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HONDURAS

General strike hits gov't 'reforms'



By Sam Ordóñez

June 3 — A national strike began in Honduras on May 30 protesting a series of reforms announced by the government. The strike was called in response a series of decrees signed by the president on May 28 aimed at restructuring the health and education sectors.

The demonstrations, which continued into the next day, suffered brutal police repression. It is a scenario repeatedly seen during the administration of President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH).

According to the teachers and doctors who called the strike, the restructuring would lead to massive layoffs and privatize these essential sectors.

In 2010, central government spending on education was 32.9 percent of the total budget; today it is only 19.9 percent. In public health, the figures were 14.3 percent in 2010 and are 9.7 percent today. (Prensa Latina, May 31)

Despite strong police repression of demonstrators, the president was forced to declare that there would be neither mass layoffs nor privatization, and the presidential decrees were not ratified by the National Congress of the Republic. However, organizers of the actions have indicated they will continue protesting until the reforms are completely discarded.

In addition to demonstrators injured by Honduran police, several government and police buildings are reported burned. It is also reported that a group burned tires at the entrance of the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa.

It is not known who initiated this fire, and reactions of progressive groups have been varied. Some claim that the action is justified, due to the recent interference of U.S. imperialism in the country. For his part, former President Manuel Zelaya described the facts as false positives.

The teachers' and doctors' organizations have said the strike will continue with demonstrations planned for June 3 and 4.

From the 2009 coup d'état to JOH's dictatorship

Manuel Zelaya was president from 2006 to 2009 when he was the victim of a coup d'état after proposing a referendum to measure public interest in a constitutional reform.

Although the army, which kidnapped Zelaya and sent him to Costa Rica on June 28, 2009, argued that Zelaya was unconstitutionally seeking a second term, the real reason for the coup was the progressive foreign policy of the Zelaya government.

In 2008, Zelaya had expressed a desire to join the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), a regional organization promoted by the governments of Venezuela and Cuba to combat the influence of U.S. imperialism.

This represented an unacceptable step for the Honduran oligarchy, which had already opposed the progressive government. When they found the opportunity, these sectors used their control of the media to fabricate a constitutional crisis and carry out a coup.

Continued on page 9



Massive protests against privatization in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, including burning tires in front of the U.S. Embassy in late May.

PRIDE MEANS FIGHT BACK! 4, 6



WW PHOTO: SOFIA ADAMS

LGBTQ solidarity at Queens, N.Y., Pride with Roxana Hernandez, a Honduran trans migrant, murdered by ICE.

Al-Quds Day for Palestine	2, 11
Klan shut down in Ohio	3
Utah workers organize union	4
'Shock and awe' war on migrants	5
Unite to fight abortion bans	7
Editorial Water is not a felony!	10

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NEW YORK

Solidarity with Palestine on Al-Quds

Hundreds rallied in New York City’s Times Square May 31 to mark International Day of Al-Quds, Arabic for Jerusalem. Launched in 1979 as one of the first official acts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Quds Day is held internationally on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan to support Palestinians resisting Israeli occupation. This year millions joined demonstrations throughout Iran, across Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and around the world.

Government forces attacked protests in Bahrain and Nigeria, while Israeli troops fired on thousands of Palestinians gathered for the Great March of Return at Israel’s barrier around the besieged Gaza Strip. "We have no doubt that the ultimate victory will be for the righteous and Palestine and that the land of Palestine will be a safe place for Muslims, Christians and Jews," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said at a Tehran rally.

— Report by Joe Catron



New York City, May 31.

WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Palestine and the U.S.: Two sides of the same struggle



WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Siddika Degia

This slightly edited greeting was given by Siddika Degia, an organizer with the NYC Peoples Power Assembly, at the Al-Quds rally in New York on May 31.

From Brooklyn to Palestine, killing people is a crime.

The constant killing of Black and Brown bodies by cops in the U.S. and the occupation of Palestine are not two separate issues. They are in fact one issue perpetrated

by the U.S. war machine. From the constant selling of military weapons to Israel by the U.S. to the renowned counterterrorism exchange program provided by Israel to U.S. cops, the issue here is one of imperialism and the control of Black and Brown bodies.

The renowned counterterrorism exchange program is one where pro-Israel organizations like the American Israel Public Affairs committee send cops to Israel where the cops learn the benefits of tear gas to break up protesters and learn about the surveillance of neighborhoods. All tactics are used here in the U.S., like the famous New York Police Department’s Muslim Surveillance Program. In return, the Israeli military learns about drug war tactics cops use here in Black and Brown communities.

What both the U.S. and Israel forget is that people in both Palestine and the U.S. will keep rising up and will continue standing in solidarity with each other because, as we all know, the people united will never be defeated. □



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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 neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment 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. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

people are gunned 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 intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational 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 Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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WORKERS WORLD
this week

- ♦ In the U.S.
 - Solidarity with Palestine on Al-Quds 2
 - Palestine and the U.S. 2
 - Janet and Janine Africa: Historic press conference . 3
 - Dayton, Ohio: Anti-racists drown out the Klan. 3
 - Anti-fascists defend Rep. Ilhan Omar. 3
 - Court allows racist gerrymandering in Ohio, Mich. . 4
 - Utah: Theater workers organize a union 4
 - Boots Riley: 'I'm inspired by you'. 4
 - Boston: 'No walls in the LGBTQ2S struggle' 5
 - 'Shock and awe' war on migrants, prisoners 5
 - Activists close down Atlanta Detention Center 5
 - Stonewall Rebellion: Crowd rage ignites 6
 - Pride marches in Buffalo, Cleveland, New York 6
 - Unite and fight against abortion bans. 7
 - Boston: Pro-choice forces defy right wing 7
 - ABCs of capitalist crisis 8
 - WV educators refuse to back down, once again ... 10
 - Al-Quds Day: Solidarity with Palestine. 11

- ♦ Around the world
 - Honduras: General strike hits gov't 'reforms' 1
 - Chavismo trains leaders to defend Caracas 9
 - Solidarity stops weapons to Saudi Arabia 10
 - Niger: Students demand U.S., French bases close . 10
 - Venezuelan right wing negotiates in Oslo 11

- ♦ Editorial
 - When a drink of water becomes a felony 10

- ♦ Noticias en Español
 - Honduras: Inicia paro nacional contra reformas . 12
 - Editorial: ‘Liberal’ – hasta a un punto 12

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Janet and Janine Africa:

‘We won’t celebrate until our MOVE 9 brothers are released’

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

MOVE 9 members Janet Holloway Africa and Janine Phillips Africa, who were recently released after spending nearly 41 years in prison, held a historic press conference in Philadelphia on May 30. They were joined by MOVE members Consuwella Dotson Africa, Carlos Africa and Sue Levino Africa who all served shorter terms following the police assault on their home on Aug. 8, 1978.

Pam Africa, minister of confrontation for the MOVE organization, chaired the impressive panel. Ramona Africa, the sole survivor of the state’s bombing of the second MOVE home on May 13, 1985, made her first public appearance following a prolonged, debilitating illness. Celebration of her birthday will be held here on June 8.

The press conference marked the first time in over 40 years that several of the MOVE members involved in the 1978 confrontation with Philadelphia police appeared together in public. MOVE 9 members Debbie Sims Africa and Michael Davis Africa Sr., released in 2018, were unable to attend because of arbitrary parole restrictions that prevent them from being with other MOVE members.

The event was held at the storefront office of the Philadelphia Student Union. The director, Julien Terrell, welcomed the elder freedom fighters as important examples for students currently involved in education and social justice struggles.

Janine Africa and Janet Africa opened the press conference by urging people to continue the fight to release the three remaining MOVE 9 members. Edward Goodman Africa was granted parole on April 1, but has yet to be released. Chuck Sims Africa and Delbert Orr Africa are still being denied parole.

Janine Africa stated: “Delbert has always been singled out since police badly beat him following the 1978 confrontation. His most recent appeal for parole

was to be heard after six months, but it’s now eight months with no response. If this government had its way, we would still be in jail. They planned for us to die there. But we won’t celebrate until we bring our brothers home.” MOVE 9 members Merle Austin Africa and Phil Africa died in prison.

Both women stressed how important their MOVE family and beliefs in the writings of MOVE founder John Africa were in helping them survive decades of imprisonment, including three years in solitary confinement. Ramona Africa — imprisoned for seven years following the deadly Philadelphia police bombing of the MOVE house on May 13 1985 — echoed these sentiments. “This system has worked hard to break us up,” Ramona said. “They tried to get me, Consuwella, Carlos and Sue to agree to the stipulation that if we did not associate with MOVE we could come out earlier, but none of us agreed to compromise.”

Resistance to brutal prison conditions

The women described the brutal conditions they were subjected to in SCI Muncy women’s prison following their arrests in 1978. They were initially put into “the hole” — solitary confinement — and told by then Head of Security Edward Bennett that they would remain there for the duration of their 30- to 100-year sentences.

“A large guard punched me in the chest and knocked me across the cell,” Janet Africa said, describing conditions. “They took our clothes, didn’t feed us, kept the lights on 24/7 and kept us in the hole for three years.”

“They thought they could break us. They don’t see women as strong, but they were wrong,” said Sue Levino Africa. “We did 50 days of a hunger strike, exercising throughout and going without even water the last few days. They even sent me to a men’s prison to try to stop us, but we ended up breaking Ed Bennett’s back.”

Carlos Africa described how in December 1981, he and MOVE 9 men



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Janine Africa, Pam Africa and Janet Africa speak at May 30 press conference in Philadelphia.

were attacked by prison guards who used water hoses, night sticks, ice picks and even baseball bats: “We survived the beatings. We fought because they had attacked our sisters at the women’s house of corrections.”

Both women maintain their innocence in the death of Philadelphia Police Officer James Ramp. He was shot in the back of the head by “friendly fire.” Ramona Africa stated that when Ed Bennett saw her in the yard at Muncy before her release, he said, “We know you all didn’t kill that cop.”

All the MOVE speakers recounted the painful impact of learning about the brutal deaths of 11 family members, including some of their own children, while in prison, when police bombed the MOVE house in May, 1985.

An audio statement from political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, welcoming the women’s release, was played. Janine Africa stated: “Mumia is imprisoned because of his stance in support of MOVE. He spoke the truth. One of the last things he did before police shot him was to call into a radio show to challenge Judge Edward Malmed who convicted us.

Mumia told him, ‘You sent nine people to jail, but you admit you don’t know who killed Ramp.’ ”

‘Political climate worse today’

When asked to compare the political climate in the 1970s to today, both women responded that things are worse now than when they were imprisoned. Janine Africa noted: “Forty years ago there was no progress, no freedom of speech — unless you said what they wanted — but the system was more diplomatic and covered things up. They aren’t covering it up any more. Police shoot people in the streets and nothing is done.”

Janet Africa added: “The system has degenerated, but there is a lot of technology now so that we can see things happen in the open. Yet even with all these cameras, all these pictures, all these situations with brothers and sisters being shot down in cold blood by cops, they still try to tell us that didn’t happen.”

“The political climate is bad, but don’t be discouraged,” concluded Janine Africa. “The power of the people is a mighty force. It’s what got Mumia off death row and it’s what got us here today.” □

DAYTON, OHIO

Anti-racists drown out the Klan

By **Arielle Robinson**

Hundreds of anti-racist people came out May 25 to protest the Ku Klux Klan in Dayton, Ohio. Members of the Honorable Sacred Knights of Indiana were scheduled to have a rally that day when only nine members showed up. Their bullhorn was drowned out by the cheering and drum beating of members of the New Black Panther Party, Black Lives Matter, Antifa, the Huey P. Newton Gun Club and more.

A Black protester held a sign with the names of Black victims of

white-supremacist violence including killer cops, with such names as Emmett Till, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Oscar Grant and Eric Garner. A fence was erected between the Klan and protesters, while police officers stood in front of the Klan, protecting the white supremacists. Over 700 officers and barricades were there.

Dayton is one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States and has experienced economic declines in the past decade. Dayton is in Montgomery County, which voted for Barack Obama

twice and then for Donald Trump in 2016.

Although the mainstream press seem to be unsure of why a KKK group from Indiana was in Dayton, Ohio, it seems obvious to leftists. With Dayton one of the most segregated cities in the country and Trump territory, the KKK saw a chance to make themselves known to white working-class people who may blame their economic issues on people of color instead of on the ruling class and its policies.

The strong show of force by protesters is an important blow to white supremacists,

as these hundreds of working-class people made it known that white supremacy should never have a platform, whatever its size.

As mosques and synagogues are shot up by white supremacists, Black people are murdered by police, migrants are being detained and more unspeakable crimes of the ruling class and its protectors are committed, the people of Dayton have shown that white supremacy will never have a platform. The people united are fighting back. □

Anti-fascist crowd defends Rep. Ilhan Omar

By **Jim McMahan**
Bellevue, Wash.

When Rep. Ilhan Omar was invited to be the featured speaker at the Washington Council on American-Islamic Relations event in Bellevue, Wash., during Ramadan May 25, she was opposed by about 40 racist Trump followers.

The misogynist, white-supremacist bigots called their demonstration to rant against Omar, Somali-American

congressperson from Minnesota, because of her courageous statements in support of the Palestinian struggle, against U.S. support for the Israeli occupation, against the U.S. war on Venezuela, for Muslim civil rights and against abortion bans.

But the Community and Labor Against Fascism coalition organized an anti-racist, anti-fascist counterdemonstration, and the progressive crowd of 800 people warmly welcomed Omar and pushed the

haters back. People chanted, “Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Islamophobia has got to go!” and other anti-racist slogans until the racists dispersed at the Bellevue Convention Center near Seattle.

The coalition posted a statement after their successful counterdemonstration on their Facebook page: “Community & Labor Against Fascism is proud to have been present to show our support for Rep. Omar and everyone targeted by racists, bigots and xenophobes. Many of

the individuals who came to the far-right counterrally, including the notorious Proud Boys, have a track record of promoting white nationalism, misogyny and violent attacks on anti-fascist protesters. We will continue to organize community actions against these bullies and bigots, and we encourage all our friends and neighbors to join us! Together, we will show that solidarity and unity in action are our strongest weapons!” □

High court allows racist gerrymandering in Ohio, Michigan

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

In 2004, Ohio became notorious for the deliberate suppression of Black voters. The racist disenfranchisement, called “Ohio’s first poll tax,” may have given the state’s 20 electoral votes to George W. Bush — without which he would have lost to John Kerry.

Not much has changed in 15 years. Only two of Ohio’s 16 Congresspeople are Black. The A. Philip Randolph Institute, a constituency group of the AFL-CIO that represents the interests of Black workers, is a plaintiff in a 2018 lawsuit filed over the way Ohio’s Congressional districts are constructed.

Plaintiffs accused the Republican-dominated state legislature of gerrymandering — by definition “to divide or arrange (a territorial unit) into election districts in a way that gives one political party an unfair advantage.” (Merriam-Webster)

The legislators redrew the Congressional district map in 2011, with the intended result giving Republicans 12 out of 16 possible seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. The lawsuit alleges that Democratic Party voters were either “packed” into a few Democratic strongholds or “cracked” into other districts where their voting strength was diluted.

In drawing up the 9th

District — nicknamed “snake on the lake” — legislators created a long, narrow district that runs 141 miles along Lake Erie and connects Toledo with part of Cleveland. This forced Marcy Kaptur of Toledo and Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland, both of whom have progressive reputations, to run against each other in the Democratic primary. Kaptur won.

On May 3, a panel of three federal judges ordered Ohio to redraw the map by June 14, stating it “dilutes the votes of Democratic voters by packing and cracking them into districts that are so skewed toward one party that the electoral outcome is predetermined.” (New York Times, May 3)

To subvert their political rivals, Republicans overlooked provisions of the Voting Rights Act. The pack-and-crack strategy negatively impacted Black voters, among the many who reject the more blatant bigotry of Trump’s party.

Another case in Michigan

The practice of gerrymandering is by no means unique to Ohio. A week before the Ohio ruling, a three-judge panel (not the same federal judges who ruled in Ohio’s lawsuit) unanimously concluded that gerrymandering was “of historical proportions” in Michigan. The “predominate purpose ... was to subordinate the interests of Democratic voters and entrench Republicans in power.” (Detroit

News, April 25)

Michigan was ordered to redraw the 2011 map of U.S. Congressional and state legislative districts by Aug. 1 and to hold special early elections in 2020 for some state Senate positions.

As in Ohio, the lawsuit primarily focused on “political” gerrymandering—deliberate advantaging of Republican Party candidates.

However, racism is an undeniable factor in Michigan as well.

As University of Florida Professor Michael McDonald notes: “If more minorities were shoved into that district than were needed in order to elect a minority candidate of choice, then the district becomes suspect. Then race was used as a predominant factor in the creation of that district.” (WDET, June 28, 2018) When this happens it is actually a violation of the Voting Rights Act, even though the act has been cited by Republicans as a reason for creating Black-majority districts.

The long 14th Congressional District contains parts of two counties, connecting all the Black-majority communities in southeast Michigan from Pontiac to Detroit. The district bypasses adjoining communities that are predominantly

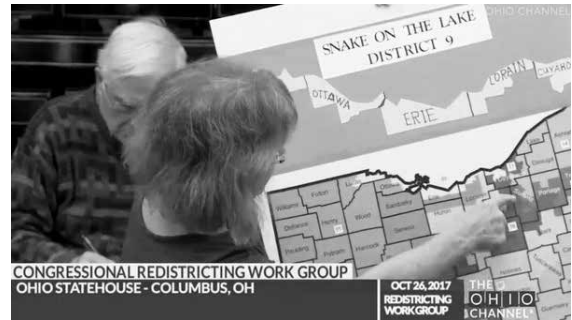


PHOTO: THE OHIO CHANNEL

At the Ohio statehouse in 2017, opponents of gerrymandering show unequal districting map.

white. Michigan’s only African-American Congressperson, Rep. Brenda Lawrence, serves that district.

High court subverts will of voters

In both Ohio and Michigan, activists have opposed gerrymandering through ballot initiatives.

Voters Not Politicians enlisted scores of volunteers to put Proposal 2 on the 2018 Michigan ballot, collecting over half a million signatures. That proposal was to create an independent commission to redraw the Congressional map after the 2020 U.S. Census.

The measure passed with over 60 percent support — 2.5 million votes.

Ohio’s anti-gerrymandering ballot initiative, Issue 1, passed during the May

Continued on page 5

Inspired by Boots Riley Theater workers organize a union

By Joanna Straughn
Salt Lake City

The Salt Lake Film Society shows independent and international films, hosts entertainment events and rents out its DVD film archive. Although it presents itself as supporting educational experiences, workers learning how to organize a fighting union was not an educational experience Film Society management had wagered on.

Front-of-house staff sell tickets, serve concessions, operate projectors and clean up theater floors. At the Film Society, they’re mainly young people, including some who are LGBTQ2S, people of color and women.

They’re drawn to work in an environment where their cultural interests can connect them to a community that enjoys critical conversations. On the other hand, their wages have been kept low and they have little say in how things are run.

According to one theater worker, management apparently hopes that workers’ interest in the organization will somehow compensate for inadequate wages. At the same time, they demean them by calling them “the popcorn people.” Workers’ previous attempts to demand higher wages continually met with management’s dismissive attitude.

When the Independent Spirit award-winning movie, “Sorry to Bother You,” played in the theater, the front-of-house staff learned by observing the characters — low-wage call center workers — and they mobilized. After contacting the AFL-CIO, they were put in touch with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. According to IATSE, “Authorization cards went out to the bargaining unit in December, and by the end of February, more than 80% of people had signed on.” (medium.com, May 28)

Just as confidence was growing, management began warning the workers not to join the union, spurring doubts in some. That’s when progressive hip-hop artist, Boots Riley, the film’s director, caught wind of the union in formation and how his film had sparked it. He made a video of himself giving words of congratulations and encouragement to the workers, saying, “You’re seeing where your power lies and who that will inspire, not just theater workers, but fast food workers ... retail workers, so what you’re doing is very important. I’m inspired.”

The union became official in April. A representative of IATSE Local 868 Ticket Sellers and Treasurers in Washington, D.C., called to congratulate the new unionists, showing them they’re not alone. Anti-worker laws like Utah’s “right-to-work” (for-less) will not stop the growing mobilizations of young people organizing fighting unions. □

Boots Riley to workers: ‘I’m inspired by you’



Below is the full transcript of Boots Riley’s May 28 video message to Salt Lake City theater workers:

“Hey, what’s up, y’all. This is Boots Riley, writer and director of ‘Sorry to Bother You.’ I want to say congratulations to you theater workers who are coming together forming a union, joining a union, fighting for higher wages and benefits and all of that good stuff. And just seeing where your power lies. And, you know, so much of what you do is, as you know, about getting stories to people.

“And the thing about what happens when people come together and fight, when people, especially when they do that on the job, it starts to tell a story to other people. It’s not just the fight that’s there that exists in front of you; it’s about the story that is being told to millions of other people that will be finding out about what you’re doing. And just even in your local area who that will inspire — not just theater workers, but fast food workers, you know, anyone, you know, retail workers — so what you’re doing is very important. And I’m inspired by you. Thank you so much.”

Boston meeting ‘No Walls in the LGBTQ2S Struggle’

By Workers World Boston bureau

Workers’ Solidarity Day was marked by a May 31 meeting titled “No Walls in the LGBTQ2S Struggle,” sponsored by Stonewall Warriors, International Workers’ Solidarity Network and Workers World Party.

The meeting was dedicated to Roxanna Hernandez, a Honduran trans woman who died in detention at the border. Speaking about the heinous deaths of children in ICE detention centers, Sam Ordóñez of Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) said, “To the right wing, a six-week-old embryo has a sacred right to live and matters even more than the life of the mother, but once that child is born, if it is a migrant, the only right it has is the right to die.”

When speaking on reproductive and gender justice, disability activist Kristin Turgeon emphasized the need to reject the walls the bosses create to divide the working class, like racism, sexism, xenophobia, anti-LGBTQ2S bigotry and ableism. The next day she was on the front line fighting against a fascist, misogynist, anti-choice gathering in downtown Boston.

Remarks at the meeting by trans activists raised consciousness about the discrimination trans people face in accessing reproductive health care, including the violence of neglect, forced sterilization, unwanted procedures or being turned down for needed procedures, racism and lack of funds. Trans people are demanding the medical measures necessary to be able to make an uncoerced, safe choice on whether or not to have children and the social supports necessary to raise healthy children.

A Boston Google worker, who asked to remain anonymous, is trying to unionize their workplace where much of the workforce is precarious. “The company purports to be against bigotry and retaliation, but it is just the opposite. ... TVCs [temps, vendors and contractors] can be fired at any time ... the workplace is racially segregated with the majority white workers full time and the majority of Black and Brown workers part-time,” they explained. Meeting participants enthusiastically pledged to offer concrete solidarity to any organizing efforts.

Frank Neisser, a longtime WWP member, marked the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion by reading from Leslie Feinberg’s work “Lavender and Red,” which chronicles the rebellion on a day-to-day basis. Neisser called on everyone to come out and be part of the Stonewall Warriors/International Workers Solidarity Network contingent in Pride Saturday, June 8. □

‘Shock and awe’ war on migrants, prisoners

By Teresa Gutierrez

In 2003, during the genocidal and criminal U.S. war against Iraq, the term “shock and awe” was propagated.

The British Telegraph wrote 10 years later on March 19, 2013: “One expression above all others has become associated with the invasion of Iraq: ‘shock and awe.’ Developed at the Pentagon, ‘shock and awe’ was a doctrine designed to leave the enemy so demoralized and disoriented that its will to resist crumbled. ... It has come to mean the application of overwhelming force, the effective obliteration of the enemy, and for many the term ‘shock and awe’ has come to epitomize the crudeness of the ... [U.S.] assault on Iraq.” (tinyurl.com/y3vmfqgo)

The Trump war against migrants — as well as the historic war against incarcerated people of color — employs the “shock and awe” tactic. No bombs are being dropped as they were in Iraq — a crime that Washington must be forced to account for. Although nothing can replace the people who were massacred or the culture that was destroyed, the U.S. nonetheless must be forced to pay reparations to the people of Iraq.

It is a different kind of war, but the attacks against migrants and the incarcerated are a war nevertheless. Despite the overwhelming assault, migrants and the imprisoned continue to organize and fight back, just as the people of Iraq did.

There may be no bombs, but prison cell bars have come to symbolize tremendous shock and awe.

Organized solidarity is urgently needed.

Detained, depressed and dying

On May 21, NBC news issued a damning report of conditions for migrants detained in for-profit centers. Just like U.S. prisons that incarcerate more people than any other country in the world, these centers amount to dehumanizing criminal chambers of horror. Willingly or not, administrators of these jails and detention centers are torturing the detained.

Scholars and social scientists have amply documented how segregation has no social relevance; it amounts to torture. Incarcerated people enter detention already traumatized. Whether they are undocumented or accused of alleged robbery, the scales of justice are already tipped to crush, not rehabilitate or assist, them.

NBC writes that thousands of detained migrants “were outlined in a trove of government documents that shed new light on the widespread use of solitary confinement for immigrant detainees in ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] custody under both the Obama and Trump administrations.” (tinyurl.com/yy8zng7w)

The documentation paints “a disturbing portrait of a system where detainees are sometimes forced into extended periods of isolation for reasons that have nothing to do with violating any rules.”

Who is being detained and why? If disabled migrants are in need of a wheelchair, a cane or have a prosthetic, they are put into isolation. If they say they are gay or transgender, they are put into isolation. If they complain against abuse from the guards, they are rushed into isolation.

If they are so depressed — as was one

trans woman, 36-year-old Dulce Rivera, described by NBC as being from Central America — and they try to commit suicide like so many detainees do, they are put in isolation.

This amounts to the government pouring gasoline on a fire.

The New York Times reported on Oct. 2, 2018, that migrants detained in the country’s largest immigration detention facility in Adelanto, Calif., regularly constructed nooses out of bed sheets in an attempt to commit suicide. The newspaper cited a government report which stated that 15 out of 20 cells contained these nooses. (tinyurl.com/yyle5mll) Did the government then assign psychological services to prevent suicide? Of course not.

Solitary confinement is torture

Conditions are horrible at migrant detention centers, but they are far worse in regular prisons. A 2012 American Psychological Association report documented the impact of the use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. It quoted Craig Haney, a psychologist and professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who was appointed that year to a National Academy of Sciences committee which studied high rates of incarceration in the U.S.

Haney toured and inspected dozens of U.S. prisons and interviewed hundreds of prison staff and inmates. According to him, the approximately 80,000 inmates in solitary confinement are “at grave risk of psychological harm” and “the conditions of confinement are far too severe to serve any kind of penological purpose.”

The APA stated: “At a June 19 hearing, Haney showed pictures to illustrate solitary confinement’s harsh conditions, including filthy cells that are ‘scarcely larger than a king-sized bed,’ he said. As a result of the endless monotony and lack of human contact, ‘for some prisoners ... solitary confinement precipitates a descent into madness. Many inmates experience panic attacks, depression and paranoia, and some suffer hallucinations,’ he said.”

The report continues: “Former inmate Anthony Graves, who spent 18 years on death row, including 10 in solitary confinement for a murder he didn’t commit, drove home Hanley’s points. ‘I would watch guys come to prison totally sane, and in three years they don’t live in the real world anymore,’ he said. One fellow inmate, Graves said, ‘would go out into the recreation yard, get naked, lie down and urinate all over himself. He would take his feces and smear it all over his face.’” (tinyurl.com/y3psc5am)

Graves represents a heroic resister. He managed to survive U.S. prisons. But the countless unknown people, U.S. or foreign-born, who are jailed, shackled, tortured, made fun of, taunted and criminalized for being poor or a person of color — and who continue to be tortured — must be defended.

The use of shock and awe in prisons is an inhumane tactic applied to workers who merely want to survive — and to live their lives.

It is time to open up the jails and lock up the Trumps of the world. □

Activists close down Atlanta Detention Center

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

The multistory Atlanta City Detention Center was built prior to the 1996 Olympics to house the hundreds of poor and homeless people that the image-conscious corporate elite were determined to banish from the sight of a global audience.

At that time the City Council passed a series of “quality of life” laws guaranteed to ensnare poor people, and Black youth and men in particular, into days or even months in the jail. For the next two decades, the 1,700-bed facility was filled with those too poor to pay the cash bond levied for traffic tickets and violations of city ordinances like loitering or public intoxication.

The detention center deserved to be called a “concentration camp for the poor,” with its notorious record of medical neglect, physical brutality and unsafe conditions.

On May 28, the hated ACDC was officially closed. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms signed the City Council’s legislation and ordered the establishment of a community task force to repurpose the building for the benefit of city residents.

A victory for prisoner activists

The struggle to achieve the shutting down of the ACDC involved years of effort by multiple groups that built campaigns to steadily reduce the incarcerated population.

A pre-arrest diversion program was won with leadership from the Solutions Not Punishment Collaboration and the Racial Justice Center. That success was followed by reforms in cash bail and marijuana policies, which again kept large numbers of people out of jail.

Immigrant rights groups such as Georgia Detention Watch and Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights



PHOTO: WOMENONThERISE

Women on the Rise is one of many prisoner rights and community activist groups who “fought to win” in closing the Atlanta jail.

zeroed in on the city’s arrangement with Immigrant and Customs Enforcement to house undocumented im/migrants in advance of deportation at ACDC. In response to outrage at the Trump administration’s family separation policy, the city ended the ICE contract, reducing the jail population by hundreds.

Before its closing, the operating costs of the jail amounted to about \$33 million a year, with only about 150 or fewer men and women locked up on a daily basis. Popular pressure from Women on the Rise, a organization of formerly incarcerated women, along with scores of other community groups, ultimately achieved the jail closure as a step in changing the racist, anti-poor, working-class-based system of incarceration.

When some called for diverting the \$33 million jail budget to the police department, activists made clear that their demand was instead to fund services to uplift and repair the communities whose members had been targeted by overpolicing, institutionalized racism and white supremacy.

Working with architects and city planners, the “communities not cages” advocates already have design drawings of

how the jail could be rehabilitated to a “one-stop shop” for a broad range of services, including health care, job training and community empowerment.

The detention center sits on a large piece of valuable land in an area of Atlanta undergoing gentrification. Undoubtedly, profit-minded developers will be pushing their own agenda. But the determined activists, especially those who have personal experience with the crimes of mass incarceration, will be going into the next battle confident that “When We Fight, We Win!”

Organizing to stop cop killing continues

The same day the city announced the ACDC closing, the city also announced that Atlanta police would no longer participate in certain federal task forces.

The recent killing of Jimmy Acheson

and, prior to that, the killing of Jamarion Robinson by FBI-led squads, saw family members and Black Lives Matter activists challenge the “official” stories. No body-camera video is allowed on federally organized task forces. Moreover, federal agents involved have not been made available for questioning by the Fulton County District Attorney.

Acheson was unarmed and hiding in a closet when he was killed by an Atlanta cop in an FBI-led squad. Seventy-six bullets fired at Robinson tore his body apart.

While the city of Atlanta ordered its police to deploy body cameras during all interactions with the public, that still has not reduced the number of officer-involved shootings in 2019.

Videos from bystanders, however, have produced charges against police. □

Gerrymandering in Ohio, Michigan

Continued from page 4

2018 primary election, with a stunning 75 percent voting in favor. The initiative creates new terms for the next remapping of voter districts, giving the minority party a greater voice in the process.

Ohio and Michigan Republicans ignored not only the opinion of the judges but the will of the voters and appealed the court rulings to the U.S. Supreme Court. They asked for a stay of orders to redraw the district maps until after the Supreme Court hears earlier gerrymandering cases from Maryland and North Carolina.

The high court agreed to stay the lower court rulings in both states. This means the 2020 Congressional elections will likely be held with the current maps intact.

Unfinished struggle against racism, for democratic rights

In other words, racist, right-wing schemes to disenfranchise voters will continue for the time being—and perhaps will be upheld by the current Supreme Court.

This struggle over a basic democratic right to vote is not occurring in a vacuum. Right now a record number of progressive women of color, some who even identify as socialists, are being elected to office. Voter suppression is a political tool to counteract and contain this significant trend.

This movement for democratic rights is taking place within the narrow context of bourgeois electoral politics—Democrats vs. Republicans. But while the form is regressive, its content is wholly progressive—a still unfinished struggle against outright disenfranchisement. All genuine anti-racists need to pay attention. □



Part 66

Leslie Feinberg’s 120-part series on connections between LGBTQ and socialist history, “Lavender & Red,” appeared in Workers World newspaper from 2004 to 2008, and is available for free download at workers.org/book/lavender-red.

By Leslie Feinberg

A number of accounts of the confrontation between cops and the crowd outside the Stonewall Bar mark the prolonged struggle between police and a cross-dressed butch lesbian as a qualitative turning point. According to Village Voice journalist Howard Smith, “It was at that moment that the scene became explosive.”

Smith wrote that the crowd roared: “Police brutality! Pigs!”

Gino, a Puerto Rican construction worker, joining in the shouts of “Let her go! Leave her alone!” reportedly dislodged a loose cobblestone and heaved it across Christopher Street. Eyewitness Steve Yates remembered, “It landed on the trunk of a police car with a terrible screech, ‘scaring the shit’ out of a policeman who was standing next to the car.”

According to Stonewall employee Harry Beard, one or more people in the crowd were able to slash all four tires on the police cruiser with the butch lesbian prisoner inside.

Raymond “Ray” Castro, a Puerto Rican baker, recalled how he fought his own arrest. “At that point I started pushing back and wound up with two plainclothes police pushing me. The next thing I know, there’s two plainclothes cops and two uniformed police in the melee. I was knocked to the ground by one of their billy clubs, [which,] put between my legs, tripped me. At that point the handcuffs got put on me, and they had a [police] wagon right in front of the entrance to the Stonewall. When I got shoved up to the door of the [police] wagon,

I had two policemen on each side of me. I didn’t quite go willingly into the [police] wagon. I didn’t want to be arrested. Even though I was handcuffed, I jumped up and [put] one foot on the right side of the door and one foot on the left of the door. I sprung up like a jumping jack and pushed backwards, knocking the police down to the ground, almost against the wall of the Stonewall. Well, they finally dragged me into the [police] wagon.”

Tom, a participant, remembered Ray battling against arrest. “A couple more were thrown into the van. We joined in with some who wanted to storm the van, free those inside, then turn over the van. But nobody was yet prepared for that kind of action. Then a scuffle at the door. One guy refused to be put into the van. Five or six cops guarding the van tried to subdue him with little success. Several guys tried to help free him. Unguarded, three or four of those in the van appeared then quickly disappeared into the crowd. This was all anyone needed.”

As police hurriedly tried to load other prisoners into the police wagon, one 18-year-old participant saw “a leg in nylons and sporting a high heel shoot out of the back of the [police] wagon into the chest of a cop, throwing him backward. Another queen then opened the door on the side of the wagon and jumped out. The cops chased and caught her, but Blond Frankie [who worked the door at the Stonewall] quickly managed to engineer another escape from the car; several queens successfully made their way out with him and were swallowed up in the crowd.” (Duberman, “Stonewall”)

Michael Fader reported seeing the cops “leave the van unattended—the doors were open, so they left. That raised the emotional level, the excitement of them getting away.”

The multinational crowd of hundreds massed around the police was made up of those brave enough and angry enough at oppression to be drawn to a confrontation with the police.

Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera stressed a very important point about the rebellion that ensued. Rivera was a Venezuelan and Puerto Rican transgender youth who had lived homeless on the streets of Manhattan since she was 10 years old. Before her death, she stressed the role in the rebellion of the homeless gay/trans street youth — Black, Latinx and white and gender-defiant — who could not afford the Stonewall door admission charge or the overpriced, watered-down drinks. The vest-pocket park across the street from the bar was their home. (Personal interview, 1997)

Rivera emphasized that at the moment of ignition of the rebellion, “It was street gay people from the Village out front — homeless people who lived in the park in Sheridan Square outside the bar — and then drag queens behind them and everybody behind us.” (Feinberg, “Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue”)

Danny Garvin described how police tried to push back those gathered around them. This allowed the crowd to make an important discovery: a big stack of new bricks at a Seventh Avenue South construction site. Garvin explained, “They would come at us with nightsticks, and we would have to disperse onto Seventh Avenue, where the people were able to see the bricks.”

Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine, who led the raid, ordered police to drive off quickly with prisoners in the police wagon and three cop cruisers and “just drop them off at the Sixth Precinct and hurry back.”

People in the crowd around the police wagon began beating on its sides, demanding to know the names of those imprisoned inside. According to Voice reporter Lucian Truscott, “A cry went up to push the [police] wagon over, but it drove away before anything could happen.”

The slashed tires of one or more of the vehicles slowed down the police exit. According to accounts compiled by David



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Leslie Feinberg speaking for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, Town Hall, New York City, 1999.

Carter: “The crowd, however, was beyond being intimidated by mere sirens and the caravan had to push slowly through the furious protesters, who, enraged, pounded on the police vehicles. Danny Garvin recalls the noise as ‘people would run over, grab the [police] wagon, and start shaking -- ba-boom! ba-boom!’”

Martin Duberman reported, “One queen mashed an officer with her heel, knocked him down, grabbed his handcuff keys, freed herself, and passed the keys to another queen behind her.”

Inspector Pine was left with eight plainclothes detectives and one uniformed cop, all surrounded by an enraged crowd. Those among the hundreds who surrounded police threw their precious pocket change in a hard hail, shouting, “Dirty copper!” and “Here’s your payoff!”

They hurled bottles, cans, bricks, a damaged fire hydrant and dog excrement at police. A youth named Timmy reportedly heaved a wire-mesh garbage can, which shattered the Stonewall’s plate-glass window, which was reinforced with plywood.

Cries of “Gay power!” and “Let’s get ‘em” articulated the detonation of mass rage.

There was nowhere for the police to retreat except back into the Stonewall — the very bar they had raided. □

Buffalo dyke march



PHOTO: MICHAEL YEH

By Marge Maloney and Ellie Dorritie
Buffalo, N.Y.

On Saturday, June 1, about 200 women and gender-oppressed people marched up one of Buffalo’s busiest streets for the 19th annual Dyke March. Led by Black and Brown women, the march had chants, banners and signs condemning the war on the LGBTQ+ community, the war on women, the war on people of color and on all oppressed people. The strongest message was for the need to unite the struggles of all the oppressed and to be in the streets demanding change.

On Sunday, June 2, the many thousands-larger, bank-sponsored Pride Parade took place. Workers World Party Buffalo marched in this year’s parade, supporting an Anti-Capitalist Leftist Solidarity Bloc and acting in unity to bring radical politics and the LGBTQ+

liberation struggle back to Buffalo’s Pride events for the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

The Solidarity Bloc declared its intent to “Make Buffalo Pride for the People, not profit,” proclaiming:

- Pride for the People is accessible and inclusive.
- Pride for the People brings community together to celebrate milestones and organize for our futures.
- Pride for the People is united against a corporatized, white-washed, profit-driven Pride.
- Pride for the People remembers the radical origins that gave us the right to march.

The Solidarity Bloc encouraged participants to wear black, in direct contrast to the overpriced rainbow merchandise that surrounds the parade. □

Pride in the CLE day

Hundreds marched in the 4th annual “Pride in the CLE” Saturday, June 1, in Cleveland to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. A tremendous turnout at the march and festival that followed demonstrated that the current right-wing attack on the community will not succeed in pushing back the struggle for full equality.

Pride in the CLE was sponsored by the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland. Mallory McMaster, pride director at the center said, “Being visible in public and showing the community that LGBTQ people exist here and contribute to the community is a form of resistance and protest in a world where we’re so oppressed and silenced and unseen.” The International Workers Solidarity Network distributed signs stating, “No walls in the LGBTQ2S community” and “Solidarity with Im/migrant workers.”

— Photo and report by Susan Schnur



Queens, N.Y. Pride

During Queens Pride, Workers World Party members joined in the #TGNCSilentWalk commemorating the lives of Dana Martin, Ashanti Carmon, Claire Legato, Jazzaline Ware, Muhlaysia Booker and Tamika Washington, all trans women of color murdered in the U.S. in 2019.

The contingent also honored Johana Medina Leon, trans asylum seeker from El Salvador, who died June 1 in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, and Roxana Hernandez, trans asylum seeker from Honduras, dead in ICE custody in 2018.

The contingent message was well received by the Queens community, with many joining in the chant, “Roxana

Hernandez, PRESENTE!” and “Fuck the police!” The contingent, organized by Latinx trans women, highlighted the facts that transphobia kills and sex work is work.

— Photo and report by Sofia Adams



Why it’s necessary Unite and fight against abortion bans

By Sue Davis

The criminal anti-abortion network in the U.S., praised and promoted by the racist, reactionary Don in the Oval Office, was hard at work the last two weeks of May.

A Missouri abortion ban was signed into law on May 24. The U.S. Supreme Court issued a split decision in an Indiana abortion case on May 27, affirming the need to bury or cremate fetal remains, but choosing not to rule on ending pre-viable abortions. A Louisiana abortion ban was signed into law on May 29. The last remaining clinic in Missouri stayed open due to a May 31 temporary restraining order.

May 31 was the 10th anniversary of Dr. George Tiller’s murder in Wichita, Kan. — who was called “St. George” by co-workers and other abortion providers because of his compassion and empathy for women.

While any one of these events could merit its own article, their shared aspects is the current violent attack on the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, Roe v. Wade.

The so-called “abortion wars” started even before Roe. The misnamed anti-abortion “National Right to Life Committee” was founded in 1967. Now the attacks that ramped up in the 1980s have gone nuclear.

Between Jan. 1 and May 20, some 378 abortion restrictions were introduced in the states. An unprecedented 40 percent were abortion bans, according to the Guttmacher Institute on May 30. Guttmacher noted that between Jan. 1, 2011, and May 31 of this year, 479 abortion restrictions became law in 33 states. That is more than a third of all 1,271 curbs since 1973.

None of the current bans have gone into effect, thanks to legal intervention by the Center for Reproductive Rights, which filed May 24 to stop the Mississippi ban. The American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood filed against the

Ohio ban on April 11 and the Alabama ban on May 24, and are preparing a suit against the Georgia ban.

The most heartening aspect of the fightback has been in the streets, with a massive outpouring of women, gender-nonconforming people and male allies defending Roe in 500 cities across the country on May 21. The most popular slogan everywhere is: “We won’t go back.”

Meanwhile, Nevada, Illinois and Vermont recently passed laws affirming Roe, joining New York and Oregon, which passed such legislation previously.

Whose right to ‘personhood’?

Medically incorrect “heartbeat” bans now place the “personhood” of an embryo — not yet a fetus — above that of a woman. (Planned Parenthood calls these “six-week bans.”) This is truly a crime against women’s and gender-oppressed people’s human rights.

Willful ignorance of the reproductive process and hostility toward women, driven by religious zealots in evangelical, Roman Catholic and various “orthodox” religions, has now led to “forced pregnancy bills.” That’s what Stacey Abrams, nationally known Black politician, calls the bill in her state of Georgia.

Though Abrams’ religious family taught her abortion was wrong, she’s a leader in the fight against the bans. “[E]very woman should have a choice. ... That’s the fundamental crux of this. ... [It’s] a decision that women can make to determine their economic future, to determine their health care. It’s a decision they make about how they control the creation of their family.” (YouTube, June 1)

An article by Zak Cheney-Rice in New York Magazine notes that 55 percent of Black people in the U.S. live in the Deep South, where Georgia has the second-highest U.S. maternal mortality rate and Alabama the sixth-highest infant mortality

rate. He notes these states have been and are politically dominated by a right-wing, white-supremacist majority. But, he writes: “Where Black resistance has taken hold in the South, it has consistently proved to be the most visible bulwark against reactionary rule.” (May 27-June 9)

According to an Atlanta Journal-Constitution poll, 49 percent of Georgia’s population opposes the anti-woman bill, compared with 44 percent who favor it. Seven out of 10 Georgians oppose overturning Roe, with 78 percent of Black voters saying abortion should be legal in most or all cases.

Vicious impact on Black women

The African-American medical director at Alabama Women’s Center for Reproductive Alternatives, Dr. Yashica Robinson, told CNN on May 18: “As a mother and a physician, this abortion ban is deeply personal. ... I am angry at the politicians who do not see women as responsible decision makers and therefore believe the care I provide should be outlawed. I am enraged that the state of Alabama would force me to choose between what is ethical and medically appropriate care, and breaking the law.”

Robinson is most concerned about how poor Black women will be affected given the Alabama Department of Public Health report in 2017: While “there were 31 pregnancy-related deaths out of 100,000 live births for white women, that number more than doubled for black women. When compared to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s] national average of 12.4 deaths per 100,000 for white women and 40 deaths per 100,000 for Black women, these numbers are particularly stark.”

“We must expose the hypocrisy of the so-called ‘pro-life’ movement,” wrote Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, a leader of the Poor People’s Campaign and member of the



Boston, June 2. WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

NAACP board, in a May 30 Nation article.

Katha Pollitt, a longtime defender of women’s right to abortion, summarized the current explosive, destructive war against women’s human rights in a May 24 New Yorker article: “Indifference to women and children isn’t an oversight. ... The point isn’t to prevent unwanted pregnancy. ... The point is to roll back modernity for women.”

Who will this outrageous war against child-bearing people hit the hardest under patriarchal, misogynist capitalism?

The poorest of working women and all the gender oppressed: women of color, young gig workers, im/migrants, trans and gender nonconforming people, rural residents, disabled women and those trying to survive domestic violence.

But the crisis also offers those who oppose U.S. ruling-class domination a chance to join this human rights movement and fight back. Here’s a chance to answer that old-time labor union call for solidarity: “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

Davis is a longtime reproductive justice activist and author of the pro-choice novel “Love Means Second Chances.”

BOSTON Pro-choice forces defy right wing

June 2—Around 100 pro-choice activists gathered in the Boston Common to confront a group of anti-abortion extremists attempting to hold a rally and march there. The action was initiated by Boston Feminists for Liberation.

The activists took control of the Parkman Bandstand where the right wing was planning to speak. The right wingers quickly called for backup, hiding behind the police in order to set up their sound system.

An undercover police officer used pepper spray in an attempt to force an activist retreat, and seven pro-choice demonstrators were arrested over the course of the day. Witnesses reported several instances of the police allowing right-wing provocateurs to escape into the crowded park while their victims were arrested.

Despite the constantly increasing police



WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

presence protecting the right wing, pro-choice activists continued to march and hold space around the bandstand and chant “Pro-life, that’s a lie! You don’t care if women die!” and “Queer, straight, Black, white, let’s unite for abortion rights!”

— Report by Sam Ordóñez

Come out for Pride at 50! Come out for Workers World!

June is Pride month. Rallies and marches worldwide are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion! From the beginning, Workers World Party has a proud history of reporting on and participating in the living struggle for LGBTQ2S justice and equality. Foremost these days is fighting transgender oppression, to stop right-wing legislative attacks on both trans and gender-nonconforming youth and adults and to stop brutal physical attacks and murders, which especially target trans women of color.

Do you know that Workers World has made major theoretical contributions to the LGBTQ2S struggle? One was publication of “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View” (World View Forum, third ed., 1993), which drew on Frederick Engels and Dorothy Ballan for a dialectical materialist explanation of LGBTQ2S oppression. Another was the body of work of Leslie Feinberg, a proud WWP leader, who created the first Marxist analysis of transgender history and struggle in such books as “Transgender Warriors: Making History,” “Transgender Liberation: Beyond Pink and Blue” and “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.”

That analysis drives Workers World’s view that the LGBTQ2S struggle is an integral component of the overall struggle

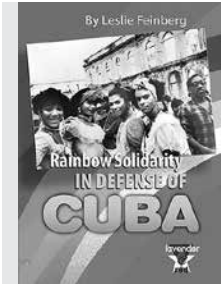


WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

A photo of Gay Caucus of YAWF (Youth Against War & Fascism, a former youth group of WWP) banner at a New York City Pride march in the early 1970s.

to end patriarchy and capitalist oppression. So if you want to both fight for the liberation of LGBTQ2S people and struggle against capitalist exploitation, help build Workers World newspaper.

We invite you to join the WW Supporter Program, which was set up 43 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-LGBTQ2S, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to crush capitalism and usher in socialism. 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 click on Donate on workers.org. Know that we are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □



Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba by Leslie Feinberg

This ground-breaking book is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba’s pre- and post-revolutionary history.

Available at major online booksellers.

ABCs of the capitalist crisis

WW reprints here Part 1 of an article, slightly abridged, by Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, that appeared in the April 12, 1992, Workers World. Despite the years that have passed since then, his analysis is highly relevant to understanding the relationship between workers and capitalists today, as signs of a new downturn in the economy multiply.

George Meany, a one-time leader of the AFL-CIO, was by no means a paragon of trade union militancy. But toward the end of his term, he had much time to think about the many capitalist recessions and recoveries he had seen.

During the late 1970s the news was full of economic data about the recession going on. A reporter from the big-business press asked him, "When is a recession over?" "The recession is over," Meany replied, "when everybody goes back to work."

Every worker, especially the unemployed, would eagerly agree with his answer. Yet not one bourgeois economist will agree with this definition.

There are many so-called independent economic institutes. But they're all oriented toward the myth that the capitalist system and economic crises are eternal. They may be very interested in an economic upturn, but getting everybody back to work? That is not their concern.

Economic growth not same as jobs

Their concern is "getting the economy moving again" — an altogether different concept than getting everybody back to work.

Of course, the capitalist system can't run without workers. The workers are the one indispensable element in capitalist production. But full employment is another matter. If Meany had been more knowledgeable about the origin and development of the capitalist system, he might have noted that ever since the first worldwide capitalist crisis, back in 1825, there has been no capitalist recovery where everybody went back to work.

Army of unemployed

Some workers are always left behind — not just because of the ill will or greed of the capitalist class, but because, on pain of losing out in their competition with other capitalists, they must introduce labor-saving devices which cut down the labor force.

This is as inevitable as the rising sun. It has been one of the immutable effects of every capitalist crisis, resulting in a so-called reserve army of hundreds of millions of unemployed worldwide.

(Of course, if a war follows a capitalist crisis, and if it's long enough and big enough, it will "employ" everybody.)

This reserve army of unemployed exists not only at the beginning of a recovery, but when it begins to gallop, and even at its very climax. It's a fact of the historical evolution of capitalism.

Even after the economy has fully

recovered, some workers are supplanted by the onward march of technology. At the present time, when innovation and new technology have reached a wild and uncontrolled level, millions have been so displaced.

Every phase of capitalist prosperity, it should be remembered, carries the seeds of its own destruction.

Unemployment 'too high'?

In a recent interview, President George [H.W.] Bush permitted himself to say that he thinks unemployment is "too high" and believes the economy will soon spurt upward. He didn't bemoan unemployment itself, just that it is too high.

This is the acceptable political and theoretical premise that underlines capitalist ideology: There is and always will be unemployment. If 5 million or 7 million are unemployed, that's legitimate and in accordance with the norms of capitalist development. Only when it's too high should the government be concerned. Otherwise, it's up to the individuals to solve their own problems.

It's a commentary on the capitalist political system and its leaders, especially the current Democratic presidential candidates, that they don't take Bush on for this. They don't see unemployment itself as an evil that corrodes the working class and the lower echelons of the middle class, who are constantly falling to the bottom of the pit with each shakeout of the financial system.

Reports of economic recovery

The latest issue of Business Week (dated March 30, 1992) proudly proclaims that "The recovery is here at last" and "KA-Boom — the rebound is underway."

Most of their statistics are derived from the releases of the Federal Reserve Bank. This is a bankers' bank. Commercial banks can borrow from it at a low interest rate that no individual could ever hope to get.

The chair of the Federal Reserve Board is Alan Greenspan. Few people are likely to know the names of the six other bankers on the Federal Reserve Board. They're all appointed, and the public isn't supposed to be concerned that they're all white, all men, all rich bankers and industrialists in this "democratic society." Heaven forbid that anyone should ask why no workers are on it!

The Federal Reserve Board plus the directors of the 12 district banks are in charge of the central banking system. Their role in charge of the money supply makes them more omnipotent than any ancient monarchy. This bank has a Federal Open Market Committee that deals with the financing of the government's obligations. It buys and sells dollars and bonds, and conducts currency wars abroad.

The game of interest rates

Historically, there's a neat game that goes on between the U.S. president and

the chair of the Federal Reserve Board in times of economic crisis. Congress plays a role in it, too.

The president, whether Republican or Democrat, plays the point man as the advocate of low interest rates or "cheap money." This is supposed to help the mortgaged farmer, the poor home owner, or little business person borrow from the bank at low interest rates. About 650,000 small businesses have died so far in the past decade, leaving hardly a trace behind.

The lower interest rates are really for the industrialists. The big banks give the ones that are thriving lower rates. As for the ones that don't make it, the banks can establish themselves as the first and most important secured creditors in case of bankruptcy.

There has been such an avalanche of failures that it has overpowered some of the biggest banks. But all that is part and parcel of the merits of the "free enterprise" system.

The chair of the Federal Reserve Board historically plays the role of the hard-headed, tight-fisted guardian of the money supply. Usually the president and the Congress say that interest rates should be lower. But the chair replies: "Not yet. It will endanger the credit standing of the government. If that goes, the whole universe might collapse."

Eventually, however, the chair gets around to lowering interest rates, and that is supposed to ease the economic crisis. Pretty soon, almost everybody will go back to work, according to the economic mythology of the bourgeois economists.

In March [1992], the Federal Reserve reported an economic improvement. Among other things, it said there was "a slow but widespread advance in the economy since the end of January." But further on it narrows its estimate to "some improvement in economic conditions."

The two assessments are not identical. The Federal Reserve measures its words carefully.

Economic conditions may improve if, for instance, you as a house painter agree to paint my apartment and I borrow some \$500 from the bank to pay you. You are then able to pay the rent for your apartment and the insurance for your old car. Many examples like that can add up to economic improvement, especially if they are multiplied by the millions.

But in a general way, an improvement in economic conditions as it is posed in the Federal Reserve survey is not the same thing as restarting the capitalist cycle of development.

What starts up the economy again?

A restart of the economy begins with the employment of workers, from whom the capitalists extract real profit. The capitalist system of exploitation begins with



Sam Marcy meeting with Fidel Castro in October, 1993.

the unpaid labor of the worker, who produces a surplus over and above what is required generally or historically to perpetuate the working class.

All the rest is merely the exchange of values within the system, and can at best only be peripheral to capitalist exploitation. For example, you can multiply the averages on the stock exchange a million-fold, but that in and of itself cannot generate profit. The profit merely changes hands.

Real profit comes from the sweat and blood of the working class. Without that, the capitalist system cannot maintain itself.

The fact that the capitalist stock market is rising is not evidence that the capitalist economy itself is rising. On the contrary, the stock market may be rising because there has been a severe restructuring of the capitalist economy, throwing out millions of workers. The market is anticipating fabulous profits from the restructuring of the capitalist economy.

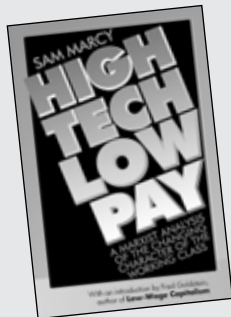
Whether the capitalist cycle of production has been restarted has to be examined independently of any ephemeral improvement in economic conditions generally. This improvement may herald an oncoming capitalist recovery, or it may fizzle out just like the last one.

Furthermore, to expect that a right-wing Republican chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, just reappointed by a reactionary Republican president, will take an Olympian view of the capitalist economy and not be influenced by the elections is ridiculous. Is it possible to avoid a flood of phony statistical evaluations calculated to overwhelm the electorate?

The havoc caused by the capitalist crisis has become so severe that the capitalist newspapers in some regions are competing with each other to give vivid pictures of the devastation suffered by millions of families throughout the country. Even the TV networks are forced to show at least once a week the homelessness, hunger and continuing slump in Bush's standing with the electorate. Some of the truth must come out one way or another.

But what is sorely missing is an explanation of the causes of the capitalist economic crisis. Whatever criticism does appear leads to illusions and hinders independent action by the working class.

To be continued.

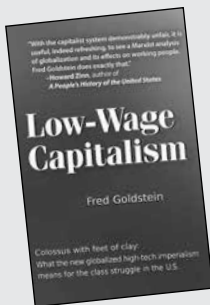


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Chavismo trains social movement leaders to defend Caracas

By Marco Teruggi
Caracas

Teruggi is an Argentine journalist living in Caracas. This article appeared June 1 in pagina12. Translated by Michael Otto.

June 1 — A defensive wall is surrounding Caracas. Over 10 days, some 1,700 men and women have received defense training. The goal is to reach 100,000 by October, with training centers in 22 parishes [neighborhoods] to cover the 117 territorial hubs in the capital and assure that the city becomes a swamp that can swallow up any attempted coups.

The first training site is located south of the city in Macarao. It was in Macarao where the right wing burned the headquarters of a communal organization on April 30, while cameras were all focused on Juan Guaidó, Leopoldo López and the handful of members of the military in their failed coup. Leaders of social movements and Chavista grassroots organizations, including people of every age group, took part in this training day.

This is the first time they have put their hands on a rifle or learned techniques for territorial reconnaissance. No one forced them to come; they are ordinary people from organized neighborhoods. They are living the day-to-day struggle that has been transformed into a battle for gas, transportation and controlled prices.

The training has various elements: learning how to make maps of the neighborhood, mobilizing with weapons, doing physical exercises, and learning about first aid, evacuation and self-defense. The instructors are members of the Bolivarian Militia, the body made up of more than 2.5 million women and men, the backbone of the so-called Doctrine of Comprehensive Defense of the Nation.

The leaders of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) are in the vanguard of the political leadership of the training plan.

"Caracas is a city of peace, a city of life, and we are going to defend it with the organization of our people, the civil-military union, and with the preparation and knowledge that we are developing in this effort of comprehensive training," explains Erika Fariás. She is the mayor of the Municipality of the Liberator of Caracas and a member of the leadership of the PSUV and the Francisco de Miranda Front.

Unified defense plan involves masses

The training exercises include several organizations: the PSUV, the allied parties [Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) and the Free Homeland Party (PPL)], the social and communal movements and the members of the Constituent National Assembly.

The exercises have three objectives. First, organization of defense through the design and execution of a plan in a unified manner among the different participants, in order to form a nucleus in each territory. Second, to carry out the exercises as such. Third, the productive effort, where the objective is that each of the 22 parishes will have a center for training and food production.

Colonel Boris Iván Berroterán de Jesús, commander of the Area of Comprehensive Defense 414 Caricuao, explains: "All Venezuelans have co-responsibility in the defense of the homeland, as it is written in article 326 of the Constitution. It is not only a question of arms. We are going to create a very important logistical chain. There must be eight or nine people in the rear for each combatant who is trained here; the instruction must be continuous; and all

components must be ready for the comprehensive defense in each territory."

The training is intended to respond to two principal possible scenarios of conflict.

The first is well known; it concerns the actions that the right wing carried out in 2013, 2014, 2017 and at the beginning of this year. These consisted of attacks on PSUV and commune offices, health and child care centers, and on Chavista leaders, as well as provocative night actions and attempts to create chaos in working-class areas. The right wing has been infiltrating and hiring armed groups for several years in order to challenge daily life in the working-class neighborhoods and to deploy in times of attack.

The second scenario involves one that the government has condemned: the possibility that the right wing may attempt to use mercenary forces composed of various agents, such as paramilitaries, criminal gangs and private contractors. In that situation, Caracas' regions — whose overpopulated hills look like labyrinths whose paths are stairs and balconies — could be a battleground for the irregular forces. The organized people must be prepared to spot enemy movements and know how to act to stop them.

What is to come: Dialogue or combat?

The training plan in Caracas advances hand-in-hand with the central commitment Chavismo has made since January: to carry out dialogue with the opposition in order to reach an agreement. The first attempts at dialogue occurred secretly for months. During the past two weeks, talks in Oslo, Norway's capital, have been public.

Chavismo has demonstrated unity around the search for dialogue and has affirmed that it will insist on reaching an agreement. The opposition, on the other

hand, has been divided on the matter. One sector is involved in the attempt at dialogue, like the representatives of Juan Guaidó acting under U.S. orders and joined by the Un Nuevo Tiempo [A New Time] party.

But another sector has insisted there is no longer anything to talk about or negotiate. That group clings to the argument that they can only get rid of Chavismo through an act of international force. To this end, for example, they work publicly on the fictional [goal of] reinserting Venezuela into the Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance via the National Assembly.

The U.S. government, for its part, publicly maintains that any solution depends on the departure of [President] Nicolás Maduro, and has returned to supporting Guaidó through Vice President Mike Pence. The question that has been around since the beginning of Guaidó's self-proclamation is how far is the United States willing to go?

While those are the public debates, what is being prepared behind closed doors? The right wing, following the U.S. plan — and depending on its financing — has already carried out violent actions during the days surrounding Guaidó's self-proclamation [as president] at the end of January. The rightists attempted to forcefully enter from Colombia on Feb. 23, unleashed attacks on the electric power grid, and attempted a political-military coup at dawn on April 30.

What if they aren't yet willing to agree on a process in Oslo that does not concede Maduro's exit? Chavismo has to prepare for all possible scenarios. Caracas is the epicenter of the Bolivarian Revolution's power that the coup forces seek to overthrow. So Chavismo is consequently preparing on the front lines for any further attacks around and within the city. □

HONDURAS

General strike hits gov't 'reforms'

Continued from page 1

Publicly, the U.S. government under Barack Obama condemned the coup, but allowed the junta to overthrow the democratically elected president. In fact, emails from Hillary Clinton, then secretary of state, reveal that the U.S. government was negotiating with the coup leaders, most of whom were trained in the School of the Americas (in the U.S.) and had close ties to the Pentagon.

The U.S. then recognized the results of the presidential elections in November of that year, despite being held under a military junta. The new conservative president, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, received great praise from the Obama administration for his efforts toward "reconciliation," despite the fact that during his term of office journalists who supported Zelaya or opposed the coup began to disappear.

The current president came to power in 2014 and has been criticized for his corruption and increased state repression against his rivals. Although the rightists had accused Zelaya of trying to run for a second term as a pretext for the 2009 coup, JOH was able to run for reelection without judicial problems.

The 2017 election was characterized by blatant fraud from JOH's National Party. The vote count was suspended several times, in one instance for three days, and when it resumed, the opposition

advantage of almost 5 percent of the votes had mysteriously disappeared.

The manipulation of the count was so obvious that even the Organization of American States, which normally serves to seal U.S. imperial decrees, condemned the fraud. Washington immediately recognized the results.

The Honduran people took to the streets to protest the theft of the presidency, which led to police repression with tear gas and a 10-day curfew. Since then, the intense struggle to restore democracy in the Central American country has not ceased.

JOH's neoliberal offensive

When the right wing took power in Honduras in 2009, it immediately began to implement the typical neoliberal program. The objective of these elites, in service to imperialist interests, is to gut social services and open the country to the demands of the transnationals.

The current attack on health and public education would be the final blow against these services, which have been under siege for the last decade of conservative rule.

School salaries were frozen from 2010 to 2016, and since then there have been only small increases. Investment in school infrastructure is almost completely suspended.

Hospitals lack all kinds of supplies,

but the budget continues to be cut, pushing up prices for families in need of medical services.

The theft of Indigenous lands has not stopped since the Spanish conquerors arrived, but under JOH it has intensified. The murder of Indigenous environmental activist Berta Cáceres by U.S.-trained state forces is just the most famous example of the use of state violence to push through mines and "megaprojects" against the wishes of the Indigenous Peoples who own the land being used.

If disinvestment in public services, dispossession of Indigenous territories and state repression were not enough, imperialism now seeks to create "Zones of Employment and Economic Development" (ZEDE). These areas would be "model cities" oriented toward foreign investment, controlled by a commission chosen directly by the president. These cities will have their own judicial, economic and administrative systems.



Tegucigalpa, Honduras, April 2019

The oligarchy in its own propaganda about these cities admits that they use Hong Kong, which was founded as a British colony to control China after the Opium Wars, as a model. (tinyurl.com/y5rb3g65)

These ZEDES imply a return to the direct colonialism of past centuries, as they are designed to serve as an entry point for transnational corporations and foreign capital. Their nominally "autonomous" system would actually turn them into colonies of American and European companies that want to operate in Central America. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

When a drink of water becomes a felony

Many people hike for pleasure through the beauty of the Sonoran Desert near Ajo, Ariz., as you might visit a state park near where you live.

While hiking in the desert, Scott Warren discovered the brutal reality facing migrants at the U.S. border as he began to run into people who had just walked through the 100+°F desert and were in desperate need of water.

Warren became a volunteer with Tucson-based No More Deaths (NMD). This and other humanitarian aid groups in southern Arizona leave water and food in the desert for migrant travelers. And now Warren is on trial — he faces felony charges and 20 years in prison from the U.S. government for giving succor to people who would otherwise die of thirst.

This is not an exaggeration of the danger facing migrants. There have been more than 7,000 known migrant deaths

in the border desert in the last two decades — which is still an undercount of the actual number of people who have died or gone missing.

On May 20, Warren commented to Democracy Now! about the increasing mortality rate: “We went from finding human remains every other month to finding five sets of human remains on a single trip hiking through the Growler Valley, and then going back a week later and finding two more sets of remains, and then, on a single day of searching, finding eight sets of remains and bodies of people who had died in adjacent areas.”

Migrants coming into or already in the U.S. are suffering systematic racist demonization, medical neglect amounting to deliberate genocidal intent, criminalization and incarceration that includes assault and rape.

Now, not only have attacks on migrants

intensified, reprisals are ramping up against those who help migrants.

Early in 2018, NMD released a video showing U.S. Border Patrol cops destroying more than 3,000 gallons of water NMD had put out for migrants in the desert. It was after the video was released that Warren was arrested at a site where migrants were receiving life-saving aid.

Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse reported that there has been a 30 percent increase nationwide since 2015 in the number of people arrested annually for allegedly harboring or assisting undocumented migrants.

For many of the people who live along the desert borderlands, it is not unusual to have someone knock on the door and ask for water or help. No More Deaths and other organizations try to broaden and deepen that neighborly help.

In the prosecution of Warren and attacks on these aid organizations, the U.S. government is attempting to criminalize basic acts of human care.

Scott Warren has pointed out that Ajo was once a copper mining town where the company policed who crossed the border. Now, in this era of transnational capital exploitation, the U.S. government has made border policing into a big for-profit business built on dying bodies and incarcerating refugees.

The brutal hand of capitalism tries over and over again to split up oppressed and working people — tries to make us turn against each other and betray each other — to intensify profit.

Over and over, we affirm that we will succor each other, support each other, fight for each other against this death-dealing system. We pledge: No Borders in Workers’ Struggles! □

WV educators refuse to back down, once again

By Workers World West Virginia bureau

Following the successful defeat of the West Virginia omnibus education bill, SB 451, in February 2019, Senate Republicans called for a special session in June to reintroduce the same legislation. SB 451 tied a school employee pay raise to anti-public education proposals, such as for-profit charter schools, increased class size and elimination of seniority rights.

Education workers carried out a two-day walkout on Feb. 19-20, which ultimately killed the bill. The previous year, teachers and support staff waged a nine-day strike that paved the way for education worker actions in several other states.

The Senate reconvened on Saturday, June 1, thinking no one would show up since most school districts are closed for summer break. The Senate also chose that date to avoid another walkout. To the Senate’s surprise, hundreds of education workers did show up at the Capitol building in Charleston, wearing mostly red and holding signs. Members of education unions, as well as representatives of other labor unions, came together in a demonstration of unity.

Coincidentally, June 1 is also the date of the first Workers’ Solidarity Day.

No new bill was passed June 1. Senate President

Mitch Carmichael called the education workers “obstructionists.”

On June 3 the Senate reconvened, again drawing huge protests. The legislators passed the misnamed “Student Success Act.”

The new bill includes charter schools, increased class sizes and the elimination of seniority. The Senate added an amendment making it illegal for a school superintendent to close schools during a worker walkout. A separate bill created voucher programs known as Education Savings Accounts (ESAs).

Who is promoting this bill?

The bills are being promoted by union-busting outfits such as the Chamber of Commerce and the West Virginia Manufacturers Association.

On Friday, May 31, Trump-appointed Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos sent out a tweet supporting the Student Success Act, writing, “West Virginia has an opportunity to improve education for all & put the needs of students first. Looking forward to seeing bold moves to offer robust options like charter schools and ESAs and support great teachers. Let’s get it done.”

While every single survey taken since February shows most people in the state do not want to privatize public education, free-market capitalists appear to be in a hurry to do so.

Many rank-and-file educators are worried the Democrats are beginning to show their true loyalty to ruling-class interests and are starting to soften their position on charter schools. Only time will tell what will happen next.

Unions plan to return to Charleston June 17 when the bills will be taken up by the House of Representatives. □



PHOTO: AFT

West Virginia education workers and their allies rallied across the state on Jan. 9, the one-year anniversary of their historic strike, here in Saint Albans.

FRANCE & ITALY

Working-class solidarity stops weapons from arming Saudi Arabia

By John Catalinotto

Would the Saudi-flagged ship be able to load weapons in France or Italy bound for use in the brutal war against the 30 million people of Yemen?

The events of mid-to-late May gave an excellent example of the potential of international solidarity among European workers, which is also an act of solidarity with the oppressed Yemenis.

First in mid-May, dockworkers, human rights activists and anti-war organizations prevented the Saudi cargo ship from loading at Le Havre, France. The protests there had prevented the loading of weapons on the ship, the Bahri Yanbu.

They then warned Italian dockworkers that the Bahri Yanbu would soon be docking at Genoa, an industrial and port city on the west coast of Italy. The dockworkers there, called “Camalli,” though their number has decreased from 8,000 in 1987 to 1,000 today, have a history of internationalist and union activity. That dates from the anti-Fascist resistance during World War II to the militant struggles of the autumn of 1969, to refusal to load ships bringing weapons to the U.S. occupation in Vietnam.

When the authorities refused a request from the dockworkers union to inspect the ship, they refused to load the ship. They instead demonstrated in the

dock area carrying the banner: “Stop arms trafficking, make war on war.”

Luigi Cianci, a leading Camalli, said the following: “During the Vietnam War we blocked the docking of American ships and in 1971 we organized a ship to aid the Vietnamese population. And we did the same during the Gulf War.

“Even if we are far fewer today and we want to defend our jobs, we do not want to do it at all costs: The war in Yemen is one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of recent years: 60,000 killed, 90,000 children dead from malnutrition, one million people affected by the cholera epidemic. We explained these things to our members and they all agreed on the boycott.” (Il manifesto, May 17)

For the moment at least, the delivery of weapons to the Saudi monarchy was halted. The French protesters and Genoese dockworkers have given a splendid example of working-class solidarity in Europe at a time when right-wing parties have shown their ugly racist and xenophobic heads. It is an example of working-class solidarity in Europe that contrasts with the united actions of European imperialists bankers and corporations carried out by the European Union bureaucracy.

Even better, the French and Italian workers have cooperated in solidarity with the embattled people of Yemen. □

NIGER

Students demand U.S. and French bases close

By G. Dunkel

On May 25, at the call of the Union of Nigerien Students (USN), a few thousand students marched through Niamey, the capital of Niger, chanting, “Down with foreign military bases,” “Down with the French army” (Niger is a former French colony), “Down with the American army,” and “Down with the jihadists and Boko Haram.”

Niger is landlocked, just south of Algeria and just north of Nigeria in West Africa. It abuts seven countries, and most of the 23 million Nigeriens inhabit its densely populated south along the Niger River. The rest of the country is in the Sahara Desert. It should not be confused with Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country with 201 million Nigerians.

Last year, a Boko Haram guerrilla ambush killed four U.S. Special Forces soldiers and exposed a U.S. presence in Niger, one of the poorest countries in the world. In mid-May this year, another Boko Haram ambush killed 28 Nigerien soldiers and wounded a dozen more, basically in the same locality. The U.S. Special Forces and their French counterparts stood by while their Nigerien allies were taking all these casualties.

The U.N. Human Development Index calculates Niger is the seventh poorest country in the world, with 40 percent of its inhabitants living on less than \$1 a day. However, Niger contains one of the world’s largest uranium deposits.

At the May 25 protest, some placards read: “No to sub-contracting our national sovereignty” and “Our territory has been independent since August 3, 1960.” The defense minister of Niger has admitted that he is unsure of what the United States is doing at its base near Agadez, a historic town that grew up as a crossroad trading center in the Trans-Sahara trade. (jeuneafrique.com, May 25) □

After failed coup attempt

Venezuelan right wing negotiates in Oslo

By Marco Teruggi
Caracas, Venezuela

*Published first in pagina12.com.ar.
Translation by Michael Otto.*

May 31 — The panorama in Venezuela has changed during the course of one month. At dawn on April 30, Juan Guaidó, the fugitive Leopoldo López, and several deputies of the National Assembly had publicly led an attempted military coup. Over the past several days, the scene has now shifted to Oslo, the capital of Norway, where Chavismo’s representatives and a sector of the opposition have been negotiating.

There is a direct relationship between the two events. The collapse of the April 30 political-military coup attempt has forced the right wing to publicly recognize their adversary at an arena using dialogue.

Things didn’t quite go according to plan that morning in April. What was supposed to happen?

The rightists were going to liberate López from house arrest via the main gate (the Altamira overpass in east Caracas) and place him next to Guaidó to lead an uprising, in which they would meet with soldiers from the military barracks, high commanders of the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB) and sectors of government institutions. They sought to unleash a massive popular movement there that would move in a massive wave towards the Miraflores Palace.

Few on streets with opposition

In fact, the only thing that happened was that López, Guaidó, some assembly members and leaders, about 40 armed men and the chief of the intelligence service were joined on the streets by only

5,000 people. After that, López and many of the leaders fled to various embassies.

Speculation proliferated from that moment on. Elliott Abrams, U.S. Special Envoy for Venezuela, said that everything had been set up by those who he alleged had made commitments. He claimed that the commander-in-chief of the army (FANB), the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, and the chief of the Presidential Honor Guard had been involved.

According to Abrams, there was a 15-point agreement. However, that agreement has never been disclosed or confirmed. Neither was the purported participation of the people he named. On the contrary, the three officials Abrams claimed to have been involved appeared with President Nicolás Maduro and carried out their respective assignments.

Even the media that supported the attempt to overthrow Maduro openly challenged this version of the April 30 operation. They called into question the Venezuelan right wing, as well as the actors in Donald Trump’s administration and internal tensions in the White House concerning strategy toward Venezuela. The U.S. president favored getting out of the crisis by resorting to dialogue, while the John Bolton-Mike Pompeo axis wanted to advance towards a military escalation.

Guaidó faced internal dissent

The still-existing speculations were modified by information about the first round of talks in Norway. These talks had taken place unofficially before May 17, when they became public. Guaidó faced accusations from his own ranks.

Those who accused Guaidó pointed out that he went to Oslo without informing other sectors of the opposition.

Consequently, he did not take into consideration the possibility of modifying the order of the three steps he had promised from day one: Put an end to “usurpation,” establish a transitional government and hold “free elections.”

Opposition demands Maduro resign

On May 28, a second round of talks took place in Oslo. Guaidó, the self-proclaimed “president,” reiterated his rhetoric, adopting the tone of an ultimatum. Guaidó was reinforced by men from his Popular Will party, including his envoy to the United States, Carlos Vecchio, a fugitive from justice. Vecchio asserted: “All options depend on Maduro’s departure.” There would be nothing to negotiate other than the form of Maduro’s exit and his destination.

On May 29, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs — which called for maximum caution regarding the confidentiality of the results — reported through a communiqué that the meeting addressed economic, political and electoral issues.

Part of the resolution would require elections in order to be adopted. Where, when and under what conditions would they happen? That is one aspect of the debate on which there is no agreement.

Bolton: U.S. strangling economy

The other core issue is economic: The Venezuelan economy is being strangled by a U.S. blockade that seeks to suffocate the people. U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton graphically explained: “It’s sort of like in Star Wars when Darth Vader strangles somebody, that’s what we are doing to the regime economically.” Bolton’s objective now is to strike at the heart of the government’s plan to control high food prices, by blocking food imported by Venezuela’s Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP).

The government’s political situation inside Venezuela puts it in a stronger position for dialogue, while its economic position is weaker. Data published by the Central Bank of Venezuela indicate the difficulties: The gross domestic product contracted by 52.3 percent between the third quarter of 2013 and September 2018. Inflation in 2015 was 180.9 percent, 274.4 percent in 2016, and 862.6 percent in 2017; it skyrocketed to 130,060.2 percent in 2018.

What room for maneuvering does the government have with such statistics in an economy subjected to an international economic and financial blockade — and with oil production that still shows no signs of a recovery?

Chavismo committed to dialogue

Guaidó announced that he had not reached an agreement in Norway and that U.S. Vice President Mike Pence called to support him. Venezuela’s government, through Minister of Communications Jorge Rodríguez, a participant at both meetings in Oslo, says it will continue working “for peace, agreement, democracy and the defense of the Constitution,” following the Chavismo commitment to dialogue.

Maduro made that commitment clear when he said: “It has taken a lot to get to Norway, several months of secret conversations.” The president added: “Be courageous, tell your people the truth” about what happens in Oslo.

If the right-wingers who went to Norway — subject to U.S. orders — abandon the new dialogue, will they return to machine guns or to a pattern of escalating violence? Their discourse has boxed them into a position defined by a maxim: The only thing they will accept is that Maduro leave. The sticking point is that to negotiate is to give in, among other things. □

Al-Quds Day

Int’l Action Center solidarity with Palestine

Nathaniel Chase delivered this message of solidarity on behalf of the International Action Center at the Al-Quds rally in New York City’s Times Square on May 31.

We don't want no two states, we want '48! We don't want no two states, we want all of it! We want all of it!

That's right, we want all of it, because every inch from the river to the sea is Palestine.

Today, as we gather with millions of people around the world on Al-Quds, let us celebrate the extraordinary resistance of the Palestinian people, who for 71 years—since the settler-colonial Zionist movement displaced 750,000 Palestinians to create the racist state of Israel—have fought back against genocide and the theft of their homeland.

For 71 years the Palestinian people have faced down the most powerful war machine ever assembled, that of U.S. imperialism and its puppet state Israel, and yet they remain unbowed.

This resistance is terrifying to the U.S. and Israel because they know that no matter how many bombs they drop, no matter how many villages they destroy, no matter how many protesters they shoot, they cannot break the spirit of the Palestinian people.

Because they know that the global

Palestinian solidarity movement, including the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS), continues to gain strength.

And because they know that the unbreakable will of the Palestinian people is an inspiration to billions across the planet to press forward in their own struggles for national liberation, to strike powerful blows against the dying beast of U.S. imperialism.

So as we mourn the many martyrs of the Palestinian cause, let us also celebrate their resistance and chant for the whole world to hear: "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" □



Al-Quds Day, May 31, NYC.

Workers World Party solidarity with Palestine

This slightly edited message of solidarity with the Palestinian people was delivered by Sara Flounders, speaking for Workers World Party, at an Al-Quds Day rally in New York City’s Times Square on May 31.

Resistance is justified when people are occupied! Greetings from Workers World Party on Al-Quds Day!

Al-Quds Day, Jerusalem Day, always the last Friday of Ramadan, is an international day acknowledged and celebrated around the world. Millions march on this day in solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian resistance.

This resistance has continued despite impossible odds, desperate conditions, starvation, mass imprisonment and killings, land expropriation, aerial bombardment.

And Al-Quds Day is a day born in revolution, 40 years ago in the great Iranian Revolution of 1979, as a salute to Palestinian resistance.

Palestine reminds us again and again of the capacity of a whole people to organize, to mobilize, to resist—for decades and generations—until liberation can be won.

Palestine is a resistance that inspires every country facing U.S. sanctions, imperialist wars, invasions, coups and occupations. In Yemen, in Iraq, in Syria, in Venezuela, in Cuba and in north Korea, peoples’ movements that are facing

seemingly impossible odds and overwhelming U.S. military power also know it is possible to resist because Gaza has survived and continues to fight.

The U.S. empire and the Zionist state of Israel won’t survive. Israel can’t last a day without U.S. military aid, U.S. diplomatic cover and U.S. political and economic power arming it and keeping that colonial, apartheid outpost alive.

But Zionism, despite every high-tech weapon, drone and tank, can’t defeat Gaza — surrounded, isolated impoverished Gaza! The Zionists have failed again and again to defeat or to silence the Palestinian struggle.

Organized peoples’ resistance is the most powerful weapon. Consciousness and mobilization of a whole people are more powerful than any weapon the U.S. can provide or Israel can deploy.

There are no walls in the workers’ struggle. It is truly one global struggle. Our struggle in the U.S. — against racist cops, against anti-migrant ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], against cut-backs affecting oppressed people — is stronger when we declare that Palestine is also our struggle.

Today, on Al-Quds Day here and around the world, we are with Palestine, we join with resistance. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!

From the river to the sea, Palestine will win! □



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 global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.

Para mas informacion: LowWageCapitalism.com

HONDURAS

Inicia paro nacional contra reformas neoliberales

Por Sam Ordóñez

3 de junio—El 30 de mayo empezó en Honduras un paro nacional en protesta de una serie de reformas anunciadas por el gobierno en los sectores de salud y educación.

Las manifestaciones, que siguieron el viernes, sufrieron represiones brutales por parte de la policía. Es un escenario que se ha visto repetidamente durante el gobierno del presidente Juan Orlando Hernández (JOH).

El paro nacional y las manifestaciones se han convocado en respuesta a una serie de decretos firmados por el presidente el día 28 de mayo que buscan reestructurar los sectores de salud y educación.

Según los maestros y médicos que convocaron el paro, dicha reestructuración resultaría en despidos masivos y la privatización de estos servicios esenciales.

En 2010, el gasto del gobierno central en educación era 32,9 por ciento del presupuesto total, hoy es solo 19,9. En salud pública, las cifras son 14,3 por ciento en 2010 y 9,7 por ciento hoy. (Prensa Latina, 31 mayo)

Pese a la fuerte represión policial de los manifestantes, el presidente fue obligado a declarar que no habían ni despidos masivos ni privatización, y se logró que los decretos presidenciales no fueran ratificados por el Congreso Nacional de la República. Sin embargo, los organizadores de las acciones han indicado que seguirán en protesta hasta que las reformas se descartan completamente.

Además de los manifestantes heridos por la policía hondureña, se reporta la quema de varios edificios gubernamentales y policiales. También se reporta que un grupo quemó neumáticos en la entrada de la embajada de los Estados Unidos en Tegucigalpa.

No se conoce quien provocó el incendio, y las reacciones de los grupos progresivos han sido varias. Algunos afirman que la acción es justificada, debido a las injerencias recientes del imperialismo norteamericano en el país. Por su parte el expresidente Manuel Zelaya calificó de

falso positivo los hechos.

Las organizaciones de maestros y médicos han afirmado que el paro continuará con manifestaciones planeadas para el lunes y martes.

Del golpe de estado en 2009 a la dictadura de JOH

Manuel Zelaya fue presidente de 2006 a 2009, cuando fue víctima de un golpe de estado después de proponer un referendo para medir el interés público en una reforma constitucional.

Aunque el ejército, que secuestró a Zelaya y lo mandó a Costa Rica, argumentaba que Zelaya buscaba un segundo término (que violaría la constitución), la verdadera razón por el golpe fue la política exterior progresista del gobierno de Zelaya.

En 2008, Zelaya expresó el deseo de unirse a la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA), una organización regional promovida por los gobiernos de Venezuela y Cuba para combatir la influencia del imperialismo norteamericano.

Esto representaba un paso inaceptable para la oligarquía hondureña, que ya se oponía al gobierno progresista. Cuando encontraron la oportunidad, usaron el control que tenían sobre los medios de comunicación para fabricar una crisis constitucional y llevar a cabo el golpe.

Públicamente, el gobierno estadounidense de Barack Obama condenó el golpe, pero dejó que se llevara a cabo el golpe. Los correos electrónicos de Hillary Clinton, que en aquel momento era Secretaria de Estado, revelan que el gobierno norteamericano negociaba con los líderes del golpe, que muchos de los cuales fueron entrenados en la Escuela de las Américas y tenían relaciones personales con el Pentágono.

Apoyo sincero

Los Estados Unidos reconoció los resultados de las elecciones presidenciales en Noviembre de ese año aunque se celebraron bajo una junta militar. El nuevo presidente conservador, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, recibió grandes alabanzas del gobierno de

Obama por sus esfuerzos hacia la “reconciliación” pese a que durante su mandato empezaron a desaparecer periodistas que apoyaban a Zelaya o se oponían al golpe.

El actual presidente llegó al poder en 2014 y ha sido criticado por su corrupción y el aumento de la represión estatal contra sus rivales. Aunque la derecha había acusado a Zelaya de buscar otro término presidencial como pretexto para el golpe de 2009, JOH se presentó a la reelección sin problemas judiciales.

La elección de 2017 fue caracterizado por un fraude descarado por parte del partido de JOH. La cuenta de votos se suspendió varias veces, en una instancia durante tres días, y al reanudar había desaparecido misteriosamente la ventaja de casi 5 por ciento de los votos del candidato opositor.

La manipulación de la cuenta fue tan obvia que incluso la Organización de Estados Americanos, que normalmente sirve para sellar los decretos imperiales de EE.UU., condenó el fraude. Washington reconoció inmediatamente los resultados.

El pueblo hondureño tomó las calles para protestar el robo de la presidencia, cosa que provocó la represión policial con gases lacrimógenos y un toque de queda de diez días. Desde entonces no ha cesado la lucha intensa para restaurar la democracia en el país centroamericano.

La ofensiva neoliberal de JOH

Cuando la derecha asumió el poder en Honduras en 2009, inmediatamente empezó a implementar el típico programa neoliberal. El objetivo de estos élites, en servicio del imperialismo, es destruir los servicios sociales y abrir el país a los deseos de las transnacionales.

El ataque actual contra la salud y la educación pública sería el golpe final contra estos servicios que llevan una década asediado por la derecha.

Los salarios escolares fueron congelados de 2010 a 2016, y desde entonces solo han tenido incrementos pequeños. Se ha terminado casi por completo la inversión en infraestructura escolar.

En los hospitales faltan todo tipo de insumos, pero se sigue cortando el



Manifestación de maestrxs en abril en Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

presupuesto, haciendo que suban los precios para las familias que necesitan los servicios médicos.

El robo de tierras indígenas no ha cesado desde que llegaron los conquistadores españoles, pero bajo JOH ha intensificado. El asesinato de Berta Cáceres por fuerzas estatales entrenados por EEUU es solo el ejemplo más famoso del uso de la violencia estatal para silenciar a los pueblos originarios ejerciendo sus derechos a sus tierras ancestrales.

Si la desinversión en servicios públicos, el despojo de los territorios indígenas, y la represión estatal no fuera suficiente, el imperialismo ahora busca crear “Zonas de empleo y desarrollo económico.” (ZEDE)

Estas “ciudades modelo” serían ciudades orientadas a la inversión extranjera, controlados por una comisión escogido directamente por el presidente. Estas ciudades tendrán su propio sistema judicial, económico, y administrativo.

La oligarquía en su propia propaganda sobre estas ciudades admite que usan como modelo a Hong Kong, que se fundó como colonia británica para controlar a China después de la Guerra del Opio. (tinyurl.com/y5rb3g65)

Estas ZEDES implican una vuelta al colonialismo directo de siglos pasados, ya que están diseñados para servir como punto de entrada para transnacionales y capital extranjera. Su sistema nominalmente “autónomo” en realidad los convertiría en colonias de las empresas norteamericanas y europeas que quieren operar en la América Central. □

MUNDO OBRERO editorial

‘Liberal’ — hasta a un punto

Los llamados medios de comunicación liberales en los Estados Unidos, especialmente el New York Times, el Washington Post y algunas fuentes de noticias de televisión, profesan la independencia. Pero no se atreven a ofender a sus dueños de clase dominante en asuntos internacionales clave.

Tomemos, por ejemplo, el “informe” que nos entregan cada día en tres importantes países productores de petróleo: Venezuela, Irán y Arabia Saudita.

¿Con qué frecuencia se nos dice que la oposición venezolana (que ahora está en desorden) surgió de la falta de “democracia” y elecciones “fraudulentas” en ese país? Estas frases se repiten una y otra vez, no solo por los medios abiertamente de derecha aquí, sino por aquellos que reclaman objetividad.

No mencionan literalmente docenas de elecciones que han tenido lugar en Venezuela desde que el movimiento liderado por Hugo Chávez tomó el poder en 1998, a través de una elección. Tampoco parecen recordar que el ala derecha del ejército venezolano secuestró a Chávez en 2002, pero fue rescatado por una movilización masiva del pueblo venezolano. El gobierno de los Estados Unidos hace un mes, con la ayuda de los medios corporativos, esperaba instigar a los militares contra el presidente Nicolás Maduro, pero esta vez no sucedió.

¿Con qué frecuencia se nos dice que el pueblo iraní está gobernado por una teocracia dictatorial? Los medios de comunicación imperialistas no hacen mención de los horrores llevados a cabo por su predecesor, el sangriento Shah, quien fue instalado

por un golpe de estado de la CIA en 1953. Una creación de las compañías petroleras de los Estados Unidos, fue derrocado en una revolución popular en 1979. Esa revolución les llevó al actual gobierno.

Venezuela e Irán ahora se consideran “enemigos” de los Estados Unidos.

Pero no Arabia Saudita.

En este momento, el ejército de los Estados Unidos está brindando apoyo logístico y material para el bombardeo genocida de Arabia Saudita en Yemen, un pequeño país que enfrenta la hambruna y el genocidio a manos de esta sangrienta guerra saudí/ EE.UU.

Incluso cuando informan sobre esta situación espantosa, ¿los medios de comunicación liberales aquí recuerdan a su audiencia que Arabia Saudita es políticamente una dictadura total de la familia

real saudí? ¿Que los 700 príncipes controlan toda la economía y la política del estado? ¿Que no hay elecciones en Arabia Saudita? ¿Y que estos príncipes teocráticos tienen una excelente relación con el gobierno de los Estados Unidos?

Eche un vistazo a la entrada de Wikipedia sobre Arabia Saudita y busque una discusión de la familia real. Hay una fotografía tomada en 1985. Haga clic en ella y verá una hermosa foto de Ronald Reagan y Donald Trump mirando mientras Ivana Trump le da la mano al Rey Fahd en la Casa Blanca. Ivana ha sido reemplazada, pero las políticas internacionales reaccionarias dictadas por las grandes empresas de EE.UU. siguen vigentes.

¿Por qué el Times, el Post, NPR y otros no mencionan eso? □