

WORKERS WORLD PARTY
PARTIDO MUNDO OBRERO

EVERY STRUGGLE IS A WOMAN'S STRUGGLE

GWA on strike
against
Frontier
Communications

Don't Use
Our Fare
Money to
Fight the
Racist

WENDY'S:
END
SEXUAL
VIOLENCE
IN THE
FIELD

WENDY'S:
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JUSTICE
FOR
FARM
WORKERS

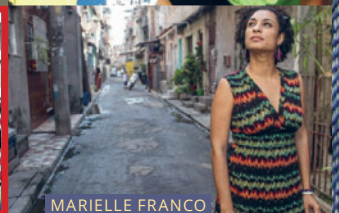
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BERTA CACERES



MARIELLE FRANCO

FROM THE PAGES OF WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER

Dedication

To Winnie Mandela (1936-2018), the heroic freedom fighter in the South African anti-apartheid struggle who inspired working and oppressed women worldwide to join the global anti-apartheid solidarity movement.

To Marielle Franco (1979-2018), Brazilian political activist of African descent, Rio City Council member, a lesbian, mother, member of the LGBTQ community and the left Party of Socialism and Liberty (PSOL), who was assassinated in Rio on March 14.

To Berta Cáceres (1971-2016), world-renowned Honduran human rights and environmental activist and Indigenous leader, who was assassinated while leading an extended campaign against a proposed dam.

These women personify the South African saying:

***“Now you have touched the women.
You have struck a rock.
You have dislodged a boulder.
You will be crushed.”***

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Introduction

By Sue Davis and Phebe Eckfeldt, April 3, 2018

Women have risen up to oppose the reactionary Trump administration and to assert our rights. The outpouring of millions of women at the Women's March, not just in the U.S but globally, on January 20, 2017, the day after his inauguration, signaled a new era. Now #MeToo and Time's Up are leading the way, as women fight for justice and equality, in all areas of life, but especially in our personal lives — for bodily integrity and self-respect.

This pamphlet, a compilation of articles from the pages of Workers World newspaper from late 2016 to Women's History Month 2018, reflects those many struggles. Struggle is the only way to bring about change, especially the thorough-going, multidimensional change that's needed to bring about women's liberation. Those leading the struggle for change include the activists fighting racist police violence, against sexual abuse, for living wages led by Fight for \$15 and a union, for DACA and stopping deportations and raids, for a clean environment and the youth uniting coast-to-coast around the demand for safe schools and much more.

The many articles selected for this pamphlet show the wide range of struggles that women in the U.S. are actively involved in — against racism and white supremacy; for the right to quality, comprehensive health care and control of our own bodies; for ending the pay gap and for union representation; and for recognition of transgender people's rights. Articles on women in the Democratic Republic of Korea and Cuba show what's possible for women building socialist workers' states.

Because these articles originated in Workers World, the newspaper of Workers World Party, they reflect a Marxist perspective about the role of women in society. Women are seen as a vital, integral component in the overarching struggle to end capitalism and classism. The basis of women's oppression and inequality is rooted in patriarchy, which arose at the same time as classes developed, with rich owners lording their wealth over those without property. Today's struggle for women's liberation is essential to overthrowing patriarchal capitalist class society and establishing egalitarian socialism.

Some in the progressive movement, in the name of condemning capitalism, assert that so-called "identity politics" have no place in the struggle to end class oppression and exploitation. But all people must understand why patriarchy should be dismantled and obliterated, at the same time that all people must unite against racism and LGBTQ bigotry so that all forms of class oppression can be smashed and dumped into the wastebin of history.

As Monica Morehead stated in a talk at an International Working Women's Day meeting in Boston on March 17: "WWP holds the view that all oppressed nationalities and workers will eventually win their emancipation through socialism — no matter what road they decide to take to get there, up to and including separation. But if we want to win our class to this view about socialism, we understand that this is a process that will only be achieved by building genuine solidarity within our class — the working class — through patience and perseverance.

"And in order to deepen that solidarity, we must avoid at all costs, the mistakes of the past. The most central mistake was not recognizing that within the working class, there is not equality. That one should not have to marginalize or put to the side one's identity as a person of color, a woman, a queer person, a person with disability, all for the sake of 'class unity.' Some characterize this as 'identity politics,' which is a cop out from doing the necessary work to build this unity."

Working-class unity, based on solidarity, is needed for victory against the bosses and bankers who run the capitalist world and pull the strings of politicians and media moguls. Solidarity is the glue that binds together the many separate struggles fighting against capitalist rule. It is our most potent weapon in forging a better world.

This compilation of articles exploring the breadth and depth of women's oppression is intended to hasten and inspire the struggle of women and of the overall class struggle. May it be a resource, a guide for and a contribution to that united struggle.

Note: All articles are identified by the date when they were posted on Workers World's website. Over half the articles are reprinted in their entirety; others have been cut ("excerpted" appears after the date). One is a combination of two articles ("revised" after the date). Each article date is followed by a URL to the original article.

Women and Standing Rock: 'Nothing will ever be the same!'

By Mahtowin Munro, April 4, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170404MM

Mahtowin Munro, of the United American Indians of New England, is also lead organizer for Indigenous People's Day in Massachusetts.

The relationship of Indigenous peoples to the land that was invaded is of first importance, not an afterthought. Everyone needs to think about your relationship to the land and water where you live. For Indigenous people, we are caretakers of the land and water. They are part of our personal bodies and of our body politic as tribal people. In defending the land and water, we exert our inherent sovereignty as Native Nations.

I am inspired by Indigenous women who have been great warriors or scholars or leaders. But we have so many amazing Indigenous women past and present who hold our families together, our own mothers and grandmothers and aunties, who show tremendous courage and strength every day even if they did not become the first lawyer or first tenured professor or ride a horse and lead everybody into a big battle against white people.

When I think about International Women's Day, I think about a lot of women who went before, more than we could name here, women whose names are not known, because some of our history has been stolen from us.

When I am talking about women, I want to explicitly say that I am including trans women. It is important to celebrate the resurgence of Two Spirit leadership that is occurring, with a strong Two Spirit presence at Standing Rock and many other places.

Women and Two Spirit people have been bearing the weight of colonialism in so many ways, for so long.

When Columbus and Cortés and the Pilgrims and all those other invaders came, they had no understanding of the land. In fact, they saw it as something to be tamed and conquered. Their contempt for the land was matched by their greed and by their violence against women and Two Spirit people.

This violence has not stopped for a single day. Black and trans people are wholesale murdered this year and every year. There are thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirits throughout the Americas. Our relations are sold into the "man camps" at fracking and pipeline sites or shipped out on boats from ports such as Duluth, Minn.

The leadership of women at Standing Rock was not new. Women have always been leading the way. However, the settlers intentionally undercut our leadership and would only deal with men as leaders. In more recent times, the media have often ignored the work of women and focused on male leaders. But it was impossible for that to happen at Standing Rock.

Unprecedented unity

I have heard a few people say that we lost, that nothing was gained at Standing Rock, because the water protectors did not succeed in shutting down the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. That is false.

Nothing will ever be the same! The unprecedented unity of Indigenous peoples from throughout the world has strengthened the Native struggle in a thousand ways. And there was an extraordinary outpouring of support from non-Native people. Thousands of people traveled out there, and thousands marched and raised money and found other ways to support.

The Trump administration greenlighted the Dakota Access Pipeline project, and oil may run through any day now. But the struggle has spread. Fights against pipelines and all extractive industries in the Americas began long before the Dakota Access struggle, and they will continue long after, too.

Our struggles are deadly serious. We are fighting for water, for life, for future generations. It is no exaggeration to say that our beautiful planet, our only planet, is in danger of dying. And we are running out of time.

The fundamental right to clean water flows through many communities and many struggles right now. The people of Flint, Mich., are still suffering. Water is continuing to be shut off in Detroit and Baltimore and other cities, predominantly in Black neighborhoods. Migrants in border colonias, and farm workers and people in rural Black communities, all deal with unsafe water. On the Navajo reservation, 40 percent of people do not have drinkable water, and there is uranium even in the little babies' bodies there. More than 100 Native Nations in Canada do not have drinkable water.

“Water Is Life” is not just a slogan. Defending our planet is not a “bougie” white thing, although it can certainly feel that way looking at many environmental nongovernmental organizations. Poor people, Indigenous peoples, people of color are most impacted by environmental devastation. This is OUR struggle.

We need to join together to resist Trump and fight fascism. We don't need to be respectable and we must not collaborate. We don't need to give free speech to Nazis and white supremacists. We need to fight on all fronts. We don't need to drop the struggle every few years to focus all our energy on elections, either.

We may get little reforms here and there, like crumbs dropping from their tables, but that is not enough. I was always taught to be grateful, maybe you were too, and that is a good practice for all of us. But I will not be grateful for crumbs, for colonization or for capitalist economic and government systems that do not represent us. Crumbs are not going to save the earth, they are not going to

save the water, and they are not going to save us or people suffering from endless imperialist theft and wars, whether in Palestine or Puerto Rico.

I think we also need to actively participate in the construction of alternatives to these systems. I see the work of the Zapatistas doing that down in Chiapas, for instance.

We need to work together and learn from each other and the struggles of the past, to follow the example of Standing Rock. The hundreds of those arrested include many youth and elders and many, many women. As the water protector camps were finally cleared entirely in late February, one of the last arrested was Regina Brave, who is 80 and was also a veteran of the Wounded Knee takeover in 1973.

There is a war against us. The war did not just start when Trump was elected. Immigrants, Muslims, disabled people, Black and Latinx and Asian people, Indigenous, trans and Two Spirit people — we must be in solidarity with each other. ♦

#MeToo and the bosses

Editorial, November 15, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171115ED

There are times when a few words speak volumes. “Me too” succinctly expresses the pain of millions of women and others who retweeted the hashtag or posted on Facebook, saying they too had experienced sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace.

The #MeToo campaign was a reaction to the publicity around the criminal sexual abuse perpetrated by Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. Since that story broke, about 80 actors, models and other industry professionals have come out publicly with horror stories of molestation and even rape. Oscar winners have been among those exposing Weinstein’s 30+-year pattern of misogynistic conduct.

All of these abuse survivors demonstrated tremendous strength and courage.

The Weinstein story followed earlier revelations about Fox News executive Roger Ailes and right-wing commentator Bill O’Reilly, not to mention the bigot in chief’s unchecked bravado around vagina-grabbing. Now dozens of high-profile personalities in media, entertainment, commerce and politics (Democrats as well as Republicans) have been identified as purveyors of workplace sexual abuse.

Former Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore, who at one time adamantly displayed the Ten Commandments as “the law” in his court chambers, has been named by women who were underaged teenagers when he allegedly

assaulted them. Now a candidate for the Senate, he was a 30-something county district attorney at the time.

The ruling class, through its mass media and political mouthpieces, indoctrinates the masses with its class perspective. As Karl Marx explained, the dominant ideas of any age are the ideas of its ruling class. Today they're from the owners of capital.

Despite all the gains of the women's and LGBTQ liberation movements, the rich and powerful still view women, young men and nonbinary and trans people who work for them — even “big stars” — as property to be exploited economically and sexually. Sexual abuse pervades the entire news, publishing and entertainment industry under capitalism — an industry that perpetuates woman-hating, racist, xenophobic, anti-LGBTQ and anti-working class stereotypes for mass consumption.

So the experiences of well-paid professional women who felt relatively safe speaking out are not even the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of workplace sexual abuse survivors labor at menial jobs at subsistence wages. If, in a 24-hour timeframe, 12 million posted their “#MeToo” stories on social media, how many tens of millions who work in retail, food service, factory, health care, agricultural, domestic, public and other sectors are suffering in silence?

And how many LGBTQ workers are being doubly targeted by bigoted bosses?

Despite Anita Hill's role in 1991 describing sexual harassment by current U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, women of color remain marginalized in public discourse on this injustice. Yet they have been dealt the harshest treatment, from abuses suffered during the theft of Indigenous lands and chattel slavery to present day immigration raids that render Latinas and other women of color vulnerable. Witness the 2011 sexual assault of African immigrant hotel housekeeper Nafissatou Diallo by former International Monetary Fund President Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

But isn't any kind of sexual harassment illegal now? Since 1986, sexual harassment has been legally recognized as a specific form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Yet the state and federal agencies charged with enforcing the law have not made even a dent in the problem. Why?

For millennia privileged men have circumvented whatever protections might exist — and until three decades ago there were no legal ones for working class and oppressed people. Today's workplace sexual abuse and assault is yet one more vile way for bosses to attempt to intimidate, divide and control workers who are just trying to survive in a cold, hostile, unjust capitalist world.

The prevalence of workplace sexual violence is another reminder of the irreconcilable antagonism between labor and capital. Putting an end to all systems of exploitation will finally enable humanity to rid itself of the entrenched patriarchy that only serves the interest of the bosses. ♦

700,000 women farm workers say: 'Us too'

By Kathy Durkin, November 28, 2017 (revised)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171128KD

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas organizers spoke movingly to thousands of participants at the #Me Too Survivors March Nov. 12 in Los Angeles. They read a letter of solidarity from women farm workers to the courageous women who publicly spoke out about their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in Hollywood. Current and former women agricultural workers and their relatives comprise the national alliance.

Their excerpted statement begins: "We write on behalf of the 700,000 women who work in the agricultural fields and packing sheds across the United States. [W]e have watched and listened with sadness as we have learned of the actors, models and other individuals who have come forward to speak about the gender-based violence they have experienced at the hands of bosses, co-workers and other powerful people in the entertainment industry. Sadly, we are not surprised because it's a reality we know far too well. Countless farm worker women suffer in silence because of the widespread sexual harassment and assault that they face at work."

It continues: "We work in the shadow of society in isolated fields and packing houses that are out of sight and out of mind. Our job nourishes the nation with crops that we plant, pick and pack. Even though we work in different environments, we share a common experience of being preyed upon by individuals who have the power to hire, fire, blacklist and threaten our economic, physical and emotional security."

Standing up publicly to denounce sexual assaults in agribusiness shows great courage, as the farm workers reveal, "Complaining about anything, even sexual harassment, is unthinkable because too much is at risk, including the ability to feed our families."

The women stress: "We understand the hurt, confusion, isolation and betrayal that you might feel," and the shame and fear. "We know it is not our fault. The only people at fault are the individuals who abuse their power to harass, threaten and harm us, as they have harmed you. As you cope with scrutiny and criticism because you bravely [spoke] out against the harrowing acts that were committed against you, know that you are not alone. We believe and stand with you."

A vast number of women who work in the fields are Latinx immigrants, many undocumented. Government regulations prohibit legal aid groups from representing undocumented people. Moreover, Washington's war on the undocumented creates a climate of fear of detention or deportation for women immigrants who report abuse. All progressive forces should show solidarity with and aid these brave women workers. ♦

Black, Brown, Indigenous girls' lives matter

Editorial, April 9, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170409ED

The hashtag #MissingDCGirls, out of Washington, D.C., went viral on social media the week of March 27, dramatizing the special vulnerability of Black and Brown girls to violence and sexual exploitation.

Racist bias about which girls' lives matter shows up clearly in mainstream media. The photo of a missing blonde and blue-eyed girl, like JonBenét Ramsey, gets prime-time news coverage for months in 1997. But viewers never hear CNN mention the death of Aiyana Stanley-Jones, a seven-year-old African-American girl killed when Detroit police invaded her home in 2010.

Where are the “Amber Alerts” sent out when Black girls go missing? As one Twitter post exclaimed: “Can someone explain to me how [so many Black girls] go missing in 24 hours in D.C. and it’s not a goddamn news story?!?”

The New York Times tried to play down the righteous furor that surfaced due to the hashtag, saying there was no “epidemic” of missing girls. (March 31)

But according to the Black and Missing Foundation, Black children are 36.5 percent of all missing U.S. children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children confirms this figure and also notes that missing Latinx children are 17 percent. Black people are only 12.5 percent of the U.S. population.

That girls of color are half or more of the missing children is certain. That the missing include large numbers of trans and gender-nonconforming girls and children is surely also true.

The Times tried to minimize the crisis by admitting the lives of Black and Latinx children are “often ignored by public officials.”

But the fact is that children of color, including girls, are actively targeted by the racist policies of “public officials” — from policing the schools to pipelines to for-profit prisons, to collusion of cops with sex trafficking, to slashing cuts in public housing, social services, education.

There is a centuries-long, racist U.S. record of “protecting” white women and girls to promote white supremacy, while covering up the untold number of crimes against the humanity of women and girls of color, from enslavement and peonage, rape and sexual abuse, to low-wage labor and daily disrespect.

Predictably, there are calls for “more police” to solve the problem of missing children, including girls. But from the slave patrols of the 19th century to this day, the police exist to occupy, criminalize, control and terrorize Black, Brown and Indigenous communities in the U.S.

And an epidemic of violence against women and girls of color rages across the occupied and colonized Americas. In Canada, according to government figures, over 1,000 Indigenous women and girls have been murdered or gone missing in the last 20 years, many of them teenagers. At the maquiladoras on the Mexican-U.S. border at Juarez, hundreds of Latinx young women and girls have been disappeared. So many are assumed dead that the term *femicidio* or *femicide* is used frequently these days.

Capitalist fortunes and corporations have been built on the bodies and labor of girls and women of color — from the children they have birthed, from their labor in the fields and factories and fast-food restaurants to forced sex work on U.S. military bases. The racist, anti-woman U.S. state will not stop this exploitation, founded as it was on that very exploitation.

In 1977, the Combahee River Collective, a group of Black, lesbian, socialist feminists, wrote of the struggle for the lives of Black women and girls: “We might use our position at the bottom ... to make a clear leap into revolutionary action. If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free, since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”

Let us take up their challenge to “leap into revolutionary action” to defend the lives of girls and women of color everywhere! ♦

Disability rights: A working-class issue

By Mary P. Kaessinger, December 1, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171201MK

Are disability rights a working-class issue? Yes.

On the one hand, we work for a living, or want to. On the other hand, it is capitalism that grinds us down and we have to struggle against the tax “reform” proposal which would wipe out necessary benefits to give tax cuts for the rich.

We are not asking for charity. We pay taxes, raise families and fight for jobs. We are demanding our rights to housing, education, public transit and employment. But for decades we have been invisible. We were warehoused in institutions or taken care of by our families, hidden out of sight.

Our first goal is to be seen as people. We have to become visible to change public attitudes. The second is to eliminate artificial barriers, like stairs. The third is legal. We have to change laws like the “Fair” Labor Standards Act which allows employers to pay subminimum wages.

The disabled rights movement started during the Depression, prompted by the economic situation at the time and energized by the labor and civil rights

struggles of the period.

Six workers formed the League of the Physically Handicapped in New York City to protest discrimination by the Works Progress Administration. ... A weekend sit-in was held at the WPA headquarters in June 1935. These actions led to the creation of 1,500 jobs in New York City. Soon the league had several hundred members and a speakers' bureau that educated unions and progressive organizations on disability issues.

1937 sit-downs vs exploitation

There were at least two sit-downs of visually disabled workers in 1937, one in Pittsburgh and one in New York. This was remarkable, considering they were prohibited from forming unions and bargaining collectively at the "sheltered" workshops where they were exploited. Like many progressive groups at the time, the league was red-baited and eventually dissolved.

The exploitation is allowed by the "Fair" Labor Standards Act of 1938. This act legalized important long-fought-for rights like the eight-hour day, the 40-hour work week, time-and-a-half pay for overtime and an end to child labor. But it engraved in stone a subminimum wage for some 16 to 18 categories of workers, including prisoners, home care workers, agricultural workers, disabled people and sex workers.

This act is the "divide and conquer" ploy of the capitalists. By mandating a subminimum wage, it encodes the idea that these groups are not real workers. We are marginalized, discarded and made invisible. We are "precarious" workers. It has nothing to do with the quality of our work.

This law has been amended several times, but it has never been amended to eliminate the subminimum wage. ... Today, the national struggle is to raise the minimum wage from \$7.50 an hour to \$15 an hour. You sure can't raise a family on a subminimum wage.

Protest Goodwill wage outrage!

Goodwill Industries International pays wages substantially lower than the minimum wage to thousands of employees while its top executives receive \$53.7 million in total compensation. Goodwill justifies this pay scale travesty by saying they are "training" workers. The [National Federation of the Blind] disputes this claim. ...

Workers World Party, to its credit, has always included disabled workers' struggles in its program. Our party members picketed a Goodwill facility, vociferously demanding higher wages, during a lunch break from our 2014 national conference in Queens, N.Y.

In the 1960s and 1970s, warehousing in institutions began to end, and disabled people started moving into the community. The independent living movement was global in scope. Struggles erupted to gain access to housing, education and public transit.

Medicaid played a critical role in this change as it financed necessary services. A close bond developed between disabled people and their caregivers. Recently, activists in Kansas lobbied successfully for a pay raise for their support workers.

In New York City, comrade Betsy Gimbel was the secretary of a local group called Disabled in Action. The leadership was cautious, but the membership, including Betsy, wanted action. At the time, buses were largely inaccessible for wheelchair users and there were no curb cuts. Betsy led the group to sit in at strategic locations around the city — bus terminals, the beginning and end of bus lines, Midtown and elsewhere — demanding accessible buses. Eventually they were successful. ...

Denver activists barricaded buses

Similar demonstrations occurred in Denver, where the Atlantis Community, (later Americans with Disabilities for Accessible Public Transportation) sat in for three days and surrounded the buses in 1978. At night, they placed their placards under the windshield wipers of the buses, climbed down from their wheelchairs and slept on the ground. It took three years and several more demonstrations, but they finally won accessible buses.

During the Carter administration, a struggle began for comprehensive federal legislation to codify the rights of the disabled. Thirteen years later, in 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This act specified the rights of the disabled and contained specific criteria for removing architectural barriers, such as stairs and installing ramps.

Parades are held annually to commemorate the signing of the ADA. In New York City, they stopped after 9/11 because Mayor Rudy Giuliani refused to sign a parade permit. Disability Pride parades began again in 2015 and get larger every year.

Comrade Edward Yudelovich and I wanted to bring a political note to this year's parade, so we asked the Peoples Power Assembly to make signs and bring our banner. The slogans were "Subways Should Be 100% Accessible," "Hands Off the ADA" and "Defend the ADA," as some members of Congress are pushing legislation to weaken it. Comrade Brian Shea worked to build the parade in Boston.

Cuba: leader in disability rights

The movement for independent living is global in scope. Shea attended a conference in 1996 in Cuba on this subject, which is covered in Workers World's pamphlet entitled, "Disability Rights and the Class Struggle." Some 300 Cuban and international delegates, the overwhelming majority with physical disabilities, attended the conference. Shea reported that delegates came from Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, Spain and the former Soviet Union.

At the conference, Shea learned that the Cubans had become expert in treating the ulcers that result from sitting in a wheelchair all day, and that the

U.S. blockade has prevented them from acquiring proper cushions for the chairs which would alleviate the pressure sores.

At the National Council on Independent Living conference held in Washington, D.C., this year, almost one-third of the delegates were from Japan.

‘Kill the bill! Don’t kill us!’

Enter Trump. Trump’s first goal after the election was dismantling the Affordable Care Act, especially Medicaid, which is literally a life-and-death issue. This brought the struggle to a new pitch. Disabled people were fighting for their lives.

Members of ADAPT (renamed Americans Disabled Attendant Programs Today), now a national organization with chapters in many cities, sat in at Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell’s office for several days, protesting a bill which would severely undermine the ADA. Wheelchair users were callously arrested, picked up and thrown into police vans. The protest was so dramatic and the issue so pivotal that it was aired on all the television stations.

A few weeks later, the fight erupted again in the Senate chamber. Members of ADAPT and NCIL, which have overlapping memberships, marched through the Senate chamber shouting “Kill the bill! Don’t kill us!” The anti-health care bill was voted down for the time being. But the rich right wing never gives up.

Low-cost, accessible transit now!

We, the disabled, are currently working with the PPA on a campaign to improve the Metropolitan Transportation Agency. It is a terrific target. It is a microcosm of the capitalist system. Every working-class New Yorker rides the subways and buses, and everyone hates it. ... The fares collected go right into the coffers of the banks as service on the debt. And we pay the fare twice!

According to the city comptroller, each household pays \$130 a month in taxes, which is earmarked for the MTA. Also, we pay \$108 a month for MetroCards. Do the math; that’s \$238 a month per rider. And there are over 8 million riders a day during the workweek.

We want to cancel the debt. We want elevators so subways are accessible. We want more buses because the MTA has reduced the number of buses on each route, and they are so crowded you can’t get on them. So you wait for the next one. The next one passes you, marked “Not in Service” and you wait longer.

The MTA officials are refurbishing stations and building new ones in gentrified neighborhoods, and not in others. We want to end racist policing in the subways, where cops arrest youth of color for jumping the turnstiles. ... ♦

Kaessinger is a wheelchair user.

Working-class women's liberation

By Monica Moorehead, December 1, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171201MM

I first joined Workers World Party in 1975 due to the Party's unique understanding that the struggle against national oppression and white supremacy can never take a back seat to fighting capitalism and imperialism in order to carry out a socialist revolution in the largest imperialist country.

Since joining the Party, I have appreciated so many other struggles. One of those is women's liberation. When I witnessed the emergence of the women's movement in the early 1970s as a Black teenager living in the South, I could not relate to a majority white movement that didn't take seriously that women's liberation for Black women is rooted in national liberation.

That all changed after my being influenced by Dotty Ballan, a Party founding member, who wrote "Feminism and Marxism." Dotty died 25 years ago. Her pamphlet accessed what was progressive about the women's movement, as a mass movement. And also what its narrow limitations were, especially being politically and ideologically dominated by a petty-bourgeois leadership that did not have a clue about showing class solidarity with the most oppressed women because their orientation was about reforming capitalism, not overthrowing it. We challenged this backward ideology while at the same time attempting to influence this movement by being a part of it.

Marxism and feminism

Our Party had so many women leaders that, during this period, Workers World Party was referred to in the movement as "the Party of the Matriarchy." Dotty wasn't the only leading comrade to elevate the revolutionary potential of working-class women. Our late chairperson, Sam Marcy, wrote his groundbreaking book, "High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class," over 33 years ago, where he stated this:

"Today the working class is of a thoroughgoing multinational character. ... Statistics appear almost daily in the bourgeois press which show how much of the working class today is Black, Latin, Asian, Native as well as women. The most recent study shows that white males are no longer predominant in industry. The workforce is already composed of over 40 percent women. And notwithstanding the heavy Black and Latin unemployment, their percentage of the workforce continues to increase significantly.

"But what has not been pointedly brought to the attention of the public is that the working class as a whole in the U.S. has changed dramatically in another sense. The predominance of the skilled over the unskilled, of the higher paid

over the lower paid, has narrowed continually. ...

“In almost all of the service industries, there is a growing preponderance of new, low-paid workers. The labor force has shifted from what it was decades ago — a mostly urban white working class — to one that is of a multinational character, which does not at all enjoy the privileges which accompanied the earlier rise of the capitalist system in the U.S.”

Sam understood that this pauperization of labor that intensified with the global capitalist crisis of low wages had created the feminization of labor.

Sam explained: “The further development of the processes of capitalist production has forced many more women out of the home and into the workforce. It is these objective trends more than any subjective factors which have broken up the old family structure headed by the male breadwinner. The pauperization of labor has made it imperative that women work.”

This feminization of labor manifests itself with women workers, especially the most oppressed women, Black, Latinx and Native, being in the forefront of not only economic struggles, but also leading in political struggles. Those range from the Fight for \$15 and a Union movement, to Indigenous water rights at Standing Rock, Black Lives Matter led by Black trans women, and, of course, the struggle for reproductive justice.

As an activist with the International Working Women’s Coalition, I also find there is no more important issue that impacts women — no matter their nationality, gender expression, socio-economics, youth, age or abilities — than the issue of sexual oppression: rape, assault, harassment, abuse, domestic violence.

Working-class women’s liberation

If the current #MeToo campaign became an explosion as so many women actors exposed movie mogul Harvey Weinstein as a sexual predator, the real catalyst was the election of white supremacist Donald Trump, with his well-known history of misogyny. Now, every day, another misogynist is being exposed, like Judge Roy Moore and Al Franken.

The #MeToo campaign has been liberating for so many women who have lived in silence and the deep-seated pain of being sexually assaulted but who now realize they are not alone. This campaign has brought widespread awareness of this war on women. There is no doubt about that.

But how can any real change be made when the voices of millions of other women haven’t been heard because of who they are, due to being marginalized and disenfranchised under capitalism?

They are migrant women who face rape and death daily by the U.S. Border Patrol when forced to flee their homeland due to imperialism. They are Black and Brown single mothers whose bosses threaten their low-wage jobs if they don’t succumb to sexual “advances.” They are women prisoners, including trans prisoners, who are sexually assaulted daily by brutal guards, or homeless women who face similar fates in shelters. They are young women who are assaulted

daily in high schools and on college campuses knowing they can't get any justice because administrations and the police are complicit when these assaults take place.

#MeToo can go only so far because it is dominated by liberals with allegiance to the Democratic Party. Struggles have to be led by the most oppressed working-class women in order for them to become more independent, anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, to lay the basis for socialism which will liberate women of all nationalities.

Marx and Engels stated in "The Communist Manifesto": "The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products.

"What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

And the most militant of all the gravediggers will be women. In tribute to Dotty Ballan and all women who have given their lives to the liberation of all humanity, working and oppressed women of the world unite!

We have nothing to lose our chains. Build a Workers World! ♦

Do it like Durham!

Interview with Takiyah Thompson

By Mikisa Thompson, December 13, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171213MT

Excerpted from an interview of Thompson, who on Aug. 14, 2017, tore down the Confederate statue in Durham, N.C. Charges against all arrested in connection with that act of defiance against white supremacy were dismissed in February 2018.

Mikisa Thompson: What are you fighting for?

Takiyah Thompson: I'm fighting against all the different "isms" that plague this society — racism, capitalism, sexism, Nazism. I'm fighting for a world where justice and equality can exist. I'm fighting for socialism. I'm fighting for the freedom and liberation of Black people, people of color and queer people.

MT: Give me your vision of 2018, now that we are 100 years after the Russian Revolution.

TT: My outlook for 2018 is to continue organizing and mobilizing around this issue. ... I'm about to go to trial for my alleged role in toppling the Confederate statue, and I just want to keep using court to further get my message out there and to talk about white supremacy and capitalism, how the two go hand-in-hand.

I'm hoping that more folks can understand the urgency of the moment that we're living in and not be swayed by these midterm elections, with Democrats trying to convince us to drop everything — forget about racism, about sexism, about capitalism being at a dead end — and just vote for the middle path. You know, don't vote for the middle path; you don't get out of the road. Take a left.

...I think my role has shown people that regular, everyday people can take a stand and do have a role in combating the ills that they see in society.

MT: What fuels your drive and determination for the Workers World Party movement as a queer Black woman in the U.S.?

TT: I want to try to leave a legacy on Earth. To create a world that is kinder and gentler for Black and Brown youth, for queer youth, for poor youth. I always say that I'm grateful for the movements that came before me and it's important to be grateful and thankful, but also to acknowledge that we need more.

You know, it's a wonderful thing that I've never known anyone who was lynched, I've never seen a cross burning. I hope that in 20 to 30 years, kids will say, "I've never seen a Confederate statue. I've never seen a Confederate flag." Just to make this world better — that's what keeps me motivated.

MT: I've heard you say that you feel more free since your actions. Please explain.

TT: Even though I'm in court and facing this system that wants to see me in jail because of its white supremacist nature, I do definitely hold my head higher. I think of Fanon. When you are able to defeat your oppressor, to take your oppressor down a notch, it helps with your own sense of self and your own sense of worth.

MT: What do you think of Black Lives Matter and similar movements?

TT: Those movements are integral to ushering in an era of equality that is free from racial violence. We as leftists, socialists, communists and members of multinational organizations have to do everything we can to ensure those movements are sustained, to ensure a world that is free of white supremacy and anti-Black violence and racism. We have to support Black nationalist struggles in the United States.

We can't allow those groups to be isolated, especially with the FBI labeling Black activists as "Black identity extremists." The FBI has a long history of targeting, killing and imprisoning Black activists, so it's absolutely necessary that any organization that considers itself socialist or seeking social justice should work hand-in-hand with Black Lives Matter and organizations like it. ♦

Link between domestic violence and mass murder

By Sue Davis, January 8, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170108SD

After Devin P. Kelley murdered 26 people and wounded 20 others in a Texas church on Nov. 5, the media reported studies showing a clear correlation between mass murders and domestic violence.

Kelley had been found guilty of kicking, beating, choking and constantly threatening his first spouse with a loaded gun (with which he also fractured his toddler stepson's skull) in an Air Force court-martial in 2012. He was sentenced to a year in military prison and given a bad conduct discharge in 2014.

Over the intervening years Kelley was repeatedly investigated for violence against women and even charged with sexually assaulting and raping a woman. He was also known to brutally attack his dog. What precipitated his carrying out the assault at the church using a military style semi-automatic rifle was an argument with his current mother-in-law who was a member there.

However, because of the Lautenberg Amendment passed in 1997, Kelley should have been prohibited from purchasing or possessing guns and ammunition due to his domestic violence conviction. But the Air Force — whether through deliberate neglect or routine omission — failed to record his conviction in the FBI National Crime Information Center database. Those statistics are used by the National Instant Check System to flag prohibited purchases and lead to follow-up investigations. So Kelley slipped through the cracks and was free to act out his cruel, misdirected rage.

There is a glaringly consistent pattern of domestic violence by mass killers that has not been reported until now. This applies to Omar Mateen, who killed 49 people and wounded 58 at the Orlando Pulse nightclub in June 2016; Tamerlan Tsarnaev, whose bomb at the Boston Marathon in April 2013 killed three and injured 264; and Adam Lanza, who killed his mother before entering the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., where he killed 20 children between the ages of 6 and 7 and six adults in December 2012. Nine of the 10 deadliest mass killings in the U.S. in the past 50 years were perpetrated by men with histories of domestic violence. (Village Voice, Nov. 8)

A 2014 study by Everytown for Gun Safety showed that 59 percent of the 100-plus mass shootings (where four or more people were killed) in the U.S. between January 2009 and June 2014 involved the murder of an intimate partner or family member.

A deadly pattern of misogyny

Yet it took the tragedy in a Texas church on a Sunday morning to expose the deadly connection between mass murder and age-old misogyny — one of the pillars of capitalism that drives U.S. society.

While such statistics have been around since the 1990s, they are not well-known, even by those who follow the movement for women's liberation. It took years of struggle, beginning in the 1970s when women first set up battered women's shelters, to see that the federal Violence Against Women Act was passed in 1994 and updated in 2013 to include same-sex relationships and visas for battered immigrants. However, the VAWA is woefully inadequate and viciously racist in how it is currently applied.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 3 women have been physically abused by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Every day three women are killed by male intimate partners in the U.S. Half of all women murdered in this country are killed by men they know intimately.

The critical factor is if there is a gun in the home. According to a study published by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2004, which compared abused women who were murdered by a partner and those who survived partner abuse, the presence of a gun more than triples the risk of death in a domestic violence situation.

Police families lead in domestic violence

Ironically, which families have the highest rate of domestic abuse? According to two studies cited by the National Center for Women and Policing, at least 40 percent of families headed by police experience domestic violence in contrast to 10 percent of other families. The NCWP states: "Victims of police family violence typically fear that the responding officers will side with their abuser and fail to properly investigate or document the crime."

The 2012 jailing of Marissa Alexander, an African-American mother of three, for firing a warning shot at her abusive spouse who was threatening her life, is Exhibit A of why that is not a paranoid fear and how the VAWA can be turned upside down.

While there are many socioeconomic conditions and widely accepted cultural behaviors that lead to domestic abuse, in addition to racist, gendered and class oppression, there is no question that the solution will not come under capitalism. In fact, if the predator in chief in the White House has his way, domestic abuse and its link to mass killings will only increase. In the first round of proposed budget cuts, Trump put 25 grants exploring ways to prevent violence against women on the chopping block.

But the good news is that the current spotlight on domestic violence and mass murders coincides with an upsurge in activism against sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace. They are two sides of the same patriarchal coin. A coin that needs to be tossed into the cesspool of sexist history, along with all other manifestations of toxic capitalism. ♦

Marissa Alexander:

Against the prison pipeline for women

By Minnie Bruce Pratt, February 2, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170202MBP

Marissa Alexander is finally free after five years of detention for an act of self-defense. In 2012 Alexander, who is African-American, was sentenced to 20 years in jail.

Her “crime”? Firing a warning shot over the head of her estranged husband who was threatening to kill her. Alexander had given birth only nine days earlier in Jacksonville, Fla.

Alexander’s case gained national attention after George Zimmerman was acquitted of killing Black teenager Trayvon Martin in 2013. Zimmerman used Florida’s Stand Your Ground law to claim self-defense.

But when Alexander’s legal team argued she also had a Stand Your Ground claim of self-defense, the courts rejected her, exposing the “justice” system’s racist and anti-woman bias.

In response to this denial of justice, a historic grass-roots campaign rose up to Free Marissa Now! This militant movement mobilized mass support to reduce Alexander’s sentence, make her case part of burgeoning Black Lives Matter marches, and win justice for other scapegoated survivors.

The Forgotten Majority, a Florida prison advocacy group, recognized the struggle to free Marissa Alexander with a #SurvivedAndPunished week of action that began Jan. 28, the day she was released. The week highlights survivors of domestic and sexual violence who have been criminalized, including Bresha Meadows in Ohio, Tondalao Hall in Oklahoma, Rasmea Odeh and Alisha Walker in Illinois, Ky Peterson in Georgia, and Ny Nourn and Kelly Savage in California.

In a press release celebrating Alexander’s freedom, the Free Marissa Now Movement stated: “The vast majority of people in women’s prisons, and many in men’s prisons, are survivors of domestic and sexual violence before they are incarcerated. There is a crucial pipeline between abuse and prison/detention centers that must be disrupted.” (tinyurl.com/hxg5b6x) ♦

Jailed women freed: 'Black Mamas Bail-Out'

By Dianne Mathiowetz, May 18, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/MO170518DM

... "Black Mamas Bail-Out Day" was launched by Southerners on New Ground (SONG), a LGBTQ organization headquartered in Atlanta, to expose the use of bail as an inherently anti-poor and racist measure that keeps thousands of working people in jail before they are convicted of any offense.

SONG's research found that on any given day, some 700,000 people are held in jails in the U.S. solely because they lack the funds to make their bail. They can lose their jobs, housing and children while awaiting their day in court.

Most often these people are arrested for minor offenses such as disorderly conduct, using fighting words, or even jaywalking, loitering or trespass. Police discretion in many of these arrests targets people of color and poor and working-class neighborhoods. People are arrested at traffic checkpoints for unpaid parking tickets, lapsed insurance or the lack of a driver's license. The inability to pay a traffic fine can land a person behind bars.

Some 80 percent of incarcerated women are mothers or caregivers. Their absence from their families injures their children and communities in immeasurable ways.

This creative, political campaign was seized upon by dozens of organizations around the country, stripping Mother's Day of its commercial veneer and truly recognizing the value of women to the well-being and liberation of their families and people.

Black Mamas Bail-Out Day took place in at least 18 cities, from Birmingham, Ala., to Baltimore and from New York City to Oakland, Calif. Tens of thousands of dollars were raised to pay the ransom money known as "bail" for women. Services were offered to help with job placement, housing needs, health and wellness concerns, legal counsel and more. ...

At a May 14 celebration, some of these women's stories were shared. One of the most compelling was that of a 71-year-old woman who, having no food at home, went to a nearby store. She was arrested for allegedly stealing a can of peanuts and had been in jail since April, unable to pay the bail money. ... ♦

NYC struggle wins removal of racist 'doctor' Sims' statue

By Dolores Cox, August 31, 2017 and January 18, 2018 (revised)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170831DC and

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180118DC

This article, revised especially for this pamphlet, is based on two articles written at different times in the struggle to remove the statue.

New York City officials announced on Jan. 11 that the statue of racist Dr. James Marion Sims would be removed from Central Park, the result of a people's struggle.

Sims, known as the "father of gynecology," made alleged medical advances through his cruel practice of performing hundreds of unethical gynecological surgical procedures on enslaved Black women without anesthesia, antiseptics or their consent. In his quest for fame, he manipulated the institution of slavery to perform his brutal experiments.

East Harlem residents campaigned for years to get this affront to their community taken down from its location at 103rd Street and Fifth Avenue. Polls showed an overwhelming number supported the statue's removal. Some 20,000 petitioners, neighborhood residents and the Coalition to Remove the Dr. Sims Statue demanded it.

The national movement to get rid of Confederate statues and monuments following white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017, led local activists to renew their push to take Sims' statue down. Black Youth Project 100 demonstrated Aug. 19 at the monument, demanding its removal.

NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito called for the statue's removal, calling Sims' "despicable acts repugnant and reprehensible" at an Aug. 21 press conference. Five days later, someone boldly spray-painted "racist" on the statue.

Medical experimentation = torture

Steve Benjamin, African-American mayor of Columbia, S.C., called for removal of Sims' offensive statue on Statehouse grounds there. "[He] tortured slave women and children for years as he developed his treatments for gynecology." (MSNBC, Aug. 15)

"Slaveowner" Sims carried out these surgeries in the U.S. South from 1845 to 1849 with no training in gynecology. In Alabama, he performed hundreds of surgeries on enslaved women that he "owned" or "borrowed." He experimented many times on 12 enslaved women, an astounding 30 times on one of them. Many women died.

Enslaved people had no personal rights and were the property of their “owners.” So owners took enslaved women to Sims for treatment so they could continue working and would produce more children to add to the enslaved population. Sims also experimented on enslaved Black men, and this “medical monster” performed horrific surgeries on enslaved women’s babies without anesthesia. All of the babies died.

Sims’ copious notes revealed slaveowner language, sprinkled with racial slurs and vivid depictions of Black women’s bodies. Later, he used the same surgical procedures on white women in New York, but with anesthesia.

A common, outrageous racist belief then was that Black people were insensitive to pain — and thus didn’t need anesthesia during surgery. This sheds light on the historically violent oppression of Blacks in the U.S., and was a horrifying testament to the brutality of slavery and its relationship to U.S. medicine.

Harriet Washington details this extensively, as well as Sims’ many crimes, in her groundbreaking book, “Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present.” (Doubleday, 2007)

Even as he was committing these crimes, Sims founded the Woman’s Hospital of New York in 1855, where he repeatedly operated on many indigent women. Despite his horrific record of killing women and children and inflicting pain, he was named president of the American Medical Association in 1875 and then president of the Gynecological Society in 1879.

‘Take it down!’

The 13-foot statue of Sims was installed in East Harlem’s historically African-American and Puerto Rican neighborhood in 1934. In an insult to oppressed women, the wording below it reads: “Surgeon and Philanthropist, Founder of the Woman’s Hospital State of New York. In recognition of his services in the cause of science and mankind.”

Sims’ statues, like Confederate monuments, memorialize white supremacist slaveowners and murderers. They perpetuate the view that Sims was a benevolent man of science, rather than a sadistic racist whose inventions were brutally enabled by slavery.

The struggle to remove the statue started several years ago. The East Harlem Preservation organization began its campaign in 2007 in solidarity with efforts by activist Viola Plummer, member of the December 12th Movement, to call attention to Sims’ cruel experiments. That year, NYC Councilmember Charles Barron petitioned the NYC Parks and Recreation Department to remove the statue. Proposals were raised to instead honor the women Sims tortured. Mark-Viverito, East Harlem Councilmember in 2011, had appealed to the Parks Department then to take down the statue, a “constant reminder of the historic cruelty endured by women of color.” The Parks Department refused to honor these requests, claiming “the city does not remove ‘art’ for content.”

In 2016, Community Board 11 called for the statue's removal. That year, at a speakout at Sims' statue "community members honored their ancestors and condemned the memorial for assaults on Black and Latina female bodies," according to the EHP.

EHP, which campaigned diligently for the statue's removal, maintained that its presence insulted the "neighborhood's majority Black and Puerto Rican residents — two groups that have been subjected to medical experiments without permission or regard for their wellbeing." Moreover, there are many heroic "Black and Puerto Rican women and men who have made great medical and scientific contributions" to the community. It is important that our children learn about them — and know their lives matter.

After the racist attack in Charlottesville, the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers was established to advise which of the 800 historical "symbols of hate" in New York should be removed. It recommended only taking down Sims' statue and relocating it to Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, his burial site: "In its current location, the Sims monument [represents] a legacy of oppression and abusive practices on bodies that were ... subjugated, subordinate and exploitable in service to his fame."

The city must also add educational plaques explaining Sims' history at the statue's current and former locations, and plan public dialogues with community organizations about nonconsensual medical experiments, particularly on women of color.

East Harlem Preservation said, "Although the statue's removal may be a symbolic gesture, it presents an opportunity to continue the dialogue on racism and violence against women of color." ♦

After the statue was removed, Brooklyn community members demanded it not be located there.

Racism's impact on maternity

By Mikisa Thompson, February 28, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170228MT

Women's History Month is a federally declared annual event that highlights the contributions of women to historical events and contemporary society. As a Black woman in contemporary society, there are many issues that affect me and my community at large. Racism and the ways in which white supremacy rears its ugly head are woven into our lives on a daily basis — especially when we are most vulnerable.

As Black women, during pregnancy and childbirth, we are at the most vulnerable to systemic racism. Black women are disproportionately affected by police brutality, low wages, homelessness and the violence of racism and genocide.

Black mothers die of heart failure

According to a Dec. 7 article in ProPublica, “In recent years, as high rates of maternal mortality in the U.S. have alarmed researchers, one statistic has been especially concerning. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], black mothers in the U.S. die at three to four times the rate of white mothers, one of the widest of all racial disparities in women’s health. Put another way, a black woman is 243 percent more likely to die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related causes.”

That number — 243 percent — is a heavy one to take in. The way racism shows up in those blessed to be Black women is especially blatant when it comes to health care. The bias toward Black women and children is the crux of the problem. Women of most races aren’t heard when they speak up about pain management or just a general feeling of not feeling well. Imagine being a Black woman and experiencing tremendous pain during and after childbirth, and you are not given the basic care—which is adequate pain management — like your female counterparts who are enduring the same process of trying to bring forth life.

Two women who have recently experienced childbirth, along with a serious health crisis or death, come to mind. One is Erica Garner, who died of a broken heart on Dec. 30 after her father, Eric Garner, was murdered in 2014 by the state in Staten Island, N.Y. The other is the number one athlete in the world: Serena Williams.

Erica Garner experienced a side effect of living while Black when her father was murdered. This trauma led to a heart attack after the birth of her son last August. This is an all too common occurrence after a Black woman births a baby.

The American Heart Association says, “Peripartum cardiomyopathy (PPCM), also known as postpartum cardiomyopathy, is an uncommon form of heart failure that happens during the last month of pregnancy or up to five months after giving birth.” (Dec. 12)

However, the AHA also says this is “a rare occurrence” — because it isn’t checking for PPCM among Black women. If the organization was doing that, everyone in the U.S. would or should be outraged.

Megan Brooks, in an article titled “Peripartum Cardiomyopathy More Severe for Black Women,” writes: “African American women with PPCM are diagnosed later postpartum, they present with more severe systolic dysfunction, their cardiac function worsens after diagnosis more often and recovers less frequently, and, when cardiac function does recover, it takes much longer to do so.” (posted on Medscape, Oct. 13)

Serena Williams gave birth to her baby daughter on Sept. 1. She has a history of blood clots. After giving birth via C-section, she had a hard time breathing. In a Jan. 10 article in Vogue titled “Serena Williams on Motherhood, Marriage and

Making her Comeback,” she explains that she knew that she needed a “CT scan with contrast and IV heparin (a blood thinner) right away. The nurse thought her pain medicine might be making her confused. But Serena insisted, and soon enough a doctor was performing an ultrasound of her legs. ‘I was like, a Doppler? I told you, I need a CT scan and a heparin drip,’ she remembers telling the team. The ultrasound revealed nothing, so they sent her for the CT, and sure enough, several small blood clots had settled in her lungs. Minutes later she was on the drip. ‘I was like, listen to Dr. Williams!’”

Infant mortality among African Americans

Williams, who has unlimited funds, was not initially heard by the medical staff. Imagine the situation facing a woman living in a poor neighborhood going to a hospital with a biased staff. It most certainly would have led to a different outcome. This is good information to know. What do we do with this informed knowledge? Who takes up our cause? Also, with the high rate of Black mothers dying, it leads to the topic of infant mortality rates among Black children.

When I was pregnant with my son, I heard a statistic that Black boys had the highest infant mortality rate up until the age of five! I couldn’t stop worrying about my son until he was five. I still worry because he can get shot while at school or while being a Black male anywhere in the U.S.

According to the CDC: “Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or their first birthday. The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In addition to giving us key information about maternal and infant health, the infant mortality rate is an important marker of the overall health of a society.”

The Department of Health and Human Services reports that African Americans have 2.2 times the infant mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites and African-American infants are 3.2 times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight as compared to non-Hispanic white infants. In 2014, African Americans had over twice the sudden infant death syndrome mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites, and African-American mothers were 2.2 times more likely than non-Hispanic white mothers to receive late or no prenatal care.

Dr. Joia Adele Crear-Perry, founder of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, says: “The United States is the only developed country in the world where maternal mortality is on the rise. Black women in the U.S. die at 3 to 4 times the rate of white women. Black babies die at 2 times the rate of their white counterparts. With clear evidence of this inequity, this is an urgent public health and human rights issue.

“As a black woman from the Deep South who is an obstetrician and a mother, my strong desire to end this inequity is amplified every time I look into the faces of my daughter and my patients. It was with this understanding that I created the National Birth Equity Collaborative in 2015.” (The Renewal Project, Nov. 30)

Black women will continue to do the work so that the least of these can flourish. The statistics brought up in this article should lead to a major uprising

because white supremacy is dismantling our homes by way of harming Black women and our children. This is genocide — the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation.

Wake up people! The effects of racism are literally and figuratively killing us. Let us continue to pull down monuments to white supremacy. Eventually, that will cause real change when it comes to one day erasing the systemic causes of racism and its impact on the health of Black women and our children. ♦

To defund Planned Parenthood means attacking primary health care for 4 million poor women

By Sue Davis, April 3, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170403SD

The U.S. Senate voted 51-50 on March 30 to overturn an Obama administrative rule not allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood payments for Title X patients. The House passed the same resolution in February, so it now goes to the misogynist in chief to be signed into law.

Collateral damage in this totally biased vote is 4 million poor women who rely on Title X of the Public Health Service Act for comprehensive family planning — which covers contraceptives but not abortion — and related preventive health services. Government payment for abortions for low-income women has been outlawed since 1976 by the Hyde Amendment.

Title X was passed by the Nixon administration in 1970. ... Passing this resolution means that if states choose to defund Planned Parenthood as a service provider for Title X patients — 11 states already have such laws — that poor women, mostly young women of color (59 percent) and immigrants, often in rural areas of the Midwest and South, will have to search for new providers or go without vital health care.

Planned Parenthood serves a third of Title X patients, using \$70 million a year in family planning grants to provide birth control and sexually transmitted infection and cancer screenings. The organization is singled out because it provides abortions for 3 percent of its millions of patients through more than 650 clinics nationwide.

Statistics from 2014 (the last year the Guttmacher Institute issued them) show that Title X averted nearly a million unintended pregnancies, 326,000 abortions and 166,000 teen pregnancies. Without Title X funding, teen pregnancy would have

been 30 percent higher; unintended pregnancies would be 33 percent higher. ... A March 2016 Guttmacher report ... concludes: "Supporting and expanding women's access to contraceptive services leads to lower incidence of abortion."

But today's predominantly male lawmakers consciously ignore the basic connection between contraception and unintended pregnancies. Added to their overriding hatred of legal, safe, accessible abortion is their contempt for and lack of compassion for all women, let alone the extra-heavy burden that poor women carry as they struggle to care for their families. By depriving poor women of easy access to contraception, this ill-advised bill will only drive desperate women to seek abortions. ...

In an act of desperation in early March, Trump offered Planned Parenthood a deal: Stop performing abortions and keep receiving \$550 million in federal funding. The answer was a resounding "No deal!"

Validated by two recent global marches involving millions of women and their supporters demanding women's rights, the struggle for quality, comprehensive health care for all women continues in the U.S. As Nancy Northrup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, noted after the Title X vote, "[Women's] health and rights should never be up for debate." (March 30) ♦

Women's rights and health care

By Kathy Durkin, October 14, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171014KD

... From the first day of his presidency, the benefit cutter in chief and his cabal in the White House, Cabinet and Congress have moved to dismantle gains and benefits won over decades by workers and [all oppressed groups]. The political agents of the ruling class — while claiming to defend jobs! — have waged an overt and covert war to overturn any social progress won through the class struggle and people's movements.

... These reactionaries have been hell-bent on overturning the Affordable Care Act since Congress enacted it in 2010. While this law fell far short of socialized medicine, it nevertheless enabled over 20 million working-class individuals to obtain health insurance. ...

Since attempts to "repeal and/or replace" Obamacare lost in Congress, the misogynist Republican right has now targeted women's health care benefits. In June, a gang of white male senators secretly tried to eliminate coverage for maternal care, mammograms, birth control and other women's medical benefits and also defund Planned Parenthood. That scheme backfired when it became public and women around the country organized against it.

One popular section of the ACA that corporate heads and right-wing politicians have continually attacked is the mandate that companies include free contraceptive coverage in their employee insurance policies. Some 62.4 million women have insurance covering contraception with no out-of-pocket costs, says the National Women's Law Center. Safe and reliable prevention of unwanted pregnancies can be costly, ranging from \$50 a month to \$1,000 for certain devices — a price too high for many women.

In collaboration with the Christian right, some companies claimed providing contraceptive coverage violated their “religious freedom.” ... The Supreme Court ruled in 2014 that closely held for-profit companies could eliminate this benefit from their insurance plans based on the owners’ religious objections. However, the Obama administration arranged an alternative: Women could bypass their employers and get this coverage directly from insurers.

Corporate pressure continued. So on Oct. 6, Trump obliged his right-wing millionaire cronies by issuing an executive order effective immediately that allows any employer to opt out of the contraceptive mandate if they claim “religious or moral objections” to it. ... The White House alleges that low-income women can obtain contraceptives through community health centers and government programs, but right-wing politicians are also determined to take a scalpel to funds for these services.

Not mentioned in most liberal critiques of the Trump administration is this fact: These attacks on women are part of big capital’s war on the working class. Bosses the world over have one main goal: to maximize profits and decrease labor costs, meaning wages and benefits. ...

The answer to this ruling-class offensive is to build working-class unity and strengthen the class struggle. That means recognizing the leading role played by the most oppressed sections of our class. ♦

Lucy Parsons: A working-class founder of May Day

By Jeff Sorel, March 1, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170301JS

The class struggle was at fever pitch in Chicago in 1885. Unemployment was high, wages were low, and food prices were rising steeply. On April 28, thousands of workers expressed their anger over spreading hunger by demonstrating against a lavish dinner celebrating the opening of the new Board of Trade building.

The workers, mostly European immigrants, filled LaSalle Street, chanting against price-fixing, speculation and the injustice of starvation amidst so much wealth. At their head, proudly carrying a red flag, marched Lucy Parsons, an African-Native-Mexican-American woman who devoted her life to fighting poverty, racism, sexism and capitalism.

Parsons was born a slave in Texas in 1853. In 1871, after emancipation, she married Albert Parsons, a white Reconstruction supporter involved in registering Black voters. The rise of Klan terror at the end of Reconstruction led the young interracial couple to move to Chicago in 1873.

Chicago was in turmoil. Thousands had been left homeless and destitute by the great fire that destroyed the city two years earlier. Millions of dollars donated to help the victims had been “borrowed” at no interest by big businessmen on the relief society’s board of directors, including George Pullman and Marshall Field, to invest in their own companies. News of this theft led 10,000 workers and unemployed to protest at City Hall, Parsons’ first big demonstration.

Albert found work as a printer and got involved in trade union organizing and socialist politics. He helped found the Knights of Labor, the first big national labor federation in the U.S. Socialist meetings were held at the Parsons’ apartment, where Lucy learned about labor history and socialist theory.

Strikes and agitation

In 1877, railroad workers struck nationwide, and many were massacred by federal troops in Chicago. Parsons saw firsthand that the state, far from neutral, always sided with the bosses. She also saw her spouse get enough votes for local office as a candidate of the Workingmen’s Party, only to have it stolen from him by massive fraud. She learned that militant action, not electoral politics, had to be the main vehicle for social change.

Parsons began to write for working-class newspapers and to speak publicly for the Working Women’s Union, exposing the horrors of factory life and the oppression experienced by women servants. An outstanding orator, she explained that only the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system could overcome this suffering.

She organized seamstresses into the Knights of Labor to fight for the eight-hour day. She joined the International Working Peoples Association, an anarcho-syndicalist organization that made one of its six founding principles: “Equal rights for all without distinction as to sex or race.”

She performed all this activity while maintaining a small dress shop to help support her two children.

On “Thanksgiving” Day 1884, Parsons led thousands of unemployed down Prairie Avenue, an exclusive street lined with the mansions of such leading capitalists as George Pullman, Philip Armour, Gustavus Swift, Cyrus Hall McCormick and Marshall Field III to dramatize how little the poor had to be thankful for. The workers rang doorbells and hurled angry epithets at their exploiters.

Giving birth to May Day

The movement for an eight-hour day began to grow rapidly over the next two years. The murders of peacefully striking picketers at the McCormick reaper plant May 3-4, 1886, culminated in the famous Haymarket rally and frame-up of working-class leaders, including Albert Parsons. These events are still commemorated by workers around the world on May 1 or May Day.

Lucy organized support for her jailed spouse and his colleagues, speaking to large crowds in 17 states, while doing extra sewing to support her family. After the trial, a New York paper urged that “Parsons be let out as a compromise to get Mrs. Parsons to stop talking.”

In fact, Lucy herself was often arrested and harshly treated. Indeed, on the morning of the executions, she and her children were stripped and thrown naked into a jail cell and released only after the hanging. The next day, Albert’s coffin was brought to her apartment. Overcome by emotion, she found the strength to retrieve the red flag she had carried in the Board of Trade demonstration, which she draped across Albert’s body.

Ten thousand workers filed through the Parsons’ apartment during the night to view the body. The next day, over 200,000 people lined the streets for the funeral procession of Albert and his fellow martyrs.

Devotion to workers and oppressed

Lucy Parsons organized against the U.S. imperialist war with Spain in 1898. She was active in every major 20th-century workers’ defense case, including those of Big Bill Haywood, Sacco and Vanzetti, and Alabama’s Scottsboro Brothers. She was an original member of the Socialist Party, wrote a weekly column for the Industrial Workers of the World and distributed communist literature. She supported the Russian Revolution of 1917, breaking with anarchist colleagues.

In her articles and speeches, Parsons repeatedly addressed the specific oppressions faced by Black people and women. She campaigned against racist lynchings and criminal injustice, and fought for women’s suffrage, equal pay, birth control access and abortion rights. In the 1920s, the Chicago Police Department described her as “more dangerous than a thousand rioters.”

In the 1930s, Parsons, close to 80 years old and too poor to afford a nickel for a streetcar, walked regularly six miles to downtown Chicago to sell socialist and communist pamphlets. She could still be counted on for every major picket line and rally against capitalist injustice.

Her main focus continued to be organizing the unemployed, frequently taking the lead in hunger marches. She helped formulate the sit-down-strike tactic, urging strikers not to “go out and starve, but to remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production.”

In 1941, at one of her last public appearances, Parsons spoke to strikers at International Harvester, successor to the company that had provoked the Haymarket events 55 years earlier. She stressed the continuity of the struggle

against the capitalists and the police, urging the workers to keep fighting till victory.

Lucy Parsons died in 1942. Virtually blind by then, her wood stove caught fire and she was trapped in the burning house. As a final indignity, the FBI stole her historically valuable library of 1,500 books and personal papers.

Parsons was a woman of color who became an extraordinary leader in the struggle for the liberation of the workers, oppressed and women. Her spirit lives on today in the new generation of women fighting for liberation and socialism. She merits remembrance on International Women's Day. Her militant legacy remains feared by her foes. In 2004, the Fraternal Order of Police tried, but failed, to stop the naming of a Chicago park after Lucy Parsons.

This article ran originally in WW on Sept. 6, 1984. There are a number of biographies of Parsons for further reading, but a primary source is "Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality & Solidarity — Writings & Speeches, 1878-1937." ♦

Black women's work and reparations

Editorial, August 8, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170808ED

July 31, 2017, was Black Women's Equal Pay Day — the day this year that the average total wages a Black woman was paid since Jan. 1, 2016, finally equalled the average wage white men were paid in 2016.

Seven extra months! That's 19 months a Black woman had to work, on average, to earn the same wages a white man did in 12 months.

Those months are not an abstract quantity. Those are the arduous days and nights of someone like Priscilla Smith, who is a home care worker in North Carolina. Starting in mid-afternoon, on duty until midnight, Smith does difficult work, both physically and socially, assisting up to 20 people a day. She is paid \$12 an hour, with no paid sick leave or vacation, and then comes home to care for her own four children.

Smith, a leader with We Dream in Black, a program of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, says: "The majority of people who do this kind of work are African-American or Latino women. The world needs to wake up and understand that Black workers need to be acknowledged, respected, and honored for their work." ([rewire.news](#), July 31) An even more severe wage gap exists for Indigenous women and for documented Latinas, who earn 54 cents for every dollar a white man makes.

There are 24 million Black women in the U.S., and 60 percent of them are part of the workforce. But they have high unemployment, imperiled job security,

a lack of benefits and advancement opportunities, and are the fastest growing U.S. prison population. Black women work more hours than white women on average, and half of Black women workers are mothers. (Economic Policy Institute, July 28)

Famed and wealthy tennis star Serena Williams, speaking on pay discrimination against Black women workers, said: “If I [had] never picked up a tennis racket, I would be one of them. That is never lost on me. The cycles of poverty, discrimination, and sexism are much, much harder to break than the record for Grand Slam titles.” (*fortune.com*, July 31)

Those cycles are rooted in the exploitation of Black women during their enslavement in the U.S. They were not paid for excruciating, forced labor in field or house. Under severest duress, they gave birth to children who were sold into similar bondage. Both kinds of labor by Black women yielded heartbreak, physical torment and death for them — and untold fortunes for Southern planters and the allied Northern banks, insurance companies and businesses.

Black women’s unpaid labor — along with that of African-American people in general — was the foundation of modern U.S. capitalism.

But Black women have been fighting back against exploitation from their first days on this continent. In addition to rebellious resistance and self-liberation during enslavement, Black women started to do labor organizing in the South as soon as they were emancipated.

In 1866, Black women laundry workers presented demands to the mayor of Jackson, Miss., for a higher standard wage so that anyone belonging to the “class of washerwomen” could “live comfortably if possible from the fruits of our labor.”

In 1881 in Atlanta, 20 women and a few men formed the Washing Society to demand similar wage increases for their work. They quickly grew to 3,000 primarily African-American women, with a few white women workers also involved. On July 19, they called a militant strike, ultimately successful, and described by historian Tera W. Hunter as “the largest and most impressive among Black Atlantans of late 19th century.” (“To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors after the Civil War’”)

The reward for centuries of fighting spirit and organizing by Black women should be more than equal pay. That would only bring their wages equal in the present year.

But for those centuries of exploitation and the profits made thereby, there should be reparations! Reparations for enslavement and forced labor, for the terrible damage inflicted by racism.

More than just equal pay — we demand reparations for Black women’s unpaid work! ♦

Women's hockey team threatens boycott over unequal pay

By Monica Moorehead, March 25, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170325MM

As everyone knows, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, both sat and kneeled in protest during the playing of the national anthem during the 2016 National Football League season to bring attention to racist oppression, especially police brutality.

This individual act of heroism helped to elevate the Black Lives Matter movement to an unprecedented level of visibility and solidarity among broader sectors of the U.S. population, reminiscent of the late, great Muhammad Ali, who took a stand against the Vietnam war 50 years ago.

To this day, Kaepernick's protest continues to have a social impact on other important issues exposing inequality in the U.S. This includes the ongoing struggle against pay inequity when it comes to female and male athletes.

In a major development, members of the U.S. women's hockey team announced on March 15 that they will be boycotting the upcoming world championship games scheduled March 31 through April 7 in Plymouth, Mich.

This women's team is currently ranked number one in the world. Since women's hockey came on the world scene in 1998, the U.S. team has won seven gold medals, along with diverse medals in every Olympic game. According to ESPN.com, USA Hockey, sponsor of the women's and men's teams, reported a gross revenue of \$42 million in 2014-15, and paid its executive staff compensation ranging from \$440,209 in salary and bonuses for director Dave Ogrea to \$250,000 to \$300,000 for other senior officials. (March 16)

How do these exorbitant salaries and bonuses compare to those of women players, whom fans turn out to see excel?

"Out of a four-year cycle, USA Hockey pays for only six months out of an entire four years. They pay us \$1,000 per month in those six months. So, for the other 42 months we don't get paid at all by USA Hockey," Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson, a two-time Olympic silver medalist, told ESPN. "It is a full-time job, and to not get paid is a financial burden and stress on the players, obviously."

This amounts to a measly \$6,000 per six months whenever the team trains in preparation for the Olympic games. During the rest of the three-and-a-half years of training, the United States Olympic Committee can supplement their salaries. But that is capped at \$24,000 depending on the degree of "accomplishment" of certain players. In other words, the USOC has various tiers of wages, like many other corporations. Those players viewed as average or below average receive

no more than \$700 a month from the USOC.

It should be noted that many USA Hockey male players are also members of professional hockey teams, making at least six-figure salaries, if not more.

Besides the terrible pay, women players have complained to USA Hockey officials about goalies having to use their own antiquated college equipment; horrible, cramped, unsanitary living quarters resulting in spider bites; and strenuous travel that none of their male counterparts are asked to endure to get to competitions.

Instead of coming to terms with the women's demands, USA Hockey officials are threatening to replace the women's team. This amounts to management saying it will call in scab labor.

The women hockey players have also complained that, while more than \$3.5 million per year has been publicly earmarked to support boys participating in the national hockey team development program, there is no equivalent program for girls.

Is this just another example exposing that any amount of patriotism exhibited by U.S. athletes cannot make them immune to all the levels of institutionalized inequality, be that racism, sexism, homophobia or discrimination against those with disabilities? ♦

Gender: An ideological weapon

By Cosmia Bohannon-Blumke, March 22, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180322CBB

In 1969, the catalyzing of the LGBTQ movement during the Stonewall Rebellion made drag queens, trans women and the gender nonconformity of the gay community visible worldwide for the first time. These oppressed peoples, and the new, radical movements that they founded in the rebellion's wake, were primarily seen by bourgeois, reactionary forces at the time as a threat to gender norms, to the nuclear family and, ultimately, to the stability of capitalist society. These perceptions were, in one way, correct.

Trans and gender-nonconforming people today embody a contradiction — a contradiction between the sex we were assigned at birth and ourselves. Bourgeois ideology tells us that assigned sex is a simple biological fact, immutable and eternal.

That absolute definition of the gender binary forms the basis of the gendered division of labor, which attempts to divide the entire human race into producers and reproducers. This division lies at the heart of class society and is embodied within the capitalist construction of the modern nuclear family.

This simplistic system, however, contradicts actual biology. Soviet medical scientists as early as the 1920s had remarked that human sexual difference was not binary but, in fact, infinite. This had been evidenced socially by the worldwide prevalence of multigendered societies throughout pre-colonial history.

Through our existence, trans people have proved this entrenched system of gender to be fallible. By demonstrating that there is no inherent difference between people of different genders, transness can be used as a weapon against capitalist ideology and cut a way towards a more complete and accurate understanding of gendered oppression.

However, the path to our liberation wasn't always so clear and has certainly never been light on obstacles. In the wake of Stonewall, the bourgeois state had its own answer to trans visibility: medical stigmatization and criminalization.

By labeling homosexuality and gender dysphoria as disorders for diagnosis, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people were socially "otherized." Gender dysphoria still stands in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), as published by the American Psychiatric Association.

This stigmatization was used to explain away the differences between the "queer" and the "ordinary" as inherent differences in the form of disorders to be treated, giving trans people a tremendous hurdle to clear to social acceptance. At the same time, laws against men "impersonating women" were enforced by the police, giving the state free rein to arrest trans women. This was an attempt to protect no individual, nor even private property, but to maintain the ideology of assigned gender in the minds of the people.

These were the formal grounds of our exclusion from society, and could be described as attempts at the confinement of trans people and the growth of our communities through bourgeois medicine and law. It was obvious that trans people were being treated as a threat, but the exact nature of the threat we posed was difficult for even us to discern.

The trans movement struggled for recognition in order to stay alive and to achieve social and legal change, but in many ways it was limited by its lack of historical context. Trans people could understand their own oppression perfectly well, but for many decades there was no theory or history explaining the place of our struggle in history or in the present world, nor the significance of understanding and combating gendered oppression as a whole.

Regardless, trans people at the time sought to organize around their shared oppression, building their own organizations, such as Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), and seeking to unite with the other movements to which they belonged.

Overwhelmingly, trans women could find no respite in the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Ideological currents within the growing radical feminist movement were dominated by theory which essentialized the root of women's

oppression to biology, taking the supposedly universal genetic differences between the two sexes as their starting point instead of social relations, which, according to them, followed.

This view, as Marxist analysis makes clear, reinforces the institution of the gender binary, legitimizing the same fundamentally sexist ideology it claims to oppose. Radical feminists actively waged a culture war against the transgender community and its activists, publishing works on how trans women who transitioned “appropriated womanhood” and reinforced patriarchal gender roles, and asserting that trans women sought to divide the women’s movement against itself.

Meanwhile, the liberal feminist movement found itself unequipped and unwilling to deal with any controversial issues that would obstruct its goal of “equality” through the further incorporation of women into capitalist production and the bourgeois state.

As a result, it was largely up to trans women to fight their own battles against the laws criminalizing them, against the police brutalizing them, against the men murdering them and against the culture vilifying them.

Finally, in the 1990s, the trans community received the theoretical leap it needed in the work of our late comrade Leslie Feinberg, who wrote extensively on gender and gender nonconformity throughout world history, from the perspective of historical materialism. His work explained how patriarchy, homosexuality and gender nonconformity were challenged and dominated by patriarchy at the advent of class society, how trans oppression was foisted onto the world by European colonizers and how the trans struggle was advancing in present-day socialist Cuba.

At the same time as this Marxist view on trans liberation was being made concrete, a tendency was beginning to grow within the liberal feminist movement that sought to appear inclusive of racialized people, LGBTQ people and disabled people. This shift in order to win over young progressive women has continued to the present.

It has since become widely accepted within liberal feminism that Black women, Brown women, lesbians, trans women and disabled women should be made a part of that contemporary movement. Their use of terms such as “intersectionality,” a concept developed by Black feminists which attempts to connect different forms of oppression, is an example of the liberal tactic of adopting the guise of diversity and progressive ideas in order to broaden its appeal.

But this inclusion is superficial in a liberal tendency with only its own interests in mind. The women whose primary political interest is putting a fellow white woman in the White House have nothing to offer multiply oppressed women whose needs are far greater and weigh far heavier.

It is relevant that this process occurred concurrently and not coincidentally with another such shift within the Democratic Party itself, with a platform aimed at increasingly disenfranchised progressive youth. The Democrats are also responsible for a noticeable push from the existing state as an entity to achieve the visage of “inclusiveness,” starting in the 2000s with cisgender LGB people, and more recently with trans people. As a result, the very state that once arrested trans women for walking the streets of Manhattan, now employs trans people as public servants and even as soldiers and police officers.

This dichotomy demonstrates perfectly the choice available to trans people in the U.S. at present: either assimilation or liberation.

The prospect of assimilation into a white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist society appeals to some trans people, just as it did to lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and to cis-heterosexual women before.

But assimilation is not enough for the trans community which is still struggling, racialized and nonconforming; who are still bound to the same cycle of poverty through the same means of economic oppression that the warriors at Stonewall were; who still rely upon sex work and who still find themselves homeless. Nor will assimilation do for anyone who is sincerely devoted to the interests of trans people.

The only path forward is one of a deep understanding of the trans struggle as essential, not incidental, to the struggle against gendered oppression. This struggle is one which necessitates solidarity with the gains of women and trans people in socialist Cuba against imperialism. The struggle is one of militant dedication to our shared liberation. This is the only path which promises us anything of hope.

Trans people must wield gender as an ideological weapon against patriarchy, and thereby against white supremacy, imperialism and capitalism. If they do not, they will wield it first and foremost against their own kind.

Furthermore, any organized movement which seeks to support the trans struggle must recognize and understand our unique position in the struggle against gendered oppression, and must not essentialize, delegitimize or tokenize trans and gender-nonconforming people.

This is the movement we must continue to build here and around the world.

This is why we say: Stonewall means fight back! ♦

The revolutionary future: Queer, trans and Black

By Adjoa Achiaa, December 1, 2017

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171201AA

In the wake of Harvey Weinstein's exposure as Hollywood cisgender scum who has sexually assaulted women for decades, victims have been speaking out about their experiences of sexual harassment and assault, noting the culture of silence and victim-blaming that forces many survivors to live in the shame of their trauma. This social media campaign has been seen as a rallying cry for feminists and the continuous work that must be done to fight toxic masculinity. But the unfortunate reality of the movement is that it has been a space for white women only.

The #metoo campaign was started 10 years ago as a nonprofit by Tarana Burke, a Black woman wanting to support young women of color facing sexual trauma and harassment. As Burke noted once in an interview: "Sexual violence doesn't see race or class, but the response to it does." (vox.com, Oct. 28)

What this current surge of mass disclosure has proven once again is that our society only cares about victims if they are rich and white. White privilege means that they can take a campaign created by a Black woman, whitewash the fuck out of it, and throw the voices of Black women and femmes away without remorse.

Because what is continuously and intentionally left out, not only from this campaign, but all conversations around victimization, are the stories of Black and Brown, queer and trans, and the violence from white men, white women and white supremacy, and how all of this is inherently tied to capitalism. It is why these mainstream feminist movements are of no benefit to us. At its core, mainstream feminism is anti-Black, anti-queer and anti-trans because it relies on the same oppressive principles under capitalism in order to remain valid.

We know this to be true when we look at the history of the "women's movement." The 1890s in the U.S. has been dubbed "the era of woman" and seen as a key time in defining the onset of the women's movement. It was a time when middle-class white women were increasing their visibility in the public sphere to prove themselves capable of engaging in male-dominated spaces. They stood against social evolutionist theorists who maintained (straight, white, cisgender) manhood as superior.

Those who supported the struggles of these white women (such as the women's suffrage movement) often linked that work to an evolutionary progress that posited the colonial capitalist U.S. as superior to the "primitive" cultures

of Asia and Africa. These feminists appealed to the white male ruling class in a way that necessarily rejected Blackness and queerness, through adhering to traditional gender norms as a way to “preserve the white race,” and through emphasizing white women’s differences from women of color in order to align themselves with white men.

The placing of Black queer and trans femmes as everything that is “not white” is an ongoing product of slavery and colonialism we see to this day. As Black feminist thinker Patricia Hill Collins has said: “White women’s sexuality could not be constructed as it is without corresponding controlling images applied to U.S. Black women.” (“Black Feminist Thought,” 2002)

I would add that this also applies to Black women in Africa and globally. We are, ultimately, not part of the category of “woman/ womanhood” and therefore unable to claim palpable narratives of women’s oppression because “woman” was never meant to include us. And so mainstream conversations and work around gender and sexual oppression are limited to the experiences of cisgender white women.

For the past month and a half, Black and dark-skinned New York City strippers have been organizing a strike, speaking out against racism and colorism in the industry. Discrimination means dark-skinned Black women have had consistent difficulty getting or keeping jobs because of the systemic preference to hire white and Latinx dancers. Dark-skinned strippers are either not allowed to dance on high-earning nights, or barred from the VIP sections. Celebrity bartenders (often white or light-skinned and with body types not only unrealistic, but rooted in anti-Blackness) are brought into the clubs, earning their money on the backs of Black femmes and our labor.

I just want to re-emphasize that this strike is not just an issue of stripper rights, or the conditions that sex workers face. It is specifically dark-skinned Black women and femmes fighting against the manifestations of anti-Blackness in sex work. Our voices and our struggles are not part of mainstream feminist “the future is female” bullshit because at the same time that white women are speaking out against cisgender-hetero-patriarchal violence, they are benefitting from the oppression of Black femmes (especially those of us that are dark-skinned, trans and/or fat).

What we need is a revolutionary socialist and revolutionary feminist movement that recognizes that the capitalist system encourages and benefits from every oppressive system. We must recognize that any form of work or activism that concedes to capitalist ideals, no matter how well-intentioned, “intersectional” or “radical” its claims, is fundamentally flawed.

Liberation will never be allowed to flourish under this system because the survival of the capitalist patriarchy is dependent upon our oppression. Under revolutionary feminism and socialism, the future will be queer, trans and Black. ♦

LGBTQ liberation and global class struggle

By Devin Cole, November 21, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW171121DC

In the last section of WWP comrade and transgender revolutionary Leslie Feinberg's 1992 publication, "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come," Leslie closes out with these words:

"The institutionalized bigotry and oppression we face today have not always existed. They arose with the division of society into exploiter and exploited. Divide-and-conquer tactics have allowed the slave-owners, feudal landlords and corporate ruling classes to keep for themselves the lion's share of wealth created by the laboring class. Like racism and all forms of prejudice, bigotry toward transgender people is a deadly carcinogen. We are pitted against each other in order to keep us from seeing each other as allies.

"Genuine bonds of solidarity can be forged between people who respect each other's differences and are willing to fight their enemy together. We are the class that does the work of the world, and can revolutionize it. We can win true liberation. The struggle against intolerable conditions is on the rise around the world. And the militant role of transgender women, men and youths in today's fightback movement is already helping to shape the future."

In northwest Florida, where I live, I lead an organization called Strive, or Social Trans Initiative. We are a grass-roots organization of working-class, multinational, multigender people who provide many services to the transgender people of northwest Florida and some surrounding areas.

Among these services are emergency housing, payment allocations for HRT (hormone replacement therapy), food and transportation. We are the only organization in the area that handles these types of situations. We do not receive any federal assistance. This need for basic supplies for transgender people was born out of the material oppression of transgender people — the majority of transgender people are working class, poor, and all are oppressed.

Queer and transgender oppression is born out of capitalist exploitation and white supremacy. Though white transgender people can and do still derive relative benefit from white supremacy, it is crucial to understand that anti-queer and anti-trans attitudes and behaviors are also born of white supremacy.

Putting this into historical context, we understand that in prefeudal times, queer and trans identity was not only accepted, but often celebrated. Then, with the creation of private property, with the seizing and sectioning off of previously communal, public land by ruling-class families, the oppression of queer and transgender people began.

Homosexuality or any sexual leanings away from “heterosexual sex only for reproductive reasons” was seen as a threat to land inheritance and thus to the continuation of private property. Because of this, trans people began to be demonized and shamed, and homosexual people began to be heavily persecuted.

Thus began the system of exploitation by the white, European ruling class that continued throughout the centuries until the colonization of the so-called “New World” and the subsequent slaughter of the Indigenous people, who celebrated gender variance with identities such as Two-Spirit. This is the connection between white supremacy and queer/transgender oppression.

Capitalism is at its end and survives only through continued imperialist war and exploitation of the masses. Queer and transgender people are no exception, and in fact we are thoroughly part of the oppressed masses. And every intersecting identity, be it nationality, race, dis/ability, citizen status, etc., includes queer and transgender people.

Therefore, the wild accusations that Marxist-Leninists are putting “identity politics over everything” are just that: Wild. False. While it is true that focusing too deeply on a single identity in terms of political struggle can put us onto an incorrect path toward liberalism, we must also look at how each of these oppressed identities interact and intersect with each other and apply those insights to the struggles of the working class.

And, yes, queer and trans people fit into every sector of oppression, but these are not the only sectors that intersect and overlap. Black and Brown women and undocumented migrants are two other groups that face heavy oppression. To fail to acknowledge any oppressed groups in order to “avoid identity politics” is to willfully deny the historical and material conditions that led to the exploitation and oppression of these groups.

All oppressed and exploited groups must be represented in order for the atrocities of capitalism to be fully destroyed, in order to defeat capitalism and bury it once and for all.

Finally, the exploitation of queer and trans workers must be discussed. Transgender people specifically face high amounts of unemployment and even once in the workforce, face discrimination from both other workers and management. In northwest Florida, we find ourselves assisting transgender people who work, either full or part time, with basic needs such as housing and medication.

This is evidence enough that capitalism is an inefficient and outdated system: full-time workers are still struggling for basic needs. I am presently a full-time worker myself and still struggle to pay monthly rent and bills. I share with a roommate who also works, but only barely, because she is also transgender and is also subjected to anti-trans prejudice in relation to work.

Due to the decline of heavy industry and the replacement of many already low-wage jobs with high-tech equipment, it becomes harder and harder to secure a stable income or to join a union to fight for better working conditions. This

is merely another function of capitalism's inevitable decay and affects trans workers disproportionately to most in the workforce.

As unions, which were created to build solidarity among workers, have declined, the homo/transphobic, divide-and-conquer tactics by the ruling class capitalists have tainted both union organizing and the workplace itself, causing deeper divisions between queer/transgender workers and cisgender/heterosexual workers.

Solidarity among all workers and oppressed peoples must be built with these groups in order for all of us to be liberated — and in order for socialism to be built and maintained. ♦

Cuba's LGBT Revolution

By Teresa Gutierrez, November 29, 2016 (excerpted and revised)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW161129TG

The Cuban Revolution is one of the greatest revolutions of all times. ... [But] mistakes were made in the early years of the revolution on the LGBTQ issue. Yes, there is still work to be done today. But backward ideas on this or any social issue come not from the Revolution but from the legacy of colonialism and Catholicism. Centuries of colonialism cannot be eradicated in less than 60 years of revolution, much less antiquated ideas on the LGBTQ issue. ...

The LGBTQ issue in Cuba should not be judged through the experience of living in the U.S. That is unfair and prejudicial. Nor should the LGBTQ issue in Cuba be put under a microscope, especially from the U.S. — the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated. ...

As a person of color, a weight flies off your shoulders knowing there is absolutely no police terror in Cuba. ... One Cuban leader said, "We are not the hell our enemies claim; nor are we the paradise our friends declare either."

"Mariela Castro's March," directed by Emmy winner Jon Alpert, should be seen in that context. The documentary focuses on the work of Mariela Castro, a member of Parliament and the director of CENESEX (National Center for Sex Education).

It is a frank and sobering account of conditions for LGBTQ people in Cuba today. It is a loving and genuine portrayal of the progress made in the Revolution for LGBTQ rights, as well as the challenges that still persist.

It has honest, in-depth interviews with elder gay men victimized by backward attitudes in the early days of the Revolution. These prejudices were rooted in the Spanish colonizers' Roman Catholicism, the patriarchy of slavery and the sexual exploitation of LGBTQ people in prerevolutionary Cuba, a U.S.

capitalist “playground.”

In 1965, when Cuba was preparing for the possibility of another U.S. invasion, gay men were not allowed to serve in the military. This was also true in the U.S. at that time.

When Units to Aid Military Production (UMAP) work brigades were mobilized to help Cuba out of an economic crisis, gay men, along with religious conscientious objectors, were assigned to those units instead of military service. (Leslie Feinberg, “Lavender and Red”) [This WW series can be downloaded from workers.org.]

UMAP brigades were not internment camps, but there was prejudice and some serious ill-treatment of gay men. Because of this, about a hundred young men from the Communist Youth were sent undercover to investigate. After their report, the brigades were closed down. (Ernesto Cardenal, “In Cuba”)

In 2010, Fidel humbly acknowledged in an interview with La Jornada that these early acts were “a great injustice” to gay people and a mistake. He had earlier affirmed in 1992, “I am absolutely opposed to any form of repression, contempt, scorn or discrimination with regard to homosexuals. It is a natural tendency, a human [tendency], that must simply be respected.” (Feinberg)

The documentary contains painful accounts of beatings and hateful attitudes toward LGBTQ people. One transgender woman tells of losing an eye after a homophobic Cuban threw acid in her face. A lesbian tells how her supervisor refused to promote her because of her sexual orientation. The film points out that the supervisor was a member of the Cuban Communist Party.

I have to admit that my love for Cuba has been so one-sided that I was shocked. I was also fearful that the film would be used to further demonize my beloved Revolution.

Groundbreaking work by CENESEX

But have no fear. The work that Mariela Castro and CENESEX are doing is groundbreaking. It will strengthen the Revolution and be another pillar of socialism in this new period.

As director of CENESEX, Mariela took on a difficult issue. She did not abuse her position as the daughter of President Raul Castro or the niece of Fidel, but did the necessary hard work of educating and organizing, step by step. Knowing the Cuban Revolution, I am confident that Mariela, who is straight, works closely, hand-in-hand, with LGBTQ Cubans in defining the current work.

I am also aware that the work took on greater importance because it was Mariela, a revolutionary socialist in her own right, whose contribution should be recognized and commended.

The Cuban government has prioritized doing the necessary work to change attitudes in society on the LGBTQ issue. They have done more than the capitalist government in the U.S. will ever do. The Cuban government defends and fights for all its people. There is no Wall Street there to dictate policy.

The government allowed the documentary to show the errors made, even by Communist Party members. This belies the myth that there is no free speech in Cuba.

Things are not perfect in Cuba; it's not a paradise. But there are no trans murders in Cuba, which are rampant in the U.S.

While progress is being made in Cuba, the LGBTQ community in the U.S. is likely to face setbacks now that a gay-conversionist advocate [is] vice president and a known sexual predator [is] president.

Homosexuality was decriminalized in Cuba in 1979. In 2008, the Cuban government began offering free gender-reassignment surgery to transgender Cubans. Every May an annual "March against Homophobia" is held in Havana and LGBTQ activists visit rural areas to promote diversity.

In a short 57 years great progress has been made. But the first steps in the liberation of our Cuban LGBTQ sisters, brothers and family were made in 1959, with the triumph of the Revolution, and in 1961 when Fidel declared Cuba a socialist society. With that declaration, LGBTQ Cubans and all society could begin the long march toward full liberation. Thank you, Fidel. ♦

Trump's misogyny, a pillar of capitalism

By Sue Davis, July 8, 2017 (excerpted)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW170708SD

President Donald J. Trump did it again. He lambasted a female news reporter with a crude, bullying tweet on June 27. ... Trump would not have touted his disgusting woman-hating if patriarchy were not one of the pillars of capitalism.

Women's inequality in U.S.

Examples of women's inequality in the U.S. begin with the pay gap. The latest statistics show that, overall, women make 80 cents for every dollar a white man makes, though women (and men) of color make even less. The Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates it will take until 2059 for white women to reach pay parity, while Black women will wait until 2124 and Latinas until 2248. Outrageous theft!

That means all businesses, corporations and shops alike, steal at least 20 cents from every dollar a woman earns, boosting their profits. According to the Department of Labor's latest statistics, as of 2010, women were 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force: 72 million workers, or 58.6 percent of the 123 million women age 16 years and over. Those 20 cents sure add up!

No wonder the ruling class doesn't want legislation that guarantees ample parental leaves, free child care and universal health care. No wonder one of the main means that ciswomen have to take charge of their lives — birth control — is on the barricades. No wonder transwomen of color are targeted for transphobic assaults and murders. No wonder “every nine seconds a woman in the U.S. is assaulted or beaten,” reports the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, while Trump plans to cut funding to prevent it. No wonder U.S. capitalism flexes its military might to bully the rest of the world into doing its bidding, disproportionately affecting women and their children.

Use and abuse of power and control are part and parcel of capitalist class society — whether in the boardroom or the bedroom, whether through tax laws favoring the rich or low wages that keep poor people poor, whether it's killer police or a brutal fist in the family. You cannot separate patriarchy — men's claim on the right to control women as their private property — from capitalism, which maintains power through private ownership of property.

The fight continues

On every international measurement scale, whether women's representation in government, living standards, longevity or infant mortality, the United States is near the bottom of the list of 40 industrial nations.

Take infant mortality. A March 21 [nbcnews.com](https://www.nbcnews.com) report noted that the U.S. rate of deaths per 1,000 live births declined from 6.9 in 2005 to 5.8 in 2014 — a 15 percent decline, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. But it's a national embarrassment that the rate in the nation's capital, a largely Black city, is 7.9. Compare that to Cuba's rate of 4.3 in 2016. (Cuban Ministry of Health, Jan. 1)

Why the difference? Cuba is a revolutionary socialist country that nationalized the big estates and businesses, many U.S.-owned, beginning in 1960, so it's able to provide universal health care and free education, while striving to eradicate all forms of racism and chauvinism against women and LGBTQ people. It puts its resources where its principled politics are, despite Washington's decades-long trading blockade.

While only revolutionary socialism can lay the basis to end all forms of oppression, including woman-hating, a lot can be, and has been, won under this system through struggle. When this writer first researched the wage gap in 1970, it was 59 cents on the dollar.

But it's essential to remember that our hard-fought gains can be pushed back by reactionaries like Trump and his gang of warmongers and billionaires if we don't keep fighting. They control the state, so uprooting that has to be our ultimate objective as we struggle to end sexism, racism, LGBTQ bias and all forms of exploitation and oppression. ♦

Women in ICE detention attempt suicide

By Teresa Gutierrez, January 24, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180124TG

In yet another blatant instance of cruel and inhumane treatment of migrant workers in the U.S., a woman in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center attempted suicide after repeated sexual abuse by a guard. (Rewire, Jan. 16)

Laura Monterrosa, a Salvadoran, has been held at T. Don Hutto Detention Center in Taylor, Texas, since May 2017. The guard began assaulting her shortly afterwards.

Her charges of sexual assault went ignored, according to Grassroots Leadership, a nonprofit social justice advocacy center based in nearby Austin. The center publicized the migrant woman's plight after detention center officials neglected to provide medical treatment for Monterrosa after her suicide attempt.

Monterrosa spoke out about her abuse in November 2017. ICE and the county sheriff's office did little in response. The guard, continuing to work at the center, saw Monterrosa every day.

Monterrosa is not alone in her allegations of abuse. After she spoke out, other women detained in Hutto came forward. ICE declared it found Monterrosa's allegations to be "unsubstantiated." That announcement came after only two interviews with Monterrosa, where translation was inadequate and where she was not allowed access to counsel. This additional abuse led to Monterrosa taking over 50 pain pills on Jan. 11, medication given to her by prison medical staff.

Suicide common in ICE detention

Suicide attempts at ICE detentions center are tragically common. Hutto, where Monterrosa is still held, is a medium security prison managed by CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America), a for-profit "adult corrections company." Not much improvement can be expected from this incarceration monster.

CoreCivic has a long and sordid history of prison abuse, including dangerous and fatal medical neglect, rancid food, cruel and inhumane treatment by guards and staff, including the long-denounced practice of solitary confinement, known to exacerbate trauma and mental health issues.

In fact, Monterrosa twice experienced "medical confinement." That's how supporters describe what "ICE and private prison companies like CoreCivic use as a form of solitary confinement." Monterrosa told her supporters that she initially hesitated to go public about her abuse for fear of being subjected to more solitary confinement. (grassrootsleadership.org)

In addition, the Hutto Detention Center, which exclusively detains asylum-seeking women, has a long history of sexual abuse. In 2007, a CoreCivic guard was accused of sexually assaulting a woman “while her son was sleeping in his crib inside the cell,” according to Courthouse News. In 2010, another CoreCivic guard was charged with sexually assaulting eight women he was tasked with transporting. (Dec. 12, 2017)

Any relief Monterrosa may receive depends on an official investigation being launched. Monterrosa can’t be deported while she waits for an appeal of her original asylum case. This means, say supporters, she will continue to encounter her alleged abuser on a daily basis.

One of Monterrosa’s advocates said: “What is happening to Laura is endemic of detention centers and almost impossible to completely eliminate unless we eliminate detention centers. There has been a trail of incidents and most of them go unreported and this is why: they don’t get investigated and the women who come forward are shamed or transferred or otherwise punished.” (rewirenews.org)

In 2016, Human Rights Watch issued a report of deaths in ICE custody. Of the 18 people studied, all committed suicide after demonstrating signs of serious mental health conditions.

Berenice, a woman of Garifuna descent from Honduras, described life in Dilley Detention Center in Texas as “soul-destroying.” Bernice had organized in Honduras for her people and then had to flee the reactionary regime. When ICE told her she could get out with her child if she paid \$5,000 in bail, that might as well have been \$5 million. That’s when she tried to kill herself, thinking her child would go free. (Guardian, May 22, 2015)

In June 2017, an Afghan national, a woman who had been locked up with her two children, attempted suicide in an attempt to free the children. Samira Hakimi had been held in the Karnes County Residential Center in Texas for six months after crossing into the U.S. from Mexico. She had been told she and her children would be held for only three months. She had no legal counsel and no information about her case, which led to her despair. (HuffPost, June 2017)

Fleeing violence, imprisoned in violence

Many female migrants are already fleeing violence against women in their home countries. El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala have female homicide rates among the highest in the world, according to the Washington Office on Latin America. (Feb. 21, 2017)

This turmoil is due to U.S. imperialist domination that leads to instability, the lucrative drug industry and political strife based on U.S. policy, such as stealing of elections in Honduras, as well as other social, economic and political turmoil manufactured by the Pentagon, like the 16-year-long war on Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, an estimated 80 percent of Central American girls and women are raped on their journey to the U.S.. For them to then be jailed, detained and

experience further abuse is deplorable. (HuffPost, Sept. 12, 2014)

Conditions for people in detention are only expected to worsen under the Trump administration. What is the solution to this rampant abuse, which is reminiscent of 19th-century prisons?

Solidarity. Organization. Fightback. As women march across the U.S. and around the world, the issue of women and trans people in prisons and ICE detentions must be front and center on our agenda.

Free them all and jail the oppressors — that's the solution.

To support Laura Monterrosa's case, visit grassrootsleadership.org. ♦

Smash rape culture and capitalism!

By Monica Moorehead, March 22, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180322MM

How could you have not been horrified at hearing woman after woman share their painful experiences of being sexually assaulted by Michigan State University's Dr. Larry Nassar. He was sentenced to a prison term of over 100 years after pleading guilty to child pornography and sexual assault charges, mainly on behalf of gymnasts — some as young as six years old — through “medical examinations.” His final sentencing was on Feb. 5.

With all the horror these women expressed to the world, you can't help but be inspired by their courage in speaking out. Many of them stated how grateful they were to the #MeToo and #Timesup campaigns for giving them the strength to speak out.

CNN showed Randall Margraves, a father of three gymnasts whom Nassar assaulted, attempting to lunge at him as he was being sentenced on Feb. 2, directly after two of his daughters' testimony. Margraves, wearing an International Electrical Workers shirt, showed much anguish on his face. He wanted to mete out personal justice for what this sexual predator had done to his daughters. Who could blame him? Margraves later apologized and stated that he had no intention of upstaging his daughters.

Since the Nassar trial and sentencing, it has been reported that he sexually assaulted 265 gymnasts over a period of 25 years or more at MSU. These women will be dealing with post-traumatic stress and depression forever. A major question has arisen: How can just one person get away with so much sexual violence without being caught and only now brought to justice?

Gymnast Rachael Denhollander stated in court: “You don't get someone like Larry Nassar, you don't get a pedophile that is able to abuse without there being a culture surrounding him in that place.” When the gymnasts and their families

attempted years before to expose Nassar, they were either dismissed or given the run-around.

It has now been documented that Nassar's crimes were well protected by a rape culture festering at MSU. Part of this culture involved MSU's president, gymnast coach and athletics director, members of the U.S. Olympics Gymnastics Committee and others. They have all resigned from their positions, and there will probably be more resignations before all is said and done.

The tip of the iceberg

But the Nassar scandal, as horrific and heinous as it is, is just the tip of the iceberg. On the heels of these developments was an investigation made by ESPN's "Outside the Lines" program of sexual assaults carried out against young women at MSU by basketball and football players since 2009. These assaults were not new, but the Nassar case helped to shine an even brighter light on them.

Workers World newspaper published an article by Megan Spencer, a MSU graduate on Oct. 21, 2010, titled "Activists protest handling of rape charges." She wrote: "The university administration has failed to suspend or expel the players from MSU, and has not even released a statement condemning the assault. In addition, Residence Life, the department in charge of on-campus housing, has failed to remove the players from their dorm room, further endangering women at MSU. Neither the director of MSU's Athletic Department, Mark Hollis, nor men's basketball coach Tom Izzo has commented publicly on the assault."

Spencer continued: "By failing to take action, punish the assailants or respond to this act of violence, MSU's administration, Residence Life and the Athletic Department send the message that students can commit acts of sexual violence against other students without consequence. It also sends the message to survivors of sexual assault that their experiences are not significant to administrators, prosecutors and others with authority, thus discouraging future survivors from reporting assaults."

Today Mark Dantonio, MSU football coach, and Izzo are once again on the hot seat for covering up for their players' acts, while women continue to suffer for these crimes, even to the point of committing suicide. Meanwhile, students and faculty members have organized protests in solidarity with the women survivors of these sexual assaults and to expose everyone involved with the cover-up. Also, students protested naming Michigan's former reactionary governor, John Engler, to fill the interim MSU president's seat. It was revealed that even National College Athletic Association President Mark Emmert was aware of what was happening at MSU before it became public.

No isolated incidents

The bigger question is: Are the sexual assaults at MSU isolated cases? What about similar assaults at Baylor University in 2014? Or at Oklahoma University

in 2014? Or at the University of Missouri? What about the Duke Lacrosse rape case in the early 2000s? Are any of these incidents isolated? Hell, no! In fact, even sports analysts say that sexual assaults against women are systemic, especially at schools with large athletic programs that each year bring millions of dollars into the coffers of these institutions — which are run more like corporations than schools. These programs will do anything and everything to protect their reputations and profits, including covering up sexual assaults by their players. At the same time, these unpaid athletes are super-exploited like other workers.

When these universities seek the most talented players, many of whom are players of color and come from struggling families, they use sexual favors to recruit them — a common practice. This was just exposed at the University of Louisville when basketball coach Rick Pitino was forced to resign.

What analysts do not say is that rape culture against women is systemic to capitalism and is rooted in class society which gave rise to patriarchy. Women's oppression has been institutionalized throughout the various stages of class society — during ancient slavery, feudalism and the current stage of capitalism. But under capitalism, where all human interactions are defined by the buying and selling of commodities to make profits, women are treated like commodities — to be exploited on the job and objectified in mass culture. Sports culture, whether amateur or professional, is one of the greatest culprits in the exploitation of women.

This is not to excuse the unspeakable criminal behavior of these athletes, who, truthfully, are products of this rape culture. Like the Ray Rices and the O.J. Simpsons of the world, it's important to keep in mind that they did not create this culture, but they perpetuate it.

We cannot forget the repressive role of the state when it comes to sexual assaults and rape. While so many women depend on the police to help them get justice, the police get away with sexual assaults — even more so than athletes. Cops are the biggest culprits when it comes to domestic violence.

Courts work in tandem with the cops to systematically deny women justice, almost always siding with athletes, spouses and boyfriends. When white men assault women of color, justice is denied in disproportionately large numbers.

Recy Taylor's fight for justice

For example, Oprah Winfrey raised in her Golden Globes speech the kidnapping and gang rape of Recy Taylor, a Black woman, by six white men in 1944 in Alabama. A grand jury refused to indict any of these racist, sexist predators. Taylor fought for justice until her death in December at the age of 97. Her name and many others should be etched in our memories forever. Indigenous women and girls in this country have disappeared at an alarming rate, many of them found raped and murdered.

If the repressive state apparatus cannot end violence against women, how can we expect other capitalist institutions like MSU and Baylor University to end it?

We fight for justice for people of color, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, people with disabilities and any sector of our class under attack, because, as a revolutionary party, we know it is key to building class unity.

However, we also understand that capitalism cannot be reformed in order to bring lasting justice for oppressed sectors of our class because this economic system is inherently anti-people of color, anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-queer, anti-those with disabilities. In other words, capitalism is anti-human.

This is why we must continue to fight for socialism. The advancement of any society is measured by the advancement of women. Despite their lower level of production, the Cuban revolution and the former Soviet Union, in existence for 75 years, were able to liberate women so they could become full participants in society and not relegated to second-class status. Why can't we do the same in the richest country in the world?

What these countries have and had that we don't have is a revolution for socialism. This means that the old repressive state that exists to keep people of color, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities and workers downtrodden, and the ruling class on top, must be smashed so a new state can replace it. This new state must be run by the vast majority of workers of many nationalities, both women and men with equal authority, in order to produce everything we need to become productive human beings.

'Capitalism's war on women'

I quote an article I wrote in a 1995 pamphlet published by World View Forum, titled "Capitalism's war on women: Why the system is responsible for violence against women." The article, "Domestic violence, racism and the state," was prompted by the original O.J. Simpson case. It reads: "The state is a naked admission that not only do class contradictions exist between the working class and the ruling class, but that these contradictions cannot be reconciled with the intervention of the class struggle."

The article asks: "How can young women, women of color, poor women, lesbians, [trans women,] and working-class women realize their full potential in capitalist society when all they face is violence, unemployment, exploitation, and oppression in their lives?"

Additionally, it explains: "[The] capitalist state cannot be reformed and will not change its class orientation without the intervention of the working class. The state, based on cruel and unjust laws, must be smashed as it was in Czarist Russia in 1917, in China in 1949 and in Cuba in 1959, and replaced with a worker's state that will defend the interests of all the workers of all nationalities in the name of socialist reconstruction and harmony."

The article concludes, "Only through the class struggle and the overthrow of class oppression will women be liberated, along with their class brothers, from centuries of sexism and backward ideas. Smash women's oppression!" ♦

North Korean women thrive despite imperialist threats

By Julie Varughese, March 8, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180308JV

This is an edited version of a talk given at the Feb. 3 “Women and the Fight for Socialism” forum hosted by Workers World Party in New York City.

The Institute of International Studies in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea released a study on Jan. 30 titled “White Paper on Human Rights Violations in U.S. in 2017.”

When I read it, I burst out in laughter. The DPRK (also known as north Korea) was mocking the United States for making claims about the status of people in the DPRK.

The white paper pointed out all the ways people in the U.S. are being exploited and attacked by the racist, patriarchal, capitalist, settler-colonial state founded on genocide and slavery.

As a relatively isolated nation, the DPRK is constantly attacked by outright lies in the Western media and by sanctions on what it can import and export, which limit its ability to take care of its own people. It also faces a constant threat of a nuclear attack by the U.S., which keeps a large military presence in south Korea and Okinawa and on its ships. Following north Korea’s recent move to cooperate with south Korea, the U.S. has only ramped up its aggressive language against the DPRK. In fact, the U.S. war against north Korea has never ended.

In November, a United Nations human rights panel claimed north Korean women are deprived of education and job opportunities and are often subjected to violence at home and sexual assault in the workplace. Recent pieces have come out saying that women and children are being raped and sex trafficked.

This is the kind of news that tugs on the heartstrings of liberals and encourages so-called humanitarian intervention — the same humanitarian intervention that destroyed Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. But how many more times will we here in the U.S. tolerate hearing these lies being told about countries the ruling class needs to invade to maintain full spectrum dominance?

Let me tell you about what the CIA — the surveillance and terror arm of the U.S. government — reported about north Korean women in their CIA Factbook.

More women than men exist in North Korea. Women live to an average of 74 years old, which competes with the U.S. average of 79 years.

According to the Library of Congress, “The social status and roles of women were radically changed on July 30, 1946, when authorities north of the 38th

parallel passed a Sex Equality Law. The 1972 constitution asserted that women hold equal social status and rights with men. The 1990 constitution stipulates that the state create various conditions for the advancement of women in society.”

According to the CIA Factbook, women make up 47 percent of the DPRK’s labor force. Women are obligated to serve in the military from age 17 to age 23. Women who have three or more children are permitted to work only 6 hours a day and still receive an 8-hour-a-day salary.

DPRK has better health care, education

North Korea is considered a low-income country, but it is on a par with or better than developed countries like the U.S. when it comes to health care and education.

For example, the “contraceptive prevalence rate” for women between the ages of 20 and 49 is 78.2 percent. In the U.S., that number is 74 percent. Women here pay for contraception. In north Korea, it’s free. The fertility rate is 1.95 children per woman in north Korea, which is about the same as in the U.S.

The obesity rate in north Korea is 6.8 percent. In the U.S., it’s 35 percent among men and 40.4 percent among women, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association.

North Korea has more hospital beds per capita than the U.S., putting the DPRK on par with south Korea, Japan and Monaco. North Korea has 13.2 beds for every 1,000 people, while the U.S. has only 2.9 beds per 1,000. (Clearly, patients are given more time to recover.)

The DPRK is about on par with the U.S. in the number of doctors for every 1,000 people. In north Korea, it’s 2.78; in the U.S., it’s 2.55.

The literacy rate for people ages 15 and older is 100 percent. You can’t say that about the U.S., where it’s 86 percent. Everyone in north Korea goes to school through the end of high school, and that’s mandatory. That’s not the case here in the U.S. But North Korea makes it easy for people to go to school.

After Korean War 1950-53, DPRK emphasized health care

After losing 20 percent of its population and seeing its landscape decimated during the 1950-53 war when the U.S. attempted to destroy the people’s republic, the DPRK emphasized health care. Between 1955 and 1986, the number of hospitals grew from 285 to 2,401, and the number of clinics from 1,020 to 5,644. There are even hospitals attached to factories and mines.

In spite of all the sanctions and the constant threat of nuclear war, north Korea has built and provided a health care system that benefits women. North Korea has even been described as having a health care system that is the envy of the developing world.

According to World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan, the DPRK has “no lack of doctors and nurses.” North Korea’s government provides universal health care for all citizens. In 2001, north Korea spent 3 percent of

its gross domestic product on health care. Despite the U.S. spending close to 18 percent of its gross domestic product on health care — more than any country in the world — it does not have the best health outcomes. It ranks 12th in life expectancy among the 12 wealthiest industrialized countries, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. That means the so-called greatest country in the world is at the bottom.

WHO criticized an earlier Amnesty International report on north Korea for an outdated and factually inaccurate report that described “barely functioning hospitals.”

Pyongyang Maternity Hospital and North Pyongan Provincial Maternity Hospital were awarded plaques declaring them Baby-Friendly Hospitals in 2009 by the UNICEF Thailand office for attaining all 10 targets of breastfeeding set by WHO and the United Nation’s Children’s Fund. Mothers typically stay in the hospital for 10 days after giving birth, and those who give birth through Caesarean section stay for 15 days. Mothers of triplets are hospitalized until the smallest child weighs at least 13 pounds.

The late President Kim Jong Il decided to build the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital in 1978 because he wished no more women would die because of pregnancy complications, which is how his mother died. Current President Kim Jong Un added the breast cancer treatment wing in 2012 because his mother had died of breast cancer.

We defend the Korean people’s right to determine the fate of their peninsula, because a threat of invasion by the U.S. military and its allies on behalf of the global ruling class anywhere in the world against oppressed peoples is a threat of invasion and exploitation everywhere. ♦

Women, Cuba and the road to revolution

By Teresa Gutierrez, March 8, 2018 (revised)

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180308TG

I’m not going to limit my [discussion] to women in Cuba but will include also women in the socialist camp.

The lives of women dramatically changed with the overturning of the Soviet Union and socialism in Eastern Europe. The facts demonstrate that the lives of women there were incomparably better under socialism than under capitalism.

The New York Times has cited research that women in socialist Eastern Europe had so many more rights and privileges than women under capitalism, that women did not just enjoy generous maternity leave, guaranteed free child care, state investments in education and training, but women under socialism

also enjoyed more sexual pleasure! (Aug. 12, 2017)

But that makes sense doesn't it? Women's lives are so difficult under capitalism that when you get home, not only are you tired from work — if you're lucky enough to have a job — but the weight and worry of life under capitalism makes pleasure of any kind a distant dream. So it makes sense that women enjoyed more sexual pleasure under socialism.

When the material basis of society benefits the workers and the oppressed and not the corporations, when society is planned and organized for the masses and not for profit, life is qualitatively better.

But with the collapse of the socialist camp came the collapse in the quality of women's lives. One study notes "a striking image of the changes after the fall of the Berlin Wall was that of women lining the highways offering sex for sale." Women in Eastern Europe began to be trafficked in record numbers directly because of the collapse of socialism. (Kligman and Limoncelli, "Trafficking Women," Social Politics 12.1)

From bounty of rights to human bondage

This is the difference for women under capitalism, instead of under socialism. And for trans women and women of color, the horrors multiply.

Imagine the lives of women in Cuba if their revolution were to be overturned. Fortunately, we don't have to imagine this because we have every confidence in the leadership and the people of the Cuba. They will not go back to capitalism. They will fight to the last breath to defend socialism.

Here in New York we will soon have the chance to hear directly from a Cuban woman deeply involved in the building of socialism. Griselda Aguilera was seven years old when she joined the literacy campaign in the early days of the revolution. In less than one year, as people were sent out to teach and give the masses the right to read and write, Cuba raised its literacy rate to 96 percent. This, of course, greatly benefited women.

And the Revolution founded the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas). The FMC helped win paid maternity leave for six whole months, with another six months of unpaid leave. That was improved in 2003, when paid maternity leave was extended to one year for both mothers and fathers. The FMC shaped Cuba's Family Code, which made it the legal obligation of men to share in housework and child rearing. Imagine that!

Perhaps what I love most about Cuban women is how, because they have grown up under socialism, they have a beautiful, dialectical-materialist way of explaining their world. When they describe actual life at home, they say: "Because they [men] do not have a wife at home to make dinner and take care of the house," life is different than what the law dictates. "Women work," Cuban women say, "but men have not learned to wash and cook. Men still don't understand what equity means."

A Cuban woman told us once—in heterosexual terms, but important nonetheless: “The woman a Cuban man wants no longer exists, and the man that a Cuban woman wants is yet to be born.” Isn’t that beautiful dialectics?

How important these points are when you are in the struggle! Because if we don’t learn how to deal with contradictions, how to apply the struggle with nuances and delicacies, how frustrating and demoralizing it can be.

And when we are frustrated and demoralized, we cannot go forward.

This is how I see the struggle against sexual assault and misogyny in the U.S. right now. A helpful struggle, going forward, but far from what we need.

For us, whether we speak of the women’s movement or the labor or anti-war movement, or even the Party: Neither the movement nor the party we want is yet to be formed. Not because we don’t fight or organize, but because of material conditions, because of the actual reality we live in.

Genuine socialists and communists and revolutionaries deal with the here-and-now, and also push toward what we aspire to be, passionately but also dispassionately, objectively and as wisely as we can.

Therefore, at a forum on women and socialism, we have a trans speaker to demonstrate to the movement this is how we go forward—how we do it! Socialists understand that to win women’s liberation, we must fight for trans liberation. To win women’s liberation, we must fight against racism, LGBTQ oppression, ableism and all the rest.

There is no socialist revolution without women’s and trans liberation. There is no women’s or LGBTQ liberation without socialist revolution. ♦

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Sue Davis and Phebe Eckfeldt, editors

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Join Us! Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in the struggles on all the issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented and students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact us.

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DEDICATION

Winnie Madikizela Mandela

Marielle Franco

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Winnie Mandela with daughters Zenani and Zindziwa.

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