

Protests open cracks in government

By Fred Goldstein

Feb. 13 — Donald Trump has suffered a series of setbacks in his foreign policy promises while escalating attacks on the workers and oppressed at home.

Trump campaigned against China all throughout his candidacy. He made aggressive charges that China was “raping our country” through currency manipulation and unfair trade. Trump threatened trade retaliation and questioned the One China policy by taking a phone call from the president of Taiwan, which is rightfully part of China.

Reality set in last week. After a phone call with the president of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping, who represents 1.3 billion people and the second-largest economy in the world, Trump announced he would follow the One China policy and not recognize Taiwan.

During his campaign, he curried favor with the most right-wing, pro-Israeli forces, like billionaire casino owner Sheldon Adelson, by vowing to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. No other imperialist country has an embassy in Jerusalem.

But when he sought Saudi and Egyptian help in the Middle East, he was told to drop the idea of moving the embassy to Jerusalem. He has not mentioned it since.

Trump vowed to restore torture as official policy and to reopen secret torture sites that the Bush administration had established in other countries but later outlawed. In the face of potential antagonism from the hundreds of millions of people in the Middle East, Trump has had to quietly back away from both these pledges.

Of course, his ban of Muslim immigrants and refugees has blown up in his face. It provoked widespread demonstrations throughout the U.S. and other continents, which are still going on.

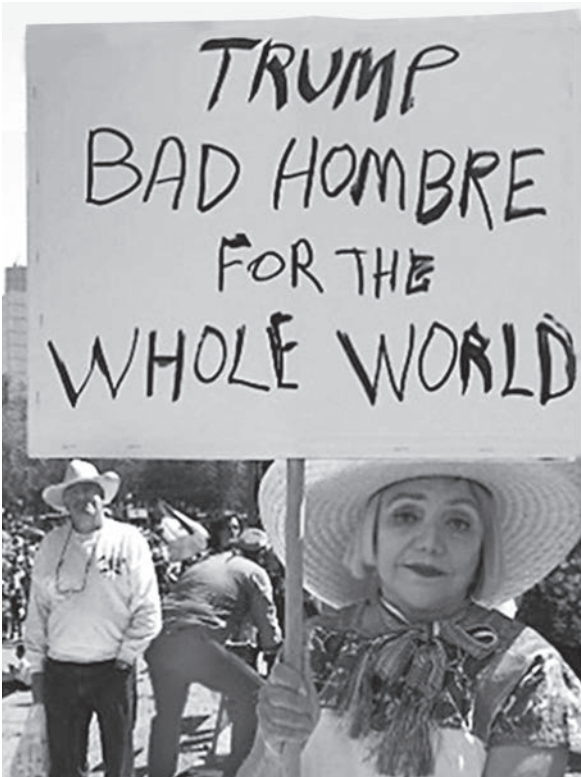
Escalating attacks on undocumented

While the capitalist media were focused on the courts and the travel ban, Trump introduced sweeping new rules for deportation. President Barack Obama was rightfully known as “deporter in chief” for the millions of deportations under his regime. In his last years, however, Obama relaxed the rules governing deportations to exclude all but the most serious crimes.

Trump issued an executive order on Jan. 25 changing the rules. His new rules call for deporting anyone with a chargeable offense, whether or not they have been convicted of a crime.

Chargeable offenses include crossing the border without documents, using a false Social Security card (without which no one can work) and any minor misdemeanor. The new rules give local immigration authorities complete discretion in deporta-

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There were nationwide protests in México against Trump on Feb. 12.

GLOBAL MAY DAY STRIKE

WWP on why the time has come

The May Day general strike should raise all the demands of the movements of the workers and oppressed against all the mounting attacks of capitalism. These include, for example, demands against union busting and those that speak to the struggle of low-wage workers, including the demand for a global minimum wage.

However, the May Day global general strike’s sharpest focus must be against all that Trump has come to represent — racism, white supremacy, neofascism, Islamophobia, attacks on immigrants, attacks on women and LGBTQ people, and a drive toward imperialist war. What’s more, the May Day global strike must be against the whole system of capitalism and imperialism and for socialism. Forging a united front among the most militant and revolutionary forces can help this happen.

Can it be done?

Whether or not the masses are willing to join such a global general strike at this moment is a question that can only be answered if there exist, on the part of enough forces, the will and commitment to fight for it. What is beyond question is the objective political necessity of a global mobilization of the masses on a new level of militancy and higher political level. The global general strike, more than an end in itself, should mark the beginning of a wider, escalating struggle of the workers and the oppressed across the planet, whose ultimate goal must be nothing less than socialist revolution.

Why a global general strike?

While many struggles tend to have a local character, it is no longer possible for the workers and the oppressed to conduct the struggle against neofascism, capitalism and imperialism on a solely local basis. The changes in global capitalism have made it both necessary and far more possible for the struggle to be waged on a globally coordinated scale.

The masses can ‘shut it down!’

Militants have wisely expanded the conception of the general strike. The capacity of organized workers to leave work, wherever they can, remains a critical part of a strike. Today, however, more advanced conceptions of the general strike allow for the wider participation of the masses no matter if they are in unions, have a job or, like so many workers, are forced to take low-wage, part-time or temporary jobs. Students and youths all over the world are walking out of schools. Women are now planning a March 8 global strike, reportedly in 30 countries. The masses have discovered that by their numbers and militancy, they can bring much of society and the economy to a halt or “Shut It Down!”

Organize people’s assemblies to build for a May Day global general strike

We believe that convening local people’s assemblies around the world to help prepare for a May Day global general strike is an organizing tactic that should be used widely.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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VIRGINIA

BLACK HISTORY, PEOPLE’S FIGHTBACK

By Workers World Staff

Community members from throughout southwest Virginia packed a meeting room at the Gainsboro Library in Roanoke Feb. 11 to hear Lamont Lilly discuss the history of Black Liberation and building people’s power today. Lilly was the 2016 Workers World Party Vice Presidential candidate. The Black History Month event was sponsored by 15 Now Roanoke and WWP.

Lilly, a resident of Durham, N.C., gave a sweeping view of Black history from Ida B. Wells and Carter G. Woodson to Ella Baker, the Black Panthers and Black Lives Matter.

“Our people have been resisting, fighting, organizing, pushing, clawing, scratching and working toward Black liberation,” said Lilly. “We’re in a library right now surrounded by books and information, but very often this information is not being taught in the public school system. It’s not being taught in our families. It’s not being taught in our neighborhoods.”

He added: “Black History Month is not just for Black folk. It’s really people’s history, and our accomplishments have contributed a great deal to the development of this country and the fabric of this society.”

Lilly concluded his remarks in the tradition of such Black socialists as Paul Robeson, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, Claudia Jones and Abayomi Azikiwe by denouncing the capitalist system and calling for a socialist revolution to truly free people of African descent and all working-class and oppressed peoples internationally from the horrors of capitalism and imperialism.

Before Lilly spoke, artist Corissa Morrison opened the event with a fightback song. Then community activist, artist, mother and educator Bernadette Brown, along with Jordan Bell, gave presentations on the historical and present struggles of the Black community in Roanoke.

The Gainsboro Library is situated in an area that was once known as “Black Wall Street” before it was largely, but not completely, destroyed by the building of Interstate 581. The presenters shared the rich history of struggle of people of African descent in the Roanoke area, including ongoing and protracted resistance during slavery, “legal”



WW PHOTO

Workers World Party 2016 Vice Presidential candidate Lamont Lilly speaking in Roanoke, Virginia.

segregation, sharecropping, domestic work and the railroads to the present day where most African Americans are unemployed or work one or several low-wage jobs for non-union pay.

After the presentations, the standing-room-only crowd of all ages, nationalities, sexual orientations, students and majority women joined in lively discussion about how to move the people’s struggle forward in this era of the Trump administration. Black workers informed white workers how they could assist oppressed people’s liberation and how all workers’ liberation depended on this. Other participants saluted the resistance against Trump’s Muslim ban and other attacks on the people.

A variety of community members testified to the atrocities being inflicted on them by the police. They told how they are being robbed by capitalists and their political servants and suggested methods of how to fight back.

Carl Spencer, Kionte Spencer’s brother, attended the meeting, and more support was gathered to demand justice for Kionte, who was murdered by Roanoke County cops Feb. 26, 2016.

The Feb. 11 event was collectively organized by many in southwest Virginia. It was part of a series of people’s events in the area over the past weeks. Thousands in many cities have come out to protest Trump, support women and LGBTQ people, denounce the Muslim ban and deportations, and much more. A variety of people’s protest events, organizing workshops and network building are in the planning stages.

For photo and videos of Feb. 11 event and more information on upcoming people’s events in southwest Virginia: facebook.com/15NowRoanoke.

MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD
Who we are & what we’re fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 59 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions. □

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this week

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Professional athletes speak out, oppose bigotry

By Monica Moorehead

The ongoing uprising in the streets against the Trump presidency continues to galvanize various sectors of U.S. society, including sports and mass culture, not always known for social activism. For instance, National Basketball Association coaches Gregg Popovich, Steve Kerr and Stan Van Gundy, all white, have been the most outspoken critics among their peers of Trump’s racist, anti-immigrant, misogynistic views, even more since Trump’s win on Nov. 8. All three of their teams — the San Antonio Spurs, Golden State Warriors and Detroit Pistons, respectively — have majority African-American and non-U.S.-born players.

When Kevin Plank, the CEO of the multibillion-dollar sports corporation Under Armour, attended a Feb. 7 business meeting at the White House with Trump and then commented that Trump was an “asset” to the country, Stephen Curry, the NBA’s reigning most valuable player, who has one of UA’s biggest sponsorship deals, took issue with Plank’s statement. When asked by the San Jose Mercury News to respond to Plank’s “asset” view of Trump, Curry, who is African-American, answered, “I agree with that description, if you remove the ‘et.’” (Feb. 9)

Soon afterwards, Misty Copeland, the first African-American principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, criticized Plank’s statement. Copeland also has a UA line of workout clothing.

Plank’s connection with Trump and the rebuttals from Curry and Copeland helped to spark a firestorm on Twitter with #boycottUnderArmour. Plank then attempted to distance himself from Trump by saying that he didn’t agree with Trump’s “social views.”

Neither Curry nor Copeland backed down from their stance. Curry, who is under contract with UA until 2024, went



Michael Bennett and Colin Kaepernick talk together after a game between their opposing teams, the Seattle Seahawks and the San Francisco 49ers.

on to say, “There is no amount of money, there is no platform I wouldn’t jump off, if it wasn’t in line with who I am.” (New York Times, Feb. 8)

Praising his players for speaking out on social issues, Kerr, Curry’s coach, has publicly supported the activism currently taking place around the country, especially those protesting attacks on Muslims.

Boycotting the White House

Since the 1920s, sports teams that have won national championships, whether amateur or professional, have visited the White House for a photo-op with the current president. Rarely has there been a time when groups of players from cham-

pionship teams boycotted these visits based on openly opposing political views. That is, until now.

Six members of the New England Patriots, who recently won Super Bowl LI, stated they will boycott going to the White House to celebrate their victory with

Trump. The six players are Martellus Bennett, Devin McCourty, Dont’a Hightower, Alan Branch, LeGarrette Blount and Chris Long. Bennett is the brother of Seattle Seahawks’ Michael Bennett, who recently refused to go to Israel with other players out of concern for the plight of Palestinians (see his statement below).

McCourty stated on Feb. 6, the day after winning the Super Bowl, “I don’t feel accepted in the White House.” He added, “With the president having so many strong opinions and prejudices, I believe certain people might feel accepted there while others won’t.” (www.bet.com, Feb. 10)

Long is the only white player to refuse to meet Trump, the other five being African-American. In fact, when San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick started his protest against systemic racism and oppression last fall by kneeling during the national anthem, Long came out in support of Kaepernick’s position, the only white NFL player to do so.

The fact that these six Patriots have taken such a principled position against Trump is significant since Patriots owner Robert Kraft, coach Bill Belichick and quarterback Tom Brady have maintained personal relations with Trump in the past, and continue to do so.

The ongoing mass protest against Trump and everything he stands for will continue to motivate more and more athletes, whether high profile or not, to become more and more socially conscious and active. □

Athletes repudiate NFL’s trip to Israel

Michael Bennett, a defensive end with the National Football League’s Seattle Seahawks, posted this statement on his Instagram and Twitter accounts on Feb. 10. Since this statement was released, two other NFL players, the Denver Broncos’ Justin Forsett and the Miami Dolphins’ Kenny Stills, stated they were withdrawing from the trip to Israel. Colin Kaepernick praised the stance taken by these athletes, coming on the heels of an open letter posted Feb. 9 on thenation.com signed by Alice Walker, Angela Davis, John Carlos, Harry Belafonte and others, which appealed to the NFL to cancel this trip in protest of the racist treatment of the Palestinian people under Zionism.

Dear World,

I was scheduled to make a visit to Israel with fellow NFL players. I was excited to see this remarkable and historic part of the world with my own eyes. I was not aware, until reading [the Feb. 5] article about the trip in the Times of Israel, that my itinerary was being constructed by the Israeli government for the purposes of making me, in the words of a government official, an “influencer and opinion-former” who would then be an “ambassador of goodwill.” I will not be used in such a manner. When I do go to Israel — and I do plan to go — it will be not only to see Israel but also the West Bank and Gaza so I can see how the Palestinians, who have called this land home for thousands of years, live their lives.

One of my heroes has always been Muhammad Ali. I know that Ali always strongly stood with the Palestinian people, visiting refugee camps, going to rallies, and always willing to be the “voice for the voiceless.” I want to be a “voice for the voiceless” and I cannot do that by going on this kind of trip.

I know this will anger some people and inspire others. But please know I did this not for you, but to be in accord with my own values and my own conscience. Like 1968 Olympian John Carlos always says, “There is no partial commitment to justice. You are either in or you’re out.” Well, I’m in.

Sincerely,
Michael Bennett

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key

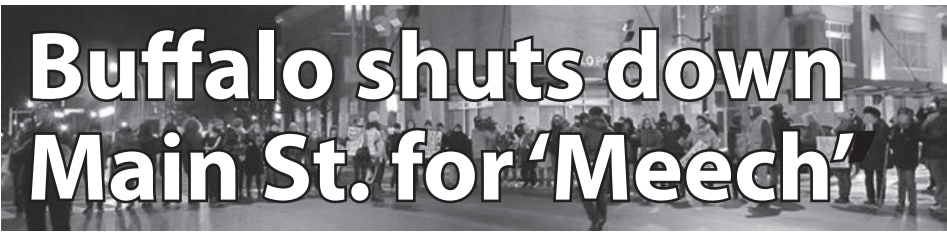
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Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Imani Henry
Black & Brown Unity Saladin Muhammad

Harriet Tubman Mumia Abu-Jamal

Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

The 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker
Available at major online booksellers.



By Lee Swaydis and Garrett Dicembre
Buffalo, N.Y.

On the night of Feb. 7, a 20-year-old unarmed Black man named Wardel “Meech” Davis was killed by Buffalo police. He died while they were arresting him, apparently for trying to leave while they were stopping him for “looking suspicious.” This accusation is commonly and widely used by racist profiling cops throughout the country. The cops involved were put on paid leave.

The next night, a crowd gathered at the street corner where Davis was killed, anti-racist activists and neighbors alike, who were called together at the urging of his friends and family.

The following night, Feb. 9, a huge crowd of people, including activists representing many organizations, shut down the high-traffic intersection on Main Street outside a Buffalo Police Department precinct station.

The crowd blocked the intersection for over an hour, led by loved ones of Meech calling for an end to racist police murders.

On Feb. 10, for a third night, a rally assembled downtown, targeting a hotel where the mayor of Buffalo was having a party. The crowd marched and chanted for an hour, demanding answers from the mayor — while guests arrived — and then marched back to the police precinct.



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

In Buffalo, N.Y., protest of cop-killing, crowd shuts down Main St., Feb. 9.

The local medical examiner reported that he had found “no cause of death” for Davis. Previously, the medical examiner’s office had said that an inmate murdered by guards in Buffalo’s notorious Holding Center died of a heart attack — until that was finally proven to be a lie.

“Authorities” say it will be many weeks before there might be more answers. News outlets are twisting what little information is available to paint Wardel “Meech” Davis as a villain.

We in Buffalo won’t stand for it! We demand the truth! We say, like the protesters chanted, “Justice for Meech! Or shut it down!” □



Lessons of the victorious Harvard dining hall strike

Class-struggle unionism in action

By Ed Childs

We had no illusions that we could beat this country's oldest corporation — Harvard Corporation, which follows the dictates of Wall Street — by just going through the motions of picketing each worksite. Our tactics were all militant, class-struggle tactics: constant pickets, marches and rallies with raucous chanting and constant drumming on plastic buckets. You could hear us all over campus and in classrooms. Picketing lasted from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the dining halls, with marches to the law school, the business school, etc., every afternoon. We marched to football games and Alumni Week events. We had the support of athletic teams, including the football team. Over 400 workers marched through Harvard Yard and Harvard Square, where there were lots of people and traffic. Greater Boston labor came out in strength for mass protests that drew more than 1,000 people.

Over 100 workers went by bus from the main campus in Cambridge to Harvard Medical School in Boston. Workers greeted the medical students as they walked out of class. Together, they held a loud, two-hour rally. We targeted Harvard Corporation members' homes and businesses. Supporters in other parts of the country picketed board members in their area. On Oct. 14, the president of UNITE HERE Local 26 and a group of women in the local's leadership sat down in the middle of the street and were arrested.

'Support from all over the world'

We were getting support from all over the world because we took on Harvard — Wall Street in the world's eyes — and because health care is a universally recognized human right. At first, workers felt they were just fighting for themselves. By the end of the first week, we felt we were fighting for the whole country, and by the second week's end we knew we were fighting for health care worldwide.

The 750 striking Harvard University Dining Service workers — cooks, dishwashers, servers and cashiers — brought multibillion-dollar Harvard University to its knees on Oct. 25, 2016. After a three-week strike, the university bosses caved, giving the members of UNITE HERE Local 26 even more than they had initially demanded. Most importantly, all the health care takeaways the Harvard Corporation had demanded were off the table. The strike victory holds valuable lessons for workers and oppressed in the age of global capitalism — particularly under the Trump administration and the rise of fascist, racist elements. Workers World's Martha Grevatt interviewed Chief Steward Ed Childs, a cook and leader in Local 26 for more than 40 years. This is the third in a series of articles based on the interviews where Childs explains how the workers won.



PHOTO: UNITE HERE LOCAL 26

Even before the strike, our first international support came from a labor federation in occupied Palestine. When the strike happened, letters and articles of support poured in from students, workers and faculty in South Africa, Japan, Brazil, Ireland, Russia and other European countries, as well as all over the U.S. The World Federation of Trade Unions supported us, and while they were meeting in South Africa, we composed a message to the Congress of South African Trade Unions supporting their general strike.

The moneyed elite were getting worried about our escalation plans and the expansion of our unity. We had met with local Black Lives Matter activists and BLM organizers who had led high school walkouts. They came to our pickets, where they proposed, as a possibility,

that high school students would walk out in solidarity with us. It was good for us that these other struggles and ours were happening simultaneously.

Harvard management started to break down by the third week. Students bombarded them with complaints about closed dining halls. Morale on campus was low; the only high morale was in support of us. Events were falling apart without food service. At the Kennedy School, where the world bourgeoisie meet all the time, and at the School of Business, meetings were collapsing.

Out of 750 members, only 24 crossed the picket line and four of those came back out. But we had to take into account the time element. HUDS workers had just come off a 2-3 month layoff with no unemployment compensation — thanks to a

Reagan-era federal law that denies benefits to food service workers and custodians during "seasonal layoffs." We would have had difficulty sustaining a protracted strike.

'Ratcheting up our tactics'

Both sides were cracking. It was the last gasp for them and for us, so we knew we had to employ drastic actions. By the third week, our conversations were all about ratcheting up our tactics.

The culmination of three weeks of class struggle came on the evening of Oct. 24. After a student walkout from a class where former Harvard President Larry Summers was the guest lecturer, the students joined the strikers who were rallying in the Yard. They marched over to the building where negotiations were taking place. Then 500 students marched into the building, chanting, "If we don't get it, shut it down!" and took over the lobby while 300 workers kept up a noisy line outside. The students stayed late into the night, chanting and drumming. Negotiations went on, and at 1:30 a.m. the next day, Harvard caved in.

We got a total victory, everything we demanded and more. We won wage increases amounting to \$3 an hour over the five-year contract (retroactive to the June 20 contract expiration date); a substantial, first-time-ever stipend during summer layoffs; better, less expensive health insurance, including for retirees; increased uniform and shoe allowances; and strengthened gender identity nondiscrimination terms. The new contract established a task force through which union members have the power to stop discrimination and promote diversity in the workplace — a demand the corporation insisted it would never accept. The university's recognition of "Columbus Day" was replaced by Indigenous Peoples Day.

Most importantly, all the health care takeaways that Harvard Corporation was demanding were off the table.

Continued on the next page

Standing Rock defense stays strong

By Chris Fry

For a year, thousands of Indigenous peoples and activists have stopped the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline across Native land and bodies of water. These water protectors assert Indigenous sovereignty and the human right to clean water, not only for themselves, but also for up to 18 million people who depend on the water threatened by this pipeline.

As the Trump regime moves forward to allow Big Oil to restart construction of the DAPL beneath the Missouri River, military veterans are returning to Standing Rock. They pledge to shield Indigenous people from the heavily armed police force and company security guards arrayed against them in North Dakota.

"We are prepared to put our bodies between Native elders and a privatized military force," said Elizabeth Williams, a 34-year-old Air Force veteran, who arrived at Standing Rock with other veterans on Feb. 10. "We stood in the face of fire before. We feel a responsibility to use the skills we have." (Guardian, Feb. 11)

LaDonna Tamakawastewin Allard, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and a founder of the Sacred Stone camp, told the Guardian reporter, "The



Colorado State Capitol Building, Denver, Feb. 10.

PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

veterans are going to make sure everything is safe and sound. ... The people on the ground have no protection."

Standing Rock activists have been attacked with water cannons, mace, rubber bullets, teargas, pepper spray and concussion grenades; more than 700 have been arrested. Agents from the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force have harassed Standing Rock supporters around the country.

"The idea that the government would attempt to construe this Indigenous-led non-violent movement into some kind of domestic terrorism investigation is unfathomable to me," said Lauren Regan, a civil rights attorney who has provided legal support to demonstrators" contacted by FBI agents. "It's outrageous, it's un-

warranted ... and it's unconstitutional." (Guardian, Feb. 10)

Over 1,000 veterans arrived at the camps to support and defend the struggle against the DAPL in December. The determination of Indigenous people, supported by a worldwide campaign, forced the Obama administration last year to direct the Army Corps of Engineers not to grant an easement for the final construction of the pipeline under the Missouri River until a full environmental impact study could be completed.

However, the extreme right wing and the Big Oil-friendly Trump regime have given the green light to this reckless project. On Feb. 7, the Army Corps granted the easement allowing Energy Transfer

Partners to resume construction of the DAPL. Army officials claim they were pressured by the Trump administration.

The dangers of this pipeline are demonstrated by the fact that thousands of gallons of oil have recently leaked from oil pipelines both in Canada and the U.S. In December 176,000 gallons leaked from an oil pipeline into a tributary of the Little Missouri River, just 150 miles away from Standing Rock. (Washington Post, Dec. 12)

Native people and their supporters have renewed their determined campaign to stop the DAPL. Around the country, thousands of activists have stepped up the support campaign for the heroic Standing Rock water protectors. Here are two highlights.

Denver

Over 500 people traveled to the Colorado State Capitol Building Feb. 10 to protest the DAPL and other pipelines carrying fossil fuels crossing Indigenous lands and breaking treaties. They marched with drums and Native Nations' flags to Wells Fargo Bank, which has heavily invested in the DAPL. An effort is being waged to get the city of Denver to divest from investments in or banks financing the pipeline.

Continued on the next page

The bosses had been testing the ground to see how they could destroy us. In the middle of negotiations, they fired their lead negotiator, Harvard's general counsel, and hired Paul Curran, well-known in Boston as a professional union buster. He tried to bust city unions, including the school bus drivers' union.

Then they fired their press secretary and hired a reporter recently fired by the Miami Herald. She lost her job there for deliberately lying, fabricating racist stories against Black residents and covering up a racist charter school movement; she was a personal friend of a pro-charter school committee person. The Black community had picketed the Miami Herald to protest her racist lies. Harvard immediately hired her, and she set up a media campaign attacking us, putting lie after lie in local and campus press.

The press, which wouldn't talk to us, tried to turn students against us by saying more money for workers would mean less for scholarships. Harvard tried to break our coalition by getting professors and deans on their side, but none of the deans and only one or two right-wing professors meekly opposed us. In fact, everyone below the president of the university supported us. There was mass student support at every one of the 20 schools; even the Republican Party's student group endorsed us.

Students were planning to seize another building and get arrested. We planned for student and worker hunger strikes. With the escalation of class-struggle tactics, and publicized plans to take the struggle even further, Harvard caved. The takeover was the powerful move that broke the Corporation's back. We were under a huge amount of pressure, but when the occupation happened, it was like two armies fighting, both exhausted, but then one gets fresh troops and just crushes the other side.

The political position of Wall Street was to defeat us. Now, we have been praised all over the world for protecting health care against the bourgeoisie who were trying to beat us down.

Phebe Eckfeldt, Steve Gillis, Martha Grevatt, Steve Kirschbaum, Milt Neidenberg and Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this series of articles.



Seattle City Council session, Feb. 7

Seattle

After a months-long campaign, protests forced the city of Seattle to divest from its \$3 billion account with Wells Fargo Bank on Feb. 7. A coalition of groups led by Native peoples and joined by solidarity organizations forced the hand of the Seattle City Council. The vote for divestment came only an hour after the Army announced it would permit the DAPL construction.

The \$3 billion a year that the city is divesting from Wells Fargo contains all of the city's revenues, even from parking meters. The city resolution denounced Wells Fargo's role as a lender for the DAPL and the bank's role as a big investor in immigrant detention prisons through its stock in Geo Corporation, which owns over 60 facilities.

This winter Native solidarity activists joined anti-Trump demonstrations in Seattle and rallied several times at Wells Fargo headquarters. They held "divest pickets" at many of the bank's branches around the city.

The packed City Council meetings were addressed by members of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Nations of Alaska and the Muckleshoot Nation near Seattle. Matt Remle, a leading local organizer from Standing Rock, and Olivia One Feather, a Standing Rock defender, also spoke.

On Feb. 11, NoDAPL protesters blocked busy Interstate Highway 5 in Bellingham, Wash. That day another strong protest was held in Seattle in solidarity with Standing Rock.

MARCH 10:
National March on Washington, D.C.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council has called for a National March of Native Nations on Washington on March 10. The call is being supported by the youth council at Standing Rock and many other water protectors.

See the Global Call to Action and further information at standwithstandingrock.net/march/.

Viviana Weinstein and Jim McMahan contributed to this article.

By Deirdre Griswold

Feb. 13 — The Democratic Party's inability to stop or even slow down the dramatic shift to the right, represented by the accession of Donald Trump and his gang of bigots to head the government, was proven once again when the Senate Democrats failed to react as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell invoked an obscure gag order to shut up Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Warren had been reading into the record a letter written in 1986 by Coretta Scott King, in which the Civil Rights leader excoriated Alabama Sen. Jefferson Beauregard Sessions' racist history. Sessions at that time was a candidate for a federal judgeship. King had written that Sessions "used the awesome power of his office to chill the free exercise of the vote by black citizens."

As even more proof of Trump's own racism, the billionaire realtor nominated Sessions to head the Justice Department. Warren was at the point in King's letter that showed Sessions was recognized as an open racist and should not be confirmed by the Senate when McConnell gaveled her down.

As Warren argued for her right to speak, the other Democrats sat frozen in their seats.

They should know better

All the more liberal of the capitalist media are agreed that the crew Trump has assembled to head the various branches of government will try to turn back the clock on everything from civil rights, women's rights and workers' rights to environmental protection and public education. And everyone knows that Trump came nowhere near getting the popular vote, trailing his opponent by almost 3 million votes.

The election was certainly no mandate for ripping up the gains won over decades of struggle by progressive mass movements.



PHOTO: KITV

Protesters blocked pro-privatization Dept. of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos from entering D.C. public school Feb. 10.

The people know this. They know that they must act, must go beyond the usual strategies of writing to Congress or sending petitions or letters of protest. They have come out into the streets by the millions to oppose this ultrareactionary gang. The massive, global Women's March of Jan. 21 was a direct repudiation of the misogyny, crude sexism, racism and scapegoating of immigrants and refugees, particularly Muslims, by this far-right government.

The least the Senate Democrats could have done was refuse to sit idly by while their colleague was rudely forced off the podium. In scores of countries, such an affront would have caused an uproar, maybe even some fists to fly. But here, the gavel came down, and business continued as usual. This is how the two-party system works in the U.S., with both parties bowing before the power of Big Money.

DeVos, Puzder, Perry:
more of the same ilk

In the same week, another appointee who makes a mockery of the institution she is empowered to run breezed through. Betsy DeVos, an enemy of public schools, became head of the Department of Education on Feb. 7. DeVos was never a teacher or even a student in a public school. Her acquaintance with education comes from being a lobbyist for charter schools, which, like privately run prisons, serve the profit motive.

Public school systems in many places have already been starved of funds, es-

pecially as inner cities lose jobs and population. With DeVos as head, the Education Department is expected to adopt measures that would advantage private charter schools, while squeezing both teachers and students in public schools.

Though the DeVos nomination met no effective opposition in Congress, it wasn't the same in the real world. When the new education secretary tried to enter the Jefferson Middle School Academy in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 10, she was blocked by demonstrators at the school's entrance. Some held signs reading, "We love our public schools." CNN reported, "BlackLivesMatter DC, the Black Youth Project and other groups had sent social media messages urging people to protest at the school."

In coming days, other appointees whose task is to

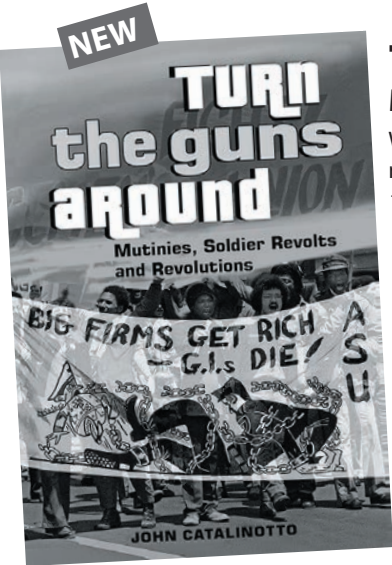
undermine the institutions they are appointed to run are expected to be confirmed by the Senate. Particularly odious are Andrew Puzder for labor secretary and former Texas governor Rick Perry to head the Department of Energy.

Puzder is CEO of CKE Restaurants, Inc., the firm that controls Carl's Jr. and Hardee's fast food chains. His credentials to head the Labor Department? Being the boss in a business notorious for its super-exploitation of low-wage workers, many single mothers of color.

Perry, Trump's pick for the Department of Energy, is hated in Texas for his use of the death penalty and for his subservience to the oil and gas industry. The National Institute on Money in State Politics reported in 2011 that Perry, "even before establishing super PACs to rake in unlimited contributions from Texas billionaires in his presidential run, has been one of the best funded politicians in history. Since his 1998 candidacy to be George W. Bush's lieutenant governor, Perry has raked in \$117,091,642 in campaign contributions, with the oil and gas industry the top contributor."

This is what is called government of the billionaires, by the billionaires and for the billionaires.

And since the billionaires really run both parties in Congress, don't expect the fightback to come from there. It must come from those who have no stake in this capitalist system and every reason to resist the hatred and bigotry it fosters to keep us divided. □



Available at online booksellers

TURN THE GUNS AROUND
Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life GI resistance in the Vietnam War era, shows its relation to capitalist state power and highlights why breaking the military chain of command is an essential step to ending oppression around the globe.

"If schools in the United States really wanted to impart historical truth, Catalinotto's 'Turn The Guns Around' would be required reading. He tells the true story of this epoch. Few participants know more about the massive GI rebellion against the Vietnam War, the anti-war veterans' movement or the history of soldier revolts from the Paris Commune to the Portuguese coup."

— Pvt Larry Holmes GI resister and organizer for the American Servicemen's Union 1972-74.

BLACK RECONSTRUCTION AND THE PARIS COMMUNE:

TWO MOMENTOUS REVOLUTIONS

By Jeff Sorel

Black History Month brings back to life long-buried struggles of African-American people for liberation and justice. One of the most stirring such struggles took place a century-and-a-half ago during Reconstruction, when a revolutionary upsurge in the 1870s led to formerly enslaved people winning political power throughout the U.S. South.

A contemporaneous revolutionary struggle over 4,000 miles away shared significant features with radical Reconstruction. In 1871, French workers seized power in Paris and proclaimed the Paris Commune after the bourgeois government fled the city.

Parallels between Reconstruction and the Paris Commune were remarked on at the time. In the June 21, 1871, issue of the New York Tribune, a Northern Republican rightly warned that the “dangerous alliance of poor southern whites” and Black people “might form a party by themselves as dangerous to the interest of society as the communists of France.”

Of course, the two developments were not identical. Radical Reconstruction was a movement against big landowners by mostly Black agricultural workers, joined by mostly white small landholders supported temporarily by a section of big capital. The Paris Commune reflected urban class struggle and socialist agitation against expanding industrial capital. But the parallels are striking.

From war to revolution

Like many revolutions, Reconstruction and the Paris Commune were triggered by military defeats of the ruling regimes. Reconstruction arose after the defeat of the Southern slaveholders in the Civil War. The Commune arose after Prussia’s defeat of France and replacement of the existing empire by a bourgeois republic.

In both cases, the victorious capitalist governments sought deals with their supposed enemies. These betrayals fostered mass anger that erupted into revolutionary action. The achievements of Reconstruction and the Commune rested on force of arms.

Enslaved Black people left the plantations in what historian W.E.B. Du Bois called “a general strike.” Almost 200,000 enrolled in the Union army and helped break the back of Confederate resistance. The presence of Black soldiers encouraged widespread land seizures, and a small section of “radical” Northern capitalists, to preserve their victory, were forced to support the formation of militias of Black soldiers under federal protection.

In Paris, the bourgeois government’s attempt to confiscate National Guard



cannons sparked the workers and poor to rise up and seize power. The Commune they established quickly abolished conscription and the standing army, leaving the people as the sole armed force.

Political mobilizations of the oppressed

Both Reconstruction and the Paris Commune reflected vast political mobilizations of the oppressed. In the South, although it had been a crime for enslaved people even to read, political consciousness developed quickly with emancipation. Black people organized conventions to resist the ex-slaveowners’ imposition of racist “Black Codes.” During the six-week Paris Commune, virtually every city block hosted daily agitational meetings, demonstrations and rallies.

These mass mobilizations were reflected at the polls. With property qualifications abolished, Black people voted in at least some Southern states in proportion to their population. In South Carolina, they won roughly two-thirds of legislative seats, leading Du Bois to hail “the South Carolina Commune.” Throughout the South, some 2,000 Black people won state and federal positions. Likewise, an expanded franchise for the Paris Commune elections heightened the impact of the more population-dense, working-class districts.



Social reforms won

The Reconstruction and Commune governments aimed legislation at comparable problems, including education. While illiteracy was the heritage of slavery, even in urban Paris only 30 percent could read and write. Reconstruction Alabama provided more funding to

public schools than ever before, and the Commune ensured that all public school education was secular.

Labor issues also received much attention. The Commune abolished night work for bakers and infraction fines for all workers, and it authorized labor unions to seize abandoned workshops, form cooperatives and resume production. Reconstruction decrees authorized land seizures, including on the Sea Islands, where 40,000 formerly enslaved people administered 400,000 acres of abandoned rice plantations until the lands were stolen back when Reconstruction ended.

Both revolutions addressed the needs of the poor. Reconstruction governments abolished imprisonment for debt and set up relief programs. The Commune canceled past-due rent payments and decreed a three-year moratorium on debt payments.

Women played vital roles

Women played a key role in both struggles. Reconstruction governments passed groundbreaking laws to protect women’s rights to divorce and hold property. Accounts of battles against the emerging Ku Klux Klan speak of Black women “carrying axes or hatchets in their hands, their aprons or dresses half-concealing the weapons.”

In the Parisian clubs, many of the most radical proposals came from women, who displayed legendary heroism on the barricades.

The socialist and anarchist communards had been schooled in internationalism. Lacking that background, revolutionary Reconstruction found its way to it. The National “Colored” Labor Convention, held in Washington in 1869, supported Cuban independence against Spain and elected a delegate to represent the interests of Black workers at the 1870 International Labor Congress. Black Reconstruction congressmembers also championed relief for embattled Cherokees and opposed restrictions on Chinese immigration.

Counterrevolutionary terror unleashed

Both Southern Black people and Parisian workers suffered from a lack of dependable allies. Black people in the South needed support from poor Southern whites — allies with objectively more lasting potential than Northern capitalists — and the groundwork for such an alliance was laid. The Communards needed support from the French peasantry. But both the Southern whites and French peasants were blindered by the hostility unleashed by the rich and became tools of reaction.

Both Reconstruction and the Commune were drowned in waves of blood. Pro-slavery terrorists murdered tens of thousands of Black people in the South from 1867 to 1877. A white terror group in South Carolina became the state militia in 1877, reflecting the heralded “compromise” between Northern capitalists and Southern landowners that ended Reconstruction.

Over 15,000 Parisians were killed by French republican troops in the single week after the Commune’s fall — five times more than were killed in Paris during the so-called “Great Terror” of 1793-1794.

Struggles reborn

But the struggle against racist oppression and capitalist exploitation lived on. Just seven months after the fall of the Paris Commune, the Skidmore Guards, a militia comprised of Black members, formed the front ranks of a New York City march organized by the International Workingmen’s Association to protest the continuing executions of Paris Commune leaders.

The truth about Reconstruction was unearthed and kept alive by Du Bois and other Black historians. The militancy of that period was born anew in the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements of the last century. Likewise, analyses of the Paris Commune by socialists Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin, as well as revival of the French workers’ movement in the 1880s, ensured that the achievements of the Paris Commune would continue to inspire revolutionaries.

Indeed, within a week after the fall of the Paris Commune, Eugène Pottier, a French revolutionary, penned lyrics to the “Internationale,” the socialist anthem, that sum up the spirit of these two great revolutions on opposite sides of the Atlantic: “Arise ye prisoners of starvation, arise ye wretched of the earth, ... Arise ye slaves no more in thrall, ... We have been naught, we shall be all!” □

Fight racism, ultra-rightism: BUILD WW

Racism is the centerpiece of Trump’s ultrarightist administration. And the progressive movement has come out swinging — whether at airports around the country against an illegal ban on peoples from Muslim countries, or at the University of California-Berkeley against a white supremacist. These actions give new meaning to the phrase “repression breeds resistance” and to the importance of Black History Month this year.

Workers World always makes a big deal out of Black History Month, as we commemorate the myriad sacrifices and valiant struggles of Black people to eradicate institutionalized racism, root and branch, in this country, and the many battles to throw off imperialist chains in African countries.

Today’s reactionary era has elevated the struggle against racism to new heights and demands a united, militant response. And Workers World has responded. Based on our Marxist analysis, we see the need for a general strike and for building a broad-based united front of all progressive forces in this country.

But we can’t do that without your help. You can play a vital role, not just in the streets, on the job or by sharing WW with like-minded people, but by helping to build

Workers World financially. We need funds to promote the kind of all-out fightback that’s needed to smash the oppressive system of capitalism, which is based on systemic, institutionalized racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and exploitation.

You can always make a one-time contribution, or you can join the Workers World Supporter Program and build the paper all year long. We established the program 40 years ago in 1977 so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to make the revolutionary change that crushes capitalism and ushers in socialism.

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

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. We are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □

Civil Rights leader John Lewis says: ‘Keep marching!’

By Dolores Cox
New York

Congressperson John Lewis was the keynote speaker at the standing-room-only Black History Month celebration in New York City on Feb. 3. The event was held at the headquarters of District Council 37, the city’s largest civil service employees’ union. Local labor leaders and elected officials attended.

Lewis, the son of sharecroppers, was born on Feb. 21, 1940, outside Troy, Ala., in Pike County. He and his nine siblings grew up on the family’s farm. Lewis’ father saved \$300 to buy the land in 1944. At the age of 8 or 9, he said he wanted to be a preacher and began by preaching to the chickens. He later stated, humorously, that the chickens listened better than do his colleagues in Congress.

In 1958 Lewis said he wanted to attend all-white, segregated Troy State College, and wrote to Martin Luther King Jr. asking for his help. King sent him a bus ticket to Montgomery. There, they first met. When he returned home, however, his parents were fearful of him attending Troy State, so he went to the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tenn., instead.

Lewis recalled going to the segregated movie theatre and schools in Pike County, Ala., and seeing “whites only” signs everywhere. He remembered being turned away from the public library in 1956 at age 16. He was told that it was for whites only. With a proud, ironic smile, he said that he returned to the same library in 1998 for a book signing for one of his books and got a library card.

When he was young, he was inspired by the activism surrounding the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and by the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, whom he heard on the radio. He decided to join the Civil Rights Movement. From 1963 to 1966 he served as chairperson of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which he helped form. As a student at Fisk University, he organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Nashville. SNCC was largely responsible for organizing the movement’s student activism.

On the Freedom Rides

In 1961, Lewis participated in the Freedom Rides, which challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the South. He and others risked their lives many times on these buses by simply sitting in seats reserved for white riders. He was severely beaten by angry mobs, and burned with hot water and lit cigarettes.

Police arrested the courageous young activist for challenging the injustices of Jim Crow/apartheid segregation in the South. In the 1960s, Lewis was arrested and jailed 40 times.

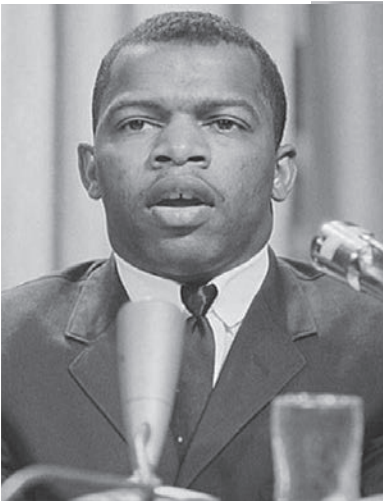
Lewis became a nationally recognized leader and was named one of the “Big Six” leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. At age 23, he was a co-creator and keynote speaker at the historic August 1963 March on Washington.

In 1964, Lewis coordinated SNCC efforts to organize voter registration drives and community action programs for African Americans during Mississippi Freedom Summer. The following year, he spearheaded one of the most powerful moments of the Civil Rights Movement: He and Civil Rights leader Hosea Williams led over 600 peaceful protesters across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., on March 7, 1965.

Their intention was to march from Selma to Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the state. However, state troopers attacked the marchers in a brutal confrontation that became known as “Bloody Sunday.” News broadcasts and photographs revealed the senseless cruelty of the segregated South. This helped to hasten passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Despite more than 40 arrests, brutal physical attacks and serious injuries, Lewis remained a devoted advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence. He left SNCC in 1966 and continued his commitment to the Civil Rights Movement. He became the director of the Voter Education Project. This organization transformed the nation’s political climate by adding nearly 40 million people of color to the voter rolls. In 1977, Lewis was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to direct more than 250,000 volunteers for the federal volunteer agency, ACTION.

Lewis was elected to the Atlanta City Council in 1981. He was an advocate for ethics in government and neighborhood preservation. In November 1986, he was elect-



John Lewis in 1965. John Lewis today standing at foot of the bridge where the Selma to Montgomery march began.

ed to Congress and has served as U.S. representative of Georgia’s 5th Congressional District since then. He is senior chief deputy whip for the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives and is a member of several congressional committees.

‘Stand up and keep marching!’

In speaking about the first two weeks of the fascist-like reign of President Donald Trump, Rep. Lewis

stated, “There are dark days ahead.” He urged everyone to “stand up and keep marching. Get in necessary trouble for what’s right and just. Don’t get weary, keep pushing and don’t go back. Have no fear. You can’t stop now, and don’t despair. Anything worth having is hard, but hang in. Forces in D.C. need to be challenged. You cannot be silent.”

Lewis ended his remarks by saying, “I will continue to fight as long as there’s breath in my body.” □

Eastern Michigan

Students win anti-racist victory

By Damien Angelopoulos

On Feb. 2, Eastern Michigan University’s administration handed down its decision to drop sanctions against 16 students, mostly Black, who protested racist graffiti posted on university buildings in November. Officials gave way to escalating solidarity actions by students, faculty and community members.

This outcome is a victory for the determined, anti-racist students who kept up the outcry against the EMU administration. It was due to protesters’ fearlessness and persistence that the charges were dropped. The EMU Black Student Union and the NAACP, among other groups, organized the protests.

During the two weeks prior to the decision, students staged several protests, disrupting activity at the Student Center, declaring: “United we stand! Divided we fall!” and “Shame on you, EMU!” Over three consecutive days, students marched through the Student Center and picketed President James Smith’s office. They walked out and marched through the Pray-Harold Building, ending up at the Student Center to demand: “Drop the charges!”

The 16 students were sanctioned after occupying the Student Center past closing time in November. They heroically defied this “colorblind” administration. EMU officials originally called for the students’ expulsion, but later reduced the punishment to deferred suspensions. Officials then sent out letters of reprimand to the 16 students, which would have stayed on their academic records.

Throughout the negotiations and student hearings, even in the face of massive criticism, the administration maintained that the rules must be “evenly applied” and that they must maintain the “integrity” of the “investigative process.” This prompted a student to succinctly reply, “Fuck the process!”

The students condemned the white university administration’s racist hypocrisy in pursuing sanctions against Black students protesting racist intimidation. While EMU diligently prosecuted the case against the protesters, they didn’t put as much energy into finding those who wrote the threatening, racist messages on university buildings — including on the door of a historically Black fraternity. Students carried a huge sign at the protests stating:



PHOTO: BEEBROWN

Militant anti-racist student protests took place at Eastern Michigan University.

“Eastern Michigan University’s president is a racist.”

The irony was not lost on protest organizers when the university held its Dr. Martin Luther King Day symposium, entitled, “Courageous Conversations: Writings on the Walls,” at the same time as it pursued punishment against Black students protesting racist graffiti.

There is a long tradition of anti-racist student organizing in the Washtenaw County area. Many organizers at recent events in the city of Ypsilanti identified themselves with the deep abolitionist history in that city. Frederick Douglass spoke there during three separate visits 150 years ago, and the largest number of African-American Civil War veterans in the country are interred there.

Mobilization at the University of Michigan around racial justice and sanctuary university status has likewise recently reached critical mass, especially through the efforts of Students4Justice, a students of color-led social justice group. The organization staged a walkout last year on Nov. 16 that attracted well over 1,000 students, faculty and community members.

The protests follow years of organizing in the Washtenaw area by groups such as the Ann Arbor Alliance for Black Lives and Radical Washtenaw, who have fought to win justice for Aura Rain Rosser, a Black woman killed by Ann Arbor police officer David Reid on Nov. 9, 2014.

Ann Arbor, dubbed “Klan Arbor” by some organizers, has shown its commitment to white supremacy and racism in its adamant refusal to significantly change its policing policies and hold accountable any officers or officials for Rosser’s death. Armed and in uniform, Reid still roams Ann Arbor, a known threat to all Black and Brown lives.

The victory at EMU vindicates the 16 courageous, determined students and those who have stood in solidarity with them. □

The ‘Alt-Right’: A new mask for white supremacy

By Ava Lipati

Feb. 13 — “Alt-right” has become a buzzword in the mainstream media to describe the extreme right-wing politics pushed by far-right bigots like Milo Yiannopoulos, Richard Spencer and Steve Bannon. What do the term and its mouthpieces really represent?

‘Alt-right’ mouthpieces

Milo Yiannopoulos, an openly racist gay man who is known for harassing women and people of color on Twitter (from which he was eventually banned), is frequently identified as a major spokesperson for the “alt-right.” Milo is known for espousing bigoted, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-trans views as a prominent journalist for Breitbart News, a far-right publication. The site was launched in 2007 by conservative writer Andrew Breitbart as a pro-capitalist, pro-Israeli apartheid news outlet.

In recent weeks, Yiannopoulos has conducted a speaking tour across U.S. universities to campaign against the Sanctuary Campus movement. However, his anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant events were met with resistance when protesters shut them down at the University of California, Davis and UC, Berkeley.

Richard Spencer, a more obscure right-wing demagogue, coined the term alt-right in 2010. Spencer leads the National Policy Institute, a white-supremacist think tank. He was in the spotlight after the most recent NPI national conference shortly after the election, when he proclaimed, “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!” as audience members gave Nazi salutes.

Spencer and his followers say that a “White European ethno-state” should be created within the U.S. in order to “protect” white people from “multiculturalism.” These “white nationalists” — a phrase



which always means “white supremacists” — see political, cultural and economic autonomy for people of color as a fundamental threat. Spencer was again in the public eye during the inaugural weekend when a heroic anti-fascist protester smacked him down as he was being interviewed.

Steve Bannon is the most publicized figure associated with the “alt-right.” Once an investment banker at Goldman Sachs and then an executive producer in Hollywood, Bannon served as executive chair of Breitbart News from 2012 to 2016. In a 2016 Mother Jones interview, Bannon declared Breitbart News the “platform for the alt-right.”

Breitbart News publishes anti-Muslim, Zionist, anti-Black, misogynistic and other bigoted content. Instead of exposing Wall Street for exporting and outsourcing jobs, Breitbart News blames immigrants, people of color and “globalists” (an anti-Semitic code word).

This propaganda is an attempt to convince white workers to identify with white supremacy and join with white capitalists, rather than fight for working-class interests in unity with oppressed nationalities.

Bannon left his post at Breitbart in 2016 to run Donald Trump’s presidential campaign; then he became the president’s chief strategist. Since then, he has increasingly gained influence in the White House. Bannon reportedly wrote Trump’s inauguration speech and drove many of Trump’s aggressive executive orders, such as the travel ban. Though he has no military or intelligence ranking, Bannon now has an unprecedented seat

on the National Security Council.

Bannon predicts an apocalyptic conflict between Muslims and “Judeo-Christians,” between “the East” and “the West.” He has openly expressed eagerness to wage war against China and against “radical Islam,” thus ramping up the U.S. imperialist war machine for more aggression. Bannon said in 2016 that he can use Trump’s power as a “blunt instrument” to implement his white-supremacist and warmongering agenda.

What is the alt-right?

The unifying principle of Bannon’s ideology is as old as the United States itself: white supremacy. But even Bannon knows it’s more effective to use a euphemistic term like “alternative right” or “alt-right.” This term refers to a wide array of far-right groups and individuals, including neo-Nazis, “men’s rights” activists, anarcho-capitalists and right-wing libertarians who go beyond mainstream conservatism.

The white supremacy of alt-right propaganda commonly criticizes “establishment conservatives” of the Republican Party for not being openly racist enough. Those expressing this racist ideology have a strong presence on internet forums like 4chan and Reddit. It remains unclear the extent to which various groups claiming an “alt-right” identity are in communication and organized toward common repressive goals.

“Alt-right” ideology is essentially a white supremacist response to the decay of capitalism. Deep economic crises, like the one the U.S. economy has been in since 2008, accelerate fear and uncertainty among those in the middle class who have lost wealth, such as small business owners and small-scale farmers.

This extremist-right ideology is especially effective for the U.S. ruling class. The exploitation and violence of white supremacy lay the foundation for racist ideology to mobilize the middle class against segments of the multinational working class

and to divide white workers from Black and Brown workers and migrant workers. Oppressed nationalities and immigrants are thus blamed for the problems created by the very ruling class that is oppressing all workers, including white workers.

How we can fight

The development of the propaganda and ideology associated with the white supremacist “alt-right” is deeply intertwined with the new administration. Trump’s reactionary rhetoric emboldens and normalizes these hateful, violent beliefs and actions. The fight against Trump’s agenda and the entire U.S. ruling class is, by necessity, a fight against all rising reactionary forces, including the so-called alt-right.

Those associated with this new face of white supremacy have a track record of violence. Advocates claiming “alt-right” ideology have taken to social media, especially Twitter, in search of undocumented immigrants in order to report them to Immigration, Customs and Enforcement. The gunman who killed six and injured 19 people at a Quebec mosque was found to be a Trump supporter and alt-right internet troll. A protester at a Milo Yiannopoulos event in Seattle was shot by a gunman who identified with the alt-right.

However, this rise in white-supremacist violence has been met with powerful resistance from progressives and anti-fascists. After Yiannopoulos was shut down by protesters at two UC campuses, Berkeley officials warned that Yiannopoulos was planning to expose undocumented students during his speech. (tinyurl.com/jkyyzj9)

The wave of resistance is a sign of hope that the working class and oppressed will not stand by as right-wing terror rears its ugly head. In order to effectively oppose Trump and the entire capitalist class, these forces must prepare to resist the far right at every step and in every area of struggle. □

Solidarity rally backs locked-out Honeywell workers

By Martha Grevatt
South Bend, Ind.

Hundreds of supporters rallied Feb. 11 in South Bend, Ind., to support United Auto Workers Local 9, whose 320 members are locked out by Honeywell. The workers in South Bend, along with 42 members of UAW Local 1508 in Green Island, N.Y., were locked out May 9, just two days after workers voted to reject a contract that would have eradicated 80 years of bargaining advances.

Among the core issues that drove Local 9 to overwhelmingly reject the contract in May and again in November were provisions to eliminate seniority rights and to make workers pay an unaffordable share of health care costs. Honeywell would also have had the right to make additional changes to health care coverage unilaterally.

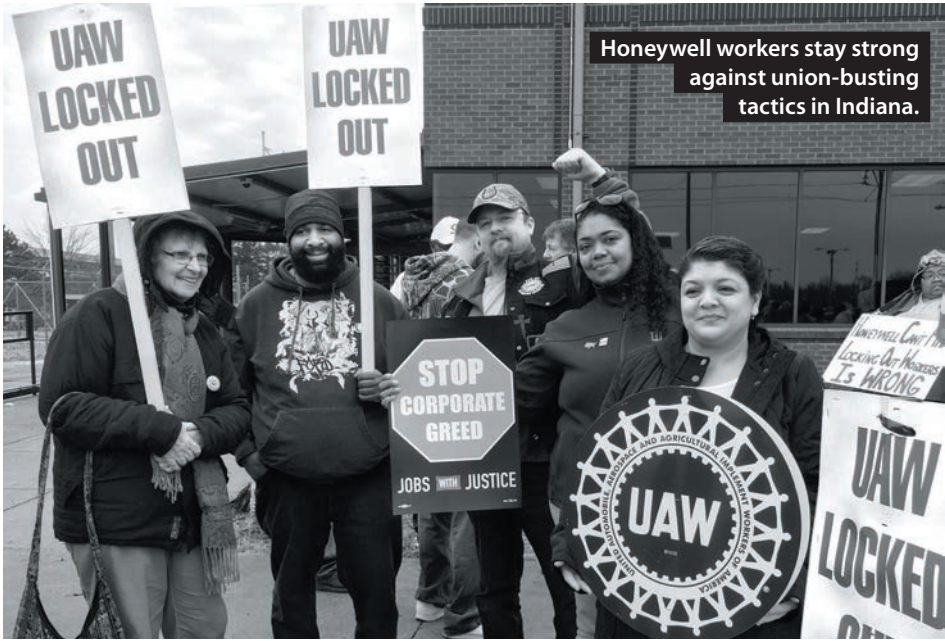
Organizers chose the rally date to honor the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Flint Sit-down Strike. That was the 44-day occupation of General Motors plants that forced the company to recognize the UAW. Local 9 actually pioneered the sit-down tactic in the UAW when it held the union’s first occupation in November 1936, winning union recognition from Bendix after holding the plant for six days.

The union’s supporters rallied at UAW Local 5, which offered its space in solidarity with the locked-out workers. Local 5, one of the original locals that founded the UAW in 1935, represented Studebaker workers until the company folded in 1965. This local still represents workers at several companies.

Paul Mishler, director of Labor Studies at Indiana University-South Bend, chaired the rally and gave a presentation about the 1936 sit-down. Other speakers included Local 9 Vice President Todd Treder; UAW Local 551 Vice President Scott Houldieson, representing the Autoworker Caravan, which initiated the rally; St. Joseph Valley Project/Jobs with Justice Chair Joe Carbone; United Steelworkers staff organizer Robin Rich; and South Bend Common Council member Regina Williams-Preston.

Also speaking were April Lidinsky, director of Gender Studies at Indiana University-South Bend and organizer of the Jan. 21 women’s march in South Bend; Frank Hammer and Melvin Thompson, former presidents of UAW Locals 909 and 140 respectively; and representatives of Local 5, Detroit’s Moratorium Now! Coalition and Steelworkers locals and retiree chapters.

Hammer and Thompson drew the link



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

between the locked-out workers’ struggle and the fight of GM workers in Bogotá, Colombia, who were fired after they were injured. The Association of Injured Workers and Ex-workers of GM Colmotores (Asotrecol) has been maintaining a tent encampment outside the U.S. Embassy for over five years. Local 9 donated one-third of what was collected for their members to Asotrecol.

The combined take of the collection at the rally and two previous collections by a progressive church came to over \$2,500. More churches are planning Sunday collections or pancake breakfasts to assist

the workers, who ran out of unemployment benefits in November.

After the rally, supporters caravanned to the plant, where they yelled at the scabs going in. Many scabs are from Strom Engineering, a union-busting firm brought into the plant prior to the contract vote. Strom employees shadowed the workers while they worked, in order to learn their jobs and be able to run production in the event of a strike or lockout. Union members now assume the lockout was planned in advance.

Chants included “Hey, hey, Honeywell! Take your scabs and go to hell!” □

Protests open cracks in government

Continued from page 1

tion proceedings. These rules make all 11 million undocumented workers in the U.S. subject to arrest and deportation at any time.

Immigration, Customs and Enforcement immediately carried out 160 arrests in Los Angeles. An additional 200 undocumented workers were arrested in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. About 200 were arrested across Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Wisconsin. (New York Times, Feb. 12)

Breaking up a family

Trump’s message was clear in the high-profile deportation of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos, 35, a mother of two who came to the U.S. in the 1990s when she was 14. Garcia was arrested in an ICE workplace raid in 2008, but the agency worked out an arrangement for her to remain as long as she reported to ICE periodically. She had reported eight times since then.

In 2013 an order to deport was instituted, but Garcia de Rayos was allowed to remain. But when Trump changed the rules to allow priority deportation for any illegality, she was seized on Feb. 8 when she reported to ICE and deported within 24 hours.

Protesters were arrested at demonstrations to stop her deportation.

As to the raids over the last week, Trump has announced he was “carrying out my campaign promise.” In other words, he is stoking fear in the immigrant community and stoking hatred in his reactionary racist followers.

Billionaires on a rampage

One of the reasons political machines under capitalist democracy have been hesitant to put billionaires personally in charge of the White House, as opposed to allowing them into the cabinet and other high positions, is the fear that their greed will lead them to wreck the economy and endanger the system altogether.

But now there is a billionaire boss, who came from outside the political establishment, who has moved directly into the

White House, and has complete domination of the most powerful governmental executive position in the world.

The Democratic Party administration of Bill Clinton laid the basis for the great financial crash of 2008. Financial policy was dominated by Robert Rubin, Clinton’s secretary of the Treasury and former head of Goldman Sachs, along with Larry Summers and Alan Greenspan, all voices of Wall Street.

This group cast aside regulations that had put a lid on bank speculation. They overturned the Glass-Steagall Act, passed after the Great Depression. The Clinton group fought against regulating a major new speculative instrument called financial derivatives. That unleashed Wall Street and the banks to do as they pleased.

It took less than 10 years for the massive speculation in mortgages and derivatives to build up a bubble. The bubble burst and the Great Recession of 2008 crashed down on the U.S. and the globe. It made the cyclical capitalist boom-and-bust crisis immeasurably worse.

Now the Trump administration is busily crafting new ways of removing all restraints on the banks and financiers.

In the wake of the 2008 crash, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act was passed to put some restraints on the banks going forward. Trump boasted to a host of bankers that he was going to get advice from Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase on how to take apart Dodd-Frank, among other regulations.

The working class must get ready for a reenactment of speculative frenzy among the bankers and the bosses if Trump pushes through his financial “reform,” which includes his plan to lower corporate taxes and do away with regulations on corporate crimes against the workers and against the environment.

Attacks breed resistance

The right wing mobilized anti-abortion forces nationally on Feb. 11 to demonstrate against Planned Parenthood. Trump has promised to defund the

organization, which provides not only abortions but basic women’s health care throughout the country.

The right-wing demonstrations were met by equal or greater pro-choice forces supporting Planned Parenthood in cities large and small across the country. For example, in St. Paul, Minn., the anti-abortion forces numbered 500 while the pro-choice forces numbered 5,000. (CommonDreams, Feb. 17)

A massive pushback by tens of thousands in the movement against Trump’s Muslim travel ban panicked the ruling class and the courts. Trump suffered a setback as Ninth Circuit Court judges unanimously upheld a Seattle district court ruling that temporarily stopped the travel ban. There is no evidence that Trump has given up the ban, but he has had to say that he might have to redraft it to make it more acceptable in court. But the mass opposition is already in motion.

As demonstrations against the deportations broke out throughout the U.S., a massive demonstration in Mexico City was part of a Mexico-wide mobilization against the wall and the persecution of immigrants. Meanwhile, in the U.S., workers have been demonstrating against anti-union, “right to work” moves in Wisconsin and Michigan state legislatures.

The temporary victory in court against the travel ban and deportations is the result of both the demonstrations down below and the harm that the ban does to the tech industry, the universities, hospitals, agribusiness and other capitalist institutions. It is a case in which the movement on behalf of the oppressed benefited from a combination of their own struggle and a split in the ruling class.

Courts no friend of workers and oppressed

The court ruling on the travel ban has been accompanied by mountains of capitalist praise for judicial checks on the executive, the great “separation of powers,” “checks and balances” and so on.

The Seattle and the Ninth Circuit courts issued liberal rulings. Trump will undoubtedly try again, since the judiciary, and especially the federal judiciary, is the most reactionary branch of the three branches of the capitalist state. Federal judges are appointed for life. They cannot be removed by any ordinary means. Therefore, no one should be inveigled into relying on the courts.

Of course, the workers and oppressed are always in favor of rulings they can take advantage of. For example, the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. the Board

of Education overturned the racist doctrine of “separate but equal,” which had been the legal basis for Jim Crow laws enforcing segregation in the South.

But that 1954 ruling was in anticipation of the coming massive Civil Rights Movement and the general Black Liberation struggle rising in the South. It was an anticipatory ruling.

Similarly, the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion was a ruling in reaction to a mass movement of women. It had nothing to do with any progressive leaning of the court. In fact, it was a Nixon court with a majority of Republican-appointed judges who were under mass pressure.

By contrast, the history of the Supreme Court is overwhelmingly reactionary. An 1806 Supreme Court ruling that a union organized by shoemakers was a “criminal conspiracy” was applied to other unions for much of the 19th century.

The Dred Scott decision of 1857 declared that runaway fugitive enslaved people were still property of a master and had to be returned. The Plessy v. Ferguson ruling of 1896 upheld the pernicious “separate but equal” doctrine of racial segregation in public facilities.

This reactionary history extends all the way to this century’s Citizens United decision, which unleashed billions of dollars to further corrupt the voting system and gut the Voting Rights Act, disenfranchising millions of African American and Latinx people.

As for checks and balances, these are applied by currents of the ruling class to check each other when needed. These checks and balances, now being hailed by the capitalist mass media, have little bearing on the condition of the workers and the oppressed.

There are no checks and balances on the extreme capitalist exploitation and accumulation of wealth in the U.S. that has left the top 0.1 percent of the population with more wealth than the bottom 90 percent.

There are no checks and balances on mass incarceration or racist police killings. There are no checks and balances on the persecution and deportation of immigrants or on the destruction of health care for millions of poor women. There are no checks and balances on imperialist wars of aggression or on the death machines of the military-industrial complex.

As a rule, these atrocities are either ignored or blessed by the courts.

The only true check on the aggression of the ruling class against the workers and the oppressed is the mass struggle. □

Detroit rallies for reproductive justice



Several protests in support of Planned Parenthood and against intensified attacks on women took place in Metro Detroit on Feb. 11. At the Cass Corridor Planned Parenthood, close to 1,000 pro-choice, pro-women demonstrators lined both sides of the street of a long block.

Fewer than a dozen bigoted, anti-abortion protesters dared to show up at this women’s health clinic during nationwide rallies on Feb. 11 calling for the federal government to defund Planned Parenthood. Over 200 clinics were targeted in 45 states and the nation’s capital. The belligerent forces here were surrounded

and drowned out by pro-women militants.

The pro-Planned Parenthood protesters were predominantly youthful, and for many it was their first protest. They experienced how the numbers and power of the people could defy police orders and take the streets.

At least two breakaway marches, including one in the middle of Cass Avenue, took place, with pro-PP militant youth leading the chants and learning leadership skills at the same time. Activists with Workers World Party and the Michigan People’s Defense Network participated.

— Story and photo by Kris Hamel

L.A. protests ICE raids, blocks 101 Freeway



WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

In an extraordinary display of unified action, more than 20 grass-roots progressive and migrant-rights organizations in Los Angeles endorsed and participated in a response to raids and

detentions carried out by U.S. Immigration, Customs and Enforcement in the Los Angeles area. Here, dozens blocked the busy entrance to the 101 Freeway just north of Los Angeles City Hall.

— Report by Scott Scheffer



Global May Day— Strike!

WWP on why the time has come

Continued from page 1

Such assemblies can take many forms, including people’s and workers’ assemblies, women’s assemblies, LGBTQ assemblies, student and youth assemblies, etc. These assemblies could facilitate bringing tens of thousands of organizers into general strike-building, as well as providing the opportunity for militants and activists to issue their own calls for the general strike that reflect local demands, as well as the demands of diverse sections of the workers and oppressed.

First task: Defend the oppressed

In building for a global May Day, it’s important to understand that the first need is to rally to the political and physical defense of the most oppressed who are the first targets of Trump. Some on the left have mistakenly dismissed the movements for Black Lives Matter, immigrants and Muslims, Latinx and Indigenous rights, which Standing Rock represents, and all the struggles of the most oppressed, including women, LGBTQ communities and people with disabilities, as “identity politics.”

This mistake can only serve to further marginalize and demonize the most oppressed sections of the working class, who are already the first targets of neofascism. This mistake also ruptures the necessary solidarity between the workers and the oppressed. When we talk about the working class, we are talking about the oppressed. This is why the workers’ movement changed the slogan “Workers of the world unite” to “Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite.” Our view is that it is the oppressed who are in the leadership of the entire working class.

Trump does not represent the beginning of attacks on the oppressed. Capitalism’s war on the oppressed has been going on for a long time. Trump has only unmasked it.

As part of the task of defending the oppressed, we advocate for the establishment of local defense committees whose first priority is to defend the oppressed against attacks from both the state and reactionary, white-supremacist and neofascist elements.

Trumpism is a desperate attempt to save capitalism by dividing the workers and oppressed

The election of billionaire, white-supremacist and neofascist Donald Trump in the United States, together with the ascendancy of neofascists in other parts of the world, has opened up a new phase of the world struggle between global capitalism and imperialism and the workers and the oppressed. The crisis that produced Trump is the crisis of a dying capitalist system. The goal of Trump and his neofascist, global counterparts is to divert the global uprising against a dying capitalist system into a global war against the most oppressed by destroying the revolutionary objective of solidarity between the workers and the oppressed.

Capitalist parties cannot lead the fight against Trump

We must not allow the liberal (actually neoliberal) wing of the imperialist ruling class, represented by the Democratic Party in the U.S. and by pro-capitalist, social-democratic parties elsewhere, to lead the struggle against Trumpism. This camp of the global capitalist class has been the main servants of capitalism, charged with preventing the working class from becoming independent of capitalist political parties. This camp of world imperialism has thrown the entire working class under the bus, paving the way for the Trumps and Le Pens of the world.

We welcome the mass protests against Trump. It is a sign that millions are becoming radicalized. The protest movement must not be usurped by any capitalist party, but instead channeled toward independent revolutionary resistance and uprising. It is up to the workers and the oppressed of the planet, including all genuinely independent progressive forces, to commence now the final struggle to rid humanity of the malignancy of capitalism once and for all.

A revolutionary united front against neofascism, racism, war, capitalism and imperialist war

This crisis has opened the biggest opportunity for a regroupment of the revolutionary, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist left on a global scale in a lifetime. We appeal to all anti-capitalist forces — whether communist, socialist, anarchist, etc., and especially those belonging to oppressed peoples, nations, communities, the labor movement and the working class — to embark on a new road to a global, revolutionary, united front.

Among other things, such a revolutionary front would be an ally of the militant youth, who all too often have come to view most of the left as wanting to put a brake on their militancy.

It is not necessary for anyone to give up their principled political differences in order to forge a revolutionary united front. However, especially now, anti-capitalist forces cannot allow differences to become a barrier to forging such a front. We are not opposed to a broader front on a temporary basis. Genuine revolutionaries must set aside sectarian habits. We also understand the need for different tactics that address the whole working class and its many different layers of political consciousness.

To repeat, we understand the need to be able to work with broader forces on a temporary basis. If, however, revolutionaries are not able to forge a higher level of unity, it will only make it easier for the Democratic Party and other pro-capitalist parties to resuscitate themselves by posing as the opponents of Trump.

On to the May Day Global General Strike! Shut It Down! □

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba is an edited compilation of 25 articles from the *Workers World* newspaper series by Feinberg entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at workers.org.

Oscar López’s bittersweet freedom

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

In a surprise action on Feb. 9, Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera returned to his homeland, Puerto Rico, after the second Obama Administration commuted his sentence in its last days in mid-January. But what so many people longed for — to greet him with hugs, Puerto Rican flags and slogans of national freedom, to make him aware of their love and gratitude — was impeded by the cruel, vengeful orders of the U.S. Empire.

López Rivera arrived at the San Juan Airport accompanied by his daughter Clarisa López, his brother José López, his lawyer Jan Susler and elected officials: the mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulín Cruz; the speaker of the City Council of New York, Melissa Mark-Viverito; and Congressperson Luis Guterrez, Democratic Party representative from Chicago.

The people gathered to meet Oscar at the terminal where he would arrive were astonished by the speed of events and the absolute impossibility of greeting him. The officials accompanying Oscar on his trip from North Carolina, where he had been transferred from Terre Haute Prison in Indiana, walked quickly around him, trying to keep him hidden. They even put a cap on his head in an attempt to cover his face.

Despite those accompanying Oscar trying to cover the television lens, this writer was able to see through the cameras a part of his walk through the airport halls. These glimpses of Oscar’s face aroused immense joy as well as great indignation, feelings shared by many people judging by the many comments on social media.

Interviewed by the media about Oscar’s arrival, Puerto Rican hero and former political prisoner Rafael Cancel Miranda told how important it was to him to be greeted by thousands of Puerto Ricans at the airport in 1979. That’s when he arrived there with Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores and Andrés Collazo after being pardoned by U.S. President Jimmy Carter. He spoke of the extraordinary joy — euphoria even — he felt to see thousands of people gathered, carrying Puerto Rican flags, when he reached Borinquen soil after 26 years in Yankee dungeons.

Oscar was deprived of this welcome. His lawyer Jan Susler said, “He is under strict supervision. He is in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons. If he wants to be in Puerto Rico, he has to be confined to

his home. He has to meet the conditions ... the most important, apart from complying with the law, is that he maintain a very low profile.” (elnuevodia.com, Feb. 9)

“Low profile” includes house arrest at the home of his daughter Clarisa, which he can leave only for medical appointments and to go to the Bureau of Prisons. He cannot talk to people with a prison record, be in any public hearing or be interviewed by the media. In addition, he must wear an electronic shackle until May 17, when he will finally finish his sentence after being a prisoner for 36 years.

Political context

Within the parameters of the U.S. “legal justice” system, there is no reason why his commutation could not have included Oscar’s immediate release. Not only is his continued control an open cruelty, it is a highly political act, preventing Oscar from being an active and cohesive element in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence.

The struggle for Oscar’s freedom has been endorsed by the most diverse Puerto Rican forces, from the current pro-statehood Governor Ricardo Roselló to pro-independence and socialist tendencies, along with religious communities of all beliefs and all social movements in between. Oscar is the symbol of the united will of a people to fight for what it considers just. That was also

the way it was with the victorious struggle to remove the U.S. Navy from the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

Now is a critical time for the Borinquen archipelago, where dangerous events are taking place. The first is the imposition of an overwhelming and dictatorial Fiscal Control Board (JCF) that seeks to bleed the working class to pay Wall Street’s bondholders. Among these bondholders is the vulture-funds firm of the now infamous John Paulson, one of the top advisers to President Donald Trump.

In addition, another administration has been established harmful to the Puerto Rican working class — that of Gov. Roselló, who imposes reforms to please the JCF while making Puerto Rican workers’ lives precarious. On top of all this, there is another proposal for a futile status plebiscite to be held on June 11.

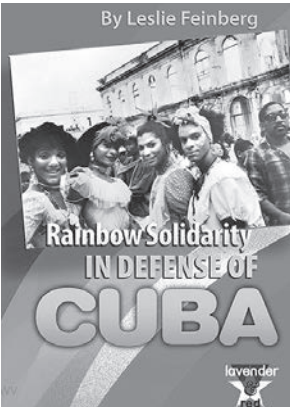
Never before has the struggle for true Puerto Rican sovereignty been so crucial. We are reaching a crossroads at this terminal phase of capitalism — a phase that seeks profits at the cost of the very life of the working class — by eliminating all the achievements obtained through decades of struggle. □



Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg author of ‘Stone Butch Blues’

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba documents revolutionary Cuba’s inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes. This ground-breaking book reveals how the Cuban Revolution has grappled with the pre-revolutionary legacy of 450 years of persecution and exploitation of homosexuality. Rainbow Solidarity answers the demonization of the 1959 Cuban Revolution by Washington and the CIA, Wall Street and Hollywood by demonstrating that the process of solving these problems is the forward motion of the revolution.



Available at major booksellers online

Eyewitness: ‘Indomitable strength’ of Cuba’s Revolution

By Nathaniel Peters

On Jan. 1, 1959, the Cuban people, with the leadership of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and others, overthrew the U.S.-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista and established a socialist state 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

The accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution are many, including free education and health care for all Cubans, a long record of support for anti-imperialist struggles around the world, and enormous relief efforts in response to humanitarian crises, such as the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak.

The Revolution has also overcome enormous obstacles, including the U.S.-orchestrated invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, the U.S. blockade (in place since 1960), numerous terrorist attacks by Cuban exile militias based in Florida and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In spite of this extraordinary endurance, U.S. journalists and politicians constantly declare impending collapse of the Revolution. After 58 years of incorrect predictions, they’re still at it. These voices have only grown louder since the 2011 changes in Cuban economic policy, the 2014 thaw in U.S.-Cuba relations and the death of Fidel Castro last year.

So are the naysayers right this time? How strong is the Cuban Revolution? Will it endure?

The people are the revolution

Last month, this writer had the opportunity to visit Cuba and witness the indomitable strength of the Revolution firsthand. On Jan. 27, thousands of students marched through the streets of Havana in the annual “March of the Torches” to commemorate Jose Martí, the



March of the Torches, Havana, Jan. 27.

WW PHOTO: NATHANIEL PETERS

Cuban national hero. The march was first organized at the University of Havana in 1953 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Martí’s birth. This year’s march was the first since the passing of Fidel Castro and was dedicated to him.

When asked about the recent developments in Cuba, Alejandro, an electrical engineering student at the José Antonio Echeverría Higher Polytechnic Institute who attended the march, put it this way:

“A lot of people think that when Fidel died the Revolution was going to fall apart, but that is not going to happen. The young Cubans are going to strengthen the Revolution and carry it forward. A big change is the change in U.S.-Cuba relations, which should benefit both countries ... but that

doesn’t mean we will give up any of the principles we have struggled for, or that we will let ourselves be defeated.”

Richard, who is studying biochemistry and Chinese at the University of Havana, made it clear what those principles are: “Fidel took [Martí’s] ideas and values, the ideas of anti-imperialism, patriotism and Latin-Americanism and put them into practice.... Some things are never going to change: free health care and education.”

Given Fidel’s enormous significance to the Cuban people, one might expect to find his face painted on every surface since his passing. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth: Fidel’s image is almost nowhere to be seen.

Raúl Castro announced at a tribute to

Fidel before his burial, “Faithful to Martí’s philosophy that ‘all the glory in the world fits into a kernel of corn,’ the leader of the Revolution rejected any manifestation of a cult of personality, and remained true to this position until the last hours of his life, insisting that, after his death, his name and likeness never be used to designate institutions, plazas, parks, avenues, streets or other public spaces, nor monuments, busts, statues and other such tributes be erected.” (en.granma.cu)

Alejandro explained this decision, “Fidel wanted to make it clear that he wasn’t the Revolution, that the people were the Revolution. Don’t think the Revolution is over because Fidel has died. We are strong and will continue with his ideas.” □

Fidel honored at Harlem, N.Y., meeting

By Stephen Millies
New York

Over 500 people jammed the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Center in Harlem, N.Y., on Feb. 4, to pay tribute to Fidel Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban Revolution, at an event entitled, “The Legacy Continues.” Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO (Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization)/Pastors for Peace, emceed with Malcolm Sacks of the Venceremos Brigade.

Walker noted the event was being held on “hallowed ground,” the site of Malcolm X’s assassination on Feb. 21, 1965. Sacks called Fidel “a real example of a revolutionary leader.”

The podium displayed a photograph of Malcolm X and Fidel laughing during their meeting at Harlem’s Hotel Theresa in 1960. A beautiful banner painted by Carlito Rivera featured Fidel’s portrait.

The Afro-Boricua Drumming and Dance Ensemble set the tribute in motion. Zayid Muhammad, revolutionary poet, gave a libation that evoked Caribbean revolutionaries Marcus Garvey, Pedro Albizu Campos and José Martí.

Scenes of Fidel at critical events in the Revolution’s history were shown on video: at the Granma’s landing, directing U.S. imperialism’s defeat at the Bay of Pigs, and in the Sierra Maestra mountains with comrades Che Guevara, Celia Sánchez and Juan Almeida. Footage showed Fidel with Nelson Mandela and Hugo Chávez, and also speaking at Har-



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

A standing ovation given to Anayansi Rodríguez, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations, Feb. 4.

lem’s Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1995 and at Riverside Church in 2000.

Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations Anayansi Rodríguez told the audience: “You are sisters and brothers.” She cited Fidel’s trips to New York before and after the Cuban Revolution’s triumph. She spoke of Fidel’s love for the late Rev. Lucius Walker, as depicted in footage of Fidel embracing him. Rev. Walker, Gail Walker’s father, founded Pastors for Peace.

Fidel: ‘a great friend and ally’

Video statements were played from South Africa, Angola and Namibia. Jerry Matthews Matjila, South Africa’s ambassador to the United Nations, called Fidel “a great friend and ally.”

Walker recognized audience members: Nguyen Phuong Nga, U.N. ambassador from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

former 30-year political prisoner Sekou Odinga; Puerto Rican revolutionary Esperanza Martell; the Rev. Herbert Daughtry of the House of the Lord Church; and the Rev. James A. Forbes, senior minister emeritus of the Riverside Church.

Dr. Joaquín Morante, a physician practicing in East Harlem, said he was one of 145 doctors from the U.S. who were provided a free medical education at Cuba’s Latin America School of Medicine, which has trained 20,000 physicians from over 100 countries.

“Long live the Haitian and Cuban revolutions!” declared Ninaj Raoul, director of Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees.

Cultural presentations included Sala Cyril reading a poem saluting Fidel by Zenzile Khoisan from South Africa. Puerto Rican revolutionary Frank Velgara, event co-organizer, also read a poem honoring

Fidel. World-renowned jazz pianist Dayramir González and violinist Taitiana Ferrer performed.

Jaime Mendieta, president of Casa de las Américas, spoke of Fidel’s trip to New York in 1955, when he addressed 800 people to gain support for the July 26th Movement fighting dictator Fulgencio Batista. Casa de las Américas members aided that struggle and later defended the Cuban Revolution.

Larry Hamm, leader of New Jersey’s dynamic People’s Organization for Progress, concluded with a fiery speech: “U.S. imperialism has not been able to defeat the Cuban Revolution. We must end the blockade against Cuba. To make revolution in the United States is the greatest tribute to Fidel.” He asserted, “We know the Cuban people will protect Assata Shakur,” the Black revolutionary given asylum there.

The program ended with drumming and dancing by Dr. Drum and Bomba Ya. Audience members danced in the aisles.

In the beautiful program produced by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Si Organizing Committee, Workers World Party declared: “Fidel will continue to inspire not only the Cuban people but the hundreds of millions around the world who yearn for liberation.” □

Nueva Central de Trabajadores de México a la ofensiva

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Si el 1ro de enero de 1994 las y los heroicos rebeldes indígenas de Chiapas bajo el EZLN lanzaron el grito de lucha tras la entrada en vigor del TLCAN; hoy en 2017 una considerable parte del pueblo mexicano se encuentra en diversas luchas de resistencia. Muchas de las cuales han sido por el efecto causado por ese nefasto TLC que llevó a México ser una neocolonia del capital internacional, predominantemente estadounidense. Habiendo perdido su soberanía económica, México se encuentra a merced de Wall Street y por consecuencia, a la crisis del gran capital liderado por los EUA.

Pero el deterioro económico y social resultante, lo que ha provocado - aparte de la miseria y la consecuente migración hacia el “gigante del norte” – es una indignación y un fuerte deseo de lucha popular. Desde la lucha del magisterio y los mineros, pasando por la de justicia por los 43 de Ayotzinapa, hasta las recientes y multitudinarias protestas extendidas por el país contra la imposición hasta de un 20 por ciento de aumento en el precio de la gasolina – denominado “el gasolinazo”, el pueblo se ha estado manifestando en las calles.

Como escribió la compañera Teresa Gutiérrez en su artículo “Advertencia a Trump: Critique a México, se provoca revolución” en la edición del 1ro de febrero de Workers World-Mundo Obrero, “México está maduro para el cambio revolucionario. El gobierno mexicano podría ser derribado en cualquier momento si no fuera por los miles de millones que los EUA envían bajo el pretexto de combatir las drogas”.

Es en este contexto histórico que se

celebró el pasado 27-29 de enero, el II Congreso Ordinario Nacional de la Nueva Central de Trabajadores de México. En comunicado de prensa, José Humberto Montes de Oca Luna, Coordinador de la Estructura Ejecutiva y Secretario del Exterior del Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (SME) dijo: “Con la presencia de una importante delegación de invitados internacionales de Brasil, Argentina, Uruguay, Estados Unidos, Nicaragua, Australia y Suiza, así como de cerca de 300 delegados de más de 50 organizaciones provenientes de 20 estados de la República, culminó exitosamente nuestro Segundo Congreso”.

Previo al congreso, se envió ampliamente el documento “Acerca de la situación actual” para el análisis y discusión política. Luego de un análisis de la crisis capitalista, se exponía la situación nacional, terminando con la “Táctica de la NCT en la coyuntura del 2017”.

Algunas de las resoluciones incluidas en el comunicado ilustran la esencia de esta nueva central. Entre ellas destacan:

Un pronunciamiento “en contra de Donald Trump por su política anti mexicana, racista, anti inmigrante, misógina y retrógrada, a partir de su discurso proteccionista y neonazi.

Rechaza tajantemente el gasolinazo impuesto por el gobierno de Enrique Peña Nieto y se compromete a apoyar las protestas populares... proponiendo que el 5 de febrero se realicen Asambleas Populares en todas las plazas públicas para organizar una gran Jornada Nacional de Lucha, un Día Nacional de Protesta el 16 de febrero próximo...



- Se solidariza con las principales luchas y exige la aparición con vida de los 43 normalistas de Ayotzinapa...
- Lanzar una Campaña de Afiliación individual y directa de los trabajadores y trabajadoras no organizados ..., que estén dispuestos a formar Sindicatos o Comités de Lucha para sumarse a la Nueva Central...
- Asimismo realizará una campaña de organización de la juventud trabajadora.
- Apoyará las luchas de los migrantes mexicanos en EUA, con quienes buscaremos una coordinación binacional, para luchar conjuntamente contra las deportaciones masivas que pretende realizar Donald Trump.
- Convoca a la Jornada Internacional por un paro de mujeres el próximo 8 de marzo, realizando una gran movilización en contra de los feminicidios y por los derechos de la mujer”.

Además, incluye solidaridad con las luchas de los pueblos latinoamericanos contra el neoliberalismo y la ofensiva Trump. Termina el comunicado diciendo que “La NCT comienza una nueva etapa en su construcción por la emancipación social, política y económica de la clase trabajadora de México y el Mundo”.

¿Cómo surgió la NCT?

En el año 2011, durante una Conferencia Nacional Sindical, el SME presentó una ponencia titulada “Por una nueva central de trabajadores del campo y la ciudad”, lo que luego de debates, hizo surgir la propuesta de construcción

de una central incluyente, democrática y clasista que aunara los diversos sectores de la clase obrera.

La propuesta del programa se ha basado en un análisis profundo de la situación en México, no sólo desde el TCLAN, sino históricamente desde la revolución del 1910-17, dentro del contexto internacional y de los avances del capitalismo hacia formas más depredadoras. El programa completo se puede leer en nuevacentral.org.mx.

Es importante destacar el carácter clasista de esta Central y su compromiso por la unidad de las fuerzas progresistas mexicanas, el esfuerzo por la formación ideológica representado en dos escuelas de formación sindical apoyadas por la Fundación Rosa Luxemburgo, y el trabajo de diseminación política a través de su periódico y la utilización de los medios sociales virtuales.

La NCT se describe como una central autónoma, democrática, solidaria, internacionalista, independiente y anticapitalista. La componen 60 organizaciones, entre las cuales se encuentran dos centrales sindicales que agrupan 12 sindicatos. Además de una Confederación de organizaciones cooperativistas, Alianza Cooperativista Nacional, con cerca de 200 cooperativas.

Montes de Oca le comentó a WW-MO: “El Congreso fue exitoso en tanto pudo congregarse 50 organizaciones sindicales y populares de 22 estados de la República, pero sobre todo por sus definiciones políticas que nos permitirán lanzar una nueva etapa de construcción que incluirá la organización de los trabajadores no organizados, resaltando el papel fundamental de las mujeres y jóvenes en este proceso”.

Los retos que plantea la ofensiva de la derecha en América Latina

III. América Latina requiere una nueva oleada revolucionaria

Hacer frente a la ofensiva del capitalismo imperialista coaligado con las derechas y burguesías nacionales requiere un vuelco en la lucha de clases que devuelva a la acción ofensiva a las masas trabajadoras. Sólo la movilización popular revolucionaria, no la movilización clientelista electorera, ni las medidas de conciliación con la burguesía, puede hacer la diferencia en la correlación de fuerzas.

De hecho, en muchos sectores de América Latina las luchas no se han detenido y continúan, pero tampoco han escalado a nivel de los años 90. Para rebasar los límites que alcanzaron las revoluciones democráticas y antineoliberales de los años 90, se requerirán nuevas revoluciones, las revoluciones del siglo XXI, las cuales ya se están gestando en las luchas populares actuales, especialmente entre la juventud antisistema que combate en todos lados.

La movilización independiente y revolucionaria de las masas trabajadoras y populares, su intensidad y maduración consciente es un proceso objetivo, cuyo curso y ritmos es difícil de prever y dirigir. Como el vino, las clases trabajadoras requieren tiempo de maduración, para agotar experiencias, para sacar conclusiones, para construir nuevas direcciones políticas, para decidir cursos de acción.

Enfrentar exitosamente la ofensiva reaccionaria requerirá de nuevas dirigencias que se alejen de dos defectos políticos muy en boga en la actualidad: por un lado, el oportunismo de quienes no pretenden otra cosa que administrar el sistema capitalista, sin rebasar los límites hasta ahora alcanzados; y el sectarismo, que reniega de las experiencias concretas de la gente, por lo que no embona con su imaginario, incapacitándose para hablar-

Esta es la tercera y última sección de la exposición presentada por Olmedo Beluche, Analista y autor marxista panameño, profesor de sociología de la Universidad de Panamá y miembro del Polo Democrático. Beluche hizo su presentación durante un foro titulado “La situación de las Izquierdas en America Latina,” organizado por la Fundación Friedrich Ebert en la ciudad de Panamá el 25 de agosto del 2016.

les a las masas que se han movilizan bajo la dirección política de Chávez, Evo, Correa, los Kirchner o Lula.

Se requerirán nuevas direcciones políticas dispuestas a asumir riesgos y costos en el enfrentamiento a la reacción imperialista, para derrotar la ofensiva reaccionaria, combinando la lucha por derechos democráticos y humanos, an-

tineoliberales, con verdaderas medidas de corte socialistas, como: poder obrero real, mediante organismos assemblearios, nacionalización de la banca, la industria y el comercio exterior.

Partes primera y segunda:
www.workers.org
<http://tinyurl.com/zeprb5j>
<http://tinyurl.com/h69luy5>



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Durante décadas, la clase capitalista ha utilizado la revolución tecnológica digital para aumentar la productividad del trabajo a un ritmo récord. Menos trabajadores producen más bienes y servicios en menos tiempo con salarios más bajos. El resultado es una serie de “recuperaciones sin empleos” que hace que las cosas vayan aún peor.

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.

www.Amazon.com

www.lowwagecapitalism.com