

PEOPLE'S WORLD

www.peoplesworld.org

May 24, 2014

Fast food workers strike in 150 U.S. cities

Special to Peoplesworld.org



Calling for a living wage and the right to form a union without retaliation, fast-food workers here, across the nation and around the world walked off their jobs in an unprecedented wave of strikes that literally swept a the globe. Strikers in the more than 150 U.S. cities involved demand both the union rights and a \$15 an hour wage. Around the world more than 230 cities were involved.

"It feels good to be a part of history. It's been exactly a year here in St. Louis that fast-food workers first went on strike for \$15 and a union and now our movement has spread all over the world," said Danielle Polk, 25, mother of 2, who works at a McDonald's on W. Florissant. "We will not sit and wait for these billion-dollar companies to pay us enough to feed our families. I've worked in fast-food for nearly a decade, and I know that change will not come unless we fight for it."

Workers went on strike at St. Louis' major fast-food restaurants, including McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's and KFC. Clergy and community supporters joined fast-food workers on the strike lines.

Beginning a little bit before 6am fast-food workers and community supporters filed into the McDonald's on W. Florissant Avenue chanting "Hey, hey, ho, ho, poverty wages have got to

go". Over a dozen of the workers at the Ferguson McDonald's went on strike today for \$15 an hour and union organizing rights. At noon, protesters arrived at the Wendy's on Gravois, just in time to catch four Wendy's workers walking out of the store. The four tossed their aprons and hats and picked up strike signs.

"Our communities deserve jobs that pay workers enough to live on, \$7.50 is just not enough," said Dr. Rev. Martin Rafanan, co-chair of the Mis-

T H I S W E E K :

- **Fast food workers strike in 150 U.S. cities**
- **Stop supporting right-wing elements in Ukraine**
- **Top hospital gets F in treatment of its workers**
- **Brasil listos para Mundial de Fútbol**
- **Working the night shift at McDonald's**

READ MORE NEWS AND OPINION DAILY AT WWW.PEOPLESWORLD.ORG

souri Jobs with Justice and Community Director for Show Me 15. "We want good jobs that pay a fair wage, that's what our families deserve, and that's what will get the economy moving forward again."

In the U.S., workers went on strike from Raleigh to Los Angeles at major fast-food restaurants

The #fastfoodglobal hashtag trended in nearly 20 U.S. cities from New York to Phoenix.

including McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's and KFC. They held the first-ever fast-food strikes in Miami, Opelika (Ala.), Orlando, Philadelphia, Sacramento and San Antonio.

In Dorchester, Mass. managers closed down a Burger King where a half-dozen workers were striking. In St. Louis, a corporate McDonald's closed its doors at 3 a.m. because managers knew the entire morning shift was going to walk out, and reopened three hours later with managers at the helm. Nearly 20 workers from that store are on strike. There was no breakfast at a Chicago Burger King when striking workers forced the kitchen to close. Strikes forced a Wendy's in Pittsburgh to close, as well as McDonald's restaurants in Oakland and Sacramento. All non-managerial workers walked off their jobs at a First Hill McDonald's in Seattle, forcing managers to keep the store running.

San Diego fast-food workers led hundreds of religious and community supporters through a Burger King drive-thru Thursday morning, chant-

ing, praying and holding signs that read, "Strike for Better Pay" and "Poverty Jobs Hurt San Diego." State legislators joined striking workers outside a Charleston, South Carolina Burger King and a McDonald's in New York City. And in Los Angeles, the Rev. Al Sharpton was expected to brave 100-degree temperatures to join protesters on a strike line Thursday afternoon.

Picketing in front of the McDonald's on Grand Boulevard in Detroit, 22 year-old Victoria Dunlap has one child she supports by working at the fast food giant. "It's very hard; I can't do it," she said. It's not the first time she's gone out on strike and Dunlap says it won't be her last. "Won't be peace until we win." She said she is overwhelmed that fast food strikes a year ago that involved only a few hundred workers have spread now across the globe. In New York City fast food workers rallied at 34th St. "Fifteen and a union," the spirited marchers chanted. On Twitter, the #fastfoodglobal hashtag trended in nearly 20 U.S. cities from New York to Phoenix.

Stop supporting right-wing elements in Ukraine

By Communist Party USA

On May 2, reports state, 1,000 extreme right-wing thugs attacked their fellow Ukrainian citizens in Odessa, setting fire to a union hall to which many had fled. At least 40 people perished in the blaze. A few days later on May 6, members of parliament from the Communist Party of the Ukraine - a party that had won 32 seats in Ukraine's Rada (federal parliament) in the 2012 election - were banned from the legislative chamber, according to news reports. Under the leadership of the Right Sector, the drive to outlaw the Communist Party and "communist ideology" is underway with a push for legislation that would implement such anti-democratic measures.

This comes on the heels of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish Ukrainians and synagogues, attacks on other minorities, and attacks on the central office of the Communist Party in Kiev. U.S. policy in the Ukraine purports to uphold democracy, yet reports in the German publication Bild indicate that FBI and CIA operatives are ac-

tive with Ukrainian "security" forces, including these far right wing forces. How is it democratic to purge a legitimately elected party from parliament? How is it democratic to violently target Communists and others in the Ukraine who disagree with the direction of the right-wing-led acting government? Besides violating the basic premise of national sovereignty, U.S. policy is aiding and abetting the most violent and reactionary forces to grab power all in the name of fighting the Russians.

We urge that the Obama administration take immediate steps to communicate to the Right Sector, Svoboda and their allies that their violent and anti-democratic actions will not be supported by the United States. In fact, the United States government, and individual U.S. politicians and officials, should cease to associate themselves with such elements.

The time to do so is now before events spiral out of control. If the Cold War is indeed over a reversal in U.S. foreign policy is long over due.

The U.S. government should cease associating with right-wing elements in Ukraine.

Top hospital gets F in treatment of its workers

By Jim Baldrige

Hospital workers were on the march in the pouring rain earlier this month at John Hopkins Hospital. One home-made sign probably best explained their concerns: “America’s Number One Hospital - Keeping Workers in Poverty.”

Close to forty busloads of healthcare workers from New York, New Jersey and the District of Columbia joined with Johns Hopkins Hospital Local 1199, SEIU Healthcare Workers East in a spirited “Mothers’ March for Justice” rally the day before Mothers Day.

Undaunted by a sudden storm the 3,000 union members, retirees and supporters enjoyed music, chants and speeches. Actors Danny Glover and Wendell Pierce of “The Wire” lifted the spirits of the workers by their supportive presentations.

Hopkins, America’s #1 ranked hospital for over a decade, was lambasted by union members and medical students who have been up front in solidarity with the workers since before a three-day strike in early April. .

“Hopkins is the top medical institution in the world,” declared Fred mason, president of the Maryland-D.C. AFL-CIO. “And they can’t figure out how to treat their workers!”

“It is a contradiction for a place with a world-renowned reputation such as Johns Hopkins to pay its employees so little,” said George Gresham, president of the SEIU local. The crowd cheered as he announced simultaneous support rallies taking place in Brazil and Panama and that one would be taking place later that day in Washington, DC.

A common theme at the rally was “Hopkins should be ashamed!” Two speakers from the stage exemplified ongoing support from Hopkins medical students. “We can’t sit quietly by while you get treated this way,” declared a grad student from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (named after the recently replaced mayor of NYC).

Contract negotiations between the union and



and elevating the minimum wage rate at Hopkins to \$15 per hour. The current minimum is barely higher than the new Maryland minimum wage rate passed by the General Assembly, raising the wages to \$10.10 per hour over the next four years. There are many examples of employees losing what they have in this difficult economy because they can’t sustain their family on Hopkins pay. Hopkins in the meantime just completed construction of an entire new hospital facility, opened in 2012, at a cost of just over a billion dollars.

With \$1.9 billion in operating revenues last year, and \$145 billion in profits, 68 percent of Hopkins Hospital workers make less than the wage qualifying a single parent and child for food stamps. This is a remarkable lack of progress for the largest private employer organization in Maryland and harkens back to the 1960’s, when even skilled trades at Hopkins such as electricians qualified for food stamps. The union was organized in 1969, 1199’s first successful organizing campaign outside of New York City.

1199 SEIU pledged to continue the fight until justice is won for Hopkins caregivers. “By winning better wages at Hopkins, we can win a better Baltimore,” the union flier, HardshipAtHopkins .org said.

With \$145 billion in profits, 68 percent of Hopkins Hospital workers make less than the wage qualifying a single parent and child for food stamps.

Working the night shift at McDonald's

By Patrick

I have a personally strong attachment and support for the efforts of fast food workers to increase wages because I have worked in the fast food industry myself for two years. I can say it is an exhausting, very underpaying industry to work in.

I worked full time at McDonald's on the night shift, working over a 400+ degree stove, sweating like a dog, spilling boiling grease on various parts of my body, burning my hands and arms frequently, and often being pressured to work more than eight hours a day - but never overtime. That's what they do: they work you as much they can but never to the point of paying you overtime. They are so cheap. They only paid me minimum wage for all that.

And my coworkers weren't much better off. One was a single mother making only \$9 an hour. She would work all night and then have to go home to take care of her daughter and take her to school. She had very little time for sleep in her day.

It was a franchise restaurant and the owner was the most hawkish penny-pincher I've ever seen. He once scolded me very loudly in front of everyone at the store because I accidentally broke some egg yolks on the stove.

A \$15 minimum wage for fast food workers is a wonderful idea and I absolutely support it.

Brasil listos para Mundial de Fútbol

Por Prensa Latina

La presidenta de Brasil, Dilma Rousseff, garantizó hoy que los aeropuertos de este país están preparados para ofrecer un buen servicio durante la Copa Mundial de Fútbol, la cual comienza en 24 días.

“Vamos recibir a todos y los brasileños estarán orgullosos del país que estamos construyendo”, afirmó Rousseff en su acostumbrado programa radial de cada lunes Café con el Presidente.

Puntualizó que el aeropuerto de Guarulhos, en Sao Paulo, contará desde mañana con otra terminal, totalmente nueva y confortable, y con capacidad para recibir 12 millones de pasajeros al año.

Esta nueva instalación es mayor que las otras tres que operan en Guarulhos y cuenta con 20 puntos de embarque y desembarque, además de un patio capaz de atender 34 aviones al mismo tiempo, aseveró. La mandataria destacó en tal sentido la inversión del gobierno para ampliar y modernizar las aeródromos brasileños, no sólo para la Copa, sino también para mejorar el servicio y atender una creciente demanda de viajes de nacionales a diversos puntos del país.

A modo de ejemplo, mencionó la puesta en funcionamiento en el aeropuerto internacional de Brasilia de una nueva ala de embarque y desembarque y adelantó que este mes se inaugurará otra zona que duplicará la capacidad de atención de pasajeros.

Las reformas ejecutadas en la

terminal 2 del aeródromo Galeo, en Río de Janeiro, elevarán en casi un 80 por ciento la atención a visitantes, aseveró. La jefa de Estado recalcó que estas obras tienen como objetivo mejorar la calidad en el servicio, serán utilizados durante la Copa Mundial, pero son necesarias para enfrentar un incremento de los viajes en avión de los brasileños. El aumento de los ingresos de los ciudadanos favoreció asimismo que de 33 millones de nacionales contabilizados en 2003, hoy usen aviones 111 millones. Entre otras terminales ampliadas o en proceso de entrega enumeró los aeródromos de Manaus, en el estado de Amazonas; Confins, en Minas Gerais; Cuiabá, en Mato Grosso y en Río Grande del Norte. El exmandatario Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, quien auguró el viernes último el éxito de este Mundial, responsabilizó a ciertas agrupaciones de incitar a las manifestaciones violentas contra la Copa del Mundo.

“Parece que ciertos grupos confían en que la Copa sea un fracaso, como si sus posibilidades en las urnas fueran a beneficiarse de ello”, apuntó.

Esto se hace pese a mientras crece el desempleo en Europa y Estados Unidos, Brasil creó 10 millones de puestos de trabajo, aseveró Lula da Silva. Analistas políticos llaman igualmente la atención sobre un evidente propósito de diversos sectores de aprovechar este evento para presionar al ejecutivo y conseguir soluciones a sus reclamos.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523
3339 S. Halsted Chicago, IL 60625
Email: contact@peoplesworld.org