

Defend reproductive justice

Women’s liberation NOW!

By Sue Davis

The Women’s March on Washington on Jan. 21 has issued unity principles defining what it stands for. Included in eight rights are those for workers, immigrants, LGBTQIA communities, people with disabilities, environmental justice, civil and reproductive rights, and ending violence.

The march statement on reproductive freedom begins, “We do not accept any federal, state or local roll-backs, cuts or restrictions on our ability to access quality reproductive healthcare services, birth control, HIV/AIDS care and prevention, or medically accurate sexuality education.”

The statement concludes: “Recognizing that women have intersecting identities and are therefore impacted by a multitude of social justice and human rights issues ... [we] must create a society in which women — in particular Black women, Native women, poor women, immigrant women, Muslim women, and queer and trans women — are free and able to care for and nurture their families, however they are formed, in safe and healthy environments free from structural impediments.”

That affirmation of reproductive justice is welcome since the next day, Jan. 22, is the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, Roe v. Wade. Roe’s very existence is now in jeopardy given the aggressive anti-woman, anti-abortion stance of the Trump-Pence administration and the right-wing-controlled Congress.

The House of Representatives passed the first step in repealing the Affordable Care Act on Jan. 13, which affects millions of working people, especially women of child-bearing age whose contraceptives were paid for under the law. (See editorial.) The same day Rep. Steve King (R-IA) introduced a national law to ban all abortions.

The major federal ruling that currently restricts Medicaid and Title X payments for abortions for poor women is the Hyde Amendment, in effect since 1976. (See Jan. 5 WW.)

Attacks in the states

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 18 states in 2016 enacted 50 new restrictions on abortion. That brings the total of restrictions enacted since 2010 to 338.

Now 14 states, mostly in the South and upper Midwest, have 20-week bans on abortion. Twenty weeks is the time when anti-choice adherents claim a fetus can feel pain, though that has been debunked by the Central Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. According to NARAL Pro-Choice America, no laws have an adequate exception for women’s health.

Some states have adopted extreme laws. Texas passed one in 2016 that mandates burial or cremation of embryonic or fetal tissue from abortions, miscarriages or ectopic pregnancy surgery, regardless of the woman’s wishes. The Center for Reproductive Rights filed a lawsuit Dec. 12, arguing that “restrictions cannot impose burdens on a woman’s right to access abortion care without provid-

Continued on page 4

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WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

International Working Women’s Day Coalition defends reproductive justice, New York City, March 8, 2014.

J20 protests: Scare tactics can’t stop ‘em!

By Taryn Fivek

The repressive U.S. state apparatus that defends the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the multinational working class is doing everything in its power to keep the angry masses from coming out in the streets to reject Donald Trump — the new face of global capitalism — including Jan. 20, the day he is inaugurated.

Besides the police, Department of Homeland Security, FBI, CIA and more, the media play a big role in this apparatus. The mainstream press have historically and politically never been on the side of heroic resistance by the workers and the most oppressed



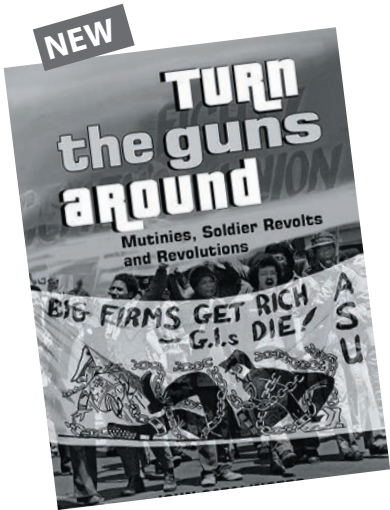
Continued on page 11

Turn the Guns Around — book review	2
Can cops ‘reform’?	3
Wage theft: Alabama, Iowa & more	4-5
Militant MLK marches	6-7

Free the prisoners!

At press time: President Obama has commuted the sentences of federal political prisoners, whistleblower Chelsea Manning and Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera. Family and supporters of Indigenous leader Leonard Peltier, also a federal prisoner, are in vigil near the White House. See workers.org for more info.

Tillerson, Big Oil and war threats	9
Editorial: Health care profiteering	10



Why young people picked up the guns

TURN THE GUNS AROUND
Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

by John Catalinotto
Available at online booksellers

A review: By L.T. Pham

John Catalinotto’s “Turn the Guns Around” captures a political period in history when struggle was at an all-time high — from the movement to resist the war in Vietnam, by both civilians and GIs (whom Catalinotto primarily focuses on), to the Black Power movement. What is crafted together in the book serves as a guide, not intended to provide answers but considerations on the kind of organization and consciousness needed to defeat the bosses and the banks today.

Similar to the struggles in the 1960s and 1970s, today we see the culmination of several movements. Black and Brown people, immigrants, LGBTQ people, women, people with disabilities and even prisoners are fortifying our ranks to confront the pending Trump administration. And youth in particular are finding ways to connect the issues to a common cause: a capitalist system no longer able to hold itself up, so it resorts more and more to police, ICE raids and detentions of migrants, and other “bodies of armed men” to enforce its interests.

For young people, like myself, who turn to history to better figure out how to actually pierce capitalism at its core and push it closer to its death, there are valuable takeaways from “Turn the Guns Around” for all young revolutionaries to consider.

From the outset, the book reminds us that “being determines consciousness.” Revolutionaries must commit to the process of change, must be open to the working class’s ability to shift its consciousness because it is our class that is constantly under attack and forced to live and work in direct opposition to our true interests.

Soldiers sent to Vietnam were only able to break through the propaganda of the violent state by witnessing for themselves the extent to which working people, peasants and the oppressed were willing to defend their fight for liberation. This, coupled with the exploitative

conditions under which GIs were forced to fight, live and work, made GIs align closer with their class — the working class — and not the politicians and bosses.

“Turn the Guns Around” also makes it clear precisely why it was necessary to organize GIs who were in resistance to the war. And more so, why it was important to have radical GIs be part of an organization. The American Servicemen’s Union was formed in 1967 because for many workers in the U.S. being in a union was a way of life. When this was paired with the revolutionary potential of that period, the union became a fighting body for better conditions but also against war and racism.

The ASU was able to connect radical GIs to one another, to bring the struggles of the GIs to civilians, and create the clear ideological relationship between the interests of GIs and the interests of Vietnamese people defending their country and of Black folks in the United States resisting state violence. The development of the ASU and its success reinforced the importance of organization — which in this period will also be essential to defending and uniting the working class. There are hundreds of thousands of people who aren’t just hungry to understand the world better but also want to change it, and we must build the organizations capable of bringing people into our movement.

Catalinotto’s book should inspire us all to have a deep understanding of the chains of command — whether they are embedded in the military, factory workplace, or the banks and corporations. These chains of command can be broken. Capitalist state power is penetrable; there are many contradictions that exist in favor of our class, but only if we make use of them.

For young revolutionaries picking up “Turn the Guns Around,” I would encourage us to remember that who we

Continued on page 3



Who we are & what we’re fighting for

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

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

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

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WORKERS WORLD this week

★ In the U.S.

Women’s liberation NOW!.....	1
J20 protests: Scare tactics can’t stop ‘em!.....	1
Why young people picked up the guns	2
Can reforms stop police terror in Chicago?.....	3
Resistance continues at Standing Rock	3
On the picket line	4
Trump’s attack plan against federal workers	4
How Michigan criminalized unemployed workers	5
Fighting wage theft in Iowa City.....	5
Anti-worker labor secretary pick protested	6
Baltimore Unity March: ‘Resist Trumpism!’	6
First-ever MLK Day march	7
Ousting a school board racist bigot	7
‘The inauguration of the resistance’	7
Celebrating Dr. King the fighter.....	7
Philly rally slams denial prisoner hepC care, pharma profit ..	8
State says no to prisoners’ health treatment — again	8

★ Around the world

Free a Puerto Rican patriot	8
How European governments freeze refugees to death... ..	8
Tillerson, Exxon Mobil and the South China Sea.....	9
Fight Trump and fight NATO	9
Global actions demand freedom for Ahmad Sa’adat	10
Cuban migration and U.S. policy war.....	11

★ Editorial

Stop health care profiteering!	10
U.S. out of Guantánamo!	11

★ Noticias en Español

Trump, Rusia, y la Democracia: El enemigo está en casa ..	12
El calentamiento global, Trump y China.....	12

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Can reforms stop police terror in Chicago?

By Jeff Sorel
Chicago

It took the U.S. Department of Justice 13 months to determine what everyone in Chicago already knows — that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) is brutal and racist. In a scathing, 164-page report issued on January 13, the DOJ concluded that routine use of excessive force by the country’s second largest police department violates constitutional rights.

The DOJ report was triggered by public outcry after the release of a dashcam video showing white cop Jason Van Dyke fatally pumping 16 shots into unarmed Black teenager Laquan McDonald in 2014. Without the protests of Black Lives Matter and its allies after McDonald’s murder, the DOJ investigation never would have been initiated.

What report reveals

The report finds that excessive police violence is employed most often against people of color. Police are ten times more likely to use excessive force against African-Americans and Latinx people than whites, while complaints from whites are far more likely to be sustained. Black youths told the DOJ that Chicago cops routinely spew racial epithets and “patrol our streets like they are the dog catchers and we are the dogs.”

The report also shows that CPD’s “code of silence” regarding fellow officers’ misconduct is “a deliberate, fundamental and corrosive violation.” The McDonald video clearly displays that code of silence in action, showing Van Dyke’s colleagues



International League for Peoples Struggle conference in Chicago marks second anniversary of Laquan McDonald’s death with protest.

immediately moving into cover-up mode to protect him after the shooting.

There is no accountability for such misconduct. Prior to the McDonald scandal, the Independent Police Review Authority had almost never found a shooting unjustified. The report finds that IPRA investigators routinely fail to speak to witnesses, turn a blind eye to blatant inconsistencies in incident reports and effectively presume lack of officer wrongdoing.

Political forces behind the police

The DOJ report is unlikely to lead to any fundamental change in police practice. At most, it initiates a lengthy process that may culminate in a consent decree to reform training, accountability and use-of-force standards. Although Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel pledged to negotiate such a decree, he and his cohorts are the very officials who consistently have conspired to cover up police misconduct. Their promises are likely to prove just as hollow going forward.

Issuance of the DOJ’s report just a week before a change in presidential administrations undermines any faith in the sincerity of its proposals. Incoming President Trump was heavily endorsed by police “unions” and other “law and order” lobbyists. He has called police “the most mistreated people in the country” (a truly through-the-looking-glass view of the world).

Trump’s attorney general nominee, Jeff Sessions, likewise used his recent confirmation hearing to claim that police abuse consent decrees “undermine respect for police officers.” (Washington Post, Jan. 13)

These statements indicate that the Trump administration will oppose attempts to reduce police violence, making enforcement of any Chicago consent decree a poor prospect.

In any event, the reforms suggested by the DOJ, even if implemented, would not stop racist police violence. Despite training and other reforms supposedly implemented by the Emanuel administration last year, unwarranted police shootings and beatings continue daily in Black and Latinx communities. “There have yet to be any structural systemic changes,” Aislinn Pulley, a Black Lives Matter organizer, told reporters. “We have no reason to believe they’ll be willing to change now.” (Yahoo News, Jan. 13)

Mass intervention is key

The root cause of police abuse is not lack of training or proper standards. As Monica Trinidad, a People’s Response Team spokesperson who addressed the

United Nations Committee Against Torture in 2014 about Chicago police violence, explained, “Policing is historically, inherently, a racist institution.” (Yahoo News, Jan. 13)

On that basis, the Chicago Alliance against Racist and Political Repression and other community groups are supporting an ordinance that would establish an elected Civilian Police Accountability Council with substantial oversight powers. Demanding community control of police functions recognizes that racism and violence are too deeply embedded in the CPD to be uprooted by piecemeal reforms.

Abolition of the police as a state institution is the only “reform” that can produce meaningful relief. History shows that communities are fully capable of policing themselves. Almost 150 years ago, Karl Marx described how the workers and poor of Paris abolished the existing police when they took control of the city for two months and established the Paris Commune. For the first time in memory, he wrote in “The Civil War in France,” “the streets of Paris were safe [and] without police of any kind.”

The streets of Chicago and other urban centers will likewise become safe when the workers and oppressed rise up to take control of their cities. Although the media repeatedly blame urban violence on Black and Latinx youth gangs, residents know that the biggest and bloodiest gang on the streets is uniformed in blue. Socialism will take that blue gang off the streets and eliminate the poverty, racism and lack of good-paying jobs that foster crime. □

Despite reactionary bill Resistance continues at Standing Rock

By Kris Hamel

Jan. 16 — A bill introduced in the North Dakota State Legislature on Jan. 11 would give a legal green light to police, corporate goons, vigilantes and other racists to use their motor vehicles to essentially mow down protesters if they want to.

Reactionaries in the legislature who support the oil and gas industry think the law will derail the Indigenous-led protests to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Blocking access to roads is a time-honored people’s tactic in the history of civil disobedience and protest movements, including the #noDAPL struggle.

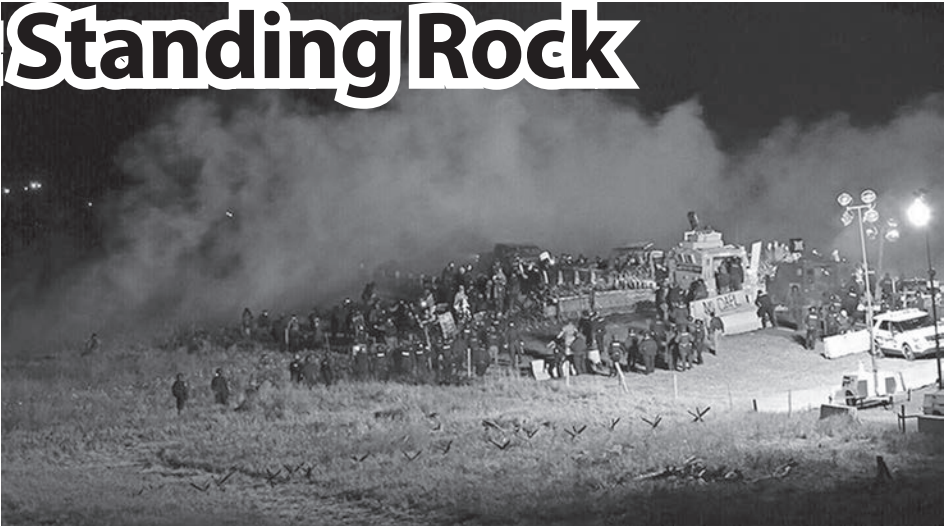
Part of the law states unequivocally: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a driver of a motor vehicle who unintentionally causes injury or death to an

individual obstructing vehicular traffic on a public road, street, or highway, is not guilty of an offense.”

Indigenous leaders from many nations have denounced the bill as undemocratic, unconstitutional and an affront to their sovereignty.

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II told reporters, “The state claims they want to work closely with the tribe on repairing our relationship with them. Clearly that is not happening when legislation that impacts us is being drafted without consultation, consent, or even basic communication.” The legislature’s committee on transportation will hold hearings on the bill on Jan. 20. (com-mondreams.org, Jan. 16)

Water protectors, led by the people of the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation) and other In-



Cops surround and attack water protectors on the Backwater Bridge, Nov. 20.

digenous nations, have “settled in” for the brutal North Dakota winter at camps of All Nations, Rosebud and Sacred Stone.

Elders, ‘defiant and strong’

Linda Black Elk (Catawba Nation) wrote a “Message from Standing Rock Camps” in which she described the protectors who remain.

“The folks left in camp, about 500, are defiant and strong. These are the tough ones ... the ones who have been sharpened by years on the front line. Many of them ... are elders who have seen so many broken promises from federal and IRA [Indian Reorganization Act] governments that they are determined to stay and fight for the water, the land, the wild-life and the treaties. They are determined to stand against the continued cultural, environmental and physical genocide of Indigenous peoples.” (nativenewsonline.net, Jan. 9)

Although an administrative or executive order from the incoming Trump administration could change the landscape

of this and many other struggles, the fight to stop the DAPL continues. Landowners have come together and filed a lawsuit in federal court in an attempt to stop construction on nine miles of the pipeline’s route.

The Backwater Bridge on Highway 1806, north of Cannonball, remains closed, although it has been deemed sound by experts. The bridge was closed by the state after militant clashes with police and corporate goons took place Nov. 20 where water protectors were trapped on the bridge and sprayed with water cannons, tear gas and projectiles.

More than 500 arrested protesters are still waiting for their day in court and their right to legal representation. Only two cases have been settled out of the 571 cases on the docket since August. A dearth of attorneys in the sparsely populated state has caused the wheels of justice to grind to a halt for these valiant water protectors. All charges should be dropped immediately!

Mni Wiconi! Water is life! #noDAPL □

Why young people picked up the guns

Continued from page 2

are in this period matters — particularly for LGBTQ youth, youth of color and other oppressed youth. And who we are should make us better at fighting for our class interests, should raise questions of how we organize, and not whether or not to organize.

We can only break the chain of command across all sectors of our society through unity and solidarity. Our class is made up of workers and oppressed people globally, of different nationalities, abilities, genders, sexualities and more. The wretched conditions of capitalism bind

us together and make our class infinitely stronger and more revolutionary than the bosses who seek to make us inhuman.

We have picked up the guns in a different period, but in the legacy of revolutionary struggle no less. There will be unlikely alliances formed; there will be many people coming to consciousness but realizing that they can’t do it on their own; and we must be bold because we know that our vision for a socialist world is not only possible — it is inevitable. Catalinotto’s book tells the stories and the history of what will make it so. □

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Twin Cities janitors strike J20

Janitors contracted to clean Home Depot stores in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn., announced Jan. 9 they are striking the day President-elect Trump takes office. The Jan. 20 strike confronts Trump’s racist, anti-worker agenda, of which Home Depot’s founders are vocal supporters. The workers, majority Latinx immigrants, are also protesting poverty wages and lack of workplace dignity at service jobs in the area.

“Home Depot uses the Trump model for its janitorial services” by hiring immigrant workers and conducting wage theft, noted Centro de Trabajadores Unido en la Lucha (Center for Workers Organized in Struggle). Since 2009, CTUL has organized seven retail janitor strikes and helped the successful campaign to raise the minimum wage in Minneapolis to \$15. (ctul.net) For more about the strike, see tinyurl.com/jc7lf76.

NYC transit workers reach agreement

“We get assaulted, spat upon, we even get murdered in the line of duty doing what we do. We deserve a contract that adequately reflects the work we ... perform day in and day out,” said Transportation Workers Local 100 President John Samuelsen at a Dec. 14 New York Metro Transportation Authority board meeting. (masstransitmag.com, Dec. 16)

Samuelsen represents 38,000 public transportation workers in New York City, whose contract with MTA expired as of midnight Jan. 15. At issue are MTA’s budget of 2 percent raises. The workers say such a small annual raise isn’t enough to counteract heavy inflation rates. Although TWU 100 workers perform the critical jobs of moving 8 million riders a day through the largest public transit system in the U.S., they make on average almost \$20,000 less annually than neighboring Long Island Railroad workers. (TWULocal100.org)

When negotiations ended Jan. 16, Local 100 had an agreement. Samuelsen posted on the website: “The package provides wage increases which are significantly above inflation and it includes many important negotiated economic sweeteners that will put a substantial amount of money into transit workers’ pockets. This is a concession-free contract. We have protected our health benefits and we have secured important improvements in dental. ... Terms will be presented to the full Local 100 Executive Board tomorrow morning” and then to the membership for ratification.

NYC rally supports Momentive strikers

The 700 members of IUE-CWA 81359 (Electronic Workers and Communication Workers) decided to take their strike against Momentive Performance Materials to New York City on Jan. 13. Ever since Nov. 2, the workers have walked picket lines in Waterford, N.Y., to stop massive health care cuts for themselves and complete cuts to health and life insurance for retirees. Ever since Momentive was spun off from General Electric in 2006 to big private equity firms, wages have been slashed up to 50 percent and pensions frozen. “Enough is enough” is the workers’ rallying cry.



WW PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Inspired by last year’s successful Verizon strike, the workers are targeting Apollo Global Management, located on New York City’s West 57th Street. Leon Black, the CEO of Apollo Global Management, which owns 40 percent of Momentive, is worth \$5.4 billion. The workers are demanding that Black, who has gotten rich destroying good jobs at companies like Momentive, tell Momentive CEO Jack Boss to go back to the table and negotiate a fair contract. To support the workers, sign the petition to Boss at tinyurl.com/zxqu8fm.

D.C. firefighters reject Metro’s ‘blame game’

Fire Fighters Association Local 36, representing emergency services workers in the Washington, D.C., area, responded Jan. 10 to D.C. Metro’s “outlandish accusation that our members bear responsibility for Metro’s chronic and systemic problems in regards to rail safety.” (iaff36.org) As capitalist austerity continues to wreak havoc on transportation infrastructures across the country, organized labor should expect such “blame games” and scapegoating. Stay tuned.

Alabama poultry plant fined for safety violations

Farm Fresh Foods, LLC, a poultry plant in Guntersville, Ala., was fined more than \$29,000 by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration on Dec. 2 for unsafe work conditions. OSHA learned of these conditions from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

When OSHA investigated, it found that water contaminated with chemicals and chicken waste pooled at workers’ feet due to inadequate drainage. Workers risked slip-and-fall injuries when supervisors made them race to move 80-pound crates of raw chicken.

Last June, after workers told the bosses about their safety concerns and high rate of injuries, 16 employees were suspended and four of them were later illegally fired. To learn more about widespread abuses in Alabama’s poultry industry, read the SPLC report based on interviews with more than 300 workers who are African American and Latinx. □

Trump’s attack plan against federal workers

By Carl Lewis

In November, the Trump “transition team” promised to slash federal employment with a mandatory across-the-board hiring freeze. This would reduce the size of the federal workforce through attrition, i.e., retirements, deaths and terminations occurring without backfilling the vacant positions. The civilian workforce in the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs will be the first targets for “draining the swamp,” as Trump calls it.

Hiring freezes are not new for civil service employees; cutting the federal workforce has been a bipartisan effort. The American Federation of Government Employees president, J. David Cox, head of the largest federal workers union, “pointed to the Social Security Administration as evidence of the possible fallout of a hiring freeze. The SSA said slower service and delayed hearings have resulted from ongoing budget cuts, and the agency has already implemented an across-the-board hiring freeze for 2017. Many positions were already frozen this year.” (The Government Executive, Oct. 25)

What makes this gutting of the civil service different from others is the likely passage by the right-wing Congress under a reactionary administration of the so-called “Promote Accountability and Government Efficiency Act.” PAGE will make it possible to eliminate raises between grade step increases, a back door to lowering wages, and turn federal workers into “at-will employees.”

Some hostile legislation that has been resurrected is the Holman Rule from the 1870’s, which will permit Congress to arbitrarily reduce the number of federal workers and cut workers’ wages. This would end the present practice of appropriating the funds requested when the head of an agen-

cy declares the amount of money and employees that it will need to operate throughout the fiscal year.

This lets Congress “allow lawmakers to bring an amendment on an appropriations bill to the House floor that may ‘retrench’ agency spending, reduce the number of federal employees in a particular agency or cut the salary or ‘compensation of any person paid out of the Treasury of the United States.’” AFGE President Cox stated that “reviving this rule means lawmakers will be able to vote to cut the pay and jobs of individual workers or groups of workers without getting input from the agencies where these employees work.” (Federal News Radio, Jan.12)

The most egregious scenario that may take place is the elimination of “5 United States Code; Chapter 71,” which permits collective bargaining rights and is enforced by the Federal Labor Relations Authority — similar to the NLRB in the private sector. **Because the president gets to appoint the head of the FLRA, this could lead to the dismantling of the authority itself.**

All of this comes at a time when most agencies are woefully understaffed, which makes it frustrating and difficult for federal workers to serve the public. Federal workers and their unions have been under a right-wing attack for decades, with proponents spewing propaganda that federal workers are overpaid, privileged and lazy. This rallying cry is a direct attempt to sow division and divide the working class. Although Republicans may lead the charge, it is an overall assault by the capitalist ruling class.

An all-out struggle for federal workers and their unions is needed at the January 20 Counterinauguration and beyond to send a message to Trump and his “alt-right” collaborators: no hiring freeze, no pay cuts, no union-busting! □

Reproductive justice

Continued from page 1

ing any medical benefit.” (Rewire, Dec. 12)

New Idaho state Sen. Dan Foreman intends to introduce a state bill that any woman who has an abortion or a doctor who performs one will be charged with first-degree murder. The only exception is if the woman’s life is in danger. (www.mcclatchydc.com, Jan. 11) Guttmacher confirmed this is a first in the U.S.

Abortion advocates resist

Ever since the selection of the Trump ticket, abortion rights organizations and advocates have been mobilizing. Many such groups will be marching on J21 in D.C. and hundreds of U.S. cities, along with many women who have never marched before.

All* Above All will be there with its new campaign: “We will be Bold, We won’t be Punished.” A*AA was started by young women and women of color in 2014 to overturn the Hyde Amendment, which discriminates against poor women — predominantly women of color, youth, immigrants, rural residents, women with disabilities

and survivors of domestic violence. At a press briefing on Jan. 12, A*AA co-director Destiny Lopez stressed, “The fight to lift coverage bans cannot be divided from the broader struggle for abortion access.”

Amy Hagstrom Miller, CEO of Whole Women’s Health, a plaintiff in last year’s Supreme Court case, pointed to the recent hike in the maternal death rate in Texas after laws forced reproductive health clinics to close. She predicted that if the anti-woman agenda exists on the federal level, “we will see more negative outcomes for women’s health.”

“What happens in the next four years could affect Latina health for decades,” said Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, executive director, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. Speaking for Latinas and their families, especially immigrants, she said, “That’s why we’re building our power, super-charging our activism, and forging new cross-movement relationships.”

Yamani Hernandez, executive director, National Network for Abortion Access,

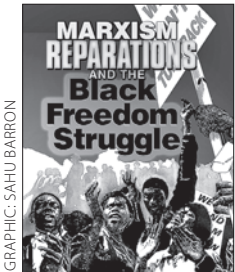
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MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes
Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy
Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell
The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead
Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights Imani Henry
Black & Brown Unity Saladin Muhammad
Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal
Are Conditions Ripe Today? The 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at major online booksellers.



How Michigan criminalized unemployed workers

By Martha Grevatt

King Midas of Greek mythology had a wish that everything he touched would turn to gold. Yet he found himself on the brink of starvation after a greed-induced gift rendered his food solid gold and inedible. The gods answered his pleas to relieve him of his “Midas touch.”

In 2013, modern-day greed created another MiDAS — the Michigan Integrated Data Automated System, used for processing unemployment claims. MiDAS took the place of human workers laid off by the state’s Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA). Just as technology has for decades eliminated jobs in manufacturing, so too it is ravaging employment in the public sector.

Long gone are the winding lines at the unemployment offices that often stretched out the door. These were common symbols of past recessions, when one of the few secure jobs was in claims intake. Now filing in most states is done online or via automated phone systems. Michigan UIA has cut its workforce to the bone. Not only are most of the offic-

es closed, but 90 percent of calls made by newly laid-off workers go unanswered. Unemployed workers wait on hold for hours until they give up.

The jobless have been criminalized by the state. While federal law allows payment of unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks, the Michigan Legislature and the infamous Gov. Rick Snyder cut state benefits to only 20 weeks in 2011. Then, beginning in 2013, many workers had income taken away after MiDAS falsely accused over 20,000 unemployed and formerly unemployed workers of fraud. MiDAS, which cost \$47 million to install, went after claims going back to 2007.

The false fraud allegations were generated whenever computers detected a slight discrepancy in information given by employers and that provided by unemployed workers. This could be as inconsequential as one saying “laid off” and the other stating “lack of work.”

A human staffer would have had the ability to discern if a potential case of fraud was present. The 20,000-plus accused, however, could only appeal their case to the automated system! Imagine

being charged with a crime and having to plead one’s case before a computer. That’s what these workers went through after being brushed by the MiDAS touch.

After being charged with the crime of insurance fraud, the falsely accused workers faced not only demands for restitution but also fines of up to four times the amount of their benefits. Many were not even notified of their charges, finding out after their state and federal tax refunds were garnished. Others had found work and were in the process of getting back on their feet, only to find their wages taken by the state.

The whole process, which became a major scandal early last year when the extent of the damage became public, pushed thousands to the brink of destitution. Help lines were established that included suicide prevention referrals.

The state unsuccessfully tried to get a class action lawsuit, filed by MiDAS’ victims, dismissed. Only now, after thousands have lost homes or declared bankruptcy, is the state paying back the money it stole from those most vulnerable. Under the weight of yet another scandal,



PHOTO: MICHIGAN RADIO

Gov. Snyder signed a bill requiring human verification of unemployment fraud.

It gets worse. The state has a special fund for moneys collected from unemployed workers found guilty of fraud. This fund is now flush with cash since the state stole unemployment benefits that jobless workers earned by paying taxes. Gov. Snyder is taking advantage of a law allowing him to raid the fund to bolster the state’s general fund.

On top of that, the latest news is that the UIA, hypervigilant in going after workers who received state benefits, has failed in a majority of cases to pursue employers who are delinquent in their obligations to the state unemployment insurance fund.

There you have it. Capitalist greed, unlike that of the mythical king, leaves its perpetrators untouched. Only the masses suffer, as Karl Marx explained, when the bosses must “constantly revolutionize the means of production” to get the maximum amount of work from fewer and fewer workers. □

Fighting wage theft in Iowa City

By Mike Kühlenbeck
Iowa City, Iowa

Workers are demanding justice for labor violations committed by Georgia-based Rimax Contractors during construction of the University of Iowa Children’s Hospital last year.

Members of the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa (CWJ) hosted a press conference and public demonstration outside the hospital on Dec. 15, charging Rimax with violations of state and federal law, including payroll fraud, misclassification, failure to provide check stubs, making unlawful payroll deductions and unlawfully retaliating against workers.

In June, Silvia Williams and four other construction workers were recruited by Rimax from Puerto Rico for drywall work on the new hospital. After a while Williams noticed that her paychecks did not reflect the hours she had worked. The nonprofit group CWJ, based in Iowa City, examined the statements and discovered evidence of payroll abuse by Rimax.



CENTER FOR WORKER JUSTICE OF EASTERN IOWA

“Iowa law requires employers to provide workers with a written statement of hours worked, amount earned and any deductions made from their pay,” according to CWJ. The check stubs re-

viewed “list only a lump sum payment with no other information.” Rimax failed to pay Social Security and payroll taxes, and wrongly referred to employees as “independent contractors” when they were hired as hourly employees.

“Many companies misclassify their employees to evade their duty to pay Social Security contributions, provide workers’ compensation and follow employment laws,” noted a CWJ press release promoting the Dec. 15 press conference and demonstration.

After realizing she was not the only one being affected, Williams raised these concerns to a Rimax manager. She was fired the following day. According to documents obtained by Workers World, Rimax told Williams to stay in Iowa City with the promise of moving her to a new job site. Yet Rimax cut off Williams’ housing payments, leaving her homeless while waiting for another job which has yet to materialize.

In a Dec. 1 letter addressed to Jason Miller, director of project management at the UI Hospitals and Clinics, CWJ President Mazahir Salih states, “Rimax made at least two deductions made from Silvia Williams’ pay without her written consent, including a deduction for the cost of two nights of her housing.” Such actions are prohibited by the National Labor Re-

lations Act and the Iowa Wage Payment Collection Act.

When neither Rimax nor Minuti Ogle Co. Inc. (an Oakdale, Minn., company which hired Rimax as a labor broker) replied to the charges, CWJ filed complaints with the Labor Division and Misclassification Unit of Iowa Workforce Development.

It is important to note this is not the first time Rimax has been accused of violating workers’ rights. As reported by the Louisiana Record in 2015, a group of workers hired by Rimax in New Orleans filed a class action suit against the company, alleging they were not paid for overtime in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Such abuses are quite common in Iowa, as they are just about anywhere in the U.S.

It was not long before a group of low-wage workers and allies in CWJ became involved, and have since championed Williams’ cause and that of her fellow workers.

CWJ Executive Director Rafael Morataya, a first-generation immigrant turned labor activist, told WW, “I know how difficult it is to leave your home and struggle to adapt to a new culture and language, the importance of finding allies and the damage that discrimination causes.”

Starting his work in the U.S. as a custodian, Morataya witnessed injustices in the workplace. “I decided I wanted to be the kind of person who stood up for dignity for myself and my co-workers, so I got involved in the union.”

As CWJ continues to fight on behalf of Williams and other Rimax employees, the group announced on Jan. 7 that they will continue defending the gains made by Iowa workers and others across the country last year.

Since the 2016 presidential election, to quote a CWJ press release from Dec. 27, “We have seen a spread of racism, xenophobia, and apathy for low-wage workers in our news and in our communities. With Trump’s coming presidency, there promises to be many struggles ahead for low-wage workers, people of color, and immigrants.” □

wrote in a Jan. 4 email to supporters, “As we kick off 2017, let’s draw strength from each other. ... Let’s march forward together, with our voices, with our donations, and with our love. ... Let’s build power.”

Why we must fight back

All the attacks on abortion from the Trump-Pence administration and right-wing Congresspeople are part and parcel of a reactionary turn to the right. Trump, his government and many of his followers want to return to the 19th century — to racist segregation, white supremacy and lynchings; no unions defending workers’ rights; no laws promoting clean air, water and a healthy environment; LGBTQ people jailed for expressing their desires; and women unable to vote, have legal rights, access safe abortions or lead independent lives.

As well as being Commander in Chief, President Trump should be called Patriarch in Chief. Smashing patriarchy should be high on our agenda.

Frederich Engels explained how patriarchy arose at the dawn of history in “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.” Primitive communism evolved from separate roles for the sexes — women cultivating crops close to home and children, while men hunted and fished — into “the historic downfall of the female sex.” As men’s domestication of herds of animals increased their power and property, they wanted to bequeath wealth to their progeny. So women’s social and economic role was subordinated to men’s, and with private property came classes and patriarchy.

It’s time for thorough-going revolutionary change. Not only do we need to fight Trump’s backward agenda, which only benefits millionaires and property owners, we need to link arms with all our sisters and brothers and form a united movement that guarantees all the rights affirmed by the Women’s March. It’s time for a revolutionary women’s movement that fights for full women’s liberation. □

Anti-worker labor secretary pick protested

By Kathy Durkin

How would most workers react if the CEO of the company that employs them was nominated to be the U.S. secretary of labor? They would view it as an attack on all workers’ rights — and they’d be correct. President-elect billionaire Donald Trump has nominated the virulently anti-labor Andrew Puzder to oversee the department that ostensibly protects workers’ rights and enforces federal labor laws and regulations.

Multimillionaire Puzder is the CEO of CKE Restaurants, Inc., which owns and operates Carl’s Jr., Hardee’s and other fast food chains employing 70,000 workers at 3,748 restaurants in 44 states and 39 countries. The company rakes in \$1.3 billion in revenue annually.

But those who toil in these fast-food eateries were not having it. They began mobilizing nationally to oppose Puzder’s nomination ever since his name was raised. CKE employees are among the most vehement forces renouncing the CEO’s appointment. On Jan. 12, they went into the streets to demand that the Senate block Puzder from becoming the secretary of labor.

From Boston to Los Angeles and Orlando, Fla., to Chicago, where airport workers joined them, thousands of low-wage workers took to the streets with the Fight for \$15 campaign, fighting for a higher hourly minimum wage and union



PHOTO: FIGHT FOR 15 LA

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

rights. In 26 cities, which also included New York, St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo., Richmond, Va., and Charleston, S.C., they marched to the doors of Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’s restaurants and held rallies, denouncing Puzder.

The workers’ signs said it all: “Puzder gets rich while keeping his employees poor” and “Puzder earns more in 1 day than I do in 1 year.” Speakers stressed the CEO’s opposition to overtime pay, minimum wage hikes, paid sick leave and breaks for workers, as well as his violations of workers’ rights and complicity in wage theft.

In many cities, demonstrators held signs asserting “Black lives matter” and “Immigrant justice” in addition to “Fight for \$15.”

Fight for \$15 activists also participated in Martin Luther King Day and immigrant rights events. In Chicago, fast food workers told their stories to a packed hall and explained why a \$15 minimum wage was essential to their families’ well-being. Kim D., a McDonald’s employee, stressed, “We are not backing down until we win economic, immigrant and racial justice.” (Fightfor15 Chicago)

Puzder’s company violates labor laws

Puzder criticizes the Fight for \$15 campaign. He praises robots’ work over human labor because they “never take a vacation [or] show up

late,” and don’t sue for age, race or sex discrimination. (Kansas City Star, Jan. 12) He supports repeal of the Affordable Care Act and endorses cuts to Medicaid, which his workers must turn to when their employer don’t provide health care benefits.

CKE has been sued numerous times by employees claiming discrimination and wage, hour and safety violations. The Restaurant Opportunities Centers says 66 percent of CKE’s women workers have reported sexual harassment at work. “Almost a third of respondents worked off the clock. Approximately one-third reported a wide range of wage theft violations, including not receiving required breaks and overtime pay.” (demos.org, Jan. 13)

Puzder claims, in an attempt to justify low pay, that mainly teenagers work at minimum-wage jobs. But 70 percent of fast food workers are in their 20s or older and many are women. One-third of them support their families, with a large number working two or three jobs to do so.

Puzder and other capitalist millionaires like him — who seek to squeeze the most out of their workforce for the lowest pay — are responsible for the impoverished living conditions of millions of workers.

The workforce at CKE’s eateries knows more than anyone the

dangers of Puzder being the secretary of labor. Demos.org quoted Terence Dixon, Hardee’s worker in St. Louis, at the Jan. 12 protest, “If Puzder is confirmed as labor secretary, it will mean the Trump years will be about low pay, wage theft, sexual harassment and racial discrimination instead of making life better for [workers] like me.”

The minimum wage is scheduled to increase in 21 states and at least 22 cities this year, but mostly not to the \$15 rate. (CNN Money, Dec. 19) The wage gains reached so far must be attributed to the strength and determination of the Fight for \$15 movement, with major participation by immigrant, Latinx and African-American workers.

Fight for \$15 says, “We face an uncertain future, but what we are certain about is the power of our solidarity.” It is bound to grow and strengthen as the multinational working class and its organizations and allies mount opposition to the attacks by anti-labor forces in Washington. □



PHOTO: FIGHT FOR 15 FLORIDA



PHOTO: FIGHT FOR 15 CHICAGO

Baltimore Unity March: ‘Resist Trumpism!’

By Ian McCamant
Baltimore

Less than 24 hours after the Senate took the first steps towards utterly obliterating health care for vulnerable U.S. residents, community activists assembled in the sleet-slick streets of Baltimore, beneath darkening skies, to kick off the fight against the latest reactionary administration: that of billionaire fascist Donald Trump.

The Unity March, organized for Jan. 14 by Workers World Party and the People’s Power Assembly, commemorated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by challenging the encroachment of Trumpist policies of reaction on the national and local levels.

“We’re fired up in Baltimore because we understand that the Donald Trumps that we experience, that we have to contend with, don’t just exist in Washington, D.C.,” said the Rev. Cortly “C.D.” Witherspoon, a prominent organizer and activist with the PPA. “We know that there’s a Trumpist ideology that exists right here in the city of Baltimore.”

The march traced a route down Maryland Avenue toward the historic Lexington Market, a hub of Baltimore’s African-American community, considered by many to be a symbol of authenticity within the city. Now, the Market is slated for gentrification, to be torn down and re-



PHOTO: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

placed with an outlet for corporate chains and petty-bourgeois storefronts. “Our families had been supporting Lexington Market long before the business interests were interested in downtown Baltimore,” said Witherspoon. “Even today we see that there is a food desert right here in the city of Baltimore, and they have the audacity to try to gentrify our city, but not for us. We know that they want to gentrify Baltimore City for the business interests.”

The city and business interests have attempted to associate Lexington Market with violent crime and drug abuse in an effort to obscure the systemic oppression of Baltimore’s poor and working class — oppressions they share with the most vulnerable populations across the coun-

try and the world under the auspices of global capitalism.

“People are out here medicating their pain of poverty,” said Lee Patterson, a member of WWP. “They’re medicating the pain of not having enough.”

Gentrification is not the answer. As Rev. Witherspoon said: “They’re not building a Baltimore city for the poor. They’re building it for the corporate CEOs.”

Trump & police work hand in hand

The march was met with opposition from the Baltimore police, who attempted to silence the activists with fabricated concerns about permits for audio equipment. Sharon Black, a member of WWP, noted the insidious implications of this

type of police behavior and the threat it poses for free expression. “Our permit is our rights,” she said, staring down the line of squad cars that trailed the march down Maryland Avenue. “When we talk about ‘Trumpist policies,’ this is what we mean. When Trump gets elected, the police terror starts.”

The resilience of the demonstrators in the face of weather and police forces served as certain proof of the commitment to resistance against policies of oppression of all kinds. “It’s really very important that we be out here today, in what some may consider to be inclement weather,” Witherspoon noted. “But how many of you know that there’s inclement weather in Washington right now? And if we don’t get used to being able to weather the storm, and being able to weather the elements now, then we’ve got trouble coming on the 20th of January.”

Black added: “It hasn’t hurt our spirits. It hasn’t hurt our resolve to fight Trumpism from Baltimore to Washington, D.C.”

As we move into the era of Trump, community action on both local and national levels becomes more crucial than ever. “There’s not gonna be a ladder coming down from Washington,” said Witherspoon. “There’s not a ladder coming down from Annapolis [the state capital], and we’ve discovered here in Baltimore there’s not a ladder coming from City Hall.

“We’re all we got, but we’re all we need.”

Lexington, Va.

First-ever MLK Day march

By Workers World Staff

Rejecting white supremacy and embracing unity and solidarity, hundreds took to the streets on Jan. 14 in Lexington, Va., for the first-ever Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. community parade there.

“It looks like this is something the city has been waiting for for a long time. Words cannot adequately describe how things turned out on this historic day in Lexington. I think Dr. King would be pleased,” said the Rev. Reginald Early of the Randolph Street United Methodist Church, a historically Black church where the parade began and ended.

Lexington is a city of 7,000 people about two hours from Richmond, the state capital. Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, Confederate leaders who fought for the continued enslavement of people of African descent and other people of color and opposed Reconstruction, are buried there. Numerous other Confederate shrines and history abound in the city.

The Community Anti-Racism Education Initiative, which sponsored the parade, formed in March in response to racist Klan literature distributed in some Lexington neighborhoods. CARE organized a rally of more than 300 last spring in response to the Klan leaflets and subsequently has held events in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, a vigil for the victims at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla., and other events.

In the months leading up to the parade, CARE organizers courageously stood up to a variety of threats. These came from the Sons of Confederate Veterans, “Flaggers” and other white-supremacist organizations.

For years, these groups have held parades on the Saturday of Virginia’s official “Lee-Jackson” weekend, with hundreds of Confederate flag-waving racists menacing the city and boycotting local small businesses. Thus the white supremacists thought they “owned” this Saturday before the Dr. King federal holiday.

CARE put in a permit for the Dr. King Day parade months in advance and fought every step of the way to the event on Jan.

14. In contrast to Confederate regalia, a sea of hundreds of community members took to the streets of Lexington. A massive lead banner was held aloft by a diverse array of participants, including union members and people from the faith-based, LGBTQ, student, youth, women’s and people-of-color communities.

People power

A rainbow of multinational contingents and individuals joined in, filling numerous city blocks with banners, signs, songs and chants imbued with the spirit of Dr. King’s dream and hope to build a people’s world. These included soccer teams and individual players holding such signs as “Give Racism the Red Card”; the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ History Project; 15 Now and Fight For \$15 from Roanoke, Va.; Quakers; the Coalition For Justice from Blacksburg, Va.; Black Lives Matter; Peoples Power Assemblies; Workers World Party; and numerous others. A variety of slogans, including “Living Wage, Jobs Not Racism” and “Unite Against State Violence,” were on signs and banners.

Participants resoundingly rejected the glorification of a history rooted in slavery and genocide, and they sent a clear message that the fight against hate and bigotry in Lexington and everywhere will continue.

The emphatic verdict of parade participants — both Lexington community residents and the many that traveled from a variety of cities and states — is that the parade was direly needed, especially in this period and in order to build relationships for future events, campaigns and movements, such as the Jan. 20 CounterInaugural protests and the Jan. 21 women’s protests in Washington, D.C., and worldwide.

“A million thanks to this community and everyone who came in solidarity from as far away as York, Pa. This is what people power looks like,” said CARE leader Robin LeBlanc.

The day concluded with remarks by keynote speakers: the Rev. Michael A. Turner and Dr. Ted Delaney on the theme

“Remembering MLK, His Life and Legacy” at the Randolph Street United Methodist Church.

Work to do

In his sermon

on the morning of Jan. 15, CARE leader and pastor Lyndon Sayers, of the Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lexington, said: “Yesterday we sang songs of love. We sang them in new ways, we did things differently than before yesterday. Yet, I also saw that so many of us are afraid, afraid of violence, afraid of speaking out, afraid of living in a broken and profoundly violent world.

“It is very easy to be afraid. It is logical to be afraid in such a broken world. But rather than live in a constant state of anx-



Hundreds join the first-ever Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. community parade in Lexington, Va., Jan. 14.

ety and fear, we can choose to tap into something larger, something more hopeful than us. That doesn’t change structural oppression, and we can’t wish away the institutional violence that surrounds us. But we can find solace in this new song.”

Added Sayers: “There is work to do. We here in this city, in this country have a task ahead of us, to tackle systemic oppression and brokenness, while also finding solace and hope that we can’t do this alone. We are loved, we are not alone. We can do this together.” □

Ousting a school board racist bigot

Dozens of people marched to protest outside the home of local millionaire developer and Buffalo school board member Carl Paladino on Jan. 12 to demand his resignation from the school board. Since a Buffalo local newspaper published Paladino’s recent disgusting, racist, transphobic remarks aimed at President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, community

activists have had multiple demonstrations of hundreds of people rejecting his bigotry.

Paladino, who was the New York co-chair for President-elect Donald Trump’s campaign, recently requested that photos of Trump be placed in all Buffalo city schools. Protests are planned to continue until he is removed from the board.

—Garrett Dicembre

‘The inauguration of the resistance’

Hundreds participated in a Jan. 14 statewide March for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in Milwaukee. Same-day similar actions in over fifty cities by immigrant rights groups across the country declared “the inauguration of the resistance” to the racist, anti-worker threats of the Trump administration.

In Milwaukee, the protest and march were supported by the Coalition for an Inclusive Wisconsin, a united front organization representing workers, union members, Muslims, African Americans, women, Jews, the LGBTQ community and others threatened by the new president.

Beginning at the offices of Voces de la Frontera and Youth Empowered in the Struggle, participants from Milwaukee, Madison, Racine and other cities in Wisconsin marched to the Milwaukee County Courthouse to demand that fam-



PHOTO: SUE RUGGLES

March for immigrant and refugee rights on Jan. 14.

ilies be kept together, mass deportations stop and no Muslim registry be created. The march welcomed refugees and also supported DACA, an Obama presidential order offering some protection to undocumented young people who came to the U.S. as children. (vdlf.org)

– Workers World staff



The annual Roanoke, Va., Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade Jan. 16 was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Roanoke NAACP and the Roanoke NAACP Youth Council.

Roanoke, Va.

Celebrating Dr. King the fighter

By Johnnie Stevens and Steve Millies

Over 100 people demonstrated in Newark, N.J., on Jan. 15 to celebrate the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday. Organized by the People’s Organization for Progress, the rally and march was a defiant mobilization against super bigot Donald Trump.

A multinational crowd gathered in front of the Dr. King statue in Newark. Chaired by POP chairperson Lawrence Hamm, the rally heard young and old fighters.

Dr. Willa Johnson Cofield described how the Ku Klux Klan burned a 17-foot-tall cross near her North Carolina home because she fought for voting rights. Although she was fired by a racist school administration, Cofield won her job back. Her legal case may have saved the jobs of 40,000 Black teach-

ers throughout the South who were targeted by Jim Crow authorities.

Former New Jersey assemblyperson William D. Payne spoke of his meetings with Dr. King. Proudly wearing a badge from the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage, a civil rights march in Washington, D.C., Payne talked about his fight to bring Black history to all New Jersey students via the “Amistad Bill.”

Speakers also included a representative from New Jersey BAYAN, a Filipino organization.

Lawrence Hamm reminded people of the Garden State’s racist history. New Jersey was the last Northern state to outlaw slavery, but there were still people held as slaves in 1865. State legislators initially refused to pass the 13th Amendment against slavery.



WW PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Dr. Willa Cofield speaks to the Newark MLK Day rally on Jan. 15.

Hamm recalled the local theaters, where African Americans could only sit in the balcony. He pointed to the old Bamberger Department Store, where Black customers weren’t allowed to try on clothes.

Pointing towards the old First Presbyterian Church, whose basement served as a “station” on the Underground Railroad, Hamm said that runaway slaves were advised that New Jersey wasn’t a safe haven.

People marched down Market Street to

Broad Street and then marched back, carrying many signs attacking police brutality and demanding jobs and health care for all. Firefighters in a fire truck honked their horn in support, as did many other drivers.

Despite a few new buildings, Newark continues to be one of the poorest cities in the U.S. The racist ruling class has never forgotten the heroic Newark rebellion in 1967. □

Philly rally slams denial prisoner hepC care, pharma profit

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

For the second time in five weeks, protesters gathered outside the Philadelphia office of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf on Jan. 13. They again demanded that the state's Department of Corrections provide political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and thousands of others under their jurisdiction with life-saving medications that can cure their chronic hepatitis C.

Last Dec. 9 demonstrators delivered tens of thousands of petitions to Wolf. These called on him and DOC Superintendent John Wetzel to provide prisoners with the anti-viral drugs Sovaldi or Harvoni. These drugs have proven 95 percent effective in curing hep C.

In 2015 the DOC established protocols designed to deny and delay even consideration of treatment for hep C until a prisoner was near death and no longer treatable. While the state delayed treatment, prisoners were already dying.

Federal District Judge Robert Mariani ordered on Jan. 3 the DOC to treat Abu-Jamal with the hep C cure within 21 days. In his precedent-setting ruling, Mariani called the DOC's persistent refusal to treat prisoners with hep C "barbaric and unconstitutional." The ruling for Abu-Jamal would have extended to the 6,000 other Pennsylvania prisoners with the disease.

The DOC filed a notice of intent on Jan. 12 to appeal Mariani's decision, asked for the court to "reconsider" its ruling and filed a motion for stay of the order. The emergency demonstration on Jan. 13 was the movement's response.

The DOC's appeal could extend

Abu-Jamal's suffering and dangerous deterioration of health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says every person with chronic hepatitis C should be given the cure immediately.

Outside Wolf's office Pam Africa of the MOVE organization and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, said, "The DOC's appeal is outrageous. It exposes the state's wanton disregard for the health and life of the men and women under its care. It vio-

lates human decency."

The DOC is arguing that medication for prisoners with the deadly hep C costs too much, and the cost should be the basis for rejecting provision of the cure. At the rally, Dr. Suzanne Ross said publicly that Judge Mariani made it absolutely clear that the cost of the medicine cannot take precedence over the constitutional right of every prisoner with hep C to get the cure.

The 12-week treatment provided through Gilead Sciences costs as much

as \$90,000 for one individual, Dr. Ross said, but that's because of Gilead's greed. Actual production of the entire treatment costs the company only \$62. Even that includes a 50 percent write-up for profits.

Earlier on Jan. 13, a delegation of activists from New York and Philadelphia, including Ross, Pam Africa, Johanna Fernandez and others traveled to the DOC's headquarters in Mechanicsburg, Pa., in an effort to meet with Wetzel. After some apparent changes, the DOC finally sent security to ask the delegation to leave. Security said the state office was "private property" and they were trespassing.

One of Gov. Tom Wolf's first acts when he took office in January 2015 was to place a moratorium on the death penalty in Pennsylvania. Yet to refuse to treat a curable disease and let prisoners die due to medical neglect is really a death sentence by another means. It's not just unconstitutional.

Mumia's supporters urge people to continue making calls to Wetzel (717-728-2573 or 717-728-4109), telling him to immediately give the hep C cure to Mumia and all other state prisoners with the disease. □

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE
Protesters demand hep C medical treatment for Pennsylvania prisoners, Jan. 13.



State says no to prisoners' healthcare treatment — again

By political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal

Taken from a Jan. 14 audio column at prisonradio.org.

Several days ago, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections appealed the Jan. 3 U.S. District Court ruling that granted an injunction against the DOC's so-called protocol covering hepatitis treatment (or should I say lack of treatment?).

The state waited almost 10 days to file

an appeal saying they didn't have the time needed to obey a court order that gave them two weeks (14 days) to begin the process.

They also ignored the court's order that the DOC was enjoined from using its "protocol" — they continue to use it, as if no court order was ever issued.

If that ain't contempt of court, what can it be called?

The state violates constitutional rights daily — because it can. What's another

court order?

To them, it ain't worth the paper it's printed on.

From the very beginning, the DOC has spit in the eye of the judge. They've filed false documents. They've made misleading claims.

They tried to intimidate him.

Why should they now be any different?

And yet, the battle goes on to save the lives of thousands of prisoners in Pennsylvania dungeons. □

How European governments freeze refugees to death

By **G. Dunkel**

From 2015 through 2016, nearly 1.7 million people took a dangerous, expensive and often deadly voyage to enter Europe as refugees, according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. The UNHCR estimates that over 5,000 people died in the Mediterranean Sea trying to get to Europe in 2016. Recent reports suggest that crossing the Sahara Desert is nearly as dangerous.

These refugees are fleeing either war or climatic disasters, or perhaps both, in their countries of origin: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria. Some of them have walked for months, being robbed by cops and bandits, fleeced by human smugglers, and sometimes helped and aided by people in the countries they passed through who were touched by their plight and their desperation.

In Europe, they encountered fences and closed borders, exclusions and mass roundups, and bureaucratic delays in processing their applications. Some sympathetic individuals and small groups gave them food, clothes, basic necessities of life. Governments that didn't want "this problem" put refugees in tents and camps with no heat for cold weather.

By an accident of geography, many of these refugees — 65,000 or more — wound up on some Greek islands lying close to Turkey. They were supposed to be transferred to other European Union countries but there was a large amount



Refugee camp in Moria, the island of Lesbos, Greece.

of foot dragging by those entities. Women and children were put in summer hotels, the men and older boys — many of the refugees are unaccompanied minors — were put in small tents. None of that housing had heat for winter.

So the Greek government and the refugees were totally unprepared for the extreme cold and heavy snows that hit Greece and much of Europe in December 2016.

Diane Sampson, an American pediatrician, has had to treat patients suffering from frostbite at the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos. The heavy snow has caused some tents to collapse. All the tents are leaking and standing in cold water. The refugees have no way of drying their clothes and bedding.

"In a situation like that our main responsibility is to look at these human beings and treat them like human beings. This place lacks basic human dignity," she told the Thomson-Reuters Foundation on Jan. 13.

While all the EU governments are treating refugees that enter their territory inhumanely, France stands out as partic-

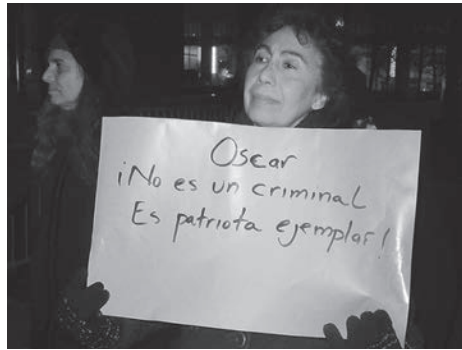
Free a Puerto Rican patriot

By **Steve Millies**

"Thirty-five! Thirty-five! We want Oscar home alive!" was chanted by people picketing the Jacob Javits Federal Building in New York City on Jan. 11. They were demanding that President Obama release Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera.

Now 74 years old, López has spent nearly half his life — 35 years — in jail. Protesters pointed out that this is even more time than Nelson Mandela was imprisoned under the hated South Africa apartheid regime. No wonder they chanted, "Your democracy is hypocrisy!"

Framed on charges of "seditious conspiracy," Oscar López Rivera's real crime



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

"Oscar is not a criminal! He is an exemplary patriot!"

in the eyes of Yankee colonialists and the FBI was fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Free Oscar López Rivera! □

ularly brutal. France is a much wealthier country than Greece and it is also experiencing extreme cold and snowy weather.

In the past, when Paris' refugee center was full, refugees slept in tents scattered near metro stops. Then the cops would seize their tents. When refugees began using blankets to stay warm, cops seized the blankets.

When Médecins sans Frontière [Doctors Without Borders] pointed out the risk of hypothermia for some of its refugee patients, Bruno Le Roux, the minister in charge of the police in France's so-called Socialist government, said, "It's necessary to stop this national sport of challenging cops." (francetvinfo.fr, 1/8)

European countries with deep and profitable ties to Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, a

former French colony, are quick to criticize those governments for creating the refugees washing up on Europe's shores. But the EU countries conspicuously refrain from criticizing themselves for how they treat the refugees they have created.

Instead, if the United States and its European allies ended their wars on Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, if the money spent on those wars went to rehabilitating and restoring the ravaged areas, if some of that money went to reverse the climate change devastating sub-Saharan Africa — then the people who have been forced to flee and become "refugees" could return to their homes.

Meanwhile, trapped in the EU's winter, the people struggle to survive the cruel freeze. □

Tillerson, Exxon Mobil and the South China Sea

By Deirdre Griswold

Donald Trump may like to surprise people, but he has followed exactly what previous presidents have done in selecting a secretary of state. This billionaire “celebrity” who spouted populist demagoguery to get elected is not filling his cabinet with people who have felt the pain of unemployment. No, he’s picked a Rockefeller man.

Rex Tillerson, Trump’s nominee, is the former chair of Exxon Mobil. And Tillerson, true to the predatory and aggressive character of this company with huge global assets, started out by making threats to China over its build-up of some small islands in the South China Sea.

Not the South U.S. Sea — the South China Sea.

Tillerson said during his confirmation hearing on Jan. 11 that China should be told its access to the islands “is not going to be allowed” and U.S. allies in the region should provide “backup.” The reaction to this saber-rattling talk of a possible military confrontation was immediate and sharp.

Paul Keating, former prime minister of

Australia, quickly issued a statement saying his country should reject such pressure: “That means no naval commitment to joint operations in the South China Sea and no enhanced U.S. military facilitation of such operations.”

What is it about the South China Sea that has Tillerson so riled up and his former company salivating? It’s not Tillerson’s claims that China is threatening the free passage of ships. That’s baloney.

The corporate news media and Exxon Mobil know what it’s all about. “The South China Sea may contain 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, according to the United States Energy Information Administration,” wrote the New York Times on Jan. 12.

The strategy of Exxon Mobil has been to get access to the great wealth under the South China Sea through Vietnam, one of the countries laying claim to it. On Jan. 13, Vietnam’s state-owned energy group, PetroVietnam, signed an agreement with Exxon Mobil to develop the country’s biggest gas project for energy generation.

John Kerry, the outgoing U.S. secretary of state who has called the choice of

Tillerson “thoughtful” and is reported to have big holdings in energy stocks in a “blind trust,” was present in Vietnam for the signing with Exxon Mobil.

U.S. tries to stir antagonisms

Washington’s strategy toward China and Vietnam for years has been to exploit and exacerbate the tensions between these two great socialist countries. It seems incredible that, after the horrible destruction wreaked by the U.S. on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, U.S. warships are now allowed to berth in Cam Ranh Bay and diplomats like Kerry are involved in business deals between Vietnamese agencies and U.S. corporate giants. But Vietnam is a poor, developing country still suffering the terrible effects of the war and has made many compromises in order to survive.

The lowest point in China-Vietnam relations came in 1979, when China invaded Vietnam for a brief period. Progressives around the world, including Workers World Party in the U.S., condemned the invasion while supporting both countries against imperialism.

Currently, relations between Vietnam and China appear to be improving. On Jan. 14, Nguyen Phu Trong and Xi Jinping, the general secretaries of the two countries’ Communist parties, issued a joint communique at the end of a visit by Trong to Beijing. It stressed cooperation and peaceful development, especially in the “East Sea.”

Both countries are trying to move away from coal and toward less polluting energy sources. For both, the prospect of replacing coal with natural gas has great advantages. China has also pledged to spend at least \$360 billion on solar and wind over the next three years to decrease its dependence on fossil fuels.

The progressive movements here have a lot of reasons to fight the Trump agenda. Stopping the billionaires’ war plans ranks along with fighting their racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and immigrant bashing.

For more information on U.S. secretaries of state and the Rockefeller connection, read Vince Copeland’s very informative book, “Expanding Empire,” online at www.workers.org/cm/empire.html. □

Fight Trump *and* fight NATO

By John Catalinotto

The president-elect’s Jan. 15 press statements directed at Europe just five days before taking office have again opened the contentious issue — within the U.S. ruling class — of how U.S. diplomacy should treat relations with Russia and with the European imperialist powers in NATO.

Although there is a real battle going on, the positions taken by both Donald Trump and the entrenched imperialist state — the CIA, the Pentagon, with political support from the leading factions of both the Democratic and Republican parties — are aimed at extending the influence of Wall Street and the power of the Pentagon.

Trump has repeated his earlier criticisms that NATO is “obsolete” and chided those European countries that don’t spend the required two percent of GDP to contribute to NATO militarism. He has also said he would negotiate with Russia, offering to relieve sanctions in return for a reduction in the nuclear stockpile.

is no solution — is U.S. chauvinism supplemented by the most backward racism, misogyny, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

Despite his feigned “populism,” Trump has assembled an administration of Wall Street heavies, crony billionaires, Pentagon generals, climate-change deniers and racist reactionaries who have dedicated their lives to destroying the government departments that they’ve been chosen to run, along with the environment.

It would make no sense to give this gang any time to carry out the crimes they plan. One must anticipate a frontal assault on whatever benefits and services remain for the population and confront it.

A movement arises — will it be derailed?

Trump’s unexpected election provoked a spontaneous wave of demonstrations. This wave included those from the Black Lives Matter movement and pro-immigrant rights “Dreamers” who had been fighting Trump all along.

It also included many first-time demonstrators. Some might have been disappointed Clinton supporters. Some were Bernie Sanders’ supporters who may or may not have voted for Clinton.

movements of the most oppressed can revolutionaries contribute to the struggle against Trump and against the Democrats. Those who choose to criticize from outside are abdicating their role.

Fight racism! Not Russia and China!

Right now, the most insidious attempt to derail this movement comes from the offensive by the CIA and the corporate media to blame Trump on Vladimir Putin and Russia on Trump.

This distortion is repeated, although Clinton’s elitist refusal to address problems of economic stagnation and prolonged unemployment, especially among poor people away from the big cities, probably cost her 10 times the votes that her leaked emails did.

The offensive is insidious for two reasons:

First, it occurs as U.S.-NATO tanks have been deployed in Poland and Eastern Europe, up to the Russian border.

The propaganda offensive thus backs real U.S.-NATO aggression that at a minimum risks a new arms race.

Second, it deceives those in the new anti-Trump movement into believing that painting the new president as a Putin puppet presents them with an easy path to his demise. No, the battle against the Trump program will be neither easy nor short. Being in a bloc with the CIA, McCain and the Clinton grouping would only undermine the movement’s independence and struggle potential.

NATO is not just “obsolete,” as Trump says. It is an instrument that Washington uses to line up European imperialist countries behind its strategic program. NATO has led wars against Yugoslavia and Libya and backed illegal occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO should be smashed.

As the anti-Trump poster available at workers.org thunders: “Fight racism, not Russia and China!” □

Both contending ruling-class factions threaten to use military power to promote U.S. interests. They are both militarist and aggressive. Both have confronted People’s China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Trump’s group is not in office, so has no record yet. The more traditional group has already wreaked havoc on Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria and promoted a coup in Ukraine supported by neo-fascist elements. They menace Russia and consider it a strategic enemy. Not only Republicans like George W. Bush and John McCain are responsible for this program, but also Democrats like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Assault on workers at home

While both ruling-class factions are driven toward imperialist war by the unsolvable capitalist economic crisis, they have different domestic programs. They especially have different public faces.

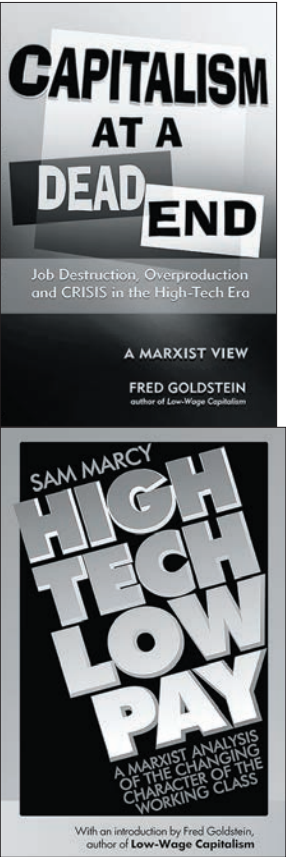
Trump is allegedly a populist. Mainly, this means he acknowledges that life has become precarious or even miserable for many in the U.S. His solution — which

This movement to confront the new president has grown enormously since those first 10 days in the streets. Not surprisingly, it is filled with contradictions. Everyone from the anti-Russian neocon establishment to cutting-edge anti-fascists detest Trump — for much different reasons. And this movement includes many who would never have protested a Clinton inauguration.

But the reality is that they are ready to take to the streets and to organize politically to confront Trump. Most will battle him issue by issue. That means defending health care, protecting Medicare and Medicaid, fighting for a higher minimum wage, defending immigrants and Muslims from arrest and attack, fighting for reproductive rights, and defending Black and Brown people from racist cops.

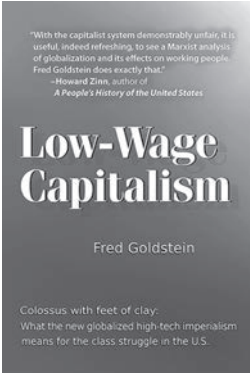
Only by doing all this can they defeat Trump and his cronies.

And only by participating in this movement, winning over its best fighters to be leaders and directing it to support the



Capitalism at a Dead End

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



High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein
author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Stop health care profiteering!

On Friday the 13th — yes, an ominously superstitious date — the U.S. House of Representatives voted 227 to 198 to start the process of repealing the Obama administration's Affordable Care Act. All 227 were Republicans. The day before, the Senate passed a similar measure 51 to 48, also along party lines.

The public reaction was really scared. Since the Republicans have not put forward even the outlines of a bill that would replace the ACA, there is great anxiety and uncertainty about what will come next.

Some 22 million people have received health insurance under the ACA. Some who had not previously been able to afford coverage benefited from an expansion of Medicaid and other government assistance. Some had been barred from getting coverage because of preexisting medical conditions. In other words, they were very sick and, because they were sick, they were denied health insurance. That's how this cruel, totally profit-driven system works.

Will they lose their medical coverage now? Will premiums for private insurance go up and government assistance be cut? Many horror stories could be told about uninsured people losing everything because of catastrophic medical costs.

There is much reason to worry that the blatantly right-wing, big-business gang that will now be running not only both houses of Congress but also the White House is, even before taking office, crafting a bill to help the profiteers while eliminating aspects of the ACA that allowed the rest of us to get some coverage.

Wall Street seems to like this idea. On the very day that Congress voted to dismantle the ACA, forbes.com reported that health care stocks were the best performing sector in afternoon trading.

It's the health of profits that concerns Congress, not the health of people. These wealthy politicians and the even richer capitalists they represent see more money coming in from a smaller number of people, with or without insurance.

Not that the Affordable Care Act has been anything like a national health system that would be paid for out of public funds and guarantee inexpensive care to everyone with a minimum of bureaucracy. Most developed capitalist countries have such health systems, which have worked effectively to improve people's health and longevity while lowering the costs involved.

Another way is possible

In socialist Cuba, they've gone further. Although a much poorer country than the U.S., especially after more than a half-century of the economic blockade imposed by Washington, little Cuba has a record of providing health services to its own people and to millions more, especially in Latin America, Haiti and Africa, that is astounding.

In the book "Too Big to Succeed: Profiteering in American Medicine," California neurosurgeon Russell Andrews wrote, "The cost of health care in the United States is at least 50 percent greater than that of any of the other developed countries, despite the fact that by commonly accepted measures of effectiveness of health care (e.g., life expectancy and infant mortality), the United States ranks lower than many developing coun-

tries that spend far less on health care (e.g., Cuba)."

World Health Organization figures confirm Andrews' conclusions. Its 2015 report on life expectancy for people born that year showed the U.S. and Cuba virtually tied at 79.3 and 79.1 years, respectively. On infant mortality, the CIA World Factbook, of all things, reports that in 2015 deaths per live births were 5.87 in the U.S. and only 4.63 in Cuba. Cuba has just announced its infant mortality rate for 2016: it's down to 4.5.

But this is only half the story. In the five years before the Cuban Revolution, 1955-1959, infant mortality there had been as high as 70 deaths per 1,000 live births, while in the U.S. it was just 27.3.

The money spent on health care is equally striking. In 2014, the World Health Organization's latest figures, the U.S. annual expenditure for health care per capita was a whopping \$9,403, compared to just \$2,475 for Cuba!

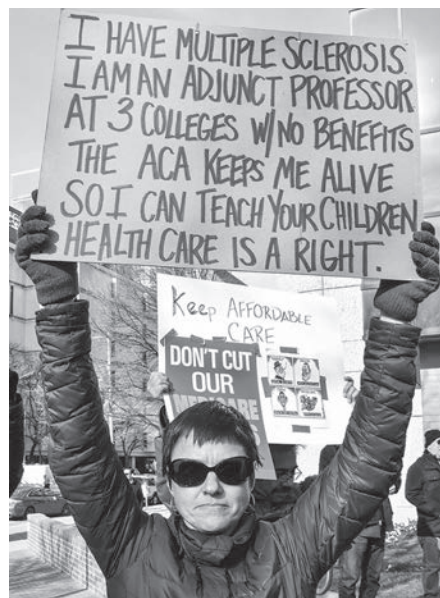
Most of the difference represents the huge profits that the current system of health care in the U.S. delivers to its capitalist owners and investors.

Fighting for socialism here is not just some pretty utopian dream. And it is not just patching up a ridiculously venal and rotting system. It is more and more becoming a life-or-death struggle as we build a movement for revolutionary change while we fight to keep and expand what little remains in social programs.

The health and futures of the vast majority of people in the U.S. are being sabotaged by lying bourgeois politicians who have built their careers either sucking up to the extremely rich exploiters or, in Trump's case, being one of them himself. The Democratic Party, by comparison, comes on as Wall Street Lite, while the Republicans are masters of their craven subservience to big capital.

All of capitalism's wealth comes from exploiting workers, not from "entrepreneurs" who are good at just one thing: increasing their own bottom line. Workers built it all; we are suffering from the stranglehold over the wealth that should belong to society; and we have the right to get rid of capitalism.

Let's build a movement for revolutionary socialism to reclaim and share the wealth we have created. Our health and our very lives depend on it.



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

A protester at a Philadelphia rally on Jan. 15 was one of thousands of people rallying countrywide to keep the Affordable Care Act and to fight for health care as a right.

Global actions demand freedom for Ahmad Sa'adat



PHOTO: BDS TURKEY

By Joe Catron

Events held across the world on Jan. 12-14 demanded freedom for Ahmad Sa'adat, the general secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and for all Palestinian prisoners. Sa'adat has been imprisoned by Israel since 2006.

"Sa'adat is not only a leader of the Palestinian left but a respected leader of the entire Palestinian national movement," Khaled Barakat, international coordinator of the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat, told Workers World about the days of action. "In fact, he became a leader in prison over his many arrests through the years."

Prior to his seizure in 2006 by Israeli forces during a raid on the Palestinian Authority's Jericho prison, Sa'adat had been imprisoned by the PA since 2002 over the assassination of the Israeli tourism minister, Rehavam Ze'evi.

The many parties to Sa'adat's capture "demonstrate the array of forces acting against the Palestinian people: the Zionist state, the U.S., U.K., and other imperial and colonial powers ... were involved in his arrest and abduction from Jericho, and the PA's policy of 'security coordination' at the behest of Israel," Barakat said.

Members of the PFLP's armed Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades shot Ze'evi, who advocated the complete ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in 2001. The action was in retaliation for Israel's assassination of Abu Ali Mustafa, Sa'adat's predecessor as general secretary, in an airstrike on his Ramallah office weeks earlier.

Ze'evi's shooting inside the Hyatt Regency in East Jerusalem made him the highest ranking Israeli official ever killed by the Palestinian resistance.

The AAMB said at the time: "The response decided upon was difficult and full of danger, but the fighters had a strong will in their hearts and a dedication and willingness to sacrifice for Abu Ali Mustafa and the Palestinian revolution." (pflp.ps)

In 2008, an Israeli military court sentenced Sa'adat to 30 years in prison for leading an "illegal terrorist organization," the PFLP.

Like every other Palestinian political faction, from Fatah to Hamas, the PFLP is banned under Israeli military regulations.

Events for Sa'adat began in New York City on Jan. 12 with simultaneous meetings by NYC Students for Justice in Palestine and Workers World Party's center.

At the center, John Fletcher, organizer for Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, called Sa'adat "a veteran of the resistance movement who comes from one of the most important generations of Palestinian resistance." (youtube.com)

Weekend actions continued with a protest by Samidoun outside the Best Buy store in Manhattan's Union Square, op-

Demonstrations to free Ahmad Sa'adat in Istanbul and New York, below.



PHOTO: BUD KOROTZER

posing Hewlett Packard's services to the Israeli prison system. Other events took place in Albuquerque, N.M.; Hilton Head, S.C.; and across at least eight European countries.

Palestinians ended the mobilization in Gaza on Dec. 16 with a mass demonstration by PFLP members and other supporters.

"The imprisonment of Palestinians works hand in hand with racist targeting in the United States, not only of Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities, but also of the Black liberation movement and other liberation struggles within the U.S.," coordinator Barakat said of the events' significance on the eve of the Trump administration. "Every struggle within the U.S. to fight racism, oppression and imperialism benefits the Palestinian people's liberation struggle."

For more information on Sa'adat and Palestinian prisoners, visit the websites of the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat and Samidoun: freeahmadsaadat.org, samidoun.net.

Catron is a member of Al-Awda New York: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

Revolted by Trump?

Workers World exposed Trump's racist, bigoted agenda throughout his campaign — and was part of militant protests against both him and Clinton across the country. Now he's putting together an anti-working class administration: a die-hard white supremacist for attorney general, a Wall Street billionaire for the Treasury, an adversary of Medicare and the Affordable Care Act for Health and Human Services, a gung-ho ex-general for Defense Secretary.

U.S. workers and oppressed people need a fighting voice for the big struggles ahead!

Workers World is ready for that challenge. We believe Marxism is now more needed than ever to pinpoint where capitalist reaction comes from. And Lenin-

Cuban migration and U.S. policy war

By Teresa Gutierrez

On Jan. 12, 2017, the Obama administration announced that it was ending a 22-year-long migration policy on Cuba. President Barack Obama declared that the U.S. government would no longer allow Cubans who landed on U.S. soil without visas to remain in the country and gain immediate legal residency. The now terminated policy — termed “wet foot, dry foot” — was exclusive to Cuban migrants. Unlike other Caribbean, Central American or African immigrants, Cubans were the only ones who were granted immediate legal residency or naturalized status as soon as they touched U.S. soil. Only when Cubans were caught during their sea crossing would the U.S. send them back to the island. Hence the “wet foot, dry foot” term. The policy is part of the decades long war emanating from Washington geared to destabilize the Cuban Revolution. For years, the Cuban government has pointed out that U.S. migration policy is aimed at inciting illegal migration from Cuba. In 1962, after the triumph of the Revolution, the U.S. government abruptly suspended travel and legal departures from Cuba to the U.S. Thousands of Cubans lost all connections with family living in the U.S. Illegal migration was the only way to connect with them. Under the Lyndon Johnson administration, the onerous Cuban Adjustment Act was enacted. That law established special migration status for Cubans and became the legal basis for the automatic right to obtain permanent resident status a year after entering the U.S. In 1994 and 1995, another migration agreement between the U.S. and Cuba provided for the U.S. to issue 20,000 visas each year to Cubans who wanted to come to the US. The “wet foot, dry foot” policy was established within the Cuban Adjustment Act to give immediate legal status. The U.S. never kept its end of the migration agreements, approving as few as

1,600 visas some years. With the agreement violated year after year, the number of people who attempted to migrate to the U.S. without authorization increased. Those agreements took place within the context of the longest blockade in U.S. history, creating untold economic and social hardships in Cuba. Despite pro-worker conditions, such as free education and free health care for all, living conditions are still hard in Cuba as a result of the blockade. When trade with the former socialist camp deteriorated exponentially, social conditions were especially hard in Cuba. Food and oil shortages abounded as a result of the tightening of the blockade and the fall of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, U.S. imperialism and its lackeys among counter-revolutionary Cuban elements in Florida consistently carried out a nonstop propaganda campaign via radio and other outlets to incite illegal migration from Cuba. This incitement led to the case of Elián González, whose mother died on a raft from Cuba headed for Florida in 1999. Elián survived and was picked up by the Coast Guard and brought to Miami. There, right-wing family members attempted to kidnap the six-year-old child and keep him in the U.S. despite his father’s demands to have Elián returned. After several months, Elián’s father, Juan Miguel, obtained freedom for his son. Elián, now an adult, is one of the many youth leaders in Cuba defending the Revolution. The Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA) establishes. establishes special and exclusive status for Cuban migrants. It makes Cubans the only people in the world who have the dispensation to automatically be granted the right to apply for U.S. citizenship and work permits as soon as they hit U.S. soil. This clearly exposes the political nature of U.S. immigration policy. For example, Haitians experience some of the most dire conditions in their homeland due to imperialist policies. Why are not Haitians or Hondurans, who are fleeing

violence, not granted immediate privileges like the Cubans? Because one of these nations has had a revolution that ousted foreign transnational corporations and Wall Street banks: Cuba. Why did Obama repeal the “wet foot, dry foot” part of the CAA? A Jan. 12 New York Times’ article, summarized Obama’s deputy national security adviser, Benjamin Rhodes, as saying that “most Cubans who came to the United States in the past ‘absolutely had to leave’ Cuba ‘for political purposes’” and that now “the flow is largely of people seeking greater economic opportunity” while ending the policy “is a reflection of Obama’s view that, ultimately, the rise of a new generation of Cubans pressing for change in their own country is vital to bringing about change there.” “It’s important that Cuba continue to have a young, dynamic population that are agents of change,” Mr. Rhodes said. Also reported in the New York Times, the infamous counterrevolutionary Jorge Mas Canosa, chairman of the right-wing Cuban American National Foundation, before his death in 1997 said of the CAA, “The changes would force Cuba’s leaders to be more responsive to their citizens.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

U.S. out of Guantánamo!

In 2009, President Barack Obama said he planned to close the prison at Guantánamo within a year. As of mid-January, it’s still open, holding 55 of the original total of 780 political prisoners held there for up to 15 years without trial. Workers World is 100 percent for the effort to close the prison. No, 200 percent, because besides closing the prison that houses alleged “terrorists” rounded up in Afghanistan, Pakistan or elsewhere 15 years ago, a second connected issue is worth another 100 percent.

‘People may be initially upset at not being able to have this way of getting out of Cuba, but ultimately, the solution for Cuba is people fighting for change in Cuba.’” Thousands of Cubans, according to the Times, have left Cuba and are awaiting entry at the U.S. Mexican border. Most have left Cuba because of economic hardship or a desire to see family in the U.S. Some just have a yearning for travel, like most human beings. These Cubans will unfortunately now experience the untold hardship and misery that their migrant sisters and brothers from other countries have endured for generations. It is indeed a step forward for Cuba that the Obama administration has ended a small part of its unfair migration policies. But the Cuban Adjustment Act in its entirety must be repealed and migratory policies that are accorded in Europe or other places should also be practiced towards Cuba. Furthermore, repealing the “wet foot, dry foot” policy in order to inspire “change inside Cuba” will fail, just like every other imperialist plot has failed since 1959. The Cuban Revolution remains strong.

Washington seized the Guantánamo Bay territory in 1898 as it entered the extra-continental imperialist dogfight by crushing Spain and grabbing Cuba from the Cubans. In 1903, the U.S. imposed a lease agreement on its Cuban puppets. For a 19th century small check in symbolic payment for their theft, but which today’s Cuban revolutionaries have never cashed, the U.S. Navy clutches sovereign Cuban territory in its claws. Close the prison! Return Guantánamo to Cuba!

J20 protest: Repressive state attempts shut-down

Continued from page 1 because they have been controlled by big business interests. If there were 5,000, 500 or even 50 activists marching on the socialist government in Havana, Cuba, demanding a capitalist system, you can bet your life that the bourgeois press would provide day-to-day

coverage, interviewing activists and featuring their demands widely. This would be mainly because an attack against Cuba serves the interests of people like Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. As it stands, the bourgeois press were unwilling even to tell the general public that J20 Resist was selling affordable bus

tickets to Washington, D.C. The press coverage on J20 organizing is consciously vague and sparse, drumming up acrimony against the protesters before the march even begins by painting pictures of resistance against Trump in D.C. as being potentially violent and pointless. The state is planning to shut down D.C. on J20 to keep out anti-Trump activists but not pro-Trump supporters.

Using repression to stop resistance

This reflects the media’s overall strategy of silence toward the brutal murders of young Black and Brown people by police and the horrific brutality experienced by Indigenous activists at the hands of both cops and mercenaries at Standing Rock. The U.S. has more than 9,000 nuclear warheads in its arsenal to threaten the world and the most people in its prisons. The ruling class has decided, correctly, that if the entire country and the rest of the world knew what was really happening in the heart of the empire, they would not stand for it much longer. Most bourgeois journalists would quite simply be out of a job. While the media yawn at the mass resistance or blame Russia for Trump getting elected, the DHS has announced an unprecedented level of so-called “securi-

ty” (aka violence baiting) around the J20 inauguration, aimed mainly at stamping out and mitigating a great potential level of resistance. This is a gross violation of the right to assemble and free speech under the U.S. Constitution. The DHS has announced that buses will not be allowed to drop protesters off near Metro stations, not only in D.C. but in Maryland and Virginia as well. Instead, buses are supposed to drop off people near RFK Stadium, which is a 2-mile walk to the Capitol where Trump will be sworn in. The Jan. 21 women’s march in D.C., mainly targeting Trump’s misogyny but also supported by Democratic Party forces, is not expected to face as much hostility and scrutiny compared to J20 when the whole world will see Trump take office. Close to 300 other J21 women’s marches will take place in every U.S. state. Notwithstanding the high level of technological surveillance being used for J20, in the long run, intimidation will prove no match for the millions of furious people in the streets who will be ready to fight back beyond J20 against the increased volume of racism, sexism and anti-immigrant hatred the Trump regime will bring. *Fivek is a NYC organizer of J20.*

Ready to fight back? Build Workers World

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MUNDO OBRERO/WORKERS WORLD FOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

El calentamiento global, Trump y China

Por Deirdre Griswold

El año 2016 que acaba de terminar fue el más caliente registrado. Así fue 2015. Y 2014 anteriormente. Cada año, nuevos récords mundiales se establecen al cubrir la atmósfera una capa de CO2 causada por la quema de combustibles fósiles, calentando el planeta más rápidamente de lo que los científicos habían predicho. En EUA, el calor del año pasado fue superado sólo por el año récord de 2012.

Entonces, ¿qué están haciendo las autoridades en el país más rico de la tierra sobre esta crisis monumental? Bueno, han conseguido que uno de sus compañeros derechistas multimillonarios sea elegido presidente, y él ha escogido un gabinete donde

abundan los negadores climáticos - muy convenientemente, dadas sus conexiones con las industrias del carbón y del petróleo.

Ahí está Rex Tillerson, el presidente saliente de ExxonMobil, selecto por Trump para Secretario de Estado. Rick Perry, un ex gobernador de la Texas rica en petróleo, para Secretario de Energía. Y Scott Pruitt, un ex fiscal general de Oklahoma que ha estado librando una batalla legal contra el Plan de Energía Limpia de la Agencia de Protección Ambiental (EPA) que reduciría las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero de las centrales eléctricas de carbón. ¿Qué puesto ocupará Pruitt? Por supuesto - la EPA.

Científicos, ambientalistas y la gente que piensa en el futuro se están halando de los pelos. ¿Qué pueden hacer?

La respuesta: Luchar desesperadamente contra este sistema podrido que está destruyendo el mundo. Ayudar a construir un movimiento de masas revolucionario contra el capitalismo y sus males, desde el racismo, el sexismo y la opresión de la comunidad LGBTT, a la explotación de todas/os los trabajadores y la destrucción del medio ambiente - todo con fines de lucro.

China invertirá \$360 mil millones en energía renovable

Es instructivo observar lo que China está haciendo con respecto al cambio climático. Sigue siendo un país en desarrollo, que necesita alimentar y albergar a 1.300 millones de personas en la misma superficie de tierra que EUA.

Sin embargo, la Administración Nacional de Energía de China anunció el 5 de enero que el país gastará otros 360.000 millones de dólares - más de un tercio de un billón de dólares - en fuentes de energía renovable como la solar y la eólica para 2020. China ya es el mayor productor de paneles solares del mundo.

Ambientalistas de todo el mundo están saludando esta decisión, señalando que cuando el gobierno chino hace tal anuncio, no es sólo una promesa vacía, un truco político o una lista de deseos. Esto significa que los planificadores económicos ya han sentado las bases y detallado cómo financiar un proyecto tan grande y desarrollar la infraestructura para llevar la energía donde se necesita.

Al mismo tiempo, China está en medio de una gran campaña para reducir sus industrias de carbón, acero y cemento. Se llama reforma estructural de la oferta. Luego de varias décadas de rápida industrialización, la tasa de crecimiento chino ha disminuido en los últimos años.

La industrialización trajo contaminación. Y ahora hay excedente de viviendas en algunas áreas, así como de materiales básicos como acero y cemento. Las mejoras tecnológicas también han hecho que algunas industrias se vuelvan redundantes.

En un sociedad capitalista como EUA, la redundancia de fuerzas productivas causa que los grandes inversores simplemente se alejen del problema, dejando áreas desindustrializadas. Y algunos de los asesores del mundo capitalista que impulsan más reformas de mercado en China, les han instado a hacer precisamente eso, especialmente porque las industrias involucradas son predominantemente empresas estatales.

¿Qué pasa con los mineros? ¿Los trabajadores del acero? Dejen de pensar en ellos. Dejen que el mercado lo ordene todo.

Pero aparece que el Partido Comunista y el gobierno chino no siguen estos consejos. Bajo la reforma estructural de la oferta, las industrias redundantes se están cerrando bajo un plan — sí, su sistema permite un plan integral de desarrollo económico — en la que todo el peso del gobierno insiste que haya formación laboral y un ingreso para todas/os los trabajadores afectados hasta que obtengan otro empleo. Al mismo tiempo, el plan general es crear nuevas industrias — como la inversión estatal en energía solar y eólica que abrirá 13 millones de empleos.

Es posible reorganizar la vida humana y la actividad económica para ser sustentable en este hermoso y único planeta. □

Trump, Rusia, y la Democracia: El enemigo está en casa

Por John Catalinotto

A medida que se acerca la toma de posesión del presidente electo, el movimiento popular opuesto a su programa reaccionario enfrenta una decisión política vital.

El primer paso importante para este movimiento es rechazar el intento de centrar la crítica del nuevo presidente en la supuesta “intervención externa” en las elecciones de EUA. La pregunta que enfrentan las/os activistas antirracistas y anti-guerra alineadas a la clase trabajadora, es cómo trabajar con este nuevo movimiento para evitar que sea desviado por fuerzas poderosas dentro del sistema capitalista en una dirección pro-militarista.

El movimiento surgió casi espontáneamente en reacción a la inesperada elección de Donald Trump. Abarca un amplio espectro de opiniones políticas, incluyendo partidarios de Hillary Clinton en la derecha, y los partidarios de Bernie Sanders, migrantes y activistas de Las Vidas Negras Importan, sindicalistas y otros más a la izquierda.

Si Clinton hubiera ganado, muchas de estas personas podrían haber permanecido pasivas y haber aceptado su presidencia. Que tengan miedo o enojo suficiente ahora para luchar contra Trump, sin embargo, proporciona una oportunidad que las fuerzas radicales de izquierda no deben ignorar.

La retórica del presidente electo, por sí sola, fomenta el racismo, la misoginia, la islamofobia y los ataques a inmigrantes. En alianza con el Congreso Republicano, amenaza los derechos reproductivos, los derechos LGBTT, la atención médica para las mujeres pobres y los pobres en general, la educación pública, la Seguridad Social, Medicare y los derechos de las/os trabajadoras a unirse a sindicatos; mientras que sus negadores climáticos atentan contra el medioambiente.

Intento de desviar el movimiento y atacar a Rusia

Cuando los dirigentes del Partido Demócrata, los medios de comunicación corporativos y las agencias de espionaje imperialistas enfocan los ataques contra el supuesto “hackeo ruso”, culpándolo por la pérdida de Clinton, esto permite a los demócratas evitar confrontar a los republicanos en estos otros temas. Son precisamente estas cuestiones las que conciernen a las/os trabajadoras de EUA y todas las per-

sonas oprimidas y por qué quieren luchar contra la nueva administración.

Al culpar a Rusia por su derrota, los líderes del Partido Demócrata, incluyendo Hillary Clinton, desvían al movimiento de sus propios fracasos. Los correos electrónicos publicados expusieron su sabotaje contra la campaña del más pro-obrero, Bernie Sanders. En el improbable caso de que por eso Clinton perdiera la elección, los demócratas son los responsables.

Pero los ataques contra Rusia son repetidos por liberales del establecimiento como Bill Moyers y por portavoces de grupos como Moveon.org que tienen un papel en la lucha contra Trump. Sus declaraciones anti-rusas imponen este tema al nuevo movimiento.

Las fuerzas más revolucionarias deben exponer la hipocresía detrás de la posición anti rusa y convencer al nuevo movimiento de oponerse al despliegue de tropas de la OTAN en la frontera rusa y al aumento de las sanciones económicas contra Rusia. Estos son pretextos para una nueva carrera armamentista.

Mire dentro de los Estados Unidos, no a Rusia, para ver por qué las elecciones son antidemocráticas. El sistema del Colegio Electoral, contra el cual los demócratas no han luchado, entregó las elecciones a Trump, a pesar de que Clinton tenía casi 3 millones de votos más.

Además, hay los obstáculos de votación que los republicanos han lanzado que excluyen a votantes afroamericanas/os y a ciudadanas/os naturalizados de EUA, a pobres, prisioneros, jóvenes y más personas que no tienen identificación “oficial”. A pesar de que los demócratas obtendrían la mayoría de esos votos, optaron por no dar batalla en estos temas. Los líderes demócratas saben que más votos de los pobres empujan la política electoral a la izquierda.

Algunas buenas señales

Afortunadamente, no sólo los medios revolucionarios—como Workers World-Mundo Obrero—están exponiendo la ofensiva anti rusa. Periodistas progresistas que tienen credibilidad histórica en este nuevo movimiento también están respondiendo.

El reportero investigador Robert Parry, que expuso muchas de las historias de Irán-Contra de los años 80, escribió un artículo el 13 de diciembre con el título “Hipocresía detrás del frenesí de la elección rusa”. (tinyurl.com/jyojlx).

Norman Solomon, cofundador de Roots-Action.org, escribió un artículo criticando a los medios progresistas que repetían acriticamente lo que las agencias de espionaje y los medios corporativos decían. Su titular fue “Urgente a los progresistas: dejen de alimentar el frenesí anti-Rusia” (tinyurl.com/ho9hc7h)

Sin embargo, líderes del Partido Demócrata continúan utilizando la ofensiva anti rusa para unirse a republicanos como los senadores John McCain y Lindsey Graham y todos los llamados neoconservadores que provocaron la agresión contra Irak, Afganistán, Libia y Siria en primer lugar. Esto incluye a Hillary Clinton.

Amenazan con acusar a Trump de traición. Para algunos esto parece una manera relativamente fácil de echarlo a un lado y unirse a un peligroso tren que levanta el espectro de una guerra nuclear. Esto debe ser combatido dentro del movimiento. No sólo Trump, sino el establecimiento demócrata tampoco promete nada a las/os amenazados por la nueva administración. La izquierda revolucionaria debe estar hombro a hombro con el pueblo contra el Trumpismo, y llevar a todas/os en el nuevo movimiento la lección de que su lucha debe permanecer independiente de ambos partidos capitalistas.

No sólo las fuerzas de Trump, sino también los líderes del Partido Demócrata son enemigos de las/os trabajadoras y los pueblos oprimidos en EUA y en el mundo. El enemigo está en casa. □

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

La tesis de este libro es que la crisis económica, que se inició en agosto de 2007, marcó un punto de inflexión en la historia del capitalismo. El autor sostiene que el sistema no se recuperará, no volverá al ciclo capitalista normal de auge y caída.

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



empleos” que hace que las cosas vayan aún peor.

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

El continuo estancamiento y el desempleo generalizado provocarán inevitablemente un resurgimiento de la lucha de clases que no se ve en EE.UU. desde la década de 1930; esta vez se dirigirá contra el propio sistema.