Wayfair walkout shows solidarity with migrants

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Boston

Over 500 Wayfair workers — clerical workers, engineers, product managers, visual artists and information technology workers — walked off their jobs at 1:30 p.m. on June 26 to protest company profits from sales to concentration camps holding immigrant and migrant children at the border. The week before, a worker leaked that Wayfair had fulfilled an order for $200,000 worth of bedroom furniture to a detention camp for 3,000 migrant children in Carrizo Springs, Texas.

The predominantly young Wayfair workers received worldwide support when they walked out and told the employer, “We will not let our labor be used to support concentration camps for migrant children.” They walked out in response to exposés of the U.S. Border Patrol’s horrendous treatment of children in concentration camps on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Customs and Border Protection holds thousands of children, from infants to teen mothers, in filthy conditions. They don’t provide enough food or clean water, clean clothing, diapers, blankets, medical care or other basic needs. The children sleep on the floor in inebriating conditions with lights on 24/7. They endure physical and sexual abuse, with no psychological support for trauma and depression.

The detention centers are supplied by contracted vendors. Wayfair’s $200,000 order was from government contractor Baptist Children’s Family Services, which operates a camp in Tornillo (near El Paso) that holds thousands of migrant children. Wayfair walkout organizers also discovered a previous $86,000 mattress order to another detention camp.

The most recent audit of care at the BCFS Tornillo facility by the Department of Health and Human Services showed serious problems, including failure to complete medical exams within the mandated 48 hours; failure to document the family reunification process; and failure to comply with state regulations regarding minimum bedroom space, health and safety standards and background checks on employees. (tinyurl.com/y3mnp3tg)

Workers reject profit from detention

Wayfair employs 14,000 people around the world, with 7,000 in downtown Boston. They sell home goods online — sofas, lamps, rugs and furniture. In 2018, the company had $6.8 billion in revenue. Within a day of learning of the sale to BCFS, more than 500 Wayfair workers signed a protest letter. The opening reads: “We, the undersigned, are writing to you from a place of concern and anger about the atrocities being committed at our southern border. The U.S. government and its contractors are responsible for the detention and mistreatment of hundreds of thousands of migrants seeking asylum in our country. We want that to end. We also want to be sure Wayfair has no part in enabling, supporting or profiting from this practice.”

Company executives stated, in a letter signed by co-founders Steve Conine and Niraj Shah, the sale would go through and directed workers toward the elections as a way to make change. Not happy with this answer, the workers held a town hall meeting inside the company June 25 with Conine.

A.J., a Wayfair employee and walkout organizer, told Workers World: “[It] was clear that management had no interest in dialogue, contrary to what they previously said. A systemic change in their operations. By Phebe Eckfeldt


Queer Liberation March organizers reject NYPD ‘apology’

The June 30 Queer Liberation March, held in Manhattan, drew 45,000 people who opposed the “official Pride with its heavy capitalist presence and contingents of cops.” The following is a June 6 statement from the Reclaim Pride Coalition in response to the New York Police Department’s “apology” for brutality during the Stonewall Rebellion. More coverage next week.

The Reclaim Pride Coalition is a group of individuals and organizations producing a massive Queer Liberation March people’s protest for June 30th. No corporations and no uniformed police in our March. From our first meetings in the months prior to the 2018 Pride Parade, the Reclaim Pride Coalition has called for a comprehensive NYPD apology, including for their ongoing brutality against marginalized groups and for a systemic change in their operations.
Concentration camps for the poor in Pennsylvania

Part 1

By Ted Kelly

Frackville, Pa.— Tensions in Pennsylvania prisons are at an all-time high since the statewide lockdown ordered to disrupt a nationwide prison strike that had been called months in advance. And now anyone in theory can take an entire block hostage and conveniently shut down the prison when an action is planned. The DOC code of ethics mandates that staff are not allowed to give one inmate power over another. Arroyo explains, and yet this is exactly the effect of this policy. “Hypothetically, you could orchestrate a lockdown of the whole facility. It’s a hostile and volatile environment.” He adds, “I’m speaking as a victim. You’re not going to keep considering me with impunity. I hate to categorize myself as a victim, but I’m being victimized by this policy.”

Imagine if you were driving down the highway, Arroyo says, and you get pulled over by a state trooper, who asks you to step out of the car and immediately places you in handcuffs. You are not charged with a crime; you are not told why you are being brought to jail. You get no phone call, no lawyer, no recourse. They hold you for 36 hours and then let you go back to your normal life, no explanations given. You are told later that because there was a robbery a few miles away off a nearby exit, police were rounding up everybody on the highway and holding them for a day and a half.

“Welcome to the violence reduction policy. That’s now what we face every day.”

Ironically, prisoners are better off if they are directly involved in incidents that cause a lockdown, because they are brought to the restricted housing unit, incident reports are filed, and prisoners have access to the law library and can appeal the decisions made by prison staff. If you’re an unsuspecting prisoner on the block just trying to live your life and do your time, you don’t get that due process.

Bryant Arroyo has filed multiple grievances against Frackville staff and the DOC regarding this “violence reduction policy,” but as of this writing they have not responded.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

People are gowned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have exploited their attacks on the multinational, multigendered and multinational working class. It is time to point the blame at—and challenge—the capitalist system.

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 Marx and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you.

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• In the U.S.

Wayfair strike shows solidarity with migrants... 1

Queer Liberation March rejects NYPD ‘apology’... 1

Concentration camps for the poor in Pennsylvania... 2

Eastern North Carolina union organizing blitz... 3

Police attack on teenagers draws protest... 3

On the picket line... 4

W. Va. education workers face setback... 4

After 41 years Move 9’s Eddie Africa released... 5

The 25th annual Trans Day of Action... 5

Antiswar protests say, “U.S. hands off Iran!”... 5

Houston warmly welcomes caravans to Cuba... 7

• Around the world

Guatemalan elections: Social democrats win, progressive groups grow... 7

Editorial

Worker self-defense at the border... 6

Noticias en Español

Irín se mantiene firme mientras EE.UU. amenaza con atacar... 8

Workers World Press is a proud supporter of the Workers Art Project.

Works in progress: $35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and distributed to any WWP branch.
By Dante Strobino

From June 9 to 14, over 40 union activists from United Electrical Workers (UE) and Unifor Canada gathered in rural eastern North Carolina for an organizing blitz. The activists targeted workplace organizers reaching out to non-union workers about joining the union. This was part of a North Carolina Public Service Union Workers, UE Local 130, campaign to build a statewide movement of people fighting for a Municipal Workers Bill of Rights. The blitz was centered in Wilson, but also targeted city workers in Goldsboro and Rocky Mount, and reached out deeper where the union already has chapters, including Electrical Workers in Raleigh. The blitz developed state- and local-based strategies to develop state- and local-based strategies and build a state-based strategy to organize and build a movement to organize and build a movement to organize.

By Martha Grevatt

Several dozen concerned community members attended a June 10 City Council meeting to protest the recent racist conduct of Euclid police. Euclid borders the East Side of Cleveland, where the city’s African-American community has historically been concentrated. The city’s black population has grown in recent decades to 60 percent.

On June 12 the police used pepper spray and pepper spray to disperse a group of Black teenagers walking to get into a roller-skating rink. The city then filed a nuisance complaint against Black-owned Mig’s Pla-Mor, with the intention of closing it down.

There was no way to leave and nowhere to go. When the youth did not immediately disperse, cops fired pepper spray and pepper balls. A pepper-ball gun resembles a paintball gun but fires pellets that break apart on contact, exposing victims to a powder that burns like pepper spray.

“Now, I got all these kids spitting up, throwing up, coughing and eyes watering,” Sanders told WKYC. “It was frightful to me, let alone we are talking about 13-, 14-, 15-year-old kids.” Sanders is now being scolded by city officials for using pepper spray.

City blasted for racism

The public comment period at the June 17 City Council meeting, which lasted for two hours as city residents, skaters, relatives of the young victims and others spoke out about the specific incident and against racism in Euclid. Witnesses described being harassed, intimidated and bullied by police officers.

Skaters of all generations spoke against closing the rink. Young men explained how skating has given them a positive outlet and an alternative to “running the streets.”

One speaker pointed out that Euclid’s police department is more than 95 percent white and the fire department is all white. The entire city administration, with the exception of City Councilmember Brian T. Moore, is white.

City workers in Rocky Mount have to pay $200 every two weeks in health insurance premiums. Additionally, many have utility bills around $400 every month. Paying these bills is impossible to sustain on their wages of about $11 or $12 an hour.

Many of the eastern North Carolina cities, such as Wilson and Rocky Mount, set up their own municipal power plants, generating power locally for residents. Nineteen of these cities formed an alliance to share power among themselves, and all contributed to building five new power plants to distribute the energy. However, in 2003 these cities sold the power plants to privately owned Duke Energy for only $1.5 billion, letting the difference in the bill fall on local residents who now collectively pay over $2 million a year.

Public workers in North Carolina are banned from collectively bargaining a union contract. Local 150 is a direct, direct-action union where workers can sign up as members and not have to wait for an onerous labor board election. This new style of unionism is picking up across the South and throughout the country.

As part of the North American Solidarity Project between UE and our close ally in Canada, Unifor, three Unifor members came to participate in the blitz and learn about the struggles of Southern workers and the social-movement union approach of Local 150.

Organizing Day out Deep South. We can see the struggles of Southern workers and the social-movement union approach of Local 150.

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Muslim Jenni-O workers’ walkout

In protest of the boss’s racism and Islamophobia, 35 to 40 Muslim workers at the Jenni-O turkey-processing plant in Melrose, Minn., marched into the parking lot instead of clocking in for their 2 p.m. shift on June 10.

A worker there since 2013 told Workday Minnesota that problems started after the plant moved to a new facility and management changed the policy regarding daily prayers. The company dictated new prayer times rather than the appropriate number and hours for daily prayer mandated by Islam. (June 10) In a letter shared June 11, the AFGE made clear how management left the workers in a vulnerable position, the manager “took off his shirt and threw it at the workers, threatened discipline and asked them to leave the plant.”

For now the workers’ heroic action is winning coverage, and they rightly believe the law is on their side: Changes to prayer time violate Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which guarantees the right to religious accommodations in a nonhostile work environment.

Mexican farmworkers strike in Northwest

Mexican farmworkers, working through the IL-ACV guestworker program at King Fuji farm in Mattawa, Wash., went on strike June 13 to protest abusive conditions and retaliation. (The Stand, June 13) The Public News service reports the bosses were intimidating the workers if they didn’t meet what the workers knew were unreasonable quotas. (June 13)

The workers are being represented by the Indigenous-led farmworker union Familias Unidas por la Justicia, affiliated with the state’s AFL-CIO labor council. According to reports, management is constantly threatening workers with deportation or blacklisting. A June 18 entry on the Community 2 Community Facebook page noted the workers were back in the field with “verbal commitments from the company that there will be no blacklisting or retaliations. We have that win but there is no signed paper for the demands of the workers.” Familias Unidas por la Justicia encourages supporters to call 509-628-1619 or email nathan@kingfuji.com and demand that King Fuji sign a legally binding agreement.

Move federal workers out of contaminated workplace!

Chanting “Federal lives matter,” members of Locals 1136, 354, 2192 and 96 of the American Federation of Government Employees rallied outside the St. Louis Federal Management, the manager “took off his shirt and threw it at the workers, threatened discipline and asked them to leave the plant.”

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After nearly 41 years

**MOVE 9’s Eddie Africa released**

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

June 27 — Edward Goodman Africa, released earlier this month after four decades of wrongful imprisonment, spoke this morning to dozens of supporters and members of the press gathered at the Philadelphia Student Union. Janet Africa and Janine were with him, making this the first public appearance of the three members of the MOVE 9 since the arrest of these political prisoners in August 1978.

“The time, while it was hard, does not seem that way when I saw them,” Eddie said, gesturing to both Janet and Janine beside him. “It did not feel like it had been that long. It felt like the next day from when we got arrested.”

“It’s good to be with family,” Addressing reporters, Africa continued. “I’m telling you now, as I told them then: I’m innocent. I did not — we did not — kill Ramp.” James Ramp died during the 1978 police assault on the MOVE house in Powelton Village, likely struck by one of the tens of thousands of rounds fired by his fellow officers that day. Nine MOVE members were all convicted of firing the same bullet.

“They know we didn’t do it. I’ve had parole agents tell me they know we didn’t kill that cop. But somebody had to pay. So they chose us.”

MOVE Minister of Confrontation Pam Africa opened the press conference by playing a prerecorded statement by journalist and activist-on-the-inside Mumia Abu-Jamal congratulating Eddie on his release.

“My brother, Mum,” said Eddie in response. “That made my day.”

The MOVE members emphasized that Mumia’s clear-eyed and unbiased reporting about their organization’s activity is what made him a target of the Philadelphia police and the city’s racist Mayor Frank Rizzo in the 1980s.

Shortly after their conviction, Mumia called in to a radio talk show to question Judge Edward Malmed, who presided over the MOVE trials. He asked whether the judge truly believed they were the ones who shot Ramp.

“I haven’t the faintest idea,” Malmed replied. And yet he sentenced each to 30 to 100 years in prison.

“The next thing we heard about Mumia right after that was that he had been shot and was in the hospital fighting for his life,” said Ramona Africa, MOVE member and sole adult survivor of the May 1985 police bombing of the MOVE house on Osage Avenue. And since his near-fatal shooting by police in 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal has been in prison, also framed for the murder of a cop.

Two surviving MOVE 9 members, Chuck Africa and Delbert Africa, are still behind bars. When bringing up Delbert’s release, Eddie stated, “I got choked up and buried his face in his hands. After being in prison for so long together and surviving together through all kinds of state-inflicted violence, getting released while Delbert remained locked behind bars was as difficult as leaving behind a spouse or a sibling, Eddie said.

The human toll of the brutal war waged on the freedom fighters of MOVE must not and cannot be forgotten. Phil Africa and Merle Africa were killed during their imprisonment under circumstances that even prison officials confessed were “suspicious.” Guards notoriously and repeatedly attacked incarcerated MOVE members, with batons and baseball bats, ice picks and wasps.

In 1989 police bombarded the house on Osage Avenue, murdering children — Tree, Nettia, Delitia, Phil Tomasa — and assassinated members Rhonda, Frank, CP, Conrad, as well as MOVE’s founder, Coordinator John Africa. Life Africa, a mere infant, was crushed to death by police in a separate attack.

The MOVE 9’s fight will not be over until Delbert, Chuck and Mumia are released — indeed, until all prisoners are free and the institutions of white supremacy are abolished once and for all.

What’s the call? Free ‘em all! 🙏

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**The 15th annual Trans Day of Action**

The 15th annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice, organized by TransJustice and the Audre Lorde Project, drew close to 1,000 people in Washington Square Park in New York City on June 28. As organizers explained in a June 12 press release, “We live in a time when oppressed peoples, including people of color, immigrants, youth and elders, people with disabilities, women, Trans & Gender Non-Conforming people, and poor people are under-served, face higher levels of discrimination, are under heightened surveil-lance and experience increased violence at the hands of the state.”

“We must come together to dismantle the trans-phobia, racism, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, and xenophobia that permeates our movements for social justice.” For more information, go to alp.org.

In Seattle, nearly 5,000 people marched down Broadway to Cal Anderson Park for a rally and festival on June 28 at Seattle Trans Pride. Marchers chanted, “Trans rights are human rights,” interspersed with “Black Lives Matter.” Sign messages included “Cops Out of Pride” and “Dignity, not detention.”


**Wayfair strike shows solidarity with migrants**

Continued from page 1

stated. Steve talked down to us and shamed us for considering a walkout. He refused to budge and committed to going through with the sale, despite the room being so packed by employees demanding an answer that the crowd extended out the doors. It was, at best, a PR move and we all understood that, once the meeting was over.

“...I want the workers to be able to monitor their ethics and cut into their profit.”

Workers walk out in solidarity

A loud, enthusiastic crowd of 1,000 supporters from the progressive movement and local unions cheered the Wayfair walkout as the workers joined them in Copley Square June 26. Union support included delegations from UNITE/HERE Local 26, Uber Guild drivers, Service Employees Local 32BJ and Harvard Graduate Student Union-United Auto Workers.

Many Wayfair workers who stayed inside readied to go on strike. “Before the walkout, what I saw through the media made me feel as though we were organizing against support of the public. There was no better confirmation than walking out of our office and into the arms of a crowd that had amassed in soli-darity,” said A.J.

Workers made signs from materi-als at hand: copy paper, cardboard and packing material. Some of the signs read: “A prison with a bed is still a prison,” “A cage is not a home,” “End biz with concentration camps” and “Solidarity with migrant families.”

Many workers were visibly tense about speaking at the microphone, as losing their jobs was a real possibility. Wayfair workers do not have a union to provide any protec-tion for work actions, and most had never spoken publicly. But one by one, encour-aged by the emcee and by the roaring crowd, young workers stepped forward to speak. The theme that echoed throughout was “No profit from detention camps.”

A political strike to defend migrants

When asked about the importance of showing solidarity, Eddie replied, “We hope that taking action like this might set a precedent and push other workers to demand their employers stop servicing contracts or selling supplies to ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and similar agencies. We also refuse to work for an organization that generates profits off the violence done to migrant families.”

Wayfair organizers plan to send another letter to management restating their demands, one of which is to create a code of ethics to prevent sales like those to detention camps. They ask supporters to continue pressuring the company.

The walkout shows that political con-sciousness among workers is on the rise. Wayfair workers transformed that con-sciousness into concrete solidarity and defense of the international working class. Lacking the protection of a union, they risked being fired, harassed or retali-ated against. The walkout became their weapon.

This was a political strike, reflecting growing class consciousness and the real-ization that workers can exercise power for the good of their class. Despite the many walls put up to divide workers, these walls can be broken down and a hand of solidarity extended. ☑
Worker self-defense at the border

The heartbreakng image went viral: Oscar Ramirez and his daughter Valeria, 23 months old, both dead, facedown in the waters of the Rio Grande—Salvadoran migrants, drowned attempting to cross into the U.S.

Reports had come in, almost simultane-ously from Phoenix and San Diego that migrant children were suffering brutal concentration camp conditions in U.S. detention at the Southern border.

A wave of revulsion spread through the U.S. population, breaking through the big-business media chatter that mini- mizes the depth of the im/migrant crisis. The human rights group Border Angels estimates that since 1994 about 10,000 people have died attempting to cross the Southern border, many but not all reflected in the official statistics.

But what’s mostly been visible on TV are the current presidential campaign debates and talk show commentaries on “How did the Democrats do with immi-gration?” Republican Trump’s goal to “Make America White Again” and the Democratic Party’s failure to mount an opposition to Trump is “favorable business climate” created by corrupt regimes that repress workers and peasants.

The so-called “border crisis” is over 400 years old, starting with the massa-cres of Indigenous peoples and theft of their lands and the kidnapping of African people into slavery. It was made official in the first U.S. immigration law, the Naturalization Act of 1790, which offered citizenship only to a “free white person.” What’s almost never stated in the corpo-rate media is that this “crisis” is rooted in home-grown, ruling-class-fomented white supremacy.

This is where we as communists must stand up to the weapons of imperialism and all military brass ordered the massacre of tens of thousands of workers and peasant farm-ers—closing off any chances they had for a better life in their own country.

Now, both the racist right wing and the apologists for “immigration reform” would disqualify Oscar Ramirez as a can-didate for “legal immigration” into the U.S. because as a worker he was seeking not “asylum”—but a better life for him-self and his family.

This is where we as communists must draw our battle line. We must defend Oscar Ramirez in the name of interna-tional worker’s solidarity. When people migrate because of the impact of class war, that truly is “seeking asylum.” The global “immigration crisis” is happening because millions of immigrant workers and oppressed people are having to flee from destabilization and imperialist wars.

Solidarity with immigrants, espe-cially at the Southern border, is worker self-defense.

War opposition grows as Protests say, ‘U.S. hands off Iran!’

By G. Dunkel

June 29—Anti-war orga-nizations in the U.S. have responded to the Trump administra-tion’s aggres-sive moves toward Iran with immediate protests and plans to hold larger actions on July 11-15 amid growing evidence that a large majority of the population opposes any new U.S. wars.

With U.S. crimes against migrants on the Southern bor-der still fresh and with grumbling and hesitation by U.S. imperialist allies/competitors over U.S. threats against Iran before the G20 sum-mit June 28–29, President Donald Trump called off the illegal attack he had ordered on Iran on June 20—and soon stepped up violations of migrants’ rights.

Trump’s decision, report-edly made just 10 minutes before the attack was to be launched, left his anti-Iran gang in place. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, whose public positions are feehonously hostile to the Iranian government, kept their jobs.

More U.S. troops flying a dozen comb-at jets were sent to the Persian Gulf June 27. Aircraft carriers, sent to the area ear-lier in an attempt to intimidate Iran, will remain deployed. The U.S. cyber warfare command is boasting about their attacks on Iran’s computer systems.

These war provocations spurred immediate protests inside the U.S. last week of June, along with plans for future protests.

In Boston, there was a demonstration June 22 involving the National Iranianamerican Council, Massachusetts Peace Action, the Coalition to Stop the Genocide in Yemen, New Democracy Coalition and the Green Party.

In Washington, D.C., on June 23, CODEPINK, Popular Resistance and Answer Coalition, along with members of other secular and faith-based groups, protested in front of the White House. In San Francisco June 25, at a demonstra-tion called by Answer, placards read, “No war or sanctions on Iran” and “Sanctions are war.” June 26 protest outside Philadelphia City Hall demanded: “No war on migrants! No war on Iran!” Workers World Party organizers of the action reported that a significant number at the protest were individuals passing by who stopped to listen and stayed to the end.

In Atlanta, there was a street visibility protest June 26 demanding, “No War on Iran! End the Sanctions” called by the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition. Cars driving by kept up a steady stream of honking in support.

In Bloomington, Ind., at a June 26 emergency protest, Indiana University College Democrats President Jack Parke said, “The goal of the protest is to talk about the issues of [U.S.] American mil-itary action and also to lend our voices to say we will not support another disastrous war.” (Indiana Daily Student, June 26th)

Mid-July: Coordinated national actions

The United National Antiwar Coalition puts the struggle against the increas-ing war on Iran in a broader context. UNAC is calling for coordinated national actions from July 11 through 15, adding “Hands Off Venezuela” as well as “Hands Off Iran” and opposing attacks on migrants, calling that part of the administration’s war at home.

There will be protests, meetings or other actions during this time in Albany, N.Y.; Atlanta; Boston; Chicago; Columbus, Ohio; Milwaukee; Minneapolis; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia; Tucker, Ga.; Washington, D.C.; and other places. A coalition is organizing the July 15 protest in New York City called for 5 p.m. at Herald Square, 34th Street and 6th Avenue.

For more information, visit www.unacpeace.org.
Houston warmly welcomes caravan to Cuba

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

The Houston Cuba Solidarity Committee hosted the 50th Friendship Caravan on June 21 and welcomed spokesperson John Waller to the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center.

“The Cuba Caravan is always welcome at S.H.A.P.E.,” said the center’s director, Delody Parker. “We have hosted the caravan for decades. We will always welcome you as this is your Houston home.”

The evening was dedicated to one of the Solidarity Committee founders, Ayanna Ado, who died in 2013.

Pacifica radio programmer Aka Holt and former Black Panther Bunchy Cruse spoke about the history and politics of the Black Panthers, a midwife and delivering over 2,000 babies in this community. Working to build solidarity with the Cuban revolution was a priority for her.

As the room filled with activists of different nationalities and ages, fromsomeone 87 years old, each person introduced themselves and gave one reason why they were attending the event.

“I love Cuba and have been several times,” said activist Gordon Anderson, who helped paint the yellow school bus in Houston organized absolutely refounded and sent to Cuba a few years ago.

“I want to keep up with what’s happening in Cuba despite the blockade and Trump’s new restrictions.”

Speaking for the Friendship Caravan to Cuba, John Waller tells the Houston crowd on June 21, “We must end the U.S. blockade!”

“My grandfather loved Cuba, and now that he is gone, I want to learn more about what he loved. I want to go to Cuba and see it for myself,” said Siva Kone, a high school senior.

Local Indigenous activist Bryan Parras brought special guests from the northwest U.S. to Alaska. Thewords when he and other members of the community were attacked by UNE members while waiting for the vote count results. (tinyurl.com/ yxxadvrz) Most of these incidents have been linked to municipal elections.

Whatever the extent of electoral fraud, there was a drop in election participation from 70 percent in 2013 to 60 percent this year. According to official files released after 94 percent of voting tables had been counted, 9 percent of the votes were blank, and another 4 percent were invalid.

Grafts between civilians and police, reported irregularities and high levels of abstentions are evidence of the flawed character of the electoral process. There are multiple reports of demonstrations and protesters blocking major roads in several departments and cities, including the capital, that explicitly rejected the election results. TSE main tains that no fraud occurred and is refusing to turn over the records.

Conclusions about the popular struggle

Support for the far right, which has governed the country in recent years, seems to have been deflated. FCCN-Nacion, the current president’s party formed by ex-military and big business interests, did not win even 5 percent of the presidential vote. PAN-Podemos, the other far-right party, asserting it would make the runoff, came in fifth and only won 2 seats in Congress.

On the other hand, the center-right, mainly represented by Vamos and Unión del Cambio Nacionalista, UCN – now the second and third largest parties in Congress – made significant gains. This was despite the fact that UCN presiden tial candidate and leader Mario Estrada was arrested in Miami on drug trafficking charges in April.

Given the possibility of electoral fraud by the oligarchal parties, the fact that a Maya Mam woman, and even more so those whose roots are in the peasant struggle, won three departments and came in second in the others is possibly the most important result.

This symbolic victory resulted from the growing strength of the peasant and Indigenous movements, which makes efforts to make corrupt deals with traditional pol iticians and which results on perceived fraud with mass mobilizations possible.

Combining the results achieved by the five parties that can be characterized as progressive – MLP, Winaq, URNG Maiz, Liberal and Convergence – 19.60 percent of the presidential vote went to progressive candidates. That result would have added a single candidate to second place and the runoff.

Two important conclusions can be drawn. The first is that the progressive social movement is growing, with an opportunity to open a period of serious struggle. The second is that to win that struggle, these parties and the social movements they represent must present a single front against conservatism and neoliberalism.

The oligarchy is treasuring at the rise of Thelma Cabrera and the movement she leads, but the fight to root out corruption and dismantle the traditional political structures is ongoing. Transformation of Guatemalan society won’t come from Congress or the presidency but from popular organization.

These results prove this consolidation is a real threat to the powers that be.

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Guatemala elections

Social democrats win, progressive parties grow

By Sam Ordóñez

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June 29 — After over a week of demonstrations and fraud allegations from many of the parties participating in the election, the electoral authority has agreed to revise the records of the count, but claims that is unlikely to result in significant change in the results.

Elections took place in Guatemala on June 16 with a few surprising outcomes. The election results of the first round of presidential candidates as well as congressional and municipal candidates. The second round of presidential elections will be in August when the top two candidates face off.

Pending final results, the runoff will be between Sandra Torres (National Unity of Hope, UNE), with 25.74 percent of the vote, and Alejandro Giammattei (Vamos) with 19.60 percent. Edmond Mulet of the Humanist party, a candidate linked to both traditional politics and the United Nations–backed commission, which carried the Impunity in Guatemala (MINU) mandate. That victory will likely be pursued in order to govern, likely weakening the already limited social-democratic policies promoted by UNE.

Various progressive and anti-corruption parties won a total of 19 seats. The biggest single party, the Soed Movements with 8 seats, was recently formed to represent progressively social sectors of urban professionals.

Overall, the results mean traditional politicians continue to control the state institutions, and the “Pact of the Corrupt” will remain in power, now led by its social-democratic wing.

Both UNE and Vamos have stated that they will not renew the CICIG (International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala) mandate. That U.N.-backed commission, which carried out anti-corruption investigations, will cease operation this fall. The progressive struggle against corruption will have to be prosecuted in the streets, in opposition to state power.

Fraud and abstentions

On June 17, Thelma Cabrera publicly stated she did not recognize the results of the election due to fraud originating with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE).

She called for mass mobilizations and a transparent vote count, with records available for review. MLP’s statement asserts: “On the national level, there is evidence of vote buying by the traditional parties…”

In several municipalities there were busing of voters by the traditional parties, irregularities in the vote count, and violent disturbances related to ballot transportation.

In Panzós, Alta Verapaz department, Alejandro Coo Poo died from gunshot wounds when he and other members of the community were attacked by UNE members while waiting for the vote count results. (tinyurl.com/yxxadvrz) Most of these incidents have been linked to municipal elections.

Whatever the extent of electoral fraud, there was a drop in election participation from 70 percent in 2013 to 60 percent this year. According to official files released after 94 percent of voting tables had been counted, 9 percent of the votes were blank, and another 4 percent were invalid.

Grafts between civilians and police, reported irregularities and high levels of abstentions are evidence of the flawed character of the electoral process. There are multiple reports of demonstrations and protesters blocking major roads in several departments and cities, including the capital, that explicitly rejected the election results. TSE maintains that no fraud occurred and is refusing to turn over the records.

Conclusions about the popular struggle

Support for the far right, which has governed the country in recent years, seems to have been deflated. FCN-Nacion, the current president’s party formed by ex-military and big business interests, did not win even 5 percent of the presidential vote. PAN-Podemos, the other far-right party, asserting it would make the runoff, came in fifth and only won 2 seats in Congress.

On the other hand, the center-right, mainly represented by Vamos and Unión del Cambio Nacionalista, UCN – now the second and third largest parties in Congress – made significant gains. This was despite the fact that UCN presidential candidate and leader Mario Estrada was arrested in Miami on drug trafficking charges in April.

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The oligarchy is treasuring at the rise of Thelma Cabrera and the movement she leads, but the fight to root out corruption and dismantle the traditional political structures is ongoing. Transformation of Guatemalan society won’t come from Congress or the presidency but from popular organization.

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"People in the U.S. can travel anywhere in the world can travel to Cuba, which gains a lot of its revenue from tourism. But only [the U.S.] denies people living here the right to go to Cuba."

"We must end the blockade. We cannot let our ability to see Cuba be left up to the whim of whoever is president. This cruel and harmful blockade must be ended now!" Waller told the crowd.

After the program, many people stayed for almost two more hours to talk with Waller and each other. The common topic of discussion was their desire to go to Cuba themselves on the very next Friendship Caravan!
Irán mantiene firme su posición, mientras EE.UU. amenaza con atacar

Por Deirdre Griswold

18 de junio — ¿Han terminado los días en que Washington se veía a sí misma y el resto del mundo imperialista aliado de inmediato? La pandilla de conspiradores Pompeo-Bolton-Trump en Washington parece estar teniendo dificultades para alinear a sus socios/rivales imperialistas detrás de un acuerdo con Irán. Su intento de crear una crisis global por el daño infligido el 13 de junio a dos petroleros en el Estrecho de Ormuz, que no sufrieron pérdidas de vidas y no corrieron peligro de hundirse, recibió gran escépticosismo, no sólo del público en general. Si no de los jefes de estado de Europa occidental.

E incluso estos compañeros imperialistas son muy conscientes de que los preparativos de los Estados Unidos para un asalto a Irán se basan en un pasquete de mentiras, y seguirán pondrá en juego sus propios intereses. La llamada “prueba” ofrecida por Washington de que Irán estaba detrás de los ataques ha sido ampliamente rechazada, incluso por el propio partido de al menos uno de los petroleros.

Ese barco, el Kakura Courageous, es propiedad de una compañía japonesa. Fue atacado mientras el primer ministro de Japón, Shinzo Abe, estaba haciendo una visita de estado a Irán, a pesar de las sanciones de los Estados Unidos. La idea de que Irán dijera ese momento para atacar a un barco japonés es ridícula, por decir lo menos.

Sin embargo, tan débiles como son los argumentos de Washington, al menos no hay pruebas para atacar a Irán. Washington ha estado avanzando, intentando alinear el apoyo de al menos algunas de las potencias imperialistas europeas para un movimiento agresivo contra el país rique petróleo. Y el 17 de junio, Trump envió a otros 1.000 soldados estadounidenses al Medio Oriente.

El pasado torturado de Irán

Las últimas amenazas contra Irán no son nada nuevo. Los gobiernos imperialistas de los Estados Unidos, tanto republi-canos como demócratas, han tenido un punto en su mira desde 1951, cuando un movimiento por la soberanía nacional liderado por Mohammad Mossadeq nacionalizó lo que había sido la Compañía de Petróleo Anglo-Persa.

Dos años más tarde, un golpe de estado de la CIA dirigido por Kermit Roosevelt Jr. derrocó al gobierno nacionalista e instaló al Rey Salman en la lujosa Corte Real de Arabia Saudita. Esta es la causa de la crisis de inmigración que enfrenta gran parte de Europa hoy, y es ese un factor en la resistencia de estos países imperialistas a ser arrastrados a otra guerra.

Irán se mantiene firme, mientras EE.UU. amenaza con atacar

Irán se mantiene firme, jugosa. Por ahora, eso no ha sucedido, y los mercados a partir del 15 de junio lo reflejaron. Pero no hay garantías de que la intensa campaña en el mundo de los mercados se retire de sus amenazas contra Irán. A $60 por barril, las empresas estadou-nidenses que producen petróleo a través de fracking, costoso y ambientalmente perjudicial, no pueden competir con el petróleo extraído de pozos. Estas empresas quieren precios más altos, y los quieren ahora. Pero la caída de los precios de las mate-rias primas es una SEÑAL de sobrepro-ducción de capital, que impide la sobreproducción intensifica la feroz competencia inter-capitalista por los merca-dos. Una caída en el precio del petróleo también puede reflejar pesimismo sobre la actividad económica futura.

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