

Durham People’s Tribunal to put White supremacy on trial

By Tyler Stuart and LeiLani Dowell
Durham, N.C.

Jan. 8 — Comrades and community members in Durham will hold a People’s Tribunal on Jan. 13, putting on trial those who enforce racial injustice.

The People’s Tribunal was created in part to challenge the charges laid against eight anti-racist activists by the Durham police for tearing down a white supremacist statue in August 2017. The defendants are scheduled to be in court again on Jan. 11.

On Aug. 12, anti-fascist and anti-racist protesters militantly challenged a neo-Nazi gathering in Charlottesville, Va. After violent clashes throughout the day, anti-racist Heather Heyer was murdered by a white supremacist who drove his car into a group of protesters.

Activists in Durham toppled the Confederate statue in front of the old Durham courthouse two days later, on Aug. 14, as a righteous response to Heyer’s murder and to assert that the community would not tolerate white supremacy in any form, including the continued imposition of monuments to racism.

On Aug. 18, people came out in force to defend Durham from an announced Ku Klux Klan rally and march through the city. The KKK rally was canceled as word of the resistance spread. Two activists facing charges stemming from the counterprotest go to court in February.

Support for the anti-racist freedom fighters has swelled nationally and internationally. On the first day that many of the defendants were scheduled to turn themselves in, hundreds lined up at the Durham courthouse in solidarity, demanding that they all be arrested for fighting white supremacy. Activists from around the U.S. arrived in caravans for the first court date and rally in support of the defendants on Sept. 12, along with a Dutch television crew. Solidarity messages have poured in from around the globe.

The state has attempted to quell this outpouring of support in part by delaying and separating the trial dates for the activist defendants. Community activists have organized and held mobilizations for every court date, now monthly since September.

Tribunal challenges the state

Seeing such blatant collusion of legal institutions with white supremacist violence, Durham organizers are taking matters into their own hands.

“The People’s Tribunal is really meant to pull together members of the Durham community, to bring charges against the sheriff, the police, the court systems and the various systems of racist oppression in the city,” said Takiyah Thompson, a Workers World party member and North Carolina Central University student who has helped organize the event.

“Fundamentally, we disagree with their laws,” said Thompson, one of the defendants. “The fact is that this bourgeois democratic society believes that the laws can only be enforced in one direction and not the other. It’s

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How does Trump survive? He pays off the ruling class

By Fred Goldstein

Journalist Michael Wolff’s new book “Fire and Fury” depicts Donald Trump as totally unfit to serve as the chief executive of U.S. imperialism. It describes the Oval Office as a snakepit populated by subordinates and relatives at each other’s throats, but who all have a low opinion of Trump and his abilities. Many, according to Wolff, question his personal and mental capacities.

The publicity given to the book is a clear signal that the capitalist media and many pundits are trying to un-

dermine the Trump presidency. They give great publicity to the quote from Steve Bannon about Donald Trump Jr.’s attendance at a meeting with a Russian lawyer. Bannon called Trump Jr.’s presence “treasonous” and “unpatriotic.”

This may have been Bannon’s way of keeping himself from being indicted by the Mueller Russia investigation, or it may have been driven by ultra-right factionalism. But the widespread coverage of this quote was aimed at breaking up the Trump-Bannon axis, which has lasted even after Bannon was fired.

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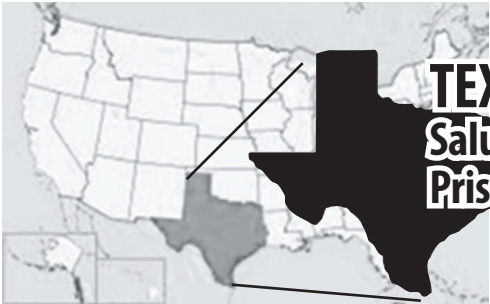


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SAN ANTONIO

New WWP branch salutes MLK Day

By Teresa Gutierrez

Workers World Party can thank mi-sogynist, white supremacist Donald Trump for one thing and one thing only: The 45th has dramatically exposed and sharpened the contradictions of capitalism and spurred on great interest in the class struggle among new layers of the workers and oppressed.

Trump, despite his shenanigans and being a “f—ing moron,” is still very much carrying out the bidding of Wall Street and the Pentagon. As a result, more and more people have decided to join the fight against capitalism.

San Antonio, Texas, is no different.

Workers World Party is excited to announce that four months ago a new branch of our party officially opened in San Antonio.

One new member, Irasema Cavazos, program director of Domesticas Unidas SA, told WW: “These are trying times for the poor, women, people of color, immigrants, workers and students who are being oppressed. Even our planet suffers due to the capitalist system.

“I believe that the Workers World Party is needed here in San Antonio, Texas, in the middle of the South, where the legacy of slavery still breathes. A woke community is what the Workers World Party will achieve as an instrument of change.”

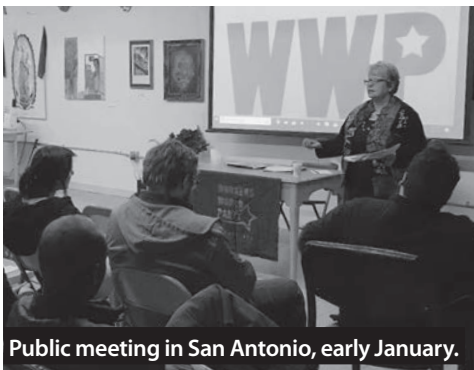
San Antonio is a major U.S. city, with a population of well over 3 million, counting the greater metro area. And San Antonio is overwhelmingly a Brown city, with the Latinx population officially at 62.7 percent, but likely more, since U.S. statistics usually exclude undocumented people.

Though the Black population is much smaller — 6.8 percent — San Antonio has one of the largest Martin Luther King Jr. Day events in the country. One year 300,000 people attended. (KSAT.news, Jan. 18, 2016)

The WWP San Antonio branch will be at the upcoming MLK event with newspapers and leaflets to show its complete solidarity with the Black community of the city, the state and the country.

Overturning colonialist, racist history

A main part of San Antonio’s sordid history is the story of colonization and racism. Spanish colonial missions,



Public meeting in San Antonio, early January.

WW PHOTO: DUKE JAY

established in the early 1700s, were used to conquer and destroy the Indigenous population of Tejas (the Indigenous name for the area). Texas was still part of colonial Mexico at that time.

Then U.S. imperialism robbed Mexico of Texas and several neighboring parts of the Southwest, with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo sealing the theft. Extending the colonial

past into a contemporary method of domination, the U.S. established military bases on some of the colonial missions. These have remained for generations, giving San Antonio the infamous and unfortunate mainstream name, “Military City, USA.”

But this colonial and military presence does not tell the whole story of San Antonio. It also has a rich history of struggle.

As another new member of the party, Duke Jay, pointed out: “A city known best for its temple to white settler colonialism [the “pinche” Alamo — TG] deserves a proper Marxist/Leninist party led by Chicane and Black voices that can decolonize as well combat the forces of gentrification, worker abuse, sexism and anti-LGBTQ oppression.

“Oppressed people are ready for a real, organized left party, not bogged down in entryism for an irredeemably imperialist Democratic Party, or scattershot in strategy and purpose. WWP is uniquely positioned to provide this, to channel these revolutionary conditions into a workers’ party led by people of color that provides victories for oppressed San Antonians, while connecting these struggles with Venezuela and Palestine and elsewhere.”

Eddie Barrera, a young queer Chicane activist who just joined the party, confirmed this view, stating: “The Southern and Southwestern states are starving for a Marxist-Leninist presence, and what better presence than a party that has been fighting injustice, inequality and racism for over 50 years! As a majority Chicane city, San Antonio needs a revolutionary party that will fight against rampant gentrification and racist immigration policies.”

The WWP center, based out of New York City, is committed to supporting this vital new branch. The center

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Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with

Join us in the fight for socialism!

seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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TEXAS

Muslim prisoners resist torture

By Gloria Rubac

“A stupid prisoner is a good prisoner.” This belief has been put into practice in a Texas prison, the Ramsey Unit, which was built over 100 years ago on what had been five slave plantations. Warden Virgil McMullen’s victims are prisoners who go to college, do peer tutoring, assist others in getting their high-school GED diploma, help prisoners prepare their parole packets and inspire prisoners to learn how to never go back to prison.

The targeted prisoners are Nanon Williams and Donshá Crump. Both are Muslims and both are working on their degrees through the University of Houston. Williams is pursuing a master’s in sociology and one in literature, while Crump is working on a bachelor’s in behavioral science.

After Hurricane Harvey in August, Workers World visited and interviewed Williams after his unit was evacuated to another prison. He told of 800 men sleeping on a gym floor with rats, roaches, mosquitoes and snakes. This reporter copied a photo of the gym taken from the prison system’s own web page which ended up being published. Now Warden McMullen says that Williams took the photo with an illegal cell phone and sent photos to the media.

Williams and Crump have been accused of heading the prison’s criminal activity. But until 2018, Williams hasn’t had any serious disciplinary cases. And Crump hasn’t had even one disciplinary case in the 23 years he’s been in prison. Since returning to the Ramsey Unit after the hurricane, Williams says his cell “has been torn apart numerous times,” which is what guards do when allegedly looking for contraband.

On Dec. 16, Williams and Crump were put into solitary with no clothes, no mattress on the steel bunk, no light, no toilet tissue, no heat and, for the first few days, no water. It was extremely cold, and after they were finally allowed to shower on a Sunday, they were told that on Sundays no towels or clothes are given out! When neither was charged after 13 days, Williams filed a grievance and they were released from solitary.

After spending almost two weeks, including Christmas, in cells with no light and two steel doors, both men told WW to “remember that we are not suicidal, we are not criminals, we do not do anything illegal. The warden hates educated prisoners, so that is our crime — educating men on how to improve their lives, write parole packets and get GEDs so they do not ever return to prison.”

Muslim prisoners targeted

When Williams was taken to solitary on Dec. 16, one of the guards stated he had a whole list of Muslim prisoners to take to solitary. “They all had attended

Islamic services. Anyone who is a Muslim or attends Islamic services and wears a beard or a kufi [cap] has been punished,” Williams said. “The warden won’t tolerate Muslims, beards or kufis. He also won’t tolerate grievance writers. The whole week in mid-December, Muslims had their decent jobs in the kitchen or in the factory taken away, and they were put in the fields and reassigned to a higher security area.” The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that Muslim prisoners can have facial hair and wear caps called kufis.

Williams wrote: “I am feeling threatened. There [was] another prisoner in front of our cells on Dec. 20 asking us a lot of questions. He isn’t a prisoner working in the solitary area, but he was walking around trying to talk with Donshá and I. We refused to talk with him. A sergeant finally searched him and found he was wearing a wire, a recording device. That prisoner is now above us in solitary in protective custody.”

On Jan. 3, Williams was rearrested and sent to solitary again, this time with another phony charge. When Williams’ attorney saw him on Jan. 4, she reported that he was in a cell with no heat and no bedding and had not been able to sleep due to constant shivering. Texas, like much of the U.S., has experienced un-

usually cold weather this winter.

Activists are now beginning a campaign to support both Williams and Crump and are meeting with legislators, attorneys and activists. Muslim leaders in Houston are concerned, and will participate in a press conference to alert the media about the harassment, the retaliation for talking about the flood conditions, the false charge Williams is now facing and about civil rights lawyers getting involved.

To help, please call Texas Sen. John Whitmire, head of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, at 512-463-0115 and demand that he investigate the harassment, freezing cold cells and phony charges.

Support letters can be written to Nanon Williams #1306434 and Donshá Crump #727528, Ramsey Unit, 1100 FM655, Rosharon, TX 77583. □



Nanon Williams, shown here with his grandchildren.

CONFEDERATE BLUE

The authors are incarcerated on the Ramsey Prison farm in Texas, formerly the home of five slave plantations.

By Nanon Williams and Donshá Crump

For the last several years we have protested the Confederate flag and demanded that statues be taken down, or we have just taken them down ourselves. Those symbols of power represent racism, oppression and the degrading of a people. They represent profit from slavery, the death of Black men, women and children dying in cotton fields, being lynched and people of color being treated more like animals than human beings.

When some see these symbols, they feel pride and heroism. We see victims, pain and suffering. We are reminded that justice, fairness and equality are a false promise.

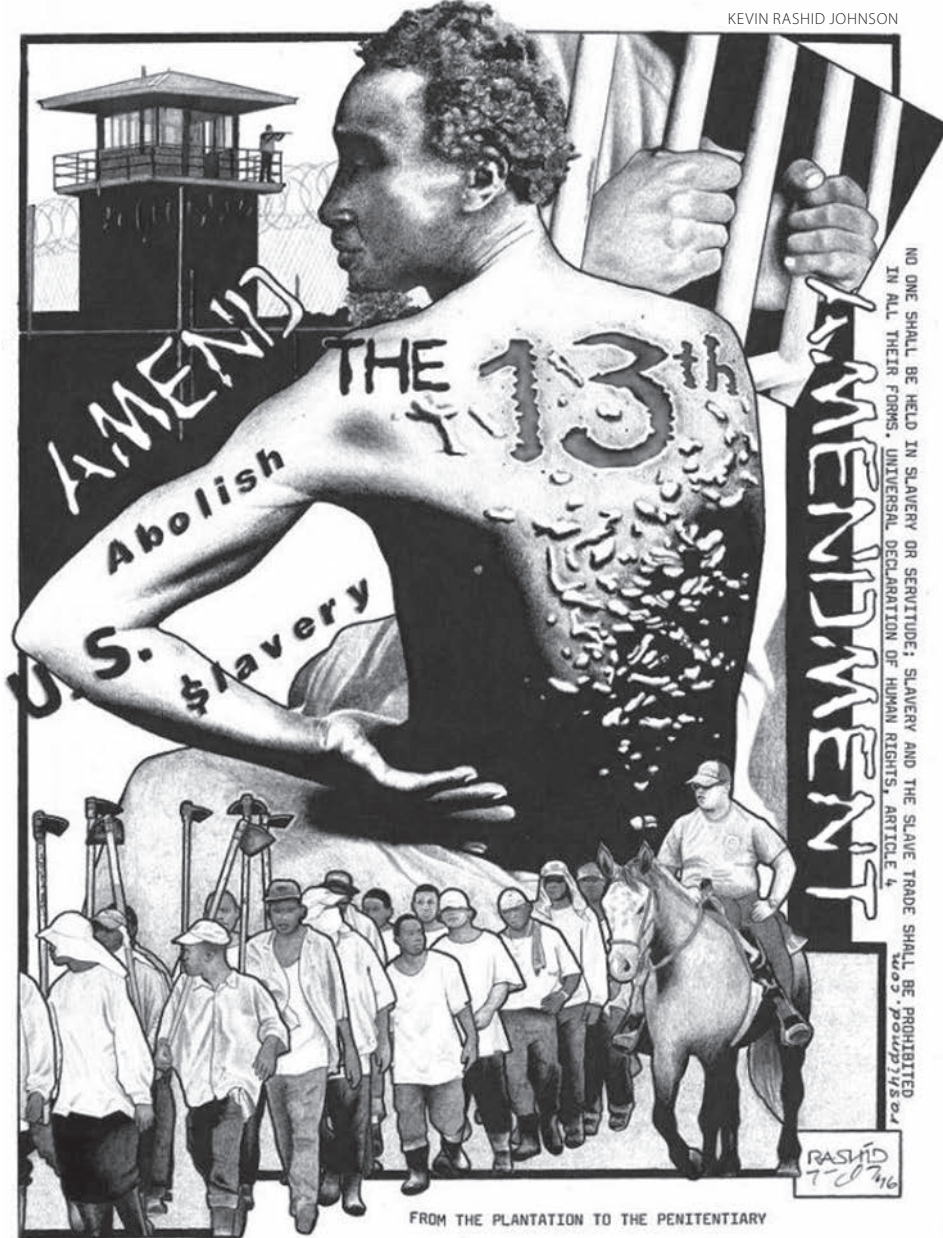
Confederate soldiers wore dark blue, called Confederate Blue, and gray uniforms. In the Texas prison system, the guards’ uniforms are these exact colors. Yet Blacks, Latinos, Africans, along with poor whites and others unconsciously wear this symbol of racism to earn their minimum-wage paychecks. They wear it to incarcerate poor people from their own neighborhoods.

These guards wear hats that say, “We Protect Our Own.” Who is “we”? Is it

Native Americans who were slaughtered and had their land stolen? Is it women and girls of color raped by their master? Does history really include us? Does this “we” include me? We wonder if Texas prison guards are even aware that their entire bodies are wrapped in a uniform of confederacy that makes them moving signs of power but also ignorance!

Prisons are indeed modern forms of slavery, and Texas has one of the largest prison populations in the world and has executed (or legally lynched) more prisoners than the next eight U.S. states combined.

We need to take down and smash all forms of racism, from statues to flags to prison slave plantations. Solidarity with the Durham anti-racist heroes! □



San Antonio

New WWP branch salutes MLK Day

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recognizes that if revolutionary fervor can spring out in one of the most reactionary racist settler states, it will spring from every corner of this country to crush capitalism once and for all.

WWP has a long history of uniting the struggle against racism aimed at Brown people with the struggle of Black people. Its Black leadership throughout the coun-

try has supported im/migrant rights, and its Brown cadre stands in unconditional defense of the Black Lives Matter movement. The party understands that supporting the struggle of people of color in the U.S. is the only road to victory and the only road that will free all workers.

Taking that view, capitalism indeed is at a dead end. □

How does Trump survive? He pays off the ruling class

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Bannon is an ultra-right ideologue whose aim has been to destroy the political center of the Republican Party. Trump, on the other hand, is a right-wing, racist, misogynistic bigot without any particular ideology. He is a pragmatist known to be easily manipulated, so the bourgeois establishment is pleased at the split caused by the book. They fear Bannon’s influence on Trump more than they fear Trump himself.

Trump, the state and the ruling class

These events raise the question of the relations between the ruling class, its executive in the form of the presidency, and the capitalist state as a whole.

It is a tenet of Marxism that the capitalist government is the executive committee of the ruling class. Its job in general is to enforce the will of the bosses and bankers. When the capitalist class is split, this function can become complex, but the general claim is certainly true. However, Marxism is also dialectical and recognizes contradictions.

Right now there is a contradiction between the immediate short-term interests of the corporate boardrooms and parlors and the long-term interests of the ruling class to maintain the U.S. as a global imperialist power.

On the one hand, Trump is showering the bosses and bankers with riches — billions in tax cuts, gas and oil drilling rights, mining rights on public lands, destruction of environmental regulations, rollbacks of banking regulations and labor protections, etc.

On the other hand, he has taken a hatchet to many long-standing policies of imperialism abroad and capitalism in the U.S. that can do long-term harm to broad ruling-class interests.

Capitalist advisory establishment and the ruling class

In this discussion it is important to distinguish between the advisory establishment to the ruling class and the class itself. The bourgeoisie over the years has created a vast stable of intellectuals who serve different factions of the ruling class.

There are think-tank intellectuals devoted to ferreting out the interests of the imperialists as they see them. There are journalistic scribes with different political lines, depending on which faction of the bourgeoisie and the political establishment they are aligned with. There is a vast array of academic advisers who go back and forth between the universities and the capitalist government.

They all vie with one another to serve the interests of imperialism and become the favored mouthpieces. Their immediate perspective can be quite different from the immediate perspective in the boardrooms, however, even as they seek to serve capitalist interests.

While various journalists, think-tank bourgeois intellectuals, academic pundits and commentators of all sorts are aghast at Trump as he swings his dip-

lomatic and political wrecking ball, the bosses are focused on the money.

Trump drives bosses’ gravy train

As long as Trump is in the presidency, the bankers and bosses are going to get much of their way with respect to profits, business, money. Under the various Democratic and Republican administrations, they have been chipping away at public land and coastline, at bank regulations, at environmental regulations, etc. But now they are enjoying unusually expanded freedom to plunder the land and the sea. They are exulting in the cuts on corporate taxes, from 35 percent to 21 percent, and billions from other cuts. Whatever Trump’s shortcomings, they can overlook them for now, because the billionaires don’t want the gravy train to stop.

The military-industrial complex — Lockheed, Boeing, Raytheon, United Technologies, etc. — is feeding off the increase in military spending to \$700 billion for nuclear weapons, anti-missile systems, new warships, warplanes, drones and missiles as Trump stokes the flames of war with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, feeds the Saudi war machine’s assaults on Yemen, ships weapons to Ukraine and positions arms to threaten Russia, China, Iran and other countries.

Military stocks rose to an all-time high when Trump signed a \$110 billion arms deal with the bourgeois-feudal monarchy of Saudi Arabia. He has been the arms salesman in chief, pushing offensive missile systems, fighter jets and ships on Japan and south Korea as part of the war buildup against the DPRK.

When the government checks come rolling in to military corporate treasuries, the embarrassments and limitations of Trump can be easily overlooked for the moment. The mass deportations, racist code words, misogyny and sexual harassment, homophobia — all are brushed aside.

It is no coincidence that when the Wolff book came out, Trump quickly made a public announcement that he was opening up the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts to the oil and gas industry for drilling. The executives of ExxonMobil, Chevron and Conoco were not giving their primary attention to the scandals of the White House at that moment.

Energy Fuels Resources, which mines uranium, got the Trump administration to slash the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears public area down to 202,000 acres. That put the uranium deposits outside the national monument. Native lands stolen from five different nations were redirected to the private sector by this ruling.

Trump has taken an axe to ruling-class institutions. He has launched attack after attack on the FBI, the crown jewel of the ruling class’s repressive apparatus, in order to discredit the Mueller investigation into his relations with Russia — even though the FBI has ruthlessly carried out the destruction of progressive and revolutionary organizations since World War I.

Trump has also taken an axe to traditional imperialist alliances. He has



denounced NATO and demanded that NATO countries pay more for their militaries. He has humiliated the presidents of Mexico, Canada and Australia, among others. He has recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and torn the mask off the U.S. as a “neutral” mediator in the struggle with the Palestinians.

In addition, Trump pulled \$1 billion in funding from the United Nations. He pulled out of the Paris climate accord and jettisoned talks for a pact on immigration and asylum.

Reagan administration and the ruling class

When the right-wing government of Ronald Reagan took over in 1981, the majority of the ruling class was deeply concerned. Reagan was the darling of the ultra-right and stood outside the main capitalist establishment as he climbed the political ladder in California. His wing of the Republican Party was at war with the Rockefeller wing.

Reagan started out his term in office by viciously breaking the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. The workers who went on strike were then banned from federal employment for life. It was the first time in decades that such a brutal, premeditated attack was made on a labor union.

This was followed up by a full-scale anti-labor offensive against copper miners in the West, meat packers and Caterpillar workers in the Midwest and more. Reagan and his corporate allies herded scabs in all strikes that took place.

Reagan slashed welfare spending by hundreds of billions, attacked welfare rights and turned the money over to the military for a vast expansion.

At first the ruling class was deeply concerned, not for the workers or the welfare recipients, but from fear of a rebellion from below. But there was no real fight-back and the labor leadership not only abandoned the welfare recipients but capitulated to the anti-labor offensive. Reagan got away with it! Then the bosses and

bankers and their politicians adjusted to the new normal of reaction. They laughed all the way to the bank.

Trump coming after us — we must come after him

The deep support that Trump is getting from the Republican Party is a reflection of the bosses’ attitude toward him. They are sticking with him in this latest crisis. They have tied their fate to him for now. The Republican congressional gang wants to attack Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. If they start down this road, they are counting on Trump’s backing.

For political reasons, he may not be so anxious to launch such an attack. But Paul Ryan and the Republicans have not given up on this program at all.

Just as during the Reagan administration, the bosses and bankers are not rushing in to stop Trump — for the moment. They may ultimately unseat him, but for now they are watching to see how much he can get away with. They will stick with him to try and get the last nickel in profits out of his rulings and laws. Until he endangers their profits and their social stability, the ruling class proper, as opposed to their pundits and advisers, will stick with him, whatever his embarrassments, limitations or diplomatic blunders.

What did not happen under Reagan was any fightback. And the Democratic Party is following the same route they did under Reagan: reliance on electoral politics and now the hope that the Mueller investigation will unseat Trump. Even the recent suspension of Temporary Protected Status for 200,000 Salvadorans in this country — on top of denial of protection for tens of thousands of Haitians and Nicaraguans — has not moved the so-called Democratic opposition to fight back.

Mass resistance in the streets, the factories, the retail stores and service industries, the campuses, and the oppressed and immigrant communities is the only way to stop this right-wing wrecking machine.

Trump wants to come after us. It is time for us to come after him. □

SHIRLEY LITTMAN Women

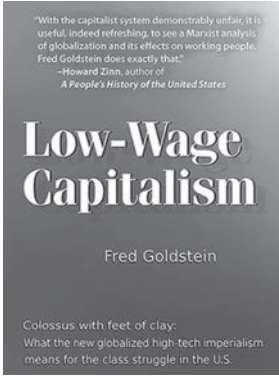
By Edward Yudelovich
New York

Shirley Littman, labor union, anti-war, social justice activist and “Raging Granies” artist, died on Dec. 7 in New York City. A Workers World Party supporter, she attended demonstrations, party meetings and events, including the 2015 memorial to LGBTQ fighter, writer and revolutionary, Leslie Feinberg. She is survived by her spouse, Larry, and their son,

Danny, who joined Shirley at events.

Some 250 friends and family members attended a Dec. 15 memorial to Shirley at the Church of the Holy Apostles in the Chelsea neighborhood. Her neighbor, Johnnie Stevens, delivered a solidarity message from WWP to Shirley’s family and thanked her for supporting the group he founded, Community Labor United for Postal Jobs and Social Services.

Shirley attended activities that provided
Continued on the next page



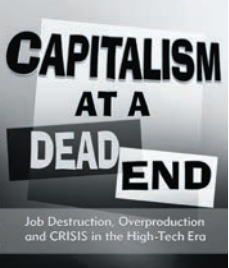
Low-Wage Capitalism

describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to LowWageCapitalism.com. Available at all major online booksellers.

Link seen between domestic violence and mass murder

By Sue Davis

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.

This is the first of several articles about domestic violence in the U.S.

‘No heat, no rent!’ cry Brooklyn tenants



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Brooklyn protest, Jan. 7.

By Anne Pruden
Brooklyn, N.Y.

An emergency demonstration in Brooklyn's Clinton Hill neighborhood on Jan. 7 drew several dozen protesters supporting tenants of a four-story apartment building. Despite below-freezing temperatures

for over a week, the residents have been denied any heat for more than 20 days.

"No heat, no rent!" yelled the demonstrators. Tenants said their landlord, Stuart Venner, will not even answer phone calls and that they are planning to take him to housing court, along with exposing him with protests. Passing neighbors indicated their support of those suffering this unhealthy cruelty.

One placard held by a protester read, "Stuart Venner sleeps warmly while his tenants are frozen!" Supporters included activists with the Crown Heights Tenants Union and FUREE (Families United for Racial and Economic Equality).

Heat denial is not limited to wealthy landlords and developers. Headlines have aroused attention to thousands of other New York City families who have been denied needed heat and hot water. Since the frigid cold arrived with the new year, over 30 developments within the New York City Public Housing Authority now lack heat and hot water!

This appears to be a racist situation, as most NYCHA tenants are people of color. What does this say of the city government's responsibility to the more than 400,000 people who live in NYCHA housing? And what is this government doing — not doing — for the over 70,000 homeless people here?

Housing, heat and water should be among the fundamental human rights guaranteed to all. Instead, in New York and other cities around the United States, capitalism consigns the poorest and most oppressed to the direst of life-threatening conditions. □

workers' champion, Presente!

Continued from page 4

tested threats of post office closings. She wrote a song for the Raging Grannies honoring postal workers and calling for saving post offices. This activist group opposes war and promotes social justice and economic equality through song and satire.

Neighbor Sara Catalinotto said: "I was first involved with Shirley in supporting the Stella D'Oro workers' strike. We and others were outside Gristedes telling people to boycott the cookies. She was so energetic and loud that nobody could miss our message. She brought the issues to the masses with gusto.

"Shirley was an active supporter of Parents to Improve School Transportation and helped get her union, Communication Workers Local 1180, to endorse the School Bus Bill of Rights campaign. PIST fights for the rights of parents of children with disabilities to better school transportation and educational services

and opportunities." Catalinotto founded PIST.

Larry Littman described Shirley as a devoted union worker who believed in people uniting for the common good to help one another: "It was in her bones. She was a people person through and through."

The Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott Senior Service Award was given to Shirley in 2015. It honored her leadership and activism in the Chelsea community.

CWA Local 1180 members spoke, praising Shirley's record as a champion, especially of women and people with disabilities. The union represents over 8,500 NYC public sector workers, mostly women and people of color.

An active member of her local's Committee on People with Disabilities, Shirley joined its delegation at the NYC Disability Pride Parade. As a shop steward, she led such a fierce fight for equal pay and promotional opportunities for women union members in the NYC Depart-

Activists call for ‘Days of Rage against Trump and Capitalism’

By John Steffin

Despite a brutal year of attacks on the working class, especially on the most oppressed, the spirit of rebellion cannot be crushed. One year after the inauguration of Donald Trump, militants will hit the streets to show the ruling class that we refuse to bow down to racism and fascist terror.

Taking its cue from our comrades in Palestine, #J20Resist, a coalition of forces formed in the months leading up to the 2017 inauguration, is calling on activists across the U.S. to participate Jan. 15-20 in “Days of Rage against Trump and Capitalism” preceding the one-year anniversary.

The coalition calls on all U.S. militants, wherever they are in the belly of the imperialist beast, to raise in their community the banner of a better world. Now more than ever, it’s important that we do so. Not only to strike fear in the hearts of the ruling class, but to show members of our class that they are not alone, that we are

not defeated, and that, despite exhaustion, pain and sorrow, revolutionary optimism lives on.

Despite virulent attacks, the last year has not been without its heroic moments from which we draw energy and inspiration.

We saw hundreds of fellow activists arrested at the inauguration, made to stand in the cold for hours while they were kettled, assaulted by the Washington, D.C., cops and others, and then dragged through a year-long prosecution process while the state attempted to outlaw dissent.

We’ve seen white supremacist terror in Charlottesville, Va., that ended the life of Heather Heyer and hospitalized dozens of other anti-racist activists. We’ve seen an escalation in raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents who have ripped apart the immigrant community. We’ve seen police brutality continue unfettered, while the U.S. rattles its saber louder and louder at the oppressed of the world.

And how does our class respond? After announcing a ban on immigration from

seven countries, many with a majority Muslim population and all of them under attack by U.S. imperialism, thousands of people occupied airports around the country.

Two days after the attack in Charlottesville, activists in Durham, N.C., took matters into their own hands and tore down a racist Confederate statue, sending waves of hope to all who had been demoralized in the wake of white supremacist terror. After a year of solidarity inside and outside the courts, the first six #J20 defendants were found not guilty of all charges.

The struggle continues!

These are just three notable moments. The vast, multinational working class continues to show, on a daily and weekly basis, that it will not back down to racism and repression. Activists are chaining themselves to ICE vans, taking the streets against police brutality and war, and breaking the silence on sexual assault.

From Jan. 15-20, let us show the world that we are still here, united, fighting for justice. That we cannot be stopped. That we believe we will win.

TRUMP DEPORTATIONS ENDLESS WAR
KILLER COPS ADDICTION UNEMPLOYMENT
70K HOMELESS IN NYC RACISM BIGOTRY
POVERTY HARASSMENT SEXISM
STUDENT LOANS BROKEN MTA SYSTEM
GENTRIFICATION ENDLESS ICE RAIDS
ALIENATION HOPELESSNESS ANXIETY
CAPITALISM CAPITALISM CAPITALISM

WE DON'T HAVE TO LIVE
LIKE THIS.
#DAYSOFRAGE

Appropriately, the Days of Rage will begin on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, where we will rally in true remembrance of a leader of the Black freedom struggle who stood in solidarity with striking workers, spoke out against the U.S. war in Vietnam and had his life cut short by the Trumpists of yesteryear.

Many different issues will be raised during the Days of Rage, including union busting, racism, police terror, sexual assault, violence against trans people, U.S. imperialism and its unending war drive, and state repression of activists like the #J20 defendants.

The week also corresponds with a court hearing Jan. 17 in Philadelphia for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther and one of the world’s most famous political prisoners, who may finally, after more than 36 years of persistent struggle, be up for a retrial.

Durham People’s Tribunal White supremacy on trial

Continued from page 1

important to challenge that notion, as a gateway for more radical challenges to the state as a whole.”

Organizers hope that the People’s Tribunal will strike both an absurd and somber note. Replete with banners, a giant gavel, witnesses, experts and a judge, the event will have all the components of a mock trial, but the crimes it addresses are real.

The tribunal will welcome community members to share testimonies of their personal experiences with white supremacy in Durham, offer rebukes of its violent institutions and recommend sentences against those in power. Those who attend will collectively agree upon the verdicts.

“It’s a way for people to have a grievance process of their own and to give people an outlet to strengthen community,” Thompson said.

To help promote the tribunal and voice solidarity with the defendants, Durham activists encourage allies to participate in the #DefendDurham video challenge. Participants can share a 30-second video on social media (with the hashtag) explaining the reasons for their support and demanding that all charges be dropped.

The event has been posted on Facebook, and will be livestreamed.

Since promoting these #DefendDurham initiatives, activists have been threatened by local white supremacists. Last week, a camera recorded two hooded figures posting an anti-Semitic, anti-communist flyer on the door of the Durham Solidarity Center. The flyer displayed Nazi slogans.

This racist crime and others across Durham have only affirmed for activists the necessity for a People’s Tribunal. “I think that the experience of a lot of people, particularly people of color, poor and working-class people, is that there is not justice in the courts,” said Elena Everett, an anti-racist defendant.

“If we can’t find justice in the courts, then we need to create our own spaces to get real stories of what is going on in our communities so that we can come up with our own solutions.” □

Supporters demand ‘Justice for Sam Smith!’



Dec. 15 — Transgender activists, family members and supporters came out to show support for Sam Smith in his bid for freedom at a hearing today at Moakley Courthouse in Boston. Smith, a Black prisoner, has been imprisoned by the injustice system for more than 25 years, ever since he was a youth.

Smith is fighting for the release of auditory tapes revealing prosecutor James Coffey’s use of bigoted, anti-trans and white supremacist language during his 2001 trial to invalidate and eliminate potential jurors who might have been sympathetic to Smith. The judge cut Coffey off during a rant, resulting in Coffey using a peremptory challenge to eliminate a potential juror.

Prosecutors have stated that the tapes are “missing.” Smith is under no illusion that the tapes will be “found,” especially

since Coffey has become a judge himself. But refusal to turn over the tapes could lead to a retrial and/or freedom for Smith.

Smith’s lawyers argue that to deny someone a seat on a jury for being transgender violates the Constitution’s 14th Amendment, which says the State shall not “deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Also, Article 12 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights prevents the use of a peremptory challenge to remove a juror because of their affiliation with “particular defined groupings in the community.”

Supporters will continue to call for “Justice for Sam Smith!” and “Unite to fight racism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry!” To demand a retrial for Sam Smith, call Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey’s office at 617-727-2200.

— Report by Phebe Eckfeld

#DEFENDDURHAM WEEK OF ACTION: JAN 8-14TH Fighting white supremacy is not a crime!

- 1 Jan 10 & 11: National Call-in Days
Call & tell them to drop the charges:
Durham County DA Roger Echols.....919-808-3010
Durham Mayor Steve Schewel.....919-560-4333
Durham County Commissioners.....919-560-0025
N.C. Governor Roy Cooper.....919-814-2000

- 2 Organize a solidarity action or Come to Durham Jan 11-15
In the spirit of Dr. King: Workers Rights - Not White Supremacy!
Use #DEFENDDURHAM

- 3 DONATE at doitlikedurham.org/fund/
To support defense, mobilization, & organizing

- 4 Send a solidarity message from your organization to: info@defenddurham.org

- 5 Host the TOPPLING RACISM - DO IT LIKE
DURHAM SPEAKING TOUR in your city:
tinyurl.com/defenddurhamtour

- 6 Check out highlights from the
inspiring documentary on the
Durham struggle:
tinyurl.com/durhamdoc

Prisoners in Florida to strike on

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Most people don’t know there is one place in the U.S. where slavery is still legal -- in prisons. The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, passed in 1864, abolished slavery and involuntary servitude -- except as punishment for a crime.

But prisoners held in this enslavement are organizing resistance. In north Texas at the mas-

sive Allred Unit, some of more than 3,000 imprisoned men went on a 10-day hunger strike at the end of December. Allred has the most people held in solitary confinement in the Texas prison system. (Houston Chronicle, Jan. 4)

After two years of uprisings, organizing and rebellion in Alabama and Florida state prisons, prisoner-organizers have called for a “laydown strike” against the Florida prison system. The action,

called Operation Push, is scheduled for Jan. 15, in solidarity with Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

According to Fight Toxic Prisons, the prisoners demand an end to prison slavery, price gouging by prison subcontractors and parole options for those with life sentences. They also raise the need for justice regarding the death penalty, voting rights and environmental health conditions.

A Florida prison organizer, in-

A visit with Mumia Abu-Jamal

Despite ailments, prisoner still spirited

By Joe Piette
SCI Mahanoy, Pa.

Philadelphia political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal looks older than he should at 63, but his mind is as sharp as ever. The Uncompromising Minister of Confrontation Pam Africa of the MOVE Organization and I, Workers World newspaper reporter, peppered him with questions for over three hours on Jan. 8. We were in the visitors' room at Mahanoy State Correctional Institute near Pottsville, Pa.

Mumia answered quickly, often with a sense of humor. He displayed an encyclopedic knowledge of legal cases, from his own to that of Terrence Williams and other prisoners whose appeals he has sometimes participated in.

At the same time, Mumia is obviously not healthy. He walks slowly, perhaps because his feet are clearly swollen. He wears white corduroy slippers, with his right foot tightly stuffed in to support his heel. But the slipper on his left foot occasionally falls off because it cannot be stuffed into the slipper.

Mumia had exposed himself to ultra violet rays for 90 seconds, followed by a bath, as recommended by Department of Correction doctors, just before he met us. But his skin looked dry. As we talked, he often scratched the back of his neck, his chest, his leg and other areas. He cannot sleep because of the constant itching. Parts of his body seem scaly and darker than other areas. When he lifted his pant leg, we saw horribly scarred skin with what appeared to be open sores. He explained that he is not allowed to show these sores when visitors want to take a photo with him.

Mumia's appetite has decreased and he has lost a little weight. After a couple of hours, his right leg suddenly stiffened. He said he felt pain behind his right knee, which subsided after about 15 minutes. Pam Africa said that also happened during her last visit. He coughed several times, each time complaining of pain on the right side of his lower rib cage or below it.

Yet Mumia was in a good mood, despite his many ailments. At one point, in the middle of a spirited discussion about Harriet Tubman, all three of us broke out singing a chorus of the civil rights song, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn us around!"

Demand health care for Mumia!

Mumia has been unjustly imprisoned for 36 years, 30 of them in solitary confinement on death row. The DOC's continuing failure to effectively treat his severe skin ailment amounts to nothing less than torture. It is one more reason he should be released from prison immediately.

In the meantime, supporters are asked to call three people:

- SCI Mahanoy Superintendent Theresa DelBalso: **570-773-2158**
- Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections John E. Wetzel: **717-728-4109**
- Pennsylvania Department of Health Acting Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine: **717-787-9857**

Callers should demand that Mumia be taken to an independent medical facility, such as Geisinger Hospital, where he was taken after collapsing in 2015. The facility has the expertise to provide a thorough, hands-on diagnostic evaluation and supervised patient care.

If the Department of Health claims it has no jurisdiction over the DOC, remind

them that their "mission is to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease, and to assure the safe delivery of quality health care for all commonwealth citizens." That should include prisoners, too.

For more information, contact Mobilization4Mumia@gmail.com or call 215-724-1618. Donations can be made at mobilization4mumia.com/donate-1/.



From left, Joe Piette, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Pam Africa, Jan. 8 at SCI Mahanoy, Pa.

Pack the court for Mumia on Jan. 17!

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

In a case that could lead to freedom for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas Judge Leon Tucker ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney's office to present new testimony at a hearing on Jan. 17. Abu-Jamal's supporters vow to pack the court.

The case before Tucker began with a hearing on April 24 concerning former DA Ronald Castille's involvement in Abu-Jamal's case. As a Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, Castille refused to recuse himself from ruling on Abu-Jamal's appeals.

A 2016 Supreme Court decision in Williams v. Pennsylvania found that Castille's refusal to remove himself from another death penalty case was unconstitutional. Abu-Jamal's attorneys filed an appeal for a new trial based on that decision. Fourteen Pennsylvania prisoners, including Abu-Jamal, are fighting for appeals on similar grounds.

Abu-Jamal's petition seeks to overturn all Pennsylvania Supreme Court decisions on his 1995-08 appeals, citing Castille's bias and conflict of interest. Castille was an assistant DA during his 1982 trial for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer. Abu-Jamal pleaded innocent. As DA in 1989, Castille opposed Abu-Jamal's post-conviction and death sentence appeal.

During his judicial campaign, Castille bragged that he had helped sentence 45 men, including Abu-Jamal, to death. The Fraternal Order of Police, which led the campaign to execute Abu-Jamal, honored Castille as "Man of the Year" and financially backed his campaign.

Elected to the high state court in 1994, Castille ruled against every appeal Abu-Jamal brought before him; most criticized the DA office's actions during Castille's tenure. He refused every request Abu-Jamal filed asking him not to rule on postconviction appeals.

Court to DA: 'Release the files'

Tucker has repeatedly ordered the DA's office to turn over all files in its possession that show Castille's "personal involvement in the case" during all court proceedings.

On Sept. 7, after they failed to fully comply with his orders, Tucker ordered the DA's office to turn over 31-plus boxes of prosecution files, all notes on meetings between Castille and his staff regarding the case, press releases or Castille's public statements about it.

In calling for the Jan. 17 hearing, Tucker ordered the DA's office to produce attorney Gayle McLaughlin Barthold to present testimony regarding her March 27, 1990, memorandum to Castille about death penalty cases. A Castille appointee, Deputy DA Barthold filed all the DA's legal papers during Abu-Jamal's 1990-91 filings in the state Supreme Court. The DA's office claims it cannot locate the memorandum.

Mobilizing for Mumia key

Abu-Jamal's legal case may be in the hands of the lawyers and the courts, but victories in the fight for his freedom have depended on a global support movement. Throughout Abu-Jamal's imprisonment, his family and supporters have fought the state's efforts to murder him.

During the recent tug-of-war over case records, Abu-Jamal supporters repeatedly took to the streets, starting with a rally outside the court during the April 2017 hearing. A call-in campaign to the DA's office was launched, demanding compliance with Tucker's order.

On May 30, the deadline for turning over the files, protesters gathered outside the DA's office, demanding: "Open up the books!" When only 54 pages of court filings — already part of the case public record — were turned in, Tucker ordered more files produced by July 7.

That day, protesters gathered at the DA's office with poster-size copies of the Tucker's order so that passersby could see

the DA's cover-up. Their signs exposed the DA's office's long history of deception and corruption.

Shake-up in DA's office

On Nov. 7, by a 3-to-1 margin, Larry Krasner, a progressive civil rights defense attorney, backed by activist communities, defeated a FOP-led campaign on behalf of his opponent, Republican nominee Beth Grossman, to become Philadelphia's 26th DA.

Krasner's platform included working to end mass incarceration, stopping cash bail imprisonment, ending illegal stop-and-frisks and stopping pursuit of the death penalty.

After taking office, Krasner fired over 31 DA office staff, including attorneys who handle capital cases. At issue is what impact this could have on Abu-Jamal's appeal.

Reportedly, Deputy DA Ronald Eisenberg, a Castille protégé who has represented the DA's office in the case, resigned weeks ago. Another DDA prominent in Abu-Jamal's trials, Hugh Burns Jr., was fired.

While the shake-up should be encouraging to Abu-Jamal supporters, Krasner's appointment of Castille to his transition team leaves doubts about his seriousness and long-term impact.

Blowing the lid off the cover-up

The potential to reopen Abu-Jamal's conviction case is dangerous to some people in high places. The case is rife with suppression of evidence of innocence, evidence-tampering by police and coercion of witnesses to identify him as "guilty." The Pennsylvania injustice establishment has lied about the facts and demonized Abu-Jamal. Politicians have used the case to win votes through racially divisive law-and-order politics.

If Abu-Jamal's new legal action succeeds, he could reintroduce legal challenges to the racist frame-up conviction that led to his 36 years in prison, 30 of them in solitary confinement on death row.

Evidence increasingly supports Abu-Jamal's claims that racism, corruption and judicial misconduct throughout his trial were the reasons he was convicted. Now, with the chance of a legal victory that could potentially release him, it is more important than ever to be in the streets to demand "Free Mumia now!" □

MLK Day

interviewed by It's Going Down, said the action will be "to willfully give up our privileges, like making phone calls, buying canteen, visits, and not attain to [attend] work assignments." The organizer added, "We're expecting all inmates throughout the state to be in one accord and act as a unit." (tinyurl.com/yar5x43m)



Lessons of ‘The Hammer & the Hoe: The Alabama Communist Party 1928-1951’

This is the final installment of a three-part series based on an article originally appearing Dec. 14 in The Forge, a socialist newspaper for the South (theforgenews.org).

By Devin Cole

In its 23-year history, the Alabama Communist Party organized four generations of mainly Black workers, farmers and laborers to come together to fight oppression and capitalism, support each other and show international solidarity with struggles all over the world. It did almost all of this underground or behind the scenes. But when it was direct, it struck fear into the minds of all reactionary, racist capitalists who sought to keep alive the decaying system of capitalism. So much fear that it took the government intervening to bring it to a halt.

The ACP was a revolutionary party not just because of its revolutionary intentions, which is to say, the revolutionary goals of communism, but revolutionary in that it is probably one of the greatest examples in the U.S. of a rural, revolutionary, Black-led cadre.

There were no “big city” or otherwise petty-bourgeois persons with considerable experience who had major influence on the formation and maintaining of the party. It lasted over two decades in that rank-and-file formation which won them many victories, even in the face of perpetual reactionary violence.

As is the case with all parties, there were errors made, some of which had lasting effects, such as its repeated attempts to work with bourgeois liberal leaders and groups while not focusing on spreading propaganda to working-class liberals. This would serve as a major error in later years when members started being expelled from the bourgeois groups.

Lessons learned

One of the main reasons behind the readiness to work with liberals is having to deal with the defeat that is “reform,” which masks itself as a permanent solution, but as history has shown us, is nothing more than an ill-fitting band-aid on a growing wound.

Fifteen years before the formation of the ACP, Lenin warned of liberal influence in revolutionary movements:

“The liberal bourgeoisie grants reforms with one hand, and with the other hand always takes them back, reduces them to nought, uses them to enslave the workers, to divide them into separate groups and perpetuate wage-slavery. For that reason reformism, even when quite sincere, in practice becomes a weapon by means of which the bourgeoisie corrupts and weakens the workers. The experience of all countries shows that the workers who put their trust in the reformists are always fooled.”

However, not all lessons learned are negative, though many in this instance are born from negative experiences. In the continuation of reactionary violence against Black workers, what the reactionaries wanted was retaliation from Black workers so they could advance attacks under the guise of being “threatened,” similar to what police do now (and have always done).

Black people were already hunted and lynched, but Black workers unionizing and embracing communism had to face that threat at an even greater volume. However, instead of retaliating aimlessly, Black workers organized endlessly, often in secrecy, to sustain their own communities and fight off Klan members and the state government.

The lesson here is that even in the face of what seems to be ceaseless reactionary violence and spineless liberalism, a disciplined, structured cadre is what will see revolutionaries through.

Disciplined self-defense

As communists, we understand and utilize self-defense; when the oppressed rise up against the ruling class, it is always in self-defense — self-defense from being exploited and killed off further, but even then in these instances, it must be disciplined.

Practice cannot be carried out without



“The Communist Party taught me that the masses of people must be educated politically through struggle — even the struggle to write a postcard, a letter, sacrificing to buy reading material and struggling to read it. Struggles to achieve people’s day-to-day needs are the basis of political education.”
- Hosea Hudson
Alabama Communist

Hosea Hudson (1898-1988) was a Georgia sharecropper who moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and became a steel-mill worker and leading union organizer, founding United Steelworkers Local 2815. A member of the Alabama Communist Party, he learned to read in the CP’s National Training School, and went on to organize the Right to Vote Club in 1938, resisting systematic intimidation of Black voters under segregation. He told his own story in “Black Worker in the Deep South: A Personal Record” (International Publishers, 1972).

theory and theory cannot be understood without practice; to try and advance one without acknowledging and studying the other will either lead to inaction or counterrevolutionary, ultraleft violence that will no doubt have a severe backlash on the most oppressed.

The Black sharecroppers, farmers, domestic workers and miners of the ACP and the masses they organized and rallied largely understood this. In such a violent climate, it was a key to their 23-year survival, at which point the only way they could be permanently shut out as an organized party was by state intervention by way of anti-communist legislation.

Despite errors, this does not in any way negate the revolutionary history and legacy of the ACP. At a time when Black people, especially Black workers, were being treated with extreme hostility and their nearly every move was being watched by local government and the KKK (though the two were and still are often indistinguishable), they managed to organize themselves into a disciplined force fight-

ing for revolutionary socialism, starting in their own self-sustained communities and moving outwards, showing national and international solidarity with all labor and oppressed movements.

This form of communism, which could appropriately be called rural communism, is a movement that needs to be studied intensely by all communists. It is a prime example of the rural working class, almost all of whom were Black, gaining the class consciousness that is needed to fight for socialism and organizing their class into a mobile movement against capitalism and white supremacy in an extremely reactionary climate and point in history.

Though the Alabama Communist Party was officially dissolved in 1951, the fighting spirit of those revolutionary laborers and workers lives on in all of us proletarians.

Long live the Alabama Sharecroppers Union! Long live the International Labor Defense! Long live the Alabama Communist Party! □

Venezuela

Socialists (PSUV) win local election landslide

By Chris Fry

In a stunning victory for Bolivarian Venezuela, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) won municipal elections in 23 of the 24 state capitals and the governorship in the state of Zulia on Dec. 10. “Overall, the PSUV and allies took 308 of the 335 municipalities up for grabs in Sunday’s election,” said TeleSUR that day.

This is the third election in six months in Venezuela. Each one has resulted in a victory for the PSUV, which is led by President Nicolás Maduro. In a country of 19.7 million eligible voters, more than 47 percent — over 9.1 million people — participated in the election. “There is an extraordinary electoral participation. I want to thank the people of Venezuela who have come to the voting centers to exercise their right to vote,” said Maduro

in the same article.

The people of Venezuela have once again shown their defiance and solidarity in the face of severe economic sanctions, and even threats of military intervention by U.S. imperialism, led by the gangster Trump regime. Why?

Since Maduro’s predecessor, Hugo Chávez, was elected president in 1998, the Venezuelan government has strived to use oil revenues to better the lives of workers and poor people. The poverty and unemployment rates have been sharply reduced. Wages have risen, and so has enrollment in free colleges. The public housing program has been overhauled and improved. Millions more began to receive pensions. The government put controls on prices of basic household and food items, making them much more affordable.

The rich in Venezuela and their U.S.

oil company patrons hate these reforms. In the last few years, the wealthy have hoarded commodities, set up a large illegal market and shipped essential goods out of the country to sell abroad at much higher prices. Meanwhile, U.S. banks have moved to block Venezuela’s transactions on the world financial market.

At the same time, the U.S. government, under the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, imposed harsh sanctions against government leaders and then against the entire country. This has intensified under the Trump government, causing even greater hardships for the Venezuelan masses.

In tune with the U.S. capitalist class, the right wing in Venezuela mobilized against the Bolivarian government and won a parliamentary election in 2015. In response — and in accordance with the country’s constitution — the Maduro gov-

ernment organized and held an election for the Peoples Assembly. This far more democratic body represents all sectors of society — urban and rural workers, poor people, women, LGBTQ individuals, Indigenous communities and others previously under represented.

Since that time, in every election — despite economic sabotage, violent street attacks, right-wing calls for the Venezuelan military to conduct a coup and Pentagon “war games” near the country’s borders — working-class and poor communities have backed the Bolivarian government and strongly support their leaders.

Progressive people around the world, and particularly those in the U.S., should show solidarity with their Venezuelan sisters and brothers at every opportunity and strongly oppose imperialist intervention, whether overt or covert. □

Koreans seek detente despite U.S. threats

By Deirdre Griswold

Jan. 8 — A turn has taken place in the crisis building over the Korean peninsula as the U.S. threatened war over the creation of a nuclear deterrent by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In his New Year's message, DPRK leader Kim Jong Un announced the completion of its nuclear defense and a "reliable war deterrent, which no force and nothing can reverse."

Speaking for the Korean Workers' Party and the government, Kim said the DPRK was now ready to accept an invitation from south Korea to sit down and discuss participating in the Olympic Games to be held there in February. The south welcomed this and preliminary discussions are scheduled to begin Jan. 9.

Last fall Trump threatened south Korea with a trade war, even as the U.S. administration also threatened military action against the north. The economic pressure on the south was clearly meant to keep it firmly in line with Washington's dictates.

Now, joint U.S.-south Korean war "games" originally scheduled for February, which would yet again have simulated a massive attack on the north, have been postponed.

Trump, in a Jan. 6 press conference, stepped back from his earlier wild threats to destroy the DPRK with "fire and fury" and his tweets bragging that the U.S. has a "bigger nuclear button" than the DPRK. Instead, he made nice about the discussions planned between north and south Korea. He also didn't repeat his threats of a trade war with south Korea or his characterization of Seoul's willingness to engage in talks with the north as "appeasement."

However, the earlier threats from the U.S., which occupies the south with nearly 30,000 troops, still clearly hang over the talks.

What is the view of progressive south Koreans about all this?

It is very instructive to hear their voice, which is completely ignored by the U.S.



People in Seongju, south Korea, protest the U.S. THAAD missile system, July 29, 2017.

big business media. Below we quote from an article on "Kim Jong-un's New Year Address and the Prospect for Peace" by Hyun Lee, a Korean-American activist. It contains many insights into the attitude of the people of south Korea on the crisis with the U.S.

'Prospects for Peace'

Lee writes that "having gained confidence in its ability to defend itself from U.S. aggression, North Korea appears ready to move onto other important matters, like building its economy and improving relations with the South. ...

"How is North Korea able to withstand so many years of sanctions and resist collapse? The only answer that western mainstream pundits can muster is China: 'Surely, it's because China is not doing enough to isolate North Korea.' But the real answer is in Kim's speech, which outlines in great detail how to make all aspects of the country's economy self-reliant: how to, for example, train and support scientists so the country can use its indigenous resources and know-how to build an economy independent from foreign powers.

"If 2017 for North Korea was a year of

struggle to complete its nuclear force to deter U.S. military threats, 2018, it seems, will be a year of struggle to undermine the power of U.S.-led sanctions — not through compromise and negotiations but, as Kim says in his New Year address, by concentrating 'all efforts on consolidating the independence and Juche character of the national economy.' ...

"Kim's speech seems to indicate that with new found confidence in its ability to defend against U.S. aggression, North Korea is now ready to prioritize engagement with the new administration in the South. But its offer of detente is not without conditions. South Korea should, said Kim, 'discontinue all the nuclear war drills they stage with outside forces' and 'refrain from any acts of bringing in nuclear armaments and aggressive forces from the United States.' This echoes the spirit of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration, signed by former leaders Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il in 2000 — which states the question of Korea's reunification should be resolved 'independently and through the joint efforts of the Korean people.' [Read: without the United States.] ...

"Rather than celebrating recent developments as breakthroughs toward peace, U.S. pundits were quick to pooh-pooh them. If South Korea 'runs off the leash,' said Daniel R. Russel, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Obama administration, to the New York Times, 'it will exacerbate tensions within the alliance.' ...

"Why is the prospect of peace in Korea so threatening to those vested in maintaining the U.S.-ROK alliance? U.S. alliance with South Korea — and Japan — is critical to its strategic interests in Asia, a region that the previous administration had identified as the center of this century's global economy in its 'pivot to Asia' doctrine. In Northeast Asia, the United States has invested billions of dollars to construct a trilateral missile defense system with South Korea and Japan to curtail China's power in the region. To U.S. military strategists, South Korea, with a 'real live enemy' to its north, provides an ideal training ground for its forces, which routinely conduct massive exercises that simulate real war scenarios and involve tens of thousands of troops from the region as well as the continental United States.

"South Korea is also among the top purchasers of U.S. weapons, a major source of earning for the United States. In the past decade, the United States sold more than \$30 billion worth of weapons to South Korea. For the U.S. military industrial complex, a divided Korea perpetually threatened by war is a bonanza. And the continued division of the peninsula is critical to keep it that way. In short, what the United States seeks, in the name of the 'U.S.-ROK alliance,' is to turn the Military Demarcation Line that separates North and South Korea into a permanent border. Even as Moon and Kim take cautious steps to resume North-South contact, we can be sure that the wheels are already turning in Washington to undermine this effort."

For Lee's full article, see zoominkorea.org.

Palestinian youth defy Trump & Israeli soldiers

By Chris Fry

"The young women shown assaulting the soldiers 'should finish their lives in prison'" was the view expressed by Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett on Dec. 20. He was talking about a small group of Palestinian women who confronted heavily armed Israeli soldiers during protests in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh on Dec. 15. (haaretz.com)

The soldiers had broken into a home, destroying and seizing property and assaulting people. They shot 15-year-old Mohammed Tamimi point-blank, so that the rubber bullet lodged in his skull. Miraculously, he survived after six hours of surgery.

One of those protesting women was 16-year-old Ahed Tamimi, Mohammed's cousin, who witnessed the shooting. Four days after the protests, she was rousted out of her bed in the middle of the night and arrested for allegedly slapping a soldier. She has been in jail since. Her mother was arrested when she visited Ahed in jail.

On Jan. 2, an Israeli military court indicted Ahed Tamimi on 12 charges. Her father, who endured years in an Israeli prison, says she faces years, perhaps decades, in prison. "Her fate is now in the

hands of people who don't even see Palestinians as full human beings," he said. (Aljazeera.com, Jan. 2)

Ahed Tamimi has a record of struggle for the Palestinian cause. In 2015, she was photographed biting the hand of an Israeli soldier trying to arrest a 12-year-old, which helped win his release.

'Identity planted in the struggle'

Tamimi has no lack of eloquence: "We may be victims of the Israeli regime, but we are just as proud of our choice to fight for our cause, despite the known cost," she said at a meeting in South Africa last August. "We knew where this path would lead us, but our identity, as a people and as individuals, is planted in the struggle, and draws its inspiration from there.

"Beyond the suffering and daily oppression of the prisoners, the wounded and the killed, we also know the tremendous power that comes from belonging to a resistance movement; the dedication, the love, the small sublime moments that come from the choice to shatter the invisible walls of passivity.

"I don't want to be perceived as a victim, and I won't give their actions the power to define who I am and what I'll be," she asserted. (haaretz.com, Dec. 31)

The Trump regime's decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and declare that city Israel's capital — which enables the settler state's relentless campaign of destruction — has sparked a new wave of resistance, particularly by Palestinian youth.

Over 600 Palestinians have been arrested for protesting Trump's action, including at least 170 children. However, these demonstrations, like the case of Ahed Tamimi, have received little coverage by U.S. corporate media. Wall Street's reliance on Israel as the chief guardian of the oil monopolies' interests motivates their stony silence toward the Palestinian people's plight and their heroic struggle.

Israeli youth defy apartheid

The Palestinian struggle has struck a chord among Israeli youth, just as the heroic Vietnamese liberation struggle inspired U.S. youth to face jail or exile rather than fight the Pentagon's war. According to Haaretz, a group of 63 high school students have publicly declared they will refuse to be drafted into the Israeli Defense Force.

"We have decided not to take part in the occupation and oppression of the Palestinian people," they wrote in a let-

ter sent to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot, and the defense and education ministers. "The 'temporary' situation has dragged on for 50 years, and we will not go on lending a hand. ... The army is carrying out the government's racist policy, which violates basic human rights and executes one law for Israelis and another law for Palestinians on the same territory."

The students also protested "intentional institutional incitement against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line" (referring to the 1949 armistice line separating Israel from the West Bank), "and we here — draft-age boys and girls from different areas of the country and from different socioeconomic backgrounds — refuse to believe the system of incitement and to participate in the government's arm of oppression and occupation."

The signatories include Matan Helman, 20, of Kibbutz Haogen, who is serving jail time because of his refusal to be drafted into the army.

The IDF is working on a plan to increase the number of draftees for combat service. Currently, enlistment rates are sinking and dropout rates stand at over 7,000 soldiers annually. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Capitalism’s weather war

The devastating cold weather in half of the U.S. during the past weeks has been covered almost gleefully by the bourgeois media as scenic catastrophe — with virtually no connection to climate change and with no serious emphasis on the human toll.

U.S. viewers have been titillated with videos of storm-surge flooding in downtown Boston, a four-foot suffocation of snow over two days in Erie, Pa., and icicles in usually balmy Savannah, Ga.

The Weather Channel headline, “Cold blast causes at least 22 deaths across U.S.,” was illustrated with a visual of a belly-up dead lizard in Florida — playing down the fact that actual humans had died. (weather.com)

The climate crisis was trivialized and distorted by Chief-Denier Trump who tweeted that the freezing East Coast “could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming.”

On the contrary, international scientific research shows that increased trapping of heat in the earth’s atmosphere — “the greenhouse effect of human development” — is wreaking havoc across the entire spectrum of weather phenomena. (climate.nasa.gov/causes)

When the new year began in upstate Syracuse, N.Y., with the coldest weather in 114 years, the Kuskokwim River in Bethel, Alaska, still had not frozen into its usual “ice road,” denying 56 villages near this remote regional center the only transport for heavy, necessary supplies. On Jan. 5, wintery Moscow was 40 degrees warmer than Iowa City, while in Australia, summer heat became so extreme that tar on more than 6 miles of a major freeway melted.

If we decode the “greenhouse of human development,” what we see is the unchecked rampage of capitalism through the Earth — from the devastation of atmosphere-stabilizing rainforests cut down for profit to the unchecked trail of pollution left by expanding U.S. military bases. (tinyurl.com/y8cvgm59)

A Jan. 5 New York Times headline described coral reefs dying from global warming as if “ravaged by war.”

Yes, capitalism has declared a “weather war” on our planet — and human beings are also being wounded and dying. That means especially the poorest, the youngest, the oldest, those living with disabilities, those most oppressed because of their nationality, race, sexuality or gender — the people with the least access to physical safety and economic resources.

In the recent weather “bomb cyclone,” broken water mains in the U.S. South meant possible bacterial contamination, boil-water advisories and sickness for the most vulnerable people in cities like Atlanta; Jackson, Miss.; and Birmingham,



PHOTO: NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLIFE INSTITUTE

Civil rights leader Ben Chavis raises fist as community organizers are arrested in protest of PCB dumping in Black-majority Warren County, N.C., in 1982.

Ala. Prisoners in Tennessee were exposed to mortal danger when the temperature in Nashville’s River Bend Maximum Security Institution did not rise above 25 degrees F, which is below freezing.

In the U.S. North, key ports in Boston, Philadelphia and New York City froze, delaying heating oil shipments, while capitalist weather-war profiteers saw the price of residential heating oil surge 13 percent, according to federal data. (NY Times, Jan. 3)

A “winter moratorium” on heat shutoffs because of inability to pay is only available to relatively few people in dire economic circumstances — not to most workers, struggling at the edge of financial survival. People end up having to choose between heat, food and medicine — and that means more illness and more death.

The lack of affordable, adequate housing everywhere in the U.S. sentences homeless people to die on city streets and in desperate tents hidden just off interstates. But people with rent-stabilized housing are also at risk as landlords cut off the heat and delay necessary repairs to empty the buildings for “redevelopment” and more profit.

Fighting back against the “climate war” of capitalism means acknowledging the importance of China’s recent decision to ban all sales of cars driven by gasoline and diesel fuel. Fighting back means remembering how Bolivarian Venezuela sent shipments of heating oil to communities of color in the U.S. during past winter crises.

Fighting back means organizing against gentrification and for affordable housing. It means militant struggle against Big Bank exploitation, landlord harassment, racist cop abuse and the white supremacist state — in communities from Equality for Flatbush in Brooklyn to Moratorium Now! in Detroit, from resistance inspired by Standing Rock to Puerto Ricans recovering their island.

Fighting back against the capitalist war on the Earth ultimately means fighting for socialism, where planning for the people — for our housing, health and happiness — can be accomplished in relation to a beautiful, dynamic, healthy Earth. □



PHOTO: @RISINGTIDENA/TWITTER

Pittsburgh protesters stop traffic Nov. 20 outside industrial park offices of Halliburton and 14 other energy companies aiming to capitalize on the polluted fracking of the Marcellus Shale.

Breaking U.S. sanctions with cryptocurrency

By Gary Wilson

A recent front-page headline of the New York Times read, “To Evade Sting of U.S. Sanctions Nations Ponder Digital Currency.” (Jan. 4, 2018)

The deception in this report begins with the seemingly harmless phrase “U.S. Sanctions.” The implication is that enforcing U.S. sanctions is a righteous move against rogue states. In reality, sanctions are an instrument of economic warfare, used like a blockade or siege with the aim of compelling a surrender to Wall Street and U.S. transnational corporate powers.

The list of countries facing U.S. sanctions currently includes Cuba, Venezuela, People’s Korea, Iran, Zimbabwe, Syria, Russia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Sanctions are imperialist economic warfare, aimed at the destruction of a population through deprivation and even starvation. But if that economic warfare fails, it is usually followed by military warfare. A brutal example of this was what happened to Iraq in the 1990s, when U.S. sanctions led directly to the deaths of 576,000 Iraqi children (New York Times, Dec. 1, 1995), followed by a U.S. military blitzkrieg in 2003 that destroyed much of the country.

The Times report says nothing about these sanctions or their destructive toll. It instead worries about the possibility that nations might evade the imperialist sanctions through the use of digital cryptocurrency. The report speculates that blockchain, the technology base for cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin, can be used for business transactions that circumvent sanctions.

Blockchain has been used for bitcoin speculation or buying illegal drugs (Silk Road), gambling (MegaDice), tax evasion (Tumbling) and various scams (Mt. Gox, ICOs, Ransomware). (Explanation of the names in parentheses can be found with an internet search.)

As that list shows, businesses can use cryptocurrencies to carry out secret transactions that are hidden from the government as well as from the big central banks. Their successes show that it is possible to conduct business while evading U.S. sanctions. While this conduct would be secret, it would not be illegal because sanctions are war — and countries facing sanctions have the right under international law to defend themselves from economic warfare.

Blockchain transactions

Blockchain transactions use a peer-to-peer network with no central authority to verify the exchanges. Transactions are signed with a digital key and recorded in a public ledger that is stored across many computers at the same level — the computers are the peers — instead of on one central computer. This setup, by enabling cryptographic verification of the blocks of the transactions, ensures that the history of the transaction can’t be altered.

The holder of a cryptocurrency is identified only by a digital key. There is no identity record of the holder, which means that no recovery is possible should a key be lost or stolen. Theft of keys has been a significant problem. On Nov. 25, Fortune magazine reported that 2.56 million bitcoins — then worth \$20 billion — had been lost or stolen.

Cryptocurrencies using blockchains have generated some enthusiasm among

those who want a world beyond the control of the monopoly capitalists and Wall Street bankers. Even the terminology used — cryptocurrency — implies that it is something not subject to a central authority. But is that even possible without a revolutionary break from the capitalist prison that controls the economy?

Is cryptocurrency even a currency?

Under capitalism, currency or money initially took the form of a physical commodity, like gold or silver, because trade needs a commodity with a value that could be easily determined. The value of gold is the amount of socially necessary labor time to produce it — mining, smelting, etc.

Karl Marx showed that gold and silver are conventionally used as money because they embody a large amount of labor in a small, durable form that is convenient. Printed money has almost no labor value, so it is sometimes called fiat currency. That is, the bank that issued the note has promised that it can be exchanged for any commodity with a value that is created by the same amount of labor time.

Money serves three functions under capitalism:

First, money has to be accepted by both the buyer and the seller.

Second, money has to be stable so that it can be used to compare the costs of production and exchange.

Third, money is a store of value, so stability is essential. History offers many examples of currencies being replaced when trust in stability was lost because of hyperinflation or tumbling deflation.

Cryptocurrencies meet none of these criteria. They are not and cannot be universally accepted and are not stable. In fact, instability is built into cryptocurrencies.

They really aren’t currency at all. The terminology used to describe cryptocurrencies and bitcoin — “wallets” and “mining” as if for gold — obscures what they are. Such terminology is meant to give cryptocurrencies magical powers.

Cryptocurrencies are actually a digital version of so-called collectibles, like rare stamps or original paintings. No amount of human labor can recreate a rare stamp or original Van Gogh painting. Copies can be made, but unlike the original they have relatively little exchange value.

As a rule, collectibles are never used as currency, though there is nothing to prevent individuals who own them from swapping them for valuable commodities or money.

While cryptocurrencies are not money, Wall Street is not ignoring the blockchain technology underlying cryptocurrencies. Indeed, like every other innovation, Wall Street wants to bring blockchains under its control.

Under the headline “Blockchain Gets a Wall Street Win,” Bloomberg News reported on Nov. 20: “The prospect of blockchain technology remaking financial services just moved a step closer to reality after banks including Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and JPMorgan Chase & Co. completed a successful six-month test in the \$2.8 trillion equity swaps market.”

Blockchains enable the banks to have a globally available, verifiable and untamperable source of data. Indeed, much of blockchain development is now centered on Wall Street. The banks expect to use blockchain technology to save costs and control internet transactions. □

Perspective on the Iranian protests

By Workers World staff

Mass demonstrations in Iran’s provincial cities made international news as 2017 ended and elicited tweets from the U.S. president warning Iran’s government not to suppress the protesters. To help orient the progressive and anti-war movement in the United States, Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto spoke with Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Center and organizer of the Stop the War on Iran Campaign.

WW: What’s most important for the U.S. movement to know about the events starting in late December in Iran?

Sara Flounders: Before we go through the facts as best we know them, we need to first make some overall political points clear. First, from here in the center of world imperialism it is important to hold firmly to a basic understanding of the relation between the United States, which is the center of world imperialism, and Iran, a developing country that Washington has targeted since its revolution in February 1979.

That revolution against the hated shah, while ultimately led by clerics, resulted in Iran gaining control of its resources, thus enabling great gains in modernizing the infrastructure, building mass housing, achieving full literacy through free education and providing free medical care for the people.

Anti-war and progressive activists need to start with the basics of what they already know about past U.S. campaigns of subversion in Iran as well as Washington’s attempts at regime change in other countries. Otherwise they can get lost in the morass of corporate and social media disinformation.

Washington has also targeted Iran because of its long defense of the Palestinian struggle and aid to Lebanon after the massive Israeli bombardment and invasion in 2006. This increased after Iran’s aid to the sovereign Syrian government. The U.S. attempted regime change in Syria starting in 2011 through bombings, sabotage and arming tens of thousands of right-wing and extremist marauders. More recently, Iran has shown solidarity with Yemen, which is facing a massive, protracted war from the Saudi monarchy, supported by the Pentagon.

So whatever the details of the current developments, our position here in the center of imperialism must be clear and forceful: U.S. hands off Iran! No intervention from the U.S. can help the Iranian people.

WW: And the current events?

SF: As far as we can tell, the protests started in Iran’s second-largest city, Mashad, on Dec. 28 and were over rising

food prices and unemployment. These protests, centered on economic grievances, quickly spread to other cities in the provinces but not to the capital, Tehran.

We should point out that a major, if not the major, cause of the economic problems is U.S. and European Union sanctions, which were imposed many years ago in order to create and increase internal dissention. U.N. sanctions, however, were lifted two years ago, after Iran suspended its nuclear program.

In recent years the low global price of oil, in addition to continued U.S. and EU sanctions, have exacerbated unemployment and decreased the government’s ability to provide subsidies for food, fuel, housing and education.

The government and other political forces inside Iran seemed to agree at the beginning that the demonstrations were spontaneous, spread rapidly and focused on justified economic demands and cutbacks of government subsidies that impacted the poorest workers. This was also the reaction of President Rouhani, who said the protesters had the right to demonstrate but not to carry out violent actions.

The protests then quickly attracted forces that appeared to be totally hostile to the Iranian Revolution, although the extent of this was likely exaggerated in the imperialist media. People in the Iranian government and state apparatus charged there was outside intervention and planned internal subversion. At rallies, people on both sides were shot.

This has also happened in Venezuela, Libya and Syria, in demonstrations where unidentified gunmen fire into the crowds and also shoot at police to instigate repression and chaos, which is then blamed on the government.

Meanwhile, there have also been pro-government mobilizations in some cities, in Tehran and in the provinces.

WW: What has been the U.S. ruling-class reaction?

SF: The U.S. president has been openly super-hostile to Iran and wants to break up the nuclear agreement that removed U.N. sanctions from Iran. Trump intervened in December with tweets attacking the Iranian government and encouraging the demonstrators. U.S. representative to the

United Nations Nikki Haley then raised in the U.N. Security Council the question of alleged Iranian government repression. Washington was clearly trying to use the events to tear up the nuclear treaty.

Whether in Venezuela, Libya, Syria, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe or Iran, imperialism attempts to provoke internal dislocation and hijack whatever opposition arises in order to turn it into a tool against the government. Regardless of the class basis of the original protests, the orientation of the internal right-wing forces, the U.S. State Department and numerous imperialist secret agencies is to make every effort to immediately impact their political character and weaken the state, which they see as an enemy of imperialism.

At the U.N., Washington had little support for this, even from the other imperialist countries, which so far have supported the nuclear treaty.

Corporate media coverage of the Iranian protests has been extensive and sympathetic to the protesters. It has exaggerated the extent of the protests while criticizing Tehran for repression. How unlike their meager coverage, for example, of Black Lives Matter protests in the U.S., pro-Palestinian demonstrations anywhere or the ongoing protests of the fraudulent election in Honduras.

The U.S. government and corporate media hypocritically express full support for protests over rising food prices and economic hardship even as Washington imposes sanctions that dislocate economic development and create wrenching shortages, which can be as brutally effective and destructive as bombs.

It is reasonable to suspect a U.S. role in any turmoil in Iran, as the U.S. engineered the 1953 coup that replaced an elected government with rule by the hated shah. In 2009 a U.S. think tank, the Brookings Institute, published a manual on how to overthrow the Iranian government and take control of the country. Chapter headings included: “The Velvet Revolution: Supporting a Popular Uprising” and “Inspiring an Insurgency: Supporting Iranian Minority and Opposition Groups.” (tinyurl.com/y8nkrnmc)

But the existence of these U.S. plans doesn’t explain the origin of every struggle.

WW: What is the nature of the internal struggle in Iran?

SF: Iran is a capitalist country, but its ruling bodies are rooted in a revolutionary upheaval that totally threw out U.S. imperial domination. It nationalized the oil and gas resources, Iran’s greatest source



of wealth. It now has a strong state sector. In the internal class struggle in Iran, as in every capitalist country, the capitalist class seeks to use every leverage and form of corruption to increase its wealth and position.

The government of President Rouhani was committed to finalizing negotiations with the U.S. and European powers to end the strangulating economic sanctions. In order to normalize economic relations, the Iranian government also accepted many International Monetary Fund and World Bank demands to drastically reduce subsidies and privatize some industries. This policy was favored by the capitalists and middle class.

The IMF and World Bank had earlier made these same demands on Syria and Libya as the price of normalizing economic and especially banking transactions. Before 2011, the IMF had demanded a cut in subsidies to the working class and poor as the price for normalizing relations with these two countries.

Currently the Iranian government provides \$100 billion per year in subsidies for fuel, bread, sugar, rice, cooking oil and medicine. About 90 percent of the population receives direct cash subsidies each month directly into their bank accounts, at a cost of \$30 billion. These subsidies soften the impact of high youth unemployment and closed industries.

The recent protests were triggered when cuts in subsidies by the Rouhani government led to a rapid 40 percent increase in the price of eggs and poultry. For the poor to battle these cuts is justified. These were demonstrations demanding social justice. The problem is U.S. intervention and the attempt to wield the protests against the government.

WW: And how would you summarize?

SF: While as you can see there are other points that help explain the current crisis and the demonstrations, these need to be balanced with defense of Iran’s sovereignty and our complete opposition to U.S. imperialism.

The anti-imperialist view from here in the center of U.S. imperialism is: Hands off Iran! End the sanctions! Stop the threats!

Don’t believe the corporate media hype. The U.S. sanctions, war threats and sabotage are the greatest source of the problems facing Iran, which is still a developing country. □

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WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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Honduras

Corea Popular resiste amenazas de EUA

Por Deirdre Griswold

¿De dónde viene el peligro de otra guerra?

¿Proviene de la República Popular Democrática de Corea, que no tiene bases militares ni soldados ni armas nucleares en ningún lugar del mundo sino sólo en su propio suelo?

¿O proviene de la clase gobernante multimillonaria de EUA, que dicta la política militar y exterior de EUA?

Estados Unidos ha estado ocupando militarmente la mitad sur de Corea desde 1945. Aviones de guerra, buques de guerra, submarinos, tropas y “asesores” militares estadounidenses, armados con todo desde fusiles de asalto hasta armas nucleares, están diseminados por todo el mundo.

Esta es la pregunta que debería haber estado en la agenda del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU el 22 de diciembre, cuando sus 15 miembros votaron a favor de una ronda de sanciones aún más severa contra la RPDC. Estas sanciones re-

ducen la capacidad del país para importar productos refinados del petróleo en un 90 por ciento y establecen un tope a las importaciones de petróleo crudo. También ordenan el retorno dentro de 24 meses, de las/os aproximadamente 100.000 ciudadanos de la RPDC que trabajan en el exterior, cuyas remesas a su país de origen contribuyen a la economía nacional.

El Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la RPDC respondió a estas sanciones, declarándolas “un acto de guerra”. Y con razón. Porque los intentos de matar de hambre y congelar un país entero pueden ser tan letales como dispararles.

Las sanciones están programadas para perjudicar a la RPDC en la época más cruel del año en este país del extremo norte. Las/os coreanos deben estar pensando en cómo apretarse el cinturón y descubrir cómo evitar el hambre y las heladas durante los meses más fríos del invierno.

¿Cómo afectarán las sanciones a las escuelas de este país socialista, que aniquiló el analfabetismo hace décadas y

proporcionaron a todas las personas una educación gratuita? ¿Cómo afectarán a los hospitales y clínicas, donde el 70 por ciento de los médicos son mujeres, que brindan atención médica total y chequeos regulares gratis a toda la población?

Las personas que viven en Estados Unidos nunca escuchan acerca de los grandes logros sociales de la RPDC. Éstos se vuelven aún más espectaculares por el hecho de que los militares estadounidenses, de 1950 a 1953, lanzaron más bombas sobre Corea del Norte que en todo el teatro del Pacífico durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. La gente de aquí no puede imaginar lo que debe haber sido construir una economía centrada en satisfacer las necesidades de las personas cuando cada edificio de más de una planta fue destruido en pedazos por los aviones estadounidenses durante la Guerra de Corea.

Pero las/os coreanos conocen los horrores de la guerra. Es por eso que se han centrado en la necesidad de la autodefensa desde entonces, para defender lo que han construido - literalmente - desde las cenizas.

EUA, un estado guerrerrista

El presupuesto militar total de Estados Unidos para el año fiscal 2018 es de \$824,6 mil millones, por lo que es mayor que los presupuestos militares de los próximos nueve países combinados. (thebalance.com) Este enorme presupuesto alimenta el complejo bancario-industrial-militar y la enorme brecha de ingresos en este país.

A fines de octubre, justo antes del viaje de Trump a China, los EUA enviaron otros dos grupos de portaaviones de ataque de la Armada estadounidense al Pacífico, sumando un total de tres portaaviones y sus flotas de cruceros, destructores y submarinos. Este año ha habido tantos buques de guerra de EUA en el Pacífico que han ocurrido varios accidentes navales graves allí.

Cada verano, otoño, invierno y primavera, los EUA conducen “juegos” de guerra en Corea del Sur, practicando para la invasión del norte y la “decapitación” - en palabras del Pentágono - de su liderazgo. Recientemente, estos ejercicios militares estadounidenses han incluido a miles de soldados de Japón, el odiado poder colonial que gobernó Corea desde 1910 hasta 1945.

A principios de diciembre, Estados Unidos lanzó otro conjunto de estos “juegos” de guerra en los que se vieron involucrados por primera vez seis aviones de combate F-22, así como seis F-35A y 12 F-35B. Estos aviones supersónicos que se acercaban a la frontera con la RPDC intensificaron la posibilidad de que los coreanos pensarán que había comenzado un ataque.

Ante esta implacable agresión, los científicos coreanos han podido construir armas nucleares y un sistema de misiles capaz de llegar a objetivos estadounidenses si son atacados. Dado lo que enfrenta la RPDC, ¿qué país del mundo podría tener más justificación al reclamar la necesidad de este tipo de defensa?

El voto de la ONU

China y Rusia, las potencias mundia-

les que son los dos vecinos del norte de la RPDC, son las encargadas de esta nueva resolución de sanciones reduciendo la mayoría de sus envíos de petróleo y enviando a casa a las/os coreanos que trabajan en sus países.

El 6 de septiembre, el New York Times informó que la administración de Trump había “circulado un proyecto de resolución en el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas que facultaría efectivamente a la Armada y Fuerza Aérea de EUA a interceptar barcos norcoreanos en el mar, inspeccionarlos para determinar si transportan material de armas o combustible al país, y usar ‘todas las medidas necesarias’ para exigir el cumplimiento”.

Se dice que China Popular y la Rusia capitalista acordaron el voto del 22 de diciembre en la ONU aumentando las sanciones a la RPDC en parte debido a la amenaza de EUA de comenzar a abordar barcos coreanos en alta mar. Están justificando su voto como un medio para evitar un incidente que podría conducir a la guerra.

Sin embargo, anteriormente votaron a favor de resoluciones de sanciones, y eso no hizo nada para evitar que EUA intensificara sus amenazas de guerra contra la RPDC o impidiera que movilizara aún más personal y equipamiento militar al área.

¿Esta última resolución, en lugar de apaciguar a los imperialistas, no abrirá su apetito para más y más concesiones a expensas del pueblo coreano? ¿Cuándo los gobiernos de China y Rusia trazarán la línea y dirán: No pasarán?

El problema no es solo que un incidente desafortunado podría llevar a la guerra. El problema es que la política de EUA, tal como se expresa en sus pronunciamientos y sus ejercicios militares, es destruir el gobierno socialista de la RPDC y convertir la mitad norte de Corea en una neocolonia de EUA.

Debe recordarse que ningún gobierno de EUA ha estado dispuesto a sentarse con representantes de la RPDC y negociar el fin del estado de guerra que existe desde 1950, a pesar de las múltiples solicitudes de los coreanos por tales discusiones y por un tratado de paz. Lo que esto significa es que el Pentágono puede lanzar un ataque en cualquier momento sin siquiera consultar al Congreso, porque ya existe un estado de guerra oficial.

Si China y Rusia hubieran vetado la resolución de sanciones, ciertamente se habrían arriesgado a tropezarse con la ira de los imperialistas. Pero, ¿no está de acuerdo con semejante resolución incurrir en un riesgo aún mayor de envalentonar las fuerzas más agresivas entre los formuladores de políticas imperialistas que quieren una dominación indiscutible sobre el mundo y ven a China y en menor grado a Rusia como rivales?

Las acciones de los vecinos de la RPDC hasta ahora deben haber confirmado a los coreanos que para evitar que los EUA comiencen otra guerra, deben tener un poderoso elemento de disuasión propio. ¿Y no es por eso que tanto la URSS, cuando existió, como la China Popular desarrollaron sus propias armas nucleares en respuesta a las amenazas de Washington y a pesar de ellas? □

Editorial WW-MO

Odioso recorte de impuestos

Cuando el Congreso finalmente aprobó la mal llamada Ley de recortes de impuestos y empleos (TCJA por las siglas en inglés) y se convirtió en ley, quedó claro que lo que representaba era una enorme transferencia de riqueza de todas/os los pobres y casi todas/os los trabajadores al 1% más rico de la sociedad. Los mayores beneficios irían a los súper ricos.

Fue el cambio más reaccionario en la política social desde que el gobierno de Bill Clinton impulsó “Terminar con el bienestar como lo conocemos” en 1996. Pero lo peor está por llegar.

Puede tomar un tiempo para que el impacto de TCJA se evidencie. Esto es cierto a pesar de que hubo muchos artículos e informes críticos que mostraron cómo uno u otro grupo de trabajadoras/es de ingresos medios se vería afectado. Mostraron cómo el recorte del impuesto corporativo del 35 por ciento al 21 por ciento y la eliminación de los impuestos al patrimonio de menos de \$11 millones beneficiarían sólo a los ricos.

En una conspiración de última hora entre la Cámara y el Senado, se eliminaron sumariamente algunas de las “reformas” más escandalosas. Estas fueron las “reformas” que despertaron y movilizaron a los sectores de la clase trabajadora a manifestarse en contra del proyecto de ley.

Por ejemplo, se eliminaron las disposiciones de que las/os estudiantes de posgrado deberían declarar el alivio de la matrícula como ingresos y el rechazo de las deducciones de intereses en los préstamos estudiantiles.

Sin examinar cada cambio -que tomará mucho más espacio de lo que permite este editorial y probablemente mantendrá ocupados a los abogados de impuestos y contadores durante todo el año- podemos concluir que la gran mayoría del aumento

esperado de \$1,5 billones en el déficit presupuestario estará en manos de los súper ricos. Lo usarán para establecer un mayor control sobre las leyes futuras. El aumento mítico de las inversiones y los nuevos empleos no proporcionará ingresos fiscales. En la medida en que los capitalistas estadounidenses incluso planean, los ejecutivos de corporaciones planean nuevas inversiones en tecnología que reduzcan los empleos y los costos laborales.

El consiguiente aumento de los déficits presupuestarios federales se convertirá en el pretexto para atacar más los programas federales que brindan servicios: Medicare, Seguridad Social, Medicaid, lo que queda de la Ley de Cuidado de Salud Asequible, beneficios para Veteranos, protección ambiental, regulación de alimentos y medicamentos y otros servicios de salud y programas de Servicios Humanos, etc. Estos recortes perjudican desproporcionadamente a toda la clase trabajadora, a las/os negros, latinas/os, y a todos los pueblos oprimidos, las mujeres, las/os niños, las/os inmigrantes y a las personas con discapacidades.

El Partido Republicano, que presionó a través de la TCJA, obviamente es un enemigo de las/os trabajadores y un amigo de los ricos. Las/os demócratas también, por su débil resistencia a este proyecto de ley, han demostrado que no están dispuestos a desafiar seriamente los intereses de la clase capitalista.

Por lo tanto, la “reforma fiscal” repite la lección que se muestra en otras áreas: lo que se necesita es una movilización independiente del movimiento de masas contra el gobierno actual, lo que requiere que esté separado del Partido Demócrata.

No odie sólo el TCJA. Luche contra ello y contra lo que serán los siguientes ataques inevitables contra trabajadoras/es y oprimidas/os. □