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url :À http://ugtg.org/article_2102.html

Message from Nellie Bailey to UGTG Convention

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Date de parution : 29 novembre 1999

Date de mise en ligne : dimanche 6 avril 2014

Mis À jour le : dimanche 6 avril 2014

UGTG.org

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April 2, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the UGTG trade union federation,

I send to all of you a warm embrace with heartfelt regret that I will not be able to join you at this critical juncture in your movement for social justice and human dignity. A debilitating symptom of vertigo brought on by a severe bout of the flu prevents my attendance, strongly advised by my personal physician.

I wish I had been able to be with you to express in person the solidarity from our Haiti-Guadeloupe Campaign Committee in the United States with your struggle for trade union rights, social justice, and national liberation and for your immediate fight to compel the French colonial authorities to drop all the trumped-up charges against the leaders and members of your federation who played such a critical role in the powerful 44-day general strike of 2009. Our committee was proud to have organized a seven-city tour of the United States soon after your huge mobilizations featuring Brothers Elie Domota and Raymond Gamma of the UGTG and LKP Strike Collective.

I would like to take a moment to present to you in writing a few of the things I would have wanted to share with you during my trip to Guadeloupe, had I been able to travel.

These are trying times confronting 99% of the world's population struggling to free itself from the strangulation of a 1% plutocracy that has an insatiable appetite for profit that it pursues with a murderous vengeance for full-spectrum dominance of the globe. That the U.S. leads this rat pack, lords of chaos, comes as no surprise even with the election of the country's first Black President, Barack Obama. This "historic first" parlayed into a false "post racial" paradigm has been further paralyzing. It is your workers' movement and the fightback of workers across the world that gives us hope for a better future.

The U.S. government is corrupt. Its economy rests in the hands of a few banks deemed too big to fail, an irrationality to justify a US\$29 trillion bailout as of November 2011 ! This constitutes the great thief of tax dollars in U.S. history. The Federal Reserve Bank continues to pump US\$85 billion a month into the U.S. stock market to avoid the inevitable complete collapse of the economy.

Corruption, like a spreading cancer, has invaded every governmental institution. The U.S. Supreme court, the judicial branch of the government, has ruled that corporations have the same rights as those of people. And it blocked a ban on corporate political spending. For the first time in U.S. history more than half of the members of Congress are millionaires. The conservative tide sweeping across the U.S. from Congress to statewide politicians, financed by right-wing plutocrats, is attempting to roll back voting rights for Blacks and other oppressed minorities, to end all reproductive rights for women, and to privatize public assets for windfall profits. Public educations and public housing, Social Security and the U.S. Postal Service are now on the auction block.

These austerity measures, ironically, are supported by President Obama, the target of vitriolic racism from an unrepentant extremist right wing whose hysterical rantings border on the insane. Accordingly, their fears are real and justified due to a predicted dramatic shift in the racial makeup of the U.S. population, an untenable prospect for a now white-skin privilege population that has seen its standard of living greatly reduced. The U.S. Census predicts the white population will become a minority by 2043. Stagnant wages and increases in the cost of living are a reality for the poor, working class and the middle class.

It's an increasingly frightening scene here in the belly of the beast that roars with its military might, repressive

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domestic policing, NSA wiretapping, the use of drones by police departments and extra-judicial killings of predominately Black and Latino people, mostly male youth.

The U.S. prison population is the highest of any industrialized nation, 2.3 million, disproportionately Black young men. Under Obama over 2 million immigrants have been deported, an expendable cheap labor pool for U.S. businesses. President Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, which authorizes the military detention of U.S. citizens without trial and the killing of U.S. citizens on American soil.

For sure, the U.S.'s collapsing economy strokes its war fever, putting the entire world at risk. And there is no relief in sight given the economic crisis in Europe that has driven hundreds of thousands protesters into the streets of Spain, Greece and France.

But all is not without hope here. Fast food and low-wage workers rally and march for a living wage, demonstrating self-determination unencumbered by threats of job loss and harassment. The anti-war movement, although not as strong under Obama as under Bush, can no longer ignore the military interventions of the Obama regime, the destruction of nation states, the civilian population deaths and the death, maiming and psychological scarring of U.S. soldiers discarded in a garbage heap of unemployment, homelessness and lack of adequate health care.

A principled anti-war leadership is on the horizon. Sadly though, a large segment of Black America, remains committed to Obama regardless of the mounting war crimes and harsh economic measure greatly impacting Blacks, high unemployment, the great loss of Black wealth because of the sub-prime housing scam by banks and out-of-control police violence and murders that occur on a daily basis in Black neighborhoods. Black youth are organizing on college campuses and in their communities such as the Dream Defenders, young Blacks who occupied the capital building of North Carolina. We are not without hope or analysis. However, we recognize the need for international collaboration and understandings of people's struggle in developing countries.

The dangerous and reckless attempt by the European Union, NATO and the U.S. to encircle Russia in a smoke-and-mirror distraction of "democracy" demands an international movement of solidarity based on the respect for human life and the environmental security of the planet. History will absolve us ! In the words of Amilcar Cabral, let us "Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories. . . ."

Although I am unable to be with you at your trade union convention and at your International Solidarity Rally, I trust you will extend another invitation to join you in your struggles when I am in better health.

Again, warm embrace.

A Luta continua ! Nellie Bailey Harlem, New York