrant children from 2009 to 2014 — during Obama’s terms — based on data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. (See “Neglect and Abuse of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children by U.S. Customs and Border Protection” at [tinyurl.com/yd2dkhwa](https://tinyurl.com/yd2dkhwa))

Private prison and border security industries poured millions of dollars into

getting Trump elected. In turn, they are getting big government contracts to detain immigrants in this billion-dollar industry. Two of the largest for-profit prison companies., GEO Group and Core-Civic, Trump donors, each built huge immigrant detention facilities in southern Texas in 2014.

Defense contractors benefit as well. MVM has received \$248 million since 2014 to transport migrant youngsters for ICE. Arms maker General Dynamics processes migrant children’s cases. Having private companies run these facilities provides a layer of protection for the government; they can be blamed for abuse, leaving the administration off the hook, while the profiteers rake in the revenue.

Protests continue to demand reunification of families and to abolish ICE. It is crucial to call for an end to all immigrant detentions and deportations and to allow all asylum seekers and refugees to enter the country — and, ultimately, to open all the borders.

As the Trump administration intensifies its racist war on immigrants, now attacking documented workers, this call to action is essential: “Stop the war on all im/migrants!” □



# Trump, the Pentagon and the establish

By Fred Goldstein

Aug. 11 — The latest round of U.S. sanctions on Russia illustrates how the Pentagon and its allies in the capitalist government are moving independently of the U.S. president to undermine his personal diplomacy when it conflicts with the military’s goals.

For reasons that are a matter of much speculation, Trump has tried to realign U.S. imperialist foreign policy to include a rapprochement with Russia. He has done this since he began his election campaign. This attempt at realignment was expressed dramatically at the Trump-Putin Helsinki summit in July.

Make no mistake, Donald Trump is no partisan of peace. He is bellicose, belligerent and an impulsive warmonger when it suits him. He is a bully in international relations as well as an authoritarian promoter of racism, sexism and bigotry at home.

### Trump feeds war machine

Trump has done much to feed the Pentagon war machine. He has given the brass record budget increases, with the 2019 military budget officially topping \$716 billion. He has authorized modernization of nuclear weapons. He has funded increases in jet fighters, ships and troops. In short, he has done everything to keep the military-industrial complex satisfied and on board with his administration.

“The increase in military spending is one of the largest in modern U.S. history, jumping by 9.3 percent from 2017 to 2019,” according to Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank.” (Washington Post, June 10)

This marks an increase of \$136 billion just from 2017 to 2019.

Meanwhile, the masses of people are losing their health care, their child care, their food stamps and their housing while suffering from poverty, joblessness and underemployment. But Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, United Technologies, Northrop Grumman and other merchants of death are bingeing on profits.

### Pentagon still dominates U.S. politics

Perhaps Trump thought his generosity to the generals and admirals would keep the Pentagon and the high command in sync with his personalized diplomacy. Not so.

As for softening toward Russia, the Pentagon is having none of this. The military’s conventional right-wing allies in the administration, National Security Adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have subverted Trump’s personal diplomacy.

For example, Pompeo and the State Department just recently notified Congress that the administration considers Russia behind the poisoning of two former Russian spies in England with a chemical

agent last March — six months ago!

Washington claims that Moscow violated the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. This is the act that U.S. imperialism used against Syria and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and is now using against Russia.

The sanctions imposed on Russia involve hundreds of millions of dollars on so-called “dual-use” products that could hypothetically be used for military purposes. More draconian sanctions, denying Russian banks access to U.S. markets if Russia does not prove that it no longer uses chemical weapons — a charge that Moscow vigorously denies — will be imposed in 90 days.

### DPRK-Trump agreement sabotaged

Trump has seized on the diplomatic overtures of Kim Jong Un, head of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and of the Workers’ Party of Korea. Kim tried to defuse the crisis on the Korean Peninsula by offering to meet on denuclearization. Trump accepted the invitation and promoted a bilateral summit meeting held in Singapore on June 12.

Trump was trying to achieve “historic” status by bringing about an end to the crisis. When he came back, he spoke about the Korean War being over and mentioned a possible peace treaty to finally end the war, begun way back in June 1950. The fighting ended in August 1953 with a ceasefire agreement, but the U.S. had never before agreed to even discuss a formal peace treaty.

Trump actually called off the annual war exercises carried out by the U.S. and South Korean military that exerted military pressure aimed at bringing down the DPRK.

Since the Singapore summit, however, virtually the entire U.S. ruling class, media and military have tried to undermine the process toward ending the Korean War. They call the DPRK leaders liars who can’t be trusted. Lately they have clamored for increased sanctions because the North won’t “denuclearize” now.

### U.S. refuses to sign peace treaty

There is a simple explanation for why the denuclearization process has not begun.

Two prestigious reporters for the imperialist New York Times, David Sanger and William Broad, admitted in an Aug. 10 article that Washington has reneged on pledges made during the Singapore summit and subsequent talks:

“On Thursday [Aug. 9], North Korea’s state-run newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, called the declaration of the end of the war ‘the demand of our time’ and that it would be the ‘first process’ in moving toward a fulfillment of the June 12 deal struck between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim. Pyongyang also wants peace treaty talks to begin before detailing its arsenal.”

In other words, reactionary hawks in the Trump administration and the military are deliberately sabotaging the precondition for denuclearization that must have been verbally agreed to by Trump, and perhaps by Pompeo — that talks first begin on a peace treaty to end the now 68 years of warfare by U.S. imperialism before the DPRK gives an inventory of its nuclear weapons. Thus, the right wing is now trying to reverse Trump’s Korea diplomacy.

### NATO and Bolton

A further example of the military going around Trump occurred when, ahead of last month’s NATO meeting, Trump’s national security adviser, right-wing militarist John Bolton, sent instructions to European imperialist defense ministers to work out a joint declaration before Trump got to the meeting. Its aim was to prevent Trump from blowing up the meeting with his hostility to NATO.

An Aug. 9 New York Times article detailed how Washington worked with Brussels to get in place an agreement by which Europe pledged to provide 30 battalions of troops, 30 squadrons of aircraft and 30 battle-ready ships by 2020. The goal of this deal was preparation for a NATO war with Russia.

A North Atlantic Command was to be set up in Norfolk, Va., to be ready for such a war. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reinforced Bolton’s directive during a gathering of the ambassadors on July 4. By the time Trump arrived in Brussels, all the deals had been agreed to. Usually, these deals are haggled out at the very end of such meetings.

### Converging against China

The Pentagon is carrying out provocative war maneuvers against the People’s Republic of China. The Navy has been sending warships to within 12 miles of Chinese islands in the South China Sea, and on Aug. 10 the U.S. sent a spy plane over them. A CNN crew was aboard the plane recording the events.

“During the flight the crew received six separate warnings from the Chinese military, telling them they were inside Chinese territory. ... ‘Leave immediately and keep out to avoid any misunderstanding,’ a voice said. And each time the Navy sent the same message: ‘I am a sovereign immune United States naval aircraft conducting lawful military activities beyond the national airspace of any coastal state.’”

That means that some 6,000 miles away from the U.S. and less than 10 miles from China, the Pentagon claims “sovereign immunity.”

The point is that this provocation comes at the same time that Trump opened up a trade war with China. In this case, his aggressive economic policy is in sync with the Pentagon’s military policy, so there is no sabotage from either faction.

### Trump, Marxism and the state

Marxist analysis is needed to unthread the complicated political relations inside the Trump administration and with Congress. According to Marx, the capitalist government is the executive committee of the ruling class.

That truth still holds. But that executive committee is by no means politically homogeneous or unified. In fact, the greater the crisis in imperialism and capitalism, the greater the divisions within the government and within the state itself.

Trump’s presidency itself is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism. Even though he lost the popular vote by 3 million, his entire political rise was based upon the political demoralization of a section of the masses and the bankruptcy of the corporate leadership of the Democratic Party. After voting for Obama in 2012, millions fled to vote for Trump in 2016. Among those voters were many who had supported Bernie Sanders’ unsuccessful bid in the primaries, but then switched to Trump.

A civil war now rages within the Democratic Party leadership over how to overcome this bankruptcy. But in any case, there is nothing the Democratic Party leaders can do to eliminate the crisis of capitalism, which is at the root of the problem.

Trump appealed to anger following years of wages being driven down and unions undermined. At the same time he attacked the setbacks for imperialism abroad, including the failed attempt to completely take over Ukraine in 2014. His election is part of a widespread racist, anti-im/migrant wave generated across the capitalist world, including Europe.

### Right-wing appointments broke up Trump’s coalition

Trump was a total outsider who triumphed over the Republican establishment. At first, his government was a coalition between that establishment and the right wing. Over time, Trump ousted the establishment figures who could tell him no: Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil, who had been his secretary of state; Gary Cohn, former CEO of Goldman Sachs, who was his chief economic adviser; and Gen. H.R. McMaster, his national security adviser.

He replaced them with anti-establishment rightists: National Security Adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Chief Economic Adviser Larry Kudlow.

Trump thought he was now free to pursue his program to revive the fortunes of imperialism. His program was to pull out of the Paris Agreement on the environment; pull out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership; bully NATO into submission; open up a racist war on immigrant workers; align with the anti-immigrant forces in Europe; blow up the Iran nuclear treaty; wage a trade war with China and

## FIGHT THE POWER! BUILD WORKERS WORLD!

Workers World newspaper has a point of view. Unlike the corporate press, we report events from the perspective of the workers and the oppressed. But you know that. That’s why you choose to read this newspaper.

But what you may not be aware of is that our purpose goes beyond simple reporting. Our Marxist-Leninist vision of an equitable, just world based on socialist planning and plenty for all peoples spurs us to advocate for change.

That’s why we’re devoting so much coverage to the outcry and mobilization against the cruel, Nazi-esque Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol “zero tolerance” policy against im/migrants that has

separated children from parents. That’s why we support FIRE, Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere, as a vehicle to intervene and play a leading, anti-capitalist role in this vital struggle. Organizing FIRE to shut down ICE is just the latest example of having our fingers on the progressive pulse, as we have in many righteous anti-imperialist, anti-racist struggles over the past 59 years.

Workers World cannot be a bystander. We must take action in defense of our class and our Marxist-Leninist principles and beliefs. If you agree with us, then it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program, which since 1977 has been helping us put out the paper.

Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends for a donation of \$75 a year. For \$100 you also get a new publication or book from World View Forum. For \$300 (\$25 a month) or more, you get your pick of five books.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. And know that we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □



# ment

other countries; tear down and renegotiate NAFTA, etc.

Of course, his program is at odds with the traditional ruling-class policy of keeping alliances with European imperialism, while holding these allies in subordination. The establishment is largely hostile to the People’s Republic of China, to Iran and unified in its opposition to Russia. But even his right-wing advisers stepped in to save the NATO alliance from Trump.

### Two false programs to revive imperialism

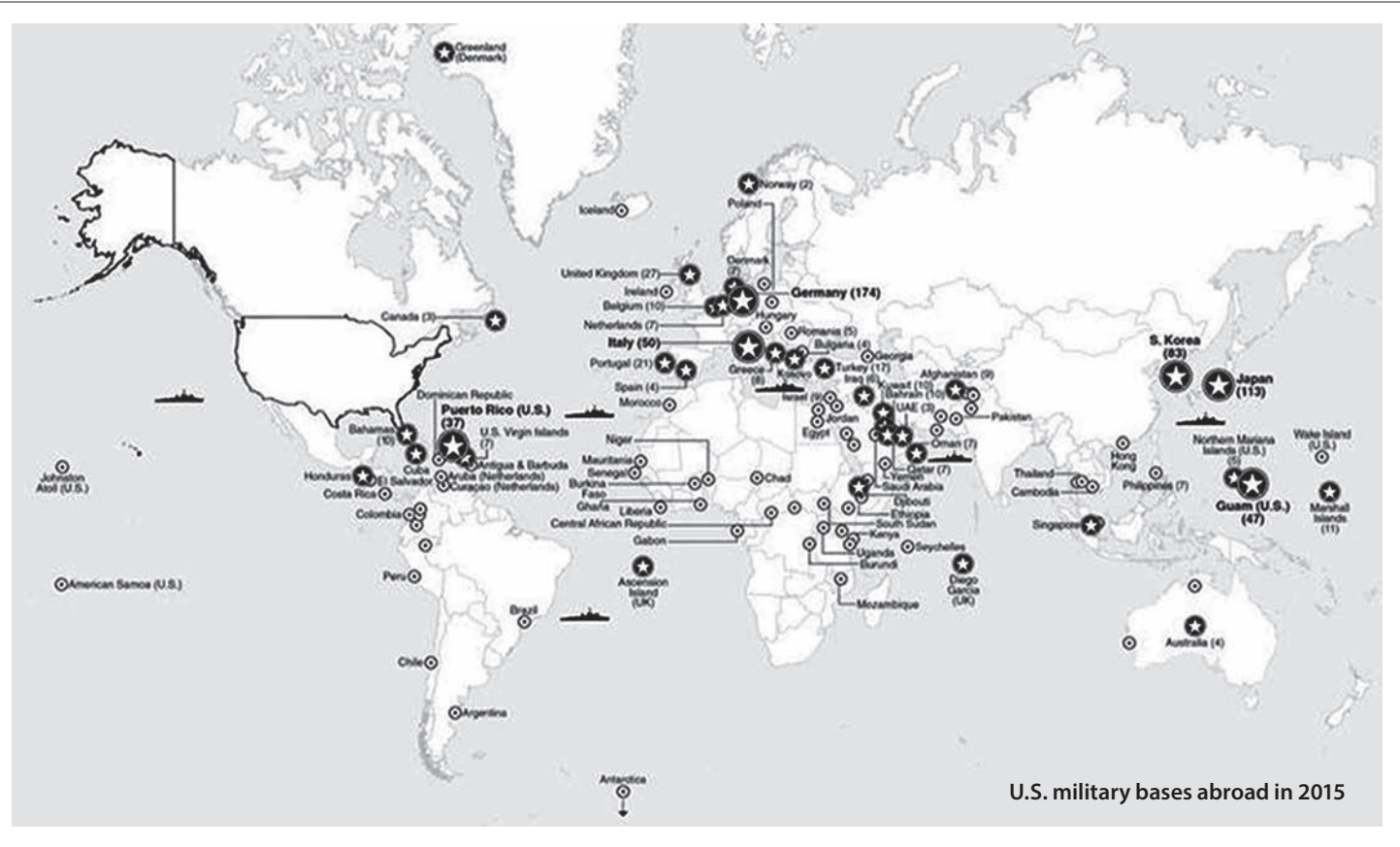
Obviously, Trump’s policies are completely detrimental to the long-standing strategies of the U.S. capitalist establishment for world domination. In fact, however, the establishment has a totally erroneous analysis of its own crisis and could not solve it with its usual approach. Both the establishment view and Trump’s view of the crisis are false.

Only a revolutionary Marxist understanding of the crisis corresponds to objective reality. And only such a view leads to a resolution of the crisis favorable to the workers and the oppressed.

The crisis of U.S. imperialism and capitalism stems from the insatiable, aggressive need of Washington and Wall Street to reconquer and recolonize the vast territories they lost during the Soviet period in the 20th century. It is a failed attempt.

They cannot turn the Pacific into an “American lake” again because China has risen up. They can do horrific damage, but they cannot recolonize the Middle East or Iran because the oppressed in the region will not let it happen. They cannot

According to Marx, the capitalist government is the executive committee of the ruling class. That truth still holds. But that executive committee is by no means politically homogeneous or unified. In fact, the greater the crisis in imperialism and capitalism, the greater the divisions within the government and within the state itself.



turn Latin America into a U.S. “backyard” despite their “regime change” aspirations. Their brutal treatment of Puerto Rico and of Latinx im/migrants explodes their false promises. And socialist Cuba still stands in their way.

The crisis stems further from the rul-

ing class’s insatiable thirst for profit and the resultant growing inequality and grinding poverty of the masses in the U.S. These masses are the ultimate social base of imperialism, a base that is eroded with every tax cut for the rich, every attack on social services, every act of racist police

brutality and mass incarceration. The ruling-class parasites are desperate to suck every last nickel of profit out of the masses as their system declines.

So both views of the crisis, Trump’s and that of the broader capitalist ruling class, are false. Capitalism has no solution to its

## In Charlottesville, Washington D.C.: Victory for anti-racists

Continued from page 1

torturer Gina Haspel, director of the CIA — must be fought as they push the government even further to the right.

### Charlottesville a year later

*The following account of what happened in Charlottesville, Va., is by Malik Clark of G-Rebels and Workers World Party.*

After fascist and Nazi groups announced a Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., for Aug. 11, University of Virginia students organized their own Rally for Justice on that day. The approach of the anniversary of Heather Heyer’s death a year ago during a similar rally by the far right conjured noticeable tension as everyone wondered what would happen. Would the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis return to clash with the anti-fascist demonstration?

Organized by the activist group Students United, the event drew over 200 protesters carrying banners and signs denouncing white supremacy, neo-Nazis and the police. The student group planned to “reclaim the north plaza of the Rotunda,” where a statue of slaveowner president Thomas Jefferson stands — a target since the previous Unite the Right demonstration in Charlottesville.

The students had been told they would be allowed to convene in this area, but law enforcement blocked off the statue and prohibited an occupation.

Many organizations came out in support of the student rally, including community groups, members of the Catholic Church and local activists. They gathered to the east of the statue and the Rotunda. Passionate Black student leaders spoke of Heather Heyer’s tragic death and how the

heavy policing of their approved rally was evidence of the people’s power. Survivors faced their resurfaced trauma and spoke about what the past year has been like for them and the importance of the community learning from tragic events.

State law enforcement overwhelmed most free space within the university. A myriad of police cars, vans, armored vehicles and buses riddled the side streets and student/faculty parking lots. Officers in full riot gear made their way through the pavilions to approach the rally.

The peaceful Rally for Justice became a target of yet another show of power by the tools of the government.

Protesters formed a human barrier to keep the cop militia away, shouting, “We don’t see no riot here, why are you in riot gear?”

The police came without warning and without requirement. The white supremacist neo-Nazis and Klan never showed.

The students, not wanting to lose control and get caged in by the surrounding officers, moved the rally to the streets and marched through the campus, occupying space as they went. As the march

progressed, police interference continued to block off routes. The students eventually lost control of the procession as the demonstration dissolved and marched off the campus.

The alt-right did not need to come to the rally — the police did the work of trying to intimidate and instill fear within our ranks. This demonstration confirmed the unwarranted police aggression toward the left. Neo-Nazis can march with torches without fear, yet a moment of healing for a hurting community requires riot gear.

By contrast, a rally in Booker T. Washington Park the next day was very well received. Many members of the community came out early on Sunday morning, empowering one another with spirituals, chants and words of solidarity.

One community member, Rosia Parker, spoke on the importance of the community standing against the police and white supremacy. “Charlottesville was built by the hands of Black people,” she said, adding, “We’re still taking this back, by force.” Parker and Katrina Turner had been pushed out of the way of the car that

killed Heather Heyer during last year’s tragedy.

Quoting Assata Shakur, Parker emphasized the need for unity between all people of Charlottesville. Community members spoke about the many difficulties facing Charlottesville, such as displacement, unaffordable housing and police brutality.

The rally brought attention to other victims of violent clashes at the first march, so they would not be forgotten.

The presence of the Ku Klux Klan in last year’s Unite the Right march was a wake-up call to this community. The community addressed the event as a racist terror attack. Don Gathers of the Charlottesville local Black Lives Matter movement urged everyone to do their part in the fight against racism and to hold Charlottesville officials accountable.

The spirit of Heather Heyer can only be honored by fixing the problems that created such an influx of opposition. The people of Charlottesville are to be commended for being able to overcome their trauma and turn a terrifying experience into a movement for equality and peace. □

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of  
*A People's History of the United States*

## Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:  
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism  
means for the class struggle in the U.S.

### 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.

Books available at all major online booksellers.

### Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

## EL CAPITALISMO EN UN CALLEJÓN SIN SALIDA

Destruction of employment, overproduction and crisis in the era of high technology

UN PUNTO DE VISTA MARXISTA

FRED GOLDSTEIN

### El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo globalha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com)

## CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END

Job Destruction, Overproduction and CRISIS in the High-Tech Era

A MARXIST VIEW

FRED GOLDSTEIN  
author of Low-Wage Capitalism



# Trump nominated Kavanaugh to overturn legal abortion

By Sue Davis

One of President Donald Trump’s most fervent — and contentious — vows on the campaign trail was that he would appoint justices who would dismantle Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court ruling that established the right to legal abortion 45 years ago.

Trump followed through in 2017 with his first appointee: Judge Neil Gorsuch, whom President George W. Bush had appointed in 2006 to the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. In Gorsuch’s Court of Appeals ruling on what was later called the Hobby Lobby case, he sided with Christian employers and religious organizations that demanded an exemption from the contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act based on their religious beliefs. After a subsequent appeal to the Supreme Court in 2014, a 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court ruling affirmed the religious exemption.

Gorsuch also expressed his anti-choice views on June 26 when he joined the conservative majority affirming the so-called First Amendment rights of “crisis pregnancy clinics” in California. That ruling gave these services permission to continue lying to and emotionally bribing, manipulating and coercing mostly poor women, often women of color, into keeping unplanned pregnancies.

Trump’s second nominee to the court is Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh, whose position on abortion and other women’s health issues is of primary concern, especially to the 67 percent of the population who support women’s access to legal abortion. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll in June, 81 percent of Democratic registered voters, 71 percent of Independents and 43 percent of Republicans do not want Roe v. Wade overturned. Among women of reproductive age (18-44), 74 percent support Roe.

In 2006, during his confirmation hearing before becoming a justice of the Washington, D.C., Circuit Court, Kavanaugh stated that he considered Roe to be binding under the principle of “stare decisis.” That Latin phrase refers to an established precedent, principle or authority set by a previous legal case or ruling, which assumes that similar facts will yield similar and predictable outcomes.

However, the most recent abortion case on which Kavanaugh dissented last October, involving a pregnant migrant teenager in Texas, showed that the judge lied.

**Kavanaugh fails to follow precedent**

In his dissenting opinion, Kavanaugh

ugh did not follow precedent on prior Roe rulings. Rather, he asserted that the pregnant 17-year-old migrant should not have immediate access to abortion care — despite the fact that a Texas court had granted the minor that right. Fortunately, the case was soon reversed by the full panel of D.C. Circuit justices, and the young woman, well into the second trimester of her pregnancy — very near the time when abortion would be unavailable in Texas — received the abortion she desperately wanted and deserved.

This very issue will soon come to the Supreme Court, since a class-action lawsuit on behalf of all im/migrant teenagers in federal custody who seek abortions is currently proceeding through the court system. Do you think Kavanaugh would follow precedent now and uphold Roe? Hardly!

(Similarly, Kavanaugh didn’t follow precedent on labor issues affecting all working people, but especially im/migrants, as detailed in an Aug. 9 Workers World article.)

On birth control, an equally critical women’s health issue, Kavanaugh sided with Gorsuch in a 2015 case on religious objections to paying for free contraceptives for all women employees as required by the Affordable Care Act. It’s projected that Kavanaugh would join the Trump administration in the pending lawsuit by 20 states to end the ACA’s requirement that health insurers cover pre-existing conditions. That case, due to be heard in a district court in Texas, could soon wind up before SCOTUS. (Washington Post, July 9)

An article posted on rightwingwatch.org cites a long list of reactionary pundits who applaud Kavanaugh’s nomination because it “was pre-approved by the Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society, which puts Americans’ access to health care, women’s ability to choose safe and legal abortion, and legal equality for LGBTQ Americans at risk.” (July 10)

Though Kavanaugh’s positions on same-sex marriage are not on the record, we do know that he supports the right of conservative Christians to discriminate on religious grounds. So we can extrapolate that he supported the court’s recent 5-4 Masterpiece Cakeshop decision and would back others that are poised to chip away at the rights LGBTQ folks have only just begun to win.

Anticipating that Trump would nominate an anti-Roe justice to the Supreme Court, five progressive organizations that support women’s right to bodily integrity and agency — Planned Parenthood,

NARAL, the National Women’s Law Center, Demand Justice and the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum — raised the “personal liberty standard” on July 5 as a new litmus test for SCOTUS justices.

Planned Parenthood Executive Vice President Dawn Laguens defined the personal liberty standard based on the Fourteenth Amendment: “[The] Senate must only confirm a justice who affirmatively declares that they believe that the Constitution protects individual liberty and the right of all people to make personal decisions about their bodies and their personal relationships, including the use of contraception, the right to have an abortion, and the freedom to marry whom you choose. That is what the American people want to know.”

The group called for marches on Sunday, Aug. 26 — Women’s Equality Day (the day the Nineteenth Amendment established women’s right to vote) — to protest Trump’s nominee.

**Need to counter anti-abortion troops and stigma**

On the Senate floor July 25, Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) denounced the threat Kavanaugh would pose to reproductive health care access, including contraceptives: “If an employer tries to deny his employee affordable birth control because he thinks he knows better ... or if a woman does not want to carry her rapist’s child to term, our nation must affirm her autonomy because our laws are her last resort. But under Judge Kavanaugh’s vision ... of tradition and conscience, women wouldn’t have that last resort.

“Instead a woman’s ability to get reproductive health care would overwhelmingly depend ... on whether she could afford it, and therefore disproportionately on her race and zip code as well. The only way to stop this is for people to take action.”

That’s what’s needed to counter the “shock-and-awe” campaign that anti-abortion groups told The Daily Beast about on Aug. 2. Motivated by what they consider a “once-in-a-generation chance to end legal abortion,” groups like the so-called Pro-Life Action League and Americans United for Life are organizing more than 50 national and state anti-abortion groups with legions of grassroots troops to execute public relations blitzes, swing-state field operations, targeted advertising, lobbying of wavering senators, traditional letter-writing and phone-banking activities, and long-standing protests outside abortion providers on weekends.

They also plan a visible presence at town halls, other public events and rallies across the country in the run-up to the midterm elections. But with a difference. They are “tamping down the hysterical rhetoric” — graphic images of fetuses and abortion tissue — which don’t win hearts and minds to their cause.

Even before the campaign was announced, Katha Pollitt, a longtime abortion rights advocate and writer for The Nation, called Kavanaugh “bad news for reproductive rights.” (New York Times, July 10) She proposed the pro-choice movement mobilize in the states, because “if Roe is overturned, each state will be free to make its own laws.” She noted that current laws in 17 states will outright ban or greatly limit abortion as soon as Roe is history. Only nine states have laws affirming the right to abortion without Roe. She added, “If we wait until Roe is overturned, it will be too late.”

Women must fight back against abortion stigma and ignorance, asserted Pollitt. Data from the Guttmacher Institute show one in four women will have an abortion in her lifetime; the risk of death due to childbirth is 14 times greater than the risk of death from abortion; the vast majority of those who have abortions do not regret it, but feel enormous relief and gratitude; and a stereotype-shattering statistic is that 59 percent of those who have abortions are already mothers.

The last issue exposes the economic pressures exerted by low wages under this class-based, patriarchal capitalist system on millions of working women, especially women of color, youth, women with disabilities, rural women, immigrants and women who suffer from domestic violence.

Pollitt also called for visible and vocal support from the majority of Christians — mainstream Protestants, both Black and white, and Catholics — who say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. According to a 2017 Pew Research Center survey, even 29 percent of white evangelicals support abortion rights.

Noting that women had abortions in the thousands even when it was illegal, Pollitt stressed that overturning Roe would “fuel resistance.” Historian of abortion Rickie Solinger agreed: “Criminalizing sex-and-pregnancy management will stimulate women, as before Roe, to enact mass disrespect for the law. We are heading for some wild disobedience.”

And not a moment too soon — in the drive to crush capitalism and eradicate all the ugly, mean, divisive aspects of racist, sexist, bigoted class society. □

## Iowa workers fight to save UI Labor Center

By Mike Kühlenbeck  
Iowa City, Iowa

Aug. 13 — Iowa workers are fighting to save the University of Iowa’s Labor Center from being closed by administrators in the wake of continuing attacks on the working class.

University administrators announced they are defunding the Labor Center along with six other UI centers, forcing this invaluable institution to close its doors within the year. The announcement was made prior to discussion with members of the Labor Center. If administrators have their way, the center’s closing will have devastating consequences for all Iowa workers.

The Labor Center, established in 1951, has since provided direct education an-

nually for over 2,500 workers across the Hawkeye State. To quote a July 12 press release from the Iowa City-based Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, the center is “the only unit in the entire state university system that specializes in research and education for and about Iowa workers.”

Iowa is notorious for its “right-to-work” laws. Its government has been doubling down on anti-worker legislation. Statewide budget cuts by the Republican-controlled state government have devastated social services and been reaching colleges and university campuses. The center’s closing would be symbolic of UI leaders acting as guardians of the ruling class.

The university’s decision comes at a time of “spiraling inequality, when the

combination of stagnant incomes and rising tuition are putting a college education increasingly out of reach,” according to UI Professor Colin Gordon. (tinyurl.com/yd46x668)

Professors, students, union members, workers, faith-based groups and community activists launched the “Save Our Labor Center” campaign to put pressure on administrators to keep the center open. SOLC organizers argue that the decision to close the center is not about “state funding cuts,” noting that the center’s 2018 General Education Fund allocation is “less than the UI president’s annual salary.”

According to a testimonial by Davenport native Rodney Blackwell, a member of Communications Workers Local 7110: “Many Iowans work full time. They don’t

have the time to find out about all the laws. That’s why the labor center is important — to educate the few, to educate the masses.”

SOLC public hearings will be hosted across the state in Des Moines (Aug. 14), Cedar Rapids (Aug. 16), Quad Cities (Aug. 22) and Sioux City (Aug. 28). More hearings and dates will be announced in the future.

As stated in an SOLC flyer promoting the Des Moines hearing: “Your participation is crucial. A critical mass of voices can turn the tide on this bad decision. Come take this historic opportunity to share your experience, and have your input become part of the public record.”

For more information, see the source of most of the SOLC quotes at saveourlaborcenter.com. □



# Crisis deepens in Puerto Rico as Junta seizes educational system

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The crisis of the Puerto Rican nation continues spiraling downward and is about to hit bottom. The main news every day only increases people's indignation. Each day proves without a doubt Puerto Rico's character as a colony. Each event adds another nail in the coffin of the far-cical "pact between Puerto Rico and the United States" that was the "Free Associated State of 1952," a false autonomy for the archipelago.

During the second week of August, it was clearly exposed who really, directly governs in Puerto Rico: the Congress of the United States, through its imposed Fiscal Control Board (a dictatorial Junta). Those who voted in past Puerto Rican elections, thinking that they would elect their leaders, have seen that their vote was a fantasy exercise in vain. The reduced participation in the last elections indicated Puerto Ricans' growing lack of confidence in their government.

## Fiscal board's power over Puerto Rico's government

Judge Laura Taylor Swain, of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, presides over the bankruptcy cases concerning Puerto Rico's government. Since Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory and not a municipality, bankruptcy cases cannot be heard by bankruptcy court judges, only by federal district court judges.

The last decision resolved two lawsuits filed by the Puerto Rican government, one from the Legislature and another from Gov. Ricardo Roselló. It referred to the FCB's power over the insular government under the Puerto Rican Constitution. It must be remembered that this Constitution was authorized by Law 600 of 1952, which was approved by the U.S. Congress.

With a sentence, the judge dismisses any aspirations of local autonomy: "The power granted to the board by section 205 (b) (1) (K) of PROMESA allows the FCB to make binding policy choices for the commonwealth government, despite the governor's objection of the recommendations under section 205." (elnuevodia.com, Aug. 8)

Section 205 of the PROMESA law refers to public policy recommendations and is basically the implementation of the interests of the U.S. Congress: to control payrolls, reduce expenses (pensions, benefits, etc.) and privatize government agencies that are potential profit generators.

Although the judge establishes that the

FCB cannot pass laws, she said that it has "budgetary" and "negotiation tools." As the saying goes, "Whoever pays the piper calls the tune." When the FCB imposes a fiscal plan that satisfies U.S. interests, it goes above and beyond any Puerto Rican law. For example: What difference does it make if the Puerto Rican government wants to preserve the Christmas bonus for public and private workers (an obligation under PR law) if the FCB's fiscal plan does not include any source to pay for it?

It should be pointed out here that the Junta's work has two central purposes: to balance the budget and return Puerto Rico to the credit market. Of course, central to this is paying the bondholders as much as possible at the expense of the people.

As a result of this decision, imposing the Junta's fiscal plan will greatly exacerbate the people's situation. Apart from reduction of the Christmas bonus — which is the annual stimulus that helps families and small businesses balance their budgets and stay afloat for the rest of the year — layoffs will increase; employment positions will decrease and retirement plans will be reduced, pushing the elderly population into poverty. Also, government services will be cut and worsened at the central level and in the municipalities where budgets will shrink even further.

## Consequences for educational system

Classes start at the beginning of August in Puerto Rican schools. How will the dictatorship of the U.S. Congress through the seven Junta members impact the Puerto Rican educational system? Never before has a school year started in such a clumsy manner, with so much uncertainty for teachers, students and their families and with so much disorganization and incongruence, especially for students in elementary school and those who need special education.

It should be noted that even though Gov. "Ricky" Roselló filed a lawsuit against the Junta, his government is politically in synch with the Junta. Congress has used the Puerto Rican government as an "easy fool" to achieve its purposes. The Roselló administration, which aims to "impose" statehood — as if that were possible — is trying to turn Puerto Rico into a copy of a U.S. state.

The governor has docilely followed the suggestions of U.S. business interests by hiring administrators, companies, consultants and others, offering them multimillion-dollar contracts. His policy has been to imitate even the failures in many

U.S. states, such as "charter schools," called "alliance schools" in Puerto Rico.

The most appalling case has been the hiring of Philadelphia-born Julia Keleher as secretary of education. She is in step with the destructive policies promoted by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, who recently visited the island to reinforce plans to privatize education.

As if it were a premonition, Roselló's reply to a reporter at the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Gazette magazine, when asked why Keleher was hired, was: "Very bluntly, we asked her to break the system and rebuild it again." (thepenngazette.com, April 23)

This is precisely what Keleher is doing. In a Machiavellian way, she closes and consolidates schools based on numbers and figures, without visiting them, knowing the condition of their buildings or learning about the adjacent communities. She has closed model schools which are in good physical shape with special classrooms to accommodate the different tasks required for special education students, who exceed 40 percent of Puerto Rico's student body.

With the excuse that thousands of children left after Hurricane Maria, Keleher closed nearly 300 schools located in the poorest, most remote neighborhoods in the mountains and rural areas, and concentrated the students in urban areas, creating difficult access due to traffic congestion. She gave no reasons for her actions to teachers and family members who asked her why. Often, she only replied, "Because." — showing there had been no planning process other than statistics.

Just two or three days before the start of school on Aug. 13, it was reported that due to overcrowding in schools where the new plan had consolidated the student body at random, the Department of Education purchased 14 trailers worth \$1.6 million for use as classrooms. These trailers are mounted on unsafe concrete blocks and lack electricity and toilets.

Moreover, the Department of Education is dividing existing classrooms in established schools to accommodate two classrooms. That is dangerous, since there is only one door for both entry and exit. Meanwhile, schools in excellent condition remain padlocked.

## Top school 'sold' for \$1

Schools in good condition have been sold. A shameful example was the Julia de Burgos School in Carolina, which was "sold" for \$1 to the Living Water Foun-

tain Church. It is now a bilingual, Christian private school called "The Fountain Christian Bilingual School." During the changeover, a mural painted in 1966 by José Antonio Torres Martinó was destroyed. This privatization process goes against the island's Constitution that ensures a secular, public education.

The Department of Education is a total mess. It tried to impose online tuition. Many children are in the care of their grandparents, who are unfamiliar with the internet and couldn't enroll them online. Also, areas far from city centers still lack a consistent internet signal. For this reason, the education department had to accept at the last minute that children could enroll in school just as they used to before the hurricane.

Regarding teachers, they also received a real slap in the face from Keleher. She has changed the subjects they teach at random, invalidating their education, studies and experiences. She has changed the grades they teach and sent teachers to faraway places. For example, a 60-year-old teacher in Patillas, in southern Puerto Rico, was assigned to teach on the island municipality of Vieques, which would be a four-hour commute for her each way, including the boat ride!

These actions are all being done to create a Puerto Rico open to foreign investment, as mandated by the Fiscal Control Board and the U.S. Congress. It is a Puerto Rico that "is a blank slate," said Roselló a few months ago when promoting the island to businessmen. His comment infers a Puerto Rico that is insecure for its working class, where the people would be servants and where there would be no regulation on the flow of megaprofits.

## Fight back!

But the teachers are ready to fight back and have called for a strike on Aug. 15, two days after school starts.

Puerto Ricans living in Philadelphia have begun a campaign to "decorate" the surroundings of the University of Pennsylvania with "Wanted" posters showing photos of Julia Keleher and David Skeel, a law professor at the school and member of the Fiscal Control Board.

On Oct. 27, the International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico will hear testimony in New York City about the attacks on education that are part of the colonial crimes being committed against the Puerto Rican people. For more information about the tribunal, visit [PuertoRicoTribunal.org](http://PuertoRicoTribunal.org). □

## ENDORSE *the* PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL on U.S. Crimes against PUERTO RICO

### LIST YOUR ORGANIZATION AS AN ENDORSER.

On Oct. 27, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., join Rafael Cancel Miranda and other Puerto Rican and international personalities and organizations at the People's Tribunal on U.S. Crimes Against Puerto Rico. The People's Tribunal will convene at Holyrood Church/Iglesia Santa Cruz in New York City.



**The Tribunal needs your support!** Since the devastation of hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, the world has heard of Puerto Rico's economic, social and environmental crisis.

This crisis is not new or even due primarily to the hurricanes, but is the culmination of the savage colonialist domination and capitalist exploitation that the United States has imposed ever since its 1898 military invasion of Puerto Rico. On Oct. 27, activists and witnesses

from Puerto Rico (including eyewitnesses to U.S. crimes), the Puerto Rican diaspora, the U.S. and the world will meet in New York City to take part in this colonial crimes tribunal.

**A people's investigation.** The Tribunal will present a people's investigation of the role of the U.S. government during its 120-year colonial rule, and particularly since the hurricanes' devastation put Puerto Rico in the eye of the world's media. The Tribunal will feature renowned Nicaraguan

legal scholar and attorney, Dr. Augusto Zamora, who will serve as prosecutor, and a distinguished jury of U.S. and international human rights leaders.

This call for action by the Puerto Rico Tribunal Ad Hoc Committee is not made solely for the sake of posterity, but also seeks to strengthen the worldwide struggle for self-determination today. What is happening in Puerto Rico is different only in scale and duration from U.S.-perpetrated destruction elsewhere.

**A people's campaign.** Only a people's campaign in solidarity with the Puerto Rican struggle for decolonization, self-determination and justice can begin to end the continued U.S. presence and domination, not only in Puerto Rico but throughout the Caribbean, Latin America and elsewhere.

We hope that your organization will endorse this very important effort and join with us on Oct. 27 in New York City.

### Please endorse!

Email: [TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com](mailto:TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com) Type "Puerto Rico Tribunal" in the subject line.

A complete list of Tribunal conveners is on our website: [PuertoRicoTribunal.org](http://PuertoRicoTribunal.org)

Like us on Facebook at Puerto Rico Tribunal.

Skype account name: Tribunal Puerto Rico

For more information, contact us at [TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com](mailto:TribunalPuertoRico@gmail.com).

**Please donations to: Puerto Rico Tribunal,** P.O. Box 34249, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Online: [gofundme.com/tribunalpuertorico](http://gofundme.com/tribunalpuertorico)



# Solidarity drives a taxi workers’ win

In New York City within the last year, six taxi and “black car” limo drivers killed themselves — in financial desperation at no longer being able to support their families or pay their debts.

The yellow and green cab, livery and black car drivers were being run into the ground by the advent of Uber and Lyft rides, cheated by “race-to-the-bottom” fares and placed in deadly competition with other desperate workers.

Such is the result of the “new gig economy” — where someone is told you can “be your own boss” with “flexible hours,” but which really means 18-hour days with no minimum wage, no overtime, no health care, and the “freedom” to drive your own car and pay your own vehicle insurance. And, by the way, compete with every other taxi, limo, livery or Lyft/Uber driver on the road.

But there is some very good news. Driver-workers won a huge victory Aug. 8. The New York Taxi Workers Alliance, after months of organizing, (encompassing the time of the six suicides), successfully drove legislation through the New York City Council that makes the city the first in the U.S. to regulate Uber and Lyft.

One of the drivers tweeted the day of the victory: “We just beat Wall Street!”

It’s one of the first worker victories in the 21st century gig economy, and all workers should celebrate it.

In reality, the gig economy has a long and gruesome history. It was called “piece work.” Women labored in isolation day and night, each in her own room, to produce knitted or embroidered pieces at whatever small sum per item

the boss offered, all the while cooking, cleaning, caretaking their children. Black women were paid next to nothing for washing and ironing at home. No minimum wage, no overtime, no health care. You provide your own scissors, needle and thread, soap and irons.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels described the 2018 gig economy 170 years ago in the 1848 Communist Manifesto: “The laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the markets.” Before they begin to organize together, this working class is just “an incoherent mass ... broken up by their mutual competition.”

Since 2011 in New York City, the forces of capital have placed taxi and limo drivers in bitter competition with Uber and Lyft drivers, while using the techno-driven companies to reap immense profits from passengers and workers alike.

The victory in NYC came from both “driver power” and “driver unity” since taxi and limo drivers overcame the competition to band together with exploited app drivers.

They won minimum fare rates across the industry, as well as minimum pay for app drivers and app passenger fares. There will be a cap on the number of new for-hire vehicles for 12 months, with the exception of wheelchair accessible vehicles. The latter stipulation is one the NYTWA insisted on, in collaboration with the disability rights Taxis for All Campaign.

### The NYTWA expressed this worker unity in an Aug. 8 statement:

“This victory belongs to yellow cab, green cab, livery, black car, Uber and Lyft drivers who united together in our union to transform shared struggle and heartbreak into hope and strength. And this victory belongs to New Yorkers and our allies who have stood with us to say, not one more death, not one more fallen driver crushed by poverty and despair.

“What happened today didn’t just set a precedent for New York City, it set a precedent for the entire world as app companies like Uber and Lyft use technological innovation to return us to a time of sweated labor, destroying lives and livelihoods across the planet.

“Today, New York City said, no more. We cannot be bought. Workers must come before a corporate agenda of greed at all costs.

“Today, a workforce of over 100,000 men and women, a workforce of immigrants and people of color, finally have a reason to hope for an end to this crisis. Today we took the first step. Tomorrow we will continue to fight.” (nytwa.org) □



PHOTO: NYTWA

New York Taxi Workers Alliance members and Executive Director Bhairavi Desai (standing, center) celebrate with allies in Taxis for All Campaign in Union Square, Aug. 9.

## WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero available online at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books)

**Excerpt:** ‘Last October, Colin Kaepernick, the African-American former quarterback for National Football League’s San Francisco 49ers, was asked after a game why he was wearing a Muhammad Ali t-shirt. He said, “To pay homage. [Ali] fought a very similar fight and was trying to do what’s right for the people.”’

# Activists’ suspicions confirmed

By Matsemela-Ali Odom  
San Diego

A coalition of activists from Workers World Party-San Diego, Committee Against Police Brutality, All of Us Or None/San Diego and community members turned out to support the Boundary Four and More on Aug. 10. This case concerns African-American and Latinx men and an Asian-American woman who were roped into a conspiracy about alleged drugs sales.

Suspicions about the case raised by Curtis Howard, formerly incarcerated activist and author, were confirmed at the indictment hearing in San Diego’s federal courthouse.

Seventeen people have been charged with conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine, possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and conspiracy to launder money. All these charges might seem convincing to many people, but a visit to the federal courthouse revealed a different story. There were no kingpins in the courtroom. All of the defendants wore green and khaki uniforms worn by low-risk offenders.

What is more, supporters of the defendants saw at least two of them enter the courtroom in wheelchairs. Another, Anthony Rhodes, has been in the infirmary, and is experiencing trouble with his vision. Rhodes’ attorney requested access to the defendant, as he became inaccessible to her when he was moved for health problems.

While the median age of the defendants is 38, at least a third of the defendants are in their 50s and 60s, while others are in their late 40s. The Aug. 10 hearing was merely a status hearing, with another one ordered for Sept. 28. That means the defendants will have had to spend at least three months in federal custody before the trial even moves forward.

A complete display of the prosecution’s evidence was not expected that day. However, the evidence produced was discernibly thin — and, at best, would normally have been grounds for a case in state court. The prosecution admitted it was also complex.

### Racism rife in (in)justice system

Studies have shown that as many as 90

percent of the crack cocaine cases sent to federal court have involved Black defendants, despite Black people using or selling the drug at a much lower rate than whites. The general notion that Black people are locked up for selling crack because crack is a “black drug” is not true.

Beginning in the 1980s, crack was stigmatized as a Black drug, which allowed the courts to easily set mandatory minimums in crack sales cases. Black people comprise a majority of those both charged with state offenses and referred to federal court and those convicted. The mass incarceration of Black and Brown people is a political and economic crisis, and definitely not one of moral deficiency.

In the past, this case would have been referred to the state legal system, but it appears that prosecutors are aiming to usurp state legislation with federal prosecutions. At the dawn of the Trump administration, Alex Shephard prophetically reported in the New Republic: “Donald Trump and Jeff Sessions are going to use an imaginary crime wave to launch a crackdown.” According to Howard, these defendants are mere pawns in that game.

District Judge Gonzalo Curiel is presiding over the case. He was appointed to the bench in 2012 by President Barack Obama and is a member of an African-American fraternity. Curiel also presided over the Trump University case.

In a similar case in 2017, the community rallied behind a defendant roped into a federal indictment that involved no physical evidence, only telecommunications. The judge in that case, also an Obama appointee, professed a belief in treatment and community service over incarceration for the convicted. The young man the community rallied around was released. Many activists hope for a similar outcome in this case.

Attending the hearing is only the first step for the coalition. Outside the courthouse, protesters held signs reading: “Treat them! Don’t Delete Them!” “Stop Low-income Indictments!” and “Justice Department Entraps Black People!” The coalition demands the release of the defendants and, upon their release, that housing, health care and employment be secured for them. □

**JOIN US! Fill the Streets and Pack the Courtroom!** This court proceeding is a critical legal step towards Mumia Abu-Jamal’s freedom. Black Panther Party spokesman, MOVE supporter and revolutionary journalist Mumia is innocent, framed in the murder of a police officer and sentenced to death 36 years ago. Mumia is alive today because of mass protest.

### FREE MUMIA NOW!

New evidence proves former DA Ronald Castile who prosecuted Mumia’s appeals, violated due process when, as PA Supreme Court justice, he took part in deciding against Mumia’s appeals. By new law Mumia should be granted the right to bring new appeal challenges to his conviction. But DA Larry Krasner told the Court Mumia’s legal petition is without merit.

“... the new District Attorney’s office, headed by Larry Krasner, is failing to do what justice requires. It is continuing the position of his predecessors, to the satisfaction of the Fraternal Order of Police.” —Bret Grote, Esq., Abolitionist Law Center Legal Director.

Almost 40 years in prison, 30 in solitary confinement on death row, have threatened his health. Mumia has never stopped fighting against this racist, class-biased system. He speaks out for all oppressed. Winning Mumia’s freedom is part of the struggle for our liberation.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL  
COURT HEARING  
8AM  
THURSDAY  
AUGUST 30  
13<sup>TH</sup> & FILBERT  
PHILADELPHIA

**freemumia.com**  
**info@freemumia.com**  
New York: **212.330.8029**  
Philadelphia: **215.724.1618**  
**facebook/Mobilization4Mumia**  
**Mobilization4mumia@gmail.com**

**International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ)**  
**Endorsed by:** The MOVE family; Mobilization for Mumia; Campaign to Bring Mumia Home; Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition NYC; People’s Organization for Progress; Food Not Bombs - Solidarity; International Action Center; MundoObrero/Workers World Party; Educators for Mumia



## Part 1

# Workers across Russia protest plan to raise retirement age

By Greg Butterfield

Across the vast breadth of the world's largest country by area, from huge cities to small towns, workers young and old have taken to the streets this summer to protest a plan by the capitalist government of the Russian Federation to raise the retirement age.

The government's plan would, step-by-step, raise the retirement age for women from 55 to 63 by the year 2034 and for men from 60 to 65 by 2028.

The plan was unveiled by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in June, on the eve of the Russia-hosted World Cup soccer championships. Activists and ordinary workers alike were outraged that officials tried to sneak the unpopular measure under the radar while people were distracted by the games.

President Vladimir Putin, who vowed publicly in 2005 never to raise the retirement age, has remained silent.

Workers in the U.S. will immediately recognize that Russian workers have a much lower retirement age than they do. That was a key accomplishment of the working class during the early years of the socialist Soviet Union. The current retirement age was established all the way back in 1928.

It's one of the last pillars of worker protection remaining from the socialist era. Russian workers, who have suffered greatly since the capitalist counterrevolution of the early 1990s, including a catastrophic decline in life expectancy, are determined not to lose this historic conquest.

"If the retirement age is increased, every citizen of Russia will be robbed of more than a million rubles (\$16,000), and it is unacceptable," declared Left Front



PHOTO: ROT FRONT

**Dramatic "red card" protest in St. Petersburg, July 18.**

leader and former political prisoner Sergei Udaltsov at a 10,000-strong protest in Moscow. (Associated Press, July 28)

### Mass mobilization

Security measures for the World Cup gave authorities an excuse to ban protests in many major cities in June and July. So regional centers and smaller cities took the lead in organizing demonstrations. In many cases, these have grown into weekly or even daily actions drawing hundreds or thousands of workers.

"In Saratov, rallies now take place almost every day," reported Free Press, the left news site. "Even the terrible heat doesn't stop people. From 300 to 1,000 attend. They hold rallies, gather signatures on petitions, which they then send to the Kremlin. ...

"In Kemerovo, the capital of the Kuzbass mining region, the mayor's office agreed to a protest near the racetrack, which is on the outskirts of the city and difficult to reach by public transportation. Nevertheless, about 1,500 people came to the rally, including from remote areas. ...

"In far-off Nefteyugansk, ... the demand of all is the same: 'No to the 'anti-people reform.'" (SVpressa.ru, July 20)

In most cities, protesters have also raised their voices against a planned 2 percent rise in the value-added tax on consumer goods (similar to sales tax in the U.S.), utility rate hikes and surging prices for gasoline and heating fuel.

On July 18, a protest permit was finally granted in Moscow, although in a "designated free speech area" in a park far from public view. Thousands turned out.

The same day, hundreds flooded the famous Nevsky Prospekt in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). City officials refused organizers a permit. So the people, banned from using signs or chanting slogans, held aloft red "stop cards" used to penalize soccer players. In this way they dramatically showed their opposition to the planned retirement age hike and use of the World Cup as an excuse to silence their protest. At least 14 people were arrested. (RotFront.su, July 19)

Despite the protests and polls showing 90 percent public opposition, on July 19 Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, approved the plan to raise the retirement age on the first reading by a vote of 328-104. (SVpressa.ru, July 20) It must pass a second reading, planned for late September, before moving to the upper house.

Finally, on July 28, a day of coordinated mass protests was held in the capital

and over 150 other cities across the vast Russian Federation, including at least 10,000 in Moscow. The day of action was principally organized by the reformist-led Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), which has a wide base. Organizers included revolutionary left parties, labor unions and many groups.

The protests forced a concession from the government. On Aug. 8 the Central Election Commission authorized three groups of petitioners to begin organizing for a nationwide referendum on the retirement age. Activists cautioned, however, that it was being carried out so as to divert the protest movement.

The CEC authorized three different groups — the KPRF, the capitalist Fair Russia party and a group of nongovernmental organizations — to organize around proposed referenda with very similar wording, setting them in competition against each other. Only one of the referenda can be approved, and each requires overcoming enormous organizational hurdles. (Tass, Aug. 8)

Despite these challenges, the struggle against raising the retirement age is shaping up to be the largest protest movement of the working class in Russia since the 1990s. And it comes at a critical moment — not only for the immediate demands of the workers — but because of the growing threat posed by U.S. sanctions and NATO war moves against Russia.

As the war danger escalates, it will be essential for the Russian workers to raise their voices independently and demand more effective, internationalist means to fight U.S. imperialism than the current oligarchic rulers can manage.

*Part 2 will look behind the pension crisis.*

# Ireland and Mexico act to reduce global warming

By Betsey Piette

While the Trump administration in the U.S. continues to deny the pressing impact of global warming — and acts to reduce environmental protections for the benefit of gas, oil and coal companies — governments in at least two other countries have taken positive actions in recent weeks.

On July 12, the Republic of Ireland became the first country in the world to divest from fossil fuel companies. Then, on Aug. 1, Mexico's President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador pledged to outlaw hydraulic fracturing, a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

The Irish Parliament ratified the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill to compel the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to sell off its shares in coal, oil, peat and gas "as soon as practicable [within five years]." To emphasize that, "A message to the Irish government to divest from fossil fuels is spelled out in lights in front of the lower house of parliament." (Guardian, July 12) The bill is expected to become law before the end of 2018.

Previously, Norway had divested from some fossil fuels, targeting coal companies, but still has major gas and oil holdings. Globally, the movement to divest from fossil fuels has impacted trillions of dollars of investment funds from pensions, insurers, cities, including New York, churches and universities.

The Irish state holds more than \$367

million in fossil fuel investments in 150 companies. "The bill considers a company to be a fossil fuel company if 20 percent or more of its revenue stems from exploration, extraction, or refinement of fossil fuels."

Unlike the U.S., which recently pulled out of the 2016 Paris Agreement on global warming, the bill enforces Ireland's climate change commitments to the agreement and has bipartisan backing throughout the government. In June, Ireland was ranked the second-worst European country on climate action, so the passage of this bill is welcome news. Environmental activists view this as a powerful statement.

### Mexico to ban fracking

López Obrador, who won Mexico's presidential election on July 7, stated in a press conference on Aug. 1 that he will ban hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"). Fracking for natural gas is thought to be a major contributor to higher atmospheric levels of carbon monoxide (CO) gas directly linked to increasing global warming.

Food and Water Watch Executive Director Wenonah Hauter applauded this call, while urging López Obrador to "move even further by pledging to transition Mexico to a fully clean, renewable energy future, thereby setting a remarkable example for its neighbors to the north." (Mintpressnews.com, Aug. 1)

López Obrador, who will take office on

Dec. 1, also spoke out in opposition to the 2013 privatization of Mexico's oil and gas reserves, which had been previously controlled by the state-owned Federal Electricity Commission (CFE). He accused the previous neoliberal government of deliberately closing the CFE plants to buy electricity from foreign countries at very high prices.

These measures demonstrate that

progress is being made in the worldwide campaign to curtail global warming, stop corporate pollution and move toward "a clean, renewable energy future." But the movement must go further and challenge the capitalists who ravage the earth in their drive for superprofits, no matter what damage they cause. The capitalist system is the main danger to the planet and its inhabitants. It's time to say so! ☐

## Protest of ICE's crimes

PHOTO: DAVID SMITH



The latest in ongoing demonstrations at the proposed Houston Immigration and Customs Enforcement holding facility for unaccompanied minors was held Aug. 11. (It's ironically located on "Emancipation Avenue" — recently renamed after a community struggle to change it from the name of a Confederate commander.) The highlight of the protest was wrapping the corner property in yellow "crime scene" tape.

Speakers explained that since the site was being repurposed for the crime of imprisoning children — that being a crime against humanity — it was appropriate to let the public know what was planned for the place. Regular demonstrations are also being held at the wealthy neighborhood home of the real estate magnate who owns the property.

Many demonstrators spoke of their horror in hearing about the purpose of the proposed site when thinking about their own children being snatched from them and herded into such a place. Tania Sediqi, speaking for the FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) coalition, reminded the gathering that the im/migration crisis is global and ongoing. She said that even though she is U.S.-born, she considers herself a "third-generation immigrant" since her grandparents were torn from their ancestral home in India and forced into the newly formed nation of Pakistan, from which her parents migrated to the U.S.

— Report by Joanne Gavin



# Puerto Rico: La crisis se profundiza

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

La crisis de la nación puertorriqueña sigue en espiral hacia abajo; poco falta para que toque fondo. La noticia principal de cada día no hace sino aumentar la indignación del pueblo. Cada día se comprueba sin lugar a dudas, su carácter de colonia. Cada evento le añade un clavo más al ataúd de la farsa del “pacto entre Puerto Rico y Estados Unidos” que fue el “Estado Libre Asociado” de 1952 aparentando una autonomía del archipiélago.

En la segunda semana del mes de agosto se acabó de exponer claramente al pueblo que quien gobierna en Puerto Rico directamente es el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, a través de su impuesta Junta (Dictatorial) de Control Fiscal. Quienes votaron en las pasadas elecciones boricuas pensando en que elegirían a sus dirigentes, se ha probado que fue un vano ejercicio de fantasía. La reducida participación en las últimas elecciones ya indicaba la creciente falta de confianza en su gobierno.

## JCF por encima del gobierno de PR

La Jueza Laura Taylor Swain, del Tribunal de Distrito de EUA por el distrito sur de Nueva York, es la encargada de presidir sobre los casos de bancarrota del gobierno de Puerto Rico. Al ser PR un territorio de EUA y no un municipio, los casos de bancarrota no pueden ser vistos por jueces de bancarrota, sino por los de distrito.

Esta última decisión contestando dos demandas del gobierno boricua, una de la Legislatura y otra del propio gobernante Ricardo Roselló, se refería al poder de la JCF sobre el gobierno insular bajo la Constitución de PR. Hay que recordar que esta constitución fue habilitada por la Ley 600 de 1952 aprobada por el Congreso EUA.

Con una oración, la jueza echa por el borde las aspiraciones de autonomía local: “El poder otorgado a la JSF por la sección 205 (b)(1)(K) de Promesa permite a la JSF hacer elecciones de política vinculantes para el gobierno central, a pesar del rechazo del gobernador a las recomendaciones bajo la sección 205”. (elnuevodia.com, 8 de agosto) La Sección 205 de la Ley Promesa se refiere a recomendaciones de política pública y es básicamente la puesta en marcha de los intereses del Congreso estadounidense: tener el control de las nóminas, de reducir gastos (pensiones, beneficios, etc.) y privatizar agencias gubernamentales que son potencialmente barriles de ganancias.

Y aunque la jueza establece que la JCF no puede aprobar leyes, también dice que tiene “herramientas presupuestarias” y de “negociación”. (ídem) Y como se dice comúnmente, “quien paga escoge la canción”, la JCF al imponer un plan fiscal que responda a sus intereses va por encima de cualquier ley de PR. Por ejemplo, ¿Qué más da si el gobierno quiere preservar el Bono de Navidad para las/os

trabajadores públicos y privados (que es obligación bajo la Ley de PR), si el Plan Fiscal de la JCF no incluye ninguna fuente de pago para éste?

Hay que puntualizar aquí que la labor de la Junta tiene realmente dos propósitos centrales: cuadrar el presupuesto y regresar a PR al mercado crediticio. Desde luego, central a esto es pagarle a los bonistas lo más que se pueda a expensas del pueblo.

Así que como resultado de esta decisión, la imposición del plan Fiscal de la Junta agravará en creces la situación del pueblo. Aparte de la reducción del bono navideño que es el estímulo anual que ayuda a las familias y a los pequeños

tratación millonaria de administradores, empresas, consultores, etc. Su política ha sido la de imitar incluso lo que ha fallado en muchos estados, como las escuelas “chárter”, llamadas “alianza” en PR.

El caso más aberrante ha sido la contratación de la norteamericana Julia Keleher, oriunda de Filadelfia, para Secretaria de Educación. Keleher está en sintonía con la terrible política de Betsy DeVos, quien recientemente visitó la isla para reforzar los planes de privatización de la educación.

Como si fuera una premonición, las palabras de Roselló a la pregunta de una reportera de la revista Penn Gazette, de la



MO/WW FOTO: JOE PIETTE

negocios balancear su presupuesto y quedar a flote durante el resto del año, se incrementarán los despidos; se reducirán las plazas de empleo; se recortarán los planes de retiro sumiendo a la población adulta mayor a la indigencia; se recortarán y empeorarán los servicios gubernamentales tanto a nivel central como en los municipios que verán mermar aún más su presupuesto.

## Implicación a educación y magisterio

En PR, las clases comienzan a principios de agosto. ¿Cuál será la repercusión de la dictadura del Congreso a través de sus siete miembros en el sistema educativo puertorriqueño?

Nunca antes había empezado un curso escolar con un proceso tan torpe, con tanta incertidumbre para maestras/os, estudiantes y sus familias, y tan desorganizado e incongruente. Sobre todo, para estudiantes de escuela elemental, y para estudiantes de educación especial.

Hay que destacar que el gobierno de “Ricky” Roselló, aunque sometió una demanda en contra de la Junta, está al compás políticamente de ésta. Y el Congreso lo ha utilizado como “tonto fácil” para lograr sus propósitos. Su administración, que quiere “imponer” la estadidad en PR (como si eso fuera posible), intenta convertir a PR en una copia de un estado de EUA. Ha seguido dócilmente las sugerencias de intereses estadounidenses en la con-

Universidad de Pensilvania donde la Keleher estudió, de por qué la contrataron, fue: “Sin rodeos, pedimos que ella rompiera el sistema y lo reconstruyera otra vez”. (<http://thepenngazette.com/> 23 de abril)

Y esto precisamente es lo que está haciendo. De una forma maquiavélica, la Keleher cierra y consolida escuelas a base de números y figuras. Sin visitar las escuelas, sin saber las condiciones ni del edificio ni de las comunidades adyacentes. Ha cerrado escuelas modelo, con integridad física, con salones específicos para acomodar las diferentes tareas que requieren las/os estudiantes de educación especial, que en PR sobrepasan el 40 por ciento del estudiantado.

Con la excusa de que se han ido miles de niñas/os después de María, ha cerrado cerca de 300 escuelas localizadas en los barrios más pobres, más alejados, de las montañas y regiones rurales, concentrando el estudiantado en zonas urbanas con difícil acceso por la congestión vehicular. Sin dar ninguna razón a maestras/os y familiares que preguntan. Muchas veces contestando solamente “Porque sí”, demostrando que no ha habido ningún proceso de planificación, fuera de la numérica.

Apenas a dos o tres días antes del comienzo de clases el lunes 13 de agosto, se dio a conocer que dado el hacinamiento en las escuelas donde había consolidado el estudiantado al azar, el Departamento de Educación había comprado 14 vagones

para usarlos de salones de clase, por valor de \$1,6 millones. Vagones que están montados en bloques de cemento, inseguros, sin electricidad ni servicios sanitarios.

Además, están dividiendo salones existentes en las escuelas consolidadas para acomodar dos clases a la vez, reduciendo peligrosamente a una sola puerta tanto la entrada como la salida. Esto pasa, mientras escuelas en excelentes condiciones permanecen con candado.

Escuelas en buen estado se han vendido. Un ejemplo vergonzoso fue la Escuela Julia de Burgos en Carolina, que se “vendió” por la cantidad de un dólar a la Iglesia Fuente de Agua Viva. Ahora es una escuela bilingüe cristiana y privada llamada ‘Fountain Christian Bilingual School’. En el proceso, destruyeron un mural del pintor José Antonio Torres Martinó del 1966. Este proceso de privatización va contra la misma constitución de PR que asegura una educación laica y pública.

El desbarajuste en el Departamento de Educación es total, e incluye la imposición de la matrícula por internet. Muchas/os niños están bajo el cuidado de sus abuelas/os quienes no manejan bien el internet, aparte de que aún sitios alejados de los centros de la ciudad carecen de señal de internet consistente. Por esto, se tuvo que aceptar a última hora que se puedan matricular en la misma escuela.

Eso en lo que toca a las/os estudiantes. El magisterio por su parte ha recibido una verdadera bofetada de la secretaria Keleher. Cambiándoles de asignaturas al azar, invalidando su experiencia y estudios. Cambiándoles de grado, enviándoles a lugares lejanos. Por ejemplo, a una maestra de 60 años de edad en Patillas, en el sur de PR, le asignaron dar clase en la isla municipio de Vieques, lo que le tomaría cuatro horas de ida y cuatro de regreso incluyendo el viaje en lancha.

¡Todo esto para crear un Puerto Rico abierto a las inversiones extranjeras! Como manda la Junta y el Congreso EUA. Un PR que como dijo Roselló al promocionar PR frente a empresarios, “es un canvas en blanco”. Un PR sin seguro para su clase trabajadora, con sirvientes criollos/os y sin regulaciones que impidan el flujo de mega ganancias.

Pero el magisterio sigue en pie de lucha, convocando a un paro el día 15 agosto, dos días después del inicio de clases.

En Filadelfia, boricuas residentes en esa ciudad han comenzado una campaña de “adornar” los alrededores de la Universidad de Pensilvania de pasquines “Se Busca” alusivos a Julia Keleher y David Skeel, este último profesor de derecho de esa universidad y miembro de la Junta.

Y el 27 de octubre, el Tribunal sobre los crímenes de EUA en PR, oírá testimonios en Nueva York sobre los ataques a la educación como parte de los crímenes coloniales cometidos contra el pueblo boricua. Para más información sobre el Tribunal, visita la página PuertoRicoTribunal.org. □

ACOMPANANOS AL 4TO ANIVERSARIO  
EN CONMEMORACIÓN DEL ASESINATO  
DE NUESTRA MADRE Y LIDER CAMPESINA

**MARGARITA MURILLO**

FECHA: AGOSTO 25, 2018  
HORA: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
INVITA: FAMILIA MURILLO

LUGAR: CENTRO SOLIDARIO  
147 W. 24TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10011  
SEGUNDO PISO  
ENTRE 6 Y 7 AVENIDA  
PARADA 23  
TRENES CJ

ESPERAMOS CONTAR CON SU PRESENCIA.  
¡SEGUIMOS EXIGIENDO JUSTICIA! ¡MARGARITA VIVE!