

#TimesUp Michigan State U.

Women condemn sex abuse culture

By Kris Balderas Hamel

Students marched on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich., on Jan. 26, demanding safety and accountability from university officials in the ever-widening sexual abuse and sexual assault scandal rocking the university.

The focus is now turning from Olympic gymnastics to MSU’s iconic and monied basketball and football programs and how accusations against student-athletes have been handled or mishandled by coaches and university officials.

Ingham County (Michigan) Circuit Court Judge Rosemarie Aquilina handed Larry Nassar his “death warrant” on Jan. 24, after seven days of heart-wrenching and powerful testimony from his victims. She sentenced the serial pedophile to 40 to 175 years in prison, to be served following Nassar’s 60-year term for federal child pornography convictions.

The rising tide of the #metoo and #timesup movement across the U. S. propelled the Nassar case into the national limelight. One after another, more than 150 young women, many of them Olympic champions, entered the courtroom to courageously confront their abuser, tell their story and demand justice from a system that failed them at every turn. (See Monica Moorehead’s Jan. 23 “Gymnasts bravely expose Nassar sexual abuse” at tinyurl.com/yc27va8h.)

Nassar was a sports physician at MSU for over 25 years. There he preyed on girls and young women, especially young gymnasts who were sent to him by USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic Committee. Girls as young as 6 were required to submit to physical examinations from Nassar, who used this as a way to cover up sexual abuse. Young women suffered at his hands for years, even after some had reported him to various authorities.

He was finally exposed in 2016 after

years of painstaking work and evidence collection by Rachael Denhollander, a gymnast survivor who became an attorney, coach and mother.

Following Nassar’s sentencing, Lou Anna K. Simon announced her resignation that day as MSU’s longtime president. Acceding to a demand from the USOC, the entire board of USA Gymnastics announced its resignation on Jan. 26.

Dominoes continue to fall

On Jan. 25, ESPN’s Outside the Lines reporters Paula Lavigne and Nicole Noren released a damning investigative report involving sexual assault allegations against several MSU Spartans football and basketball players. The report exposes a long history of “denial, inaction and information suppression” by MSU athletics officials and university leaders. (“OTL: Michigan State secrets extend far beyond Larry Nassar,” at espn.com)

MSU’s acclaimed Athletic Director Mark Hollis tendered his resignation the next day.

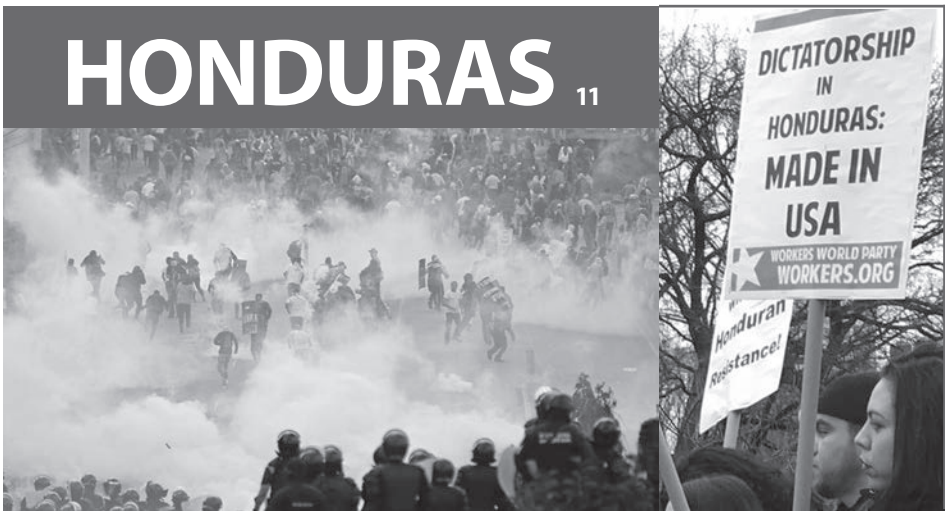
“Even MSU’s most-recognizable figures, football coach Mark Dantonio and basketball coach Tom Izzo, have had incidents involving their programs,” ESPN noted, including allegations leveled against 16 Spartans football players.

Dantonio has arrogantly denied any wrongdoing or cover-up and called the allegations “completely false.” Dantonio is the winningest coach in Spartans football history and was celebrated for his team’s comeback season in 2017 even after several players were expelled for sexual assault.

Despite mounting pressure, members of the statewide-elected MSU Board of Trustees, the university’s governing body, have refused to step down.

Meanwhile, the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Michigan


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Atlanta meeting shows solidarity with prison strikers

By Workers World Atlanta bureau

The Atlanta branch of Workers World Party sponsored a solidarity program with Florida’s striking prisoners on Jan. 19.

A packed house viewed a video produced by Critical Resistance entitled “Visions of Abolition,” which laid out the unsolvable ills of working-class concentration camps called U.S. prisons.

The audience then heard Panagioti Tsolkas from the Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons call in from Florida to describe the inhumane conditions under which thousands suffer in the state prisons and to urge support for their demands.

Next, there was a panel with Marilyn Winn, executive director of Women on the Rise, and Estrella Sánchez, a Mexican transwoman and immigrant. They described their own experiences in prison and detention centers. Moderator Devyn Springer led the discussion, which had both an emotional impact and also inspired the audience to take political action.

Dozens of people present pledged to participate in the national call-in day, Jan. 22, directed at the Florida Department of Corrections office of Julie L. Jones at 850-488-7480 to demand the end of slave labor and no retaliation against the strikers.



Atlanta, Jan. 19.

The multinational crowd included many students and youth, formerly incarcerated men and women, family members of prisoners and community activists engaged in prison abolition work.

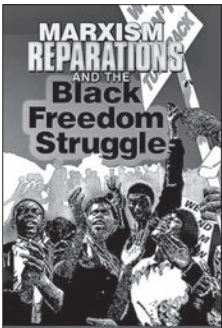
Earlier in the week, WWP members participated in the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. march with a banner that read “End Slave Labor! Smash White Supremacy! Support Striking Florida Prisoners!” They also distributed hundreds of flyers with the prisoners’ demands and a call for solidarity with the prison strike. □

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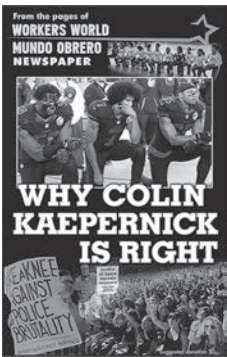


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WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper •

Downloadable at: workers.org/book/why-colin-kaepernick-is-right/



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

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

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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Bus drivers’ leader on Trump’s attacks on Haitians

WW correspondent Sam Ordóñez interviewed André François, president of the United Steelworkers, Local 8751, which represents the Boston and Randolph School bus drivers.

In December, the Department of Homeland Security

ended temporary protected status (TPS) for 59,000 Haitians. On Jan. 8, it announced ending TPS for 200,000 immigrants from El Salvador. TPS is granted to immigrants from countries suffering from natural disasters or civil wars.

Sam Ordóñez: How is the decision to end TPS affecting the Haitian community?

André François: It’s really alarming. A group of Haitians, after the earthquake, came here and got TPS, the temporary protective status, to stay here and since that time some of them went on to have children and build some kind of life for themselves. Some of them even bought houses and then have babies born here. If you tell them that you’re not gonna renew TPS for them, it’s devastating. It puts them at a big setback, let alone talking about deporting them, sending them home and breaking families.

You’re having people who are selling their belongings at a lower price just to liquidate them. Everybody is worried about what is what, what are they gonna do?

And home is not that good still. It’s even worse than after the earthquake. I’ve heard the president saying, “They no longer have hardship down there.” They have more hardship than ever!

Even with the new [Haitian] president in place and things seem to be going somewhat in order, you still have the famine, you still have a country with no work, with no infrastructure, with nothing. Some of the people actually would rather go to jail, because in jail they would have a meal, they would be safe.

We are good people, everybody knows that. We work hard. We have the greatest doctors, surgeons, just about in every state. If you go down to Boston Medical Center right now you’ll find a doctor named Doctor Larrieux, from Haiti. He’s one of the top surgeons in the country, graduated from Harvard, teaching the other doctors. He speaks the same Creole I speak. He came in here already old and with his knowledge.

I was a Dreamer without a green card. And I was given a chance and now I have become the president of a fairly large

AF: Let’s put it this way: We have 900 drivers here and 90 percent are Haitian. Out of the 90 percent, you may have a good 10 to 20 percent who may have TPS that we may not know about. From the earthquake in 2010 to now is almost eight years. We have like 300 to 400 people hired from 2010 until now, and maybe a good 100 of them might have TPS.

They’re not going to come out and tell you what they have. But as president of the union, I know a few that came to me confidentially and told me that they have this issue. And that’s going to be a problem for the city of Boston that has good, decent bus drivers picking up their kids, dropping off their kids, having a family, already situated.

The workforce is gonna lose that driver. They’re already short on drivers. It will be a sort of job action without us doing a job action as a union.

I think all this stems from the racism of the government, from the very top, like Donald Trump for example and his clan, the people around him, who surround him. Even recently the attacks on Haitian workers, right after he says that Haiti is a shithole country he came out with some more hatred, talking about banning, dismantling or disregarding all the programs that used to bring farmers and low-skill workers from Haiti. So this vendetta is not only racist, it’s inhuman.

[Author’s note: the Trump administration recently decided to remove Haiti from the list of countries eligible for H-2A and H-2B visas used for seasonal agricultural and low-skill work.]

SO: What is the union doing to build solidarity and to fight back against these decisions?

AF: Well, I personally went to a lot of rallies and a lot of protests, and demanded meetings. I was at the Statehouse not too long ago talking about DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals]

and TPS. So we fight against it, and we send some messages to the powers that be, down to Beacon Hill and down to the Statehouse. We write resolutions and we participate in all the meetings.

SO: How are workers in the bus yards and at the union meetings talking about these decisions? What kind of discussions are happening?

AF: We heard the rules, we heard what some of the lawyers are saying. We talked about how we can fight it in solidarity with other unions that have a significant amount of TPS workers as well and then do everything that we can do to correct that, to make this president think differently, to bring in some new laws or pass some resolutions that will permit these people to become permanent so they can continue to live in the society in this country in peace. That TPS actually breaks families, leaves people in fear, all kinds of problems.

SO: How can the broader community in Boston and the rest of the U.S. help win this fight? What can those of us who are citizens do to help fight against these attacks?

AF: It has to be some grassroots work, some grassroots where everybody, whether you’re a TPS holder, or a citizen or whatever, you come out and be involved. We need more networks, we need more outreach. Spread the word until everybody has that, y’know, old school stuff. Come out in full [support] in every demonstration and voice their opinion about how important it is for the government to extend TPS. Give the people not only an extension but permanent residency to stay in the country.

SO: The last thing I wanted to ask you about is the significance of the 1804 Movement that’s going on right now in New York.

AF: 1804 is the year of our independence. It was why you notice that every 1st of January that Haitian people are celebrating with squash soup, which was a delicacy for the slaves. The white folks would have the slaves cook the soup for them and then the slaves would not be

able to eat or drink from that soup. Better yet, they couldn’t even taste it to see if it was good. They had to grab the soup and give it to the white master and say, “Master, can you taste it to see if it’s good?” And they’d taste it and they’d say, “It’s alright, its good. We can have it. You can’t even taste it while you’re washing the dishes.”

So the slaves resolved they would make a movement to try to be independent, just like Malcolm X says, “By any means necessary.” Any means necessary for the slaves at that time was to burn the houses and decapitate their [masters’] heads.

In 1804, Haiti was the poorest place and the only one that took its independence and that was effective. The only ineffectiveness that was in it was that [the colonizers] left us with no resources, and instead of helping, they exploited the country, by getting all the mines and all the gold and all the resources the country had under the ground, above the ground, and then they didn’t help. They want to leave the country instead of repairing it. So it’s that demand for reparations that would be doing something for Haiti.

So 1804 can come back again, and we’ll let them know that it will come back again. There’s some more of the same 1804 folks still around and we’ve got a lot more where that came from. So Trump better know that we’re not gonna lay down and take his attacks like that.

The other day, I was in a meeting with the CEO of Boston Public Schools. I told him, given the number of Haitians we have in the city driving school buses, I already alerted all the parents that we’re not happy about what Trump’s talking about, and Trump’s decision on TPS, and a whole bunch of other issues, particularly that thing that Trump talks about the “shithole countries.”

Trump might create, in essence, his own work action, his own strike, because if everybody is doing something to respond to him, and to go after him about TPS, we’re going to be participating. We’re gonna participate real big. □

Fighting racism in February 2018, Black History Month, means starting at the top and denouncing the openly racist, white supremacist in the White House. It means opposing and exposing the bigot-in-chief’s racist policies, like ramping up Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids on 7/11 stores all around the country and deporting Haitian and Salvadoran workers after slandering them and the entire African continent in vulgar terms.

Workers World makes a big deal of Black History Month because racism permeates and corrodes every aspect of life in this country today. Everything, from fighting for living-wage jobs to ending mass incarceration, to having affordable housing and decent schools, is rooted in the centuries-long struggle to end this country’s brutal history of slavery and racism.

That’s why every month, not just Black History Month, this newspaper chronicles the struggles of African Americans

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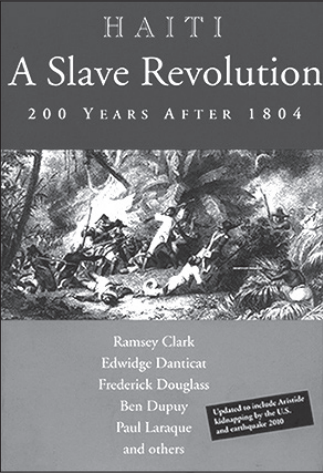
to eradicate institutionalized racism, root and branch. Like the work stoppage in Florida prisons and the Black youth murdered by police, whose crimes are not brought to justice. Like Workers World Party members in Durham, N.C., last August when they took matters into their own hands and toppled the statue of a Confederate soldier in response to the neo-Nazi, KKK rampage in Charlottesville, Va., that injured dozens and killed a courageous anti-racist protester.

WW bases our weekly coverage of the ongoing Black struggle here and our coverage of the struggles in Africa to throw off imperialist chains on the principle of self-determination: that oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms

of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary.

If you appreciate such coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. We established it in 1977 so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to make qualitative, revolutionary change that crushes capitalism and fights for socialism.

For a donation of at least \$75 a year — and much more if you can — members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks (either monthly or once a year) to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org/donate/; it’s easy to set up monthly deductions. Know that we’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □



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Railroad workers acquitted in mega-disaster

By Stephen Millies

Forty-seven people were killed when a runaway train with 72 oil tank cars crashed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, Canada, on July 6, 2013. The resulting fires and six explosions leveled the small city’s downtown area. Several other victims’ bodies were never found; it’s thought they were vaporized by the extreme heat. A jury in Sherbrooke, Quebec, found three railroad employees not guilty of criminal negligence on Jan. 19. They were engineer Tom Harding and rail traffic controller (train dispatcher) Richard Labrie, members of the United Steelworkers, and Jean Demaitre, a management employee.

“Everybody I talked to said they were scapegoats,” said former Lac-Mégantic resident Jean-Guy Rancour. (Montreal Gazette, Jan. 20) So who are the real culprits?

Engineer Harding was the only person handling the train. The railroad’s cheap-skate CEO Ed Burkhardt had eliminated conductors on his Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway. So besides operating a locomotive, Harding had to ensure that a sufficient number of hand brakes were applied on the 72 tank cars.

An engineer is supposed to “tie-down” a nearly mile-long train containing thousands of tons of volatile oil without any assistance.

According to the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, the lead locomotive hauling the 72 cars that ran away in Lac-Mégantic shouldn’t have been in service.

Ten days after the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, safety agency Transport Canada banned one-person train crews. This was

a confession that the agency had tolerated an unsafe condition.

The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration is running into resistance from the Association of American Railroads for enacting a similar rule in the U.S. The AAR President Edward R. Hamberger declared that “the simple fact is that no data exist showing two-person crews will enhance safety.” (AAR release, Aug. 15, 2016)

Try telling that to the families in Lac-Mégantic whose loved ones were burned alive.

‘A bomb train’

Oil trains have been trouble since Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller demanded rebates on his competitors’ shipments, targeting the Vanderbilts and other railroad moguls.

Back in 1888, the Pennsylvania Railroad’s general freight agent told the Interstate Commerce Commission that carrying oil in tank cars “is the most undesirable business we do.” The manager described a fire involving tank cars in New Brunswick, N.J., causing \$800,000 in damages. That’s millions of dollars in today’s money. (“Wealth Against Commonwealth” by Henry Demarest Lloyd)

The 72 tank cars entrusted to a one-person crew came from the Bakken Formation oil fields in North Dakota and included chemicals used for fracking. This made the crude oil as volatile as gasoline. It was virtually a bomb train that barreled into Lac-Mégantic at 65 mph.

Fracking injects dangerous chemicals into the water table. This guarantees that these chemicals mixed with crude oil will make it dangerous to transport by any method.

Promoters of the Dakota Access Pipe-

line have used the Lac-Mégantic tragedy to justify trespassing on Indigenous Sioux land. But pipelines leak and explode, too.

None of this bothers bigot in chief Trump, who was lavishly backed by frackers like billionaire Harold Hamm.

Oil not the only danger

U.S. railroads transport 80 percent of all dangerous chemicals.

A Norfolk Southern train hauling chorine and other chemicals derailed in Graniteville, S.C., on Jan. 6, 2005; the released poison gas killed 10 people. That train was operating in what railroaders call “dark territory” — track without wayside signals. Only a small switch target warned engineer Christopher Seeling too late that the track was misaligned for a factory siding. Signals save lives, but profits come first to the railroad brass.

The train that crashed in Lac-Mégantic was in “dark territory” too. Rail traffic controller Richard Labrie had no idea that a runaway train was going down a steep grade into the Quebec town. If a signal was tripped, Labrie would have given a warning that could have saved lives.

The Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway was originally a mainline of the Canadian Pacific that opened in 1889. This last link in that transcontinental system connected Montréal with Saint John, New Brunswick.

But like North American railroads, the Canadian Pacific sold off its less-profitable lines. They were often gobbled up by vultures like Ed Burkhardt who run them into the ground. By the time of the Lac-Mégantic disaster, stretches of the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway were limited to 25 mph or slower.

Why isn’t Burkhardt in jail?

Burkhardt is an ex-Chicago & North

Western railroad executive who picked up most of the Soo Line’s tracks in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan in 1987 and renamed it the Wisconsin Central. Workers were fired and the railroad was run as a non-union outfit until railroaders voted for union representation in 1997. (joc.com, July 21, 1997)

Lac-Mégantic isn’t the only town where Burkhardt brought disaster. A one-crew Wisconsin Central 34-car train derailed in Weyauwega, Wis., on March 4, 1996. The railroad track was found to have numerous defects. Fourteen of the cars were filled with propane or liquefied petroleum. The resulting fire burned for two weeks and forced 1,700 residents to flee. Fortunately, no one was killed. (Reuters, July 21, 2013)

This rotten safety record didn’t stop Burkhardt from taking over railroads in Tasmania and New Zealand, the British rail freight system and the former Canadian Pacific line in Quebec and Maine. Neither did it stop the industry organ “Railway Age” from naming this union-buster one of its 1999 “Railroaders of the Year.”

But Ed Burkhardt is chump change compared to Warren Buffett, the third richest person on earth, whose fortune is estimated at \$78 billion, says Forbes magazine. Buffett controls the 32,000-mile-long BNSF Railway Company. The billionaire bragged in his 2016 Berkshire Hathaway annual report that railroad employment has dropped 86 percent in the U.S. since 1947. More than a million jobs were destroyed.

Working and poor people need to take over the railroads from all the Burkhardts and Buffetts.

Millies is a retired Amtrak block operator and train dispatcher and a member of the Transportation Communications International Union and the American Train Dispatchers Association.

Women say NO to Zionism

The following joint statement from the International Action Center and Workers World Party in Los Angeles was issued concerning the women's march there on Jan. 20.

In Los Angeles, Workers World Party and the International Action Center, in solidarity with Palestinian organizations here and the established and growing boycott of the event, will not be attending the Jan. 20 Women’s March. The two organizations will, however, be attending women’s marches in other areas around the country.

Here in Los Angeles, march organizers chose to invite Scarlett Johansson as a featured speaker. Given the escalation of attacks on the Palestinian people — from the planned moving of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, to the added child abuse with the state of Israel imprisoning of 16-year-old Ahed Tamimi (recently denied bail), and the dangerous escalation of violence against Palestinians encouraged by the Trump administration — it is a direct slap in the face to Palestinian people and especially Palestinian women, in addition to anyone who believes in basic human rights, to feature a pro-Zionist speaker who in reality acts as a spokesperson for the racist, apartheid, occupying state of Israel.

Johansson, disregarding protests, continued to be the face of the advertising campaign of SodaStream, which produced its product in an illegal settlement built on land stolen from Palestinians in the West Bank. The humanitarian group Oxfam forced Johansson to step down after she had been working with the charity for eight years, due to her commitment to SodaStream. In addition, Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Johansson for her stance against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement’s campaign for Palestinian rights.

For this reason, Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, and PAWA, the Palestinian American Women’s Association, have chosen to boycott this year’s women’s march in Los Angeles, since it obviously does not reflect the concerns of marginalized or oppressed women, especially in regards to Palestinian women.

It is unfortunate that we will be unable to do outreach during the march to most of the attendees, who will be there for the right reasons. However, it is more important to stand with those who are targeted by a specific oppression and take their lead, especially when it has the chance to expose and reject reactionary actions that discourage unity.

The actions of the organizers — inviting a celebrity with wide reach and who supports Israel’s oppression — is most disunifying to the women’s movement. Any movement that denies the most oppressed is a fractured movement, and must be challenged.

We remain forever in solidarity with Palestine, along with the many progressive women, LGBTQ, Black, Brown, Asian, white and Jewish voices against U.S. imperialism, the apartheid state of Israel and racism.

Rebecca Jackson, Workers World Party Maggie Vascassenno, International Action Center

Women condemn sex abuse culture

Continued from page 1

attorney general’s office are among the official entities that have announced investigations of MSU’s handling of the rampant sexual abuse by Nassar that went unnoticed and unchecked for over 25 years.

WW in 2010 on MSU sexual assaults

The ESPN report includes an account of allegations brought by a student in late August 2010 that she had been raped by two members of the basketball team. The team’s coach Izzo is a Hall of Fame member who has taken the Spartans seven times to the NCAA Final Four.

At the time, Workers World covered the struggle at MSU led by the Coalition Against Sexual Violence, which fought to bring justice to the victim and create a safer environment on campus.

In “Activists protest handling of rape charges” published Oct. 21, 2010, MSU alum and then-student activist Megan Spencer wrote:

“The university administration has failed to suspend or expel the players from MSU, and has not even released a statement condemning the assault. In addition, Residence Life, the department in charge of on-campus housing, has failed to remove the players from their dorm

room, further endangering women at MSU. Neither the director of MSU’s Athletic Department, Mark Hollis, nor men’s basketball coach Tom Izzo has commented publicly on the assault.

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

Coalition members were harassed and threatened at the time for daring to expose what was going on with the distinguished men’s basketball team. A Spartans player yelled “F**k you, b**ch!” at the activists as they protested at an athletic parade. A banner drop (“Rape is a Crime”) inside the Breslin Center resulted in students being manhandled, cursed at and ejected from the premises. (See WW articles at tinyurl.com/ycnorogw and tinyurl.com/y8ur27wd.)

If MSU had acted properly in response to the coalition’s charges, years of additional harassment and assaults could have been prevented. □

New York City Free Ravi, free Jean!

BULLETIN: The New Sanctuary Movement announced Jan. 29 that “After weeks of unrelenting community mobilization, Judge Katherine Forrest ruled this morning that ICE denied Ravi Ragbir due process by detaining him in his routine check in on Jan. 11. That means Ravi will get to fight his ongoing case from home rather than from behind bars in detention. The fight is not over. This ruling only affects Ravi’s detention, not his pending deportation. ...Today’s decision is proof that organizing and the power of community will ultimately set us free. That’s why we must keep up the fight for the thousands of people facing the same racist, unjust, and escalating treatment from ICE every day.” Ragbir was returned to New York and freed from custody Jan. 30. Ragbir still faces deportation on Feb. 10.

On the morning of Jan. 27, nearly 100 people protested outside the Immigration and Custom Enforcement office at 26 Federal Plaza in New York City to support Ravi Ragbir, an immigrant rights leader from Trinidad who is head of the New Sanctuary Coalition of New York, and Jean Montrevil from Haiti. Both were arrested by ICE agents earlier in January. U.S. Reps. Nydia Velázquez and

Yvette Clarke from Brooklyn spoke at the rally in support of the two prisoners.

Ragbir is being detained in the Bronx and has another hearing scheduled for Jan. 29, at which another demonstration is planned. Montrevil has already been deported to Haiti, where he is fighting for his freedom. The slogan for the demonstration was “Build bridges, not walls.”

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden



‘We honor these political POWs’



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

NYC dinner

Jan. 27 — The daughters of Russell Maroon Shoatz, Jericho visitors of Jalil Muntaqim, Sundiata Acoli’s attorney, the International Concerned Friends and Families of Mumia Abu-Jamal and others filled the hall at tonight’s 22nd Annual Dinner Tribute to the Families of Our Political Prisoners/POWs at the Unitarian Church of All Souls in Manhattan. The dinner paid homage to these prisoners and their families, such as those of the MOVE 9, by collecting funds for the prisoners’ commissary accounts.

The Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and the National Alumni Association of the Black Panther Party sponsored the event. The cultural performances and tributes showed determination and unity. The group recognized, “Those who

spread the word: our revolutionary griots,” referring to Black journalists and artists who are imprisoned for having gone out of their way to expose the racist injustice of U.S.-held political prisoners.

Malcolm X Commemoration Committee chairperson Dequi Kioni Sadiqi honored the following people, along with the prisoners themselves: Nayaba Arinde, New York Amsterdam News; Basir Mchawi, Education at the Crossroads; Sally O’Brien, Where We Live/WBAI radio; photographer Solwazi Afi Olusola and performing artist Ngoma. Discussing Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, Sadiqi called for support for the “many who have now been locked down for over four decades.”

— Anne Pruden

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

LA Times writers vote union after 136 years

The Los Angeles Times has a long history of viciously anti-union ownership going back 136 years. What started as a campaign among journalists over workplace grievances, like gender pay inequities and a unilateral change in vacation time in 2016, evolved into broader concerns about the paper’s direction, the newsroom’s editorial independence and competence of top management. Staffers were also upset by the Tronc media company’s lavish compensation plan for executives, which increased 80 percent in 2017, while journalists were told there wasn’t money for raises.

Support for unionizing grew in August when Tronc fired top Times editorial leadership, prompting concerns over who would replace them. LA Times CEO and publisher Ross Levinsohn, known for his “frat-house” behavior, didn’t help. (Tronc announced immediately after the vote that Levinsohn was on a leave of absence; he has since been replaced.)

After the union drive was launched publicly in October, the paper’s ownership mounted what staffers called a “condescending” campaign, which, “in its oafishness and ineptitude,” included frequent emails urging work-

ers not to unionize. Staffers told HuffPost that “management’s aggressive anti-union posture flipped more votes in favor of unionizing.” The writers “got sick of being talked down to, as if they weren’t journalists.”

When votes were tallied Jan. 19 by the National Labor Relations Board, the results were 248 to 44 for representation by the Washington, D.C.-based NewsGuild-CWA (Communication Workers). “Having a union won’t stop layoffs, but [with] a collective voice the days of the newsroom passively standing by while corporate management did whatever they wanted are over,” Times reporter Bettina Boxall told HuffPost. (Jan. 19)

West Coast drivers fight ‘the Wal-Mart of school bus transport companies’

School bus drivers in Seattle and now Glendale, Calif., are facing a goliath: the First Student Corporation’s global headquarters are in Britain. Teamsters Local 174 in Seattle, which represents 400 drivers in King County, held a one-day unfair labor practices strike on Nov. 29. They voted down a unilaterally imposed contract with no pension terms and a substandard health care plan, which even the company admitted does not meet minimum coverage under the Affordable Care Act. No wonder the workers call the company “the Wal-Mart of the school bus transport companies.” (teamsters174.net, Jan. 6)

In Glendale, drivers, represented by Teamsters Local 572, are entrusted to transport special needs students in three regional school districts. But these buses often lack working radios or public address systems, which are critical if a student has a seizure. When First Student refused to offer terms for better pay and health benefits, a guaranteed hourly pay rate and safer conditions — both in the bus yard and on the buses themselves — the local

called the unfair labor practices strike Jan. 18. First Student has not come to the table since the strike began.

But solidarity is spreading. The Seattle Educators Association pledged to have a solidarity walkout, and in union spirit, the Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers Local 8751, passed a resolution and donated \$500 to Teamsters Local 174. Applause to those donating, walking out and showing solidarity against this conniving company.

S.C. port truckers win union victory

Some 53 short-haul drivers at South Carolina truck company Container Maintenance Corporation voted to join Teamsters Local 509 in mid-December. These workers haul container cargo between the Port of Charleston and the rail yard in North Charleston. Last August, the company changed workers’ pay from hourly to meritocracy-based “production”; then it cut their pay. As worker Reggie McQueen recounts, he applied for a home loan, but when the underwriter called the company, it was told he was just a “production worker” with no verifiable income. So McQueen’s loan was rejected. That motivated the workers to contact Local 509.

As Teamsters, the workers will be able to negotiate a package of pay and benefits that supports their families. And this victory “will pave the way for many others at the Charleston ports,” said Local 509 President James Todd in a Jan. 1 Teamster release. This victory is the fourth recent win by Teamsters at goods transport companies coast to coast in the past five months! Port drivers — both those misclassified as independent contractors and those who are employees — are driven down by low wages and unpredictable income. But they are fighting back against a system rigged by the capitalist bosses. (Payday Report, Dec. 15) Lesson learned: When bosses attack, the only retort is to fight back and organize! ☐

Durham People’s Tribunal: the state ‘guilty as hell’

By LeiLani Dowell
Durham, N.C.

Following on the heels of the dropping of felony charges on Jan. 11 for eight Durham activists who tore down a Confederate statue in August, Durham community members and activists held a People’s Tribunal on Jan. 13 to put the state on trial. This dynamic and creative event allowed survivors of the state’s racist violence to speak their truth and be affirmed in it, while exposing the injustices of the state.

The following charges were brought against former North Carolina Speaker of the House and current U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper, Durham Sheriff Mike Andrews, Durham District Attorney Roger Echols and President Donald Trump:

- Conspiracy and Obstruction of Justice — to unjustly thwart the will of the people and uphold white supremacy
- Collusion with Special Interests — to profit off the misery of communities of color and poor and working-class people
- Negligent and Serial Homicide — in public jails and detention centers
- Real Crimes Against the People — racism, poverty, homelessness, choosing profit over people.

Loan Tran, one of the day’s judges and a member of Workers World Party, opened the event stating: “We hold this tribunal not as an affirmation of the state nor its laws; we hold this tribunal to expose a system which considers borders to be legal, police killings to be legal, prisons and jails to be legal, but all of which are only legal because they enable this system to harm our people without having to answer to our people.”

George Roberson, who moved to Durham after his grandfather was killed by the Ku Klux Klan, testified on how it felt as a kid to walk by the Confederate monument on his way to court. “My heart sunk when I looked at the statue,” Roberson declared.

The Tribunal was held at CityWell, a church that has offered sanctuary to Samuel Oliver-Bruno, a Mexican immigrant who has been fighting a deportation order since December. Judge Tran urged the audience to call N.C. Rep. G. K. Butterfield to demand that every space be a sanctuary space.

Takiyah Thompson, one of the eleven people arrested in conjunction with the tearing down of the Confederate statue, noted that, after World War II, all sym-

bols related to Nazism were removed in Europe. Similarly, she asserted, the monument that stood outside the old Durham courthouse was a symbol of hate.

However, Thompson also called removing symbols of racism only a “first step. The masses have to be re-educated ... When symbols of white supremacy are removed, we must also work to remove the ideology that supports these institutions.”

Vivid testimony

Muffin, an abolitionist, All of Us or None member and director of Participatory Defense in Durham, testified that, in 2014, she was pulled over for a broken taillight and then arrested for a crime she didn’t commit. With bail at \$30,000, Muffin sat in a Durham jail for 61 days, causing her to lose her job and housing voucher. When she was exonerated and released, Muffin and her kids found themselves homeless.

“At that point I realized that I didn’t want to do the job I went to school for — being a probation officer, an overseer. There are people sitting in Durham county jail who have not committed a crime,

who are only there because they can’t pay the ransom,” Muffin declared.

At the end of the first panel, Judge Helena Cragg, director of the LGBT Center of Durham, thanked each witness for taking the time to give their testimony and experience.

Opening the second half of the event, Jose Romero of the Defend Durham crew presented a long list of names of those murdered by police just that week. He then read one of his own poems, entitled “Sanctuary,” and Martín Espada’s poem, “Imagine the Angels of Bread.”

Mikisa Thompson asserted, as the child of Jamaican immigrants, that “we are not from shithole countries. America still doesn’t recognize its own borders; colonization and plantationism are still rampant, just with another name.”

Regarding the Confederate statue, Thompson stated: “My values tell me that I’m worthy, you’re worthy, it doesn’t matter where you’re from. You’re valuable, no matter who’s in charge.”

Speaking on behalf of Felicia Arriaga, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at Duke Uni-



Durham anti-racist activists outside county courthouse on Jan. 11.

WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

Artists drop banners for Palestine Atlanta

A collective of artists in Atlanta on Jan. 25 dropped several 12-by-20 foot banners in solidarity with Palestine over busy freeway bridges. One banner also addressed Atlanta’s gentrification problem, while another demanded an end to the GILEE (Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange) program which trains Atlanta police officers in apartheid Israel.

— Report and photos by Devyn Springer



Nursing home workers hold strike



MLK Day in Chicago

What better way to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy than by striking against exploitative working conditions? This is what the nursing home workers of Veracare Nursing Home in Burbank, Ill., did on Jan. 15. The striking

workers, union organizers, and dozens of supporters gathered and picketed, calling on owner Israel Davis to cease his illegal labor practices and to negotiate a fair contract. In photo, Veracare worker Sharon Lake speaks on why she decided to strike.

— Report and photo by Andi Shihadeh

Philly groups protest cop checkpoints at women’s march

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Tens of thousands marched Jan. 20 in Philadelphia on the national day of protest for women’s rights and against current attacks by the Trump administration. The local march had the theme of “We Resist, We Persist, We Rise!” in solidarity with the growing movement against sexual harassment and abuse.

After a short march, participants rallied at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Among the anti-Trump signs were a smattering of pro-DACA and immigrant rights, Black Lives Matter and other signs calling for more diversity and inclusion.

The nonprofit Philly Women Rally, Inc., which organized the 2017 and 2018 rallies, includes a number of members connected to local Democratic Party chapters. In 2017, they were criticized for not taking more steps to address the special oppression of Black and Brown women.

This year the group made matters worse by announcing that police would set up checkpoints through which all participants would have to enter, all bags would be checked, and all attendees would be subject to search by police.

This collaboration with police prompted a call to boycott the march from many individuals and groups advocating for people of color, transgender women and other marginalized groups. Johanna James, co-organizer with the Womanist Working Collective, said the police presence invites “trauma on our already traumatized people. Inviting them into that space ultimately means you’re not taking our feelings concerning them into any sort of consideration.” (philly.com, Jan. 19)

Organizers issue open letter

The Womanist Working Collective, the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, Black Lives Matter Philly, Galaei, REAL Justice, the Women’s Fightback Net-

work-Philadelphia and Workers World Party/Mundo Obrero-Philadelphia wrote an open letter to rally organizers, circulated via social media and distributed at the march.

The statement read in part: “Their decision to collaborate with the police, an arm of the state which notoriously oppresses and terrorizes people of color, disregards the impact of this decision on women of color and other marginalized attendees. ... Involving the police in a protest ostensibly meant to empower women flies in the face of everything we know and understand about oppression and the struggles against oppression. It is further wholly unnecessary. ...

“From historic experience, police are more likely to harass or attack protesters than to offer any protection. This was particularly clear when police did nothing to stop white supremacists who brutally attacked demonstrators and even killed a protester in Charlottesville, Va.,

in August 2017. ...

“At the end of the day, police presence makes every marginalized group, including women, unsafe. In order to combat the violence that police enact by merely existing, part of fighting for the liberation of ALL women means a call to abolish police and prisons, which get away with heinous crimes against women every day.”

This statement and publicity for a boycott pressured city officials and rally organizers to back down. Their proposed checkpoints were nonexistent on the morning of the march. Even organizer Emily Cooper Morse, who in a conversation with this writer prior to the march argued for tight security, stated at the rally: “We are fighting for women’s rights, especially in communities that are marginalized the most.” Her daughter held a sign that read, “‘The most neglected person in America is the Black Woman.’ — Malcolm X.” (philly.com, Jan. 21) □



versity, Raul Jimenez testified on collaboration between local police and Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

Christopher Brazil, a security contractor for the Defend Durham crew, described his arrest for charges in relation to an Aug. 20 counterprotest on the day that the Ku Klux Klan announced they would march through Durham: “I’ve been served with charges ... when I was there to protect the people from white supremacy.”

Elijah Pryor, a local Durham community member present at the Aug. 18 uprising, jailed for 90 days before charges were dropped, testified that defending Durham is “personal for me. I found a picture of my great-grandfather, who was a slave. ... It gave me something to fight for.”

Rafiq Zaidi, a local community organizer with the Inside-Outside Alliance and a former political prisoner, told the arrestees: “What you have stood up for in pulling down that statue, those of us my age, 74, we have been waiting for you. The time is now for us to stand up.”

After hearing all the testimony, Workers World Party member Qasima Wide-man directed the audience to form groups to discuss the verdicts and plan actions to bring the guilty to justice.

Finally, the jury, which had been given signs that read “guilty” on one side and “guilty as hell” on the other, were asked to cast their verdict by raising their signs. The crowd unanimously held up the “guilty as hell” signs, chanting, “The people have decided!” □

Anniversary of U.S. invasion of Hawai’i marked

By Dolores Cox

Native Hawaiians commemorated the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai’i on Jan. 17 in Honolulu. It was on that date in 1893 that Western business owners and “missionary descendants,” aided by the U.S. military, toppled Queen Lili’uokalani, the last sovereign monarch. Two years later, she was imprisoned within the Iolani Palace when a rebellion failed to reseal her.

Thousands of people marked the solemn occasion by marching from the Royal Mausoleum at Manua Ala to the palace. Marchers included people from throughout Hawai’i, including grassroots communities, trustees, children and politicians. Hawaiians rallied at the palace and reflected on the overthrow and its impact on Hawai’i and Native Hawaiians.

Professor Noelani Goodyear-Kaopua, from the University of Hawai’i, stated: “It’s a celebration, because we’re still here, because we still remember Lili’uokalani, because we are still proud of her, of who we are as Hawaiians. We focus on ... Queen Lili’uokalani [and] that she’s an amazing hero, an amazing model of what it means to be a dignified and gracious head of state for a ... neutral country, that sought to have friendly relations throughout the world, that gave a home to people of multiple ethnicities that wanted to be here at a time when in other countries, they were enslaved.” (khon2.com, Jan. 17)

“Reflection also came with a mission

to educate the public about the history of the overthrow, encourage unity and leadership among Native Hawaiians, and support civic engagement in the Hawaiian community,” observed Jenn Boneza, in her khon2.com article that day.

‘Display of unity’

Boneza’s report also quoted Trish Kehaulani Watson, a rally organizer: “This is just an amazing display of unity. We want the people of Hawaii to know that, to know that our culture is powerful, that our history is important.” Regarding the weekend’s false-alarm missile scare, she said: “After this weekend’s events, more than ever, I think people realize the importance of family, the importance of life, the value of life, and at the end of the day, it’s all about love. It’s all about aloha. The Hawaiian kingdom stood for and means what people love most. It’s all about our children.”

Professor Jon Osorio stated: “We mourn the taking of the government in 1893. Hawaiians have not given up our identities. It is clear that our culture, not just our language, not just our arts, but our essential character as a people, these things have all survived. Our sovereignty is more alive and more potent than ever.” (Hawaii News Now, Jan. 17)



Queen Lili’uokalani

The same article reported that Hawai’i’s former Gov. John Waihee said: “I felt a lot of pride and a lot of aloha for everybody around me. It’s about a moment in history that was extremely painful for our people. At least one day a year, we should be able to reverse it.”

During the ceremony, the Hawaiian flag was raised above the palace at the same time of day it was taken down during the overthrow. The rally then continued at Queen Lili’uokalani’s statue near the state Capitol. It coincided with the state legislature’s opening day.

Congress formally apologized for the U.S. role in the overthrow 100 years later with a resolution during Clinton’s presidency. It said: “Whereas, it is proper and timely for the Congress on the occasion of the impending 100th anniversary of the event, to acknowledge the historic significance of the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai’i, to express its deep regret to the Native Hawaiian people.” (Hawaii News Now)

Native Hawaiians have long challenged the “legality” of the kingdom’s overthrow and rightfully say the U.S. annexation in 1898 was illegal.

Additional source: Honolulu Star Advertiser (Jan. 17)

A victory against white supremacy

By Tom Suille
Buffalo, N.Y.

A national demonstration against racism and Ku Klux Klan terror was held in front of Buffalo City Hall on Jan. 15, 1981. For months the African-American community had been terrorized by racist killings. Six African-American men were murdered and several more attacked. Two of the men had their hearts cut out of their bodies.

On Dec. 4, 1980, the Nazi Party of Western New York announced that it planned to hold a rally on City Hall steps on Martin Luther King’s birthday, Jan. 15. They called for 100 white men with guts.

Almost immediately, anti-racist forces began to mobilize. A press conference by anti-racist organizations on Dec. 18 called for a massive, visible and vocal protest at the same location. Endorsers included Buffalo Against Racism, Peoples Commission Against Racist Violence in Buffalo, National Black Human Rights Coalition, Workers World Party and many others. A press release issued a week later listed a broad range of local and national endorsers.

For three weeks the city administration, led by arch-racist Mayor James Griffin, said nothing. Faced with the potential of a united anti-racist action, the mayor banned both rallies.

Progressive organizers saw through the mayor’s ploy as being directed against anti-racists. No one was surprised by this. Griffin had been elected in 1977, defeating progressive African-American



State Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve. Griffin had been endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan, an endorsement that he never repudiated.

Just as fascists now are emboldened by the Donald Trump presidency, fascists at that time were emboldened in Buffalo by the Griffin administration and nationally by the recent electoral victory of Ronald Reagan, who as president would

soon begin an all-out attack on workers.

Faced with strong anti-racist organizing, the local media viciously violence-baited and red-baited the anti-racist action, and counterprotesters were threatened with arrest. When it became clear that organizers were not deterred, the city organized a rally at a separate location several blocks away, billed as a rally to “honor Dr. King.” This was the first and last time the city has sponsored such an event.

Anti-racist organizers would not be deterred from opposing the Nazis head-on. They were more determined than ever to drive them out of Buffalo. When it became clear that anti-Nazi organizers wouldn’t back down, the city blinked and lifted the ban, but the violence-baiting and red-baiting continued until the last moment.

On Jan. 15, 2,000 local and out-of-town demonstrators confronted three Nazis, who were protected by a wall of police. Participants came from cities across the Northeast and East Coast. Organizers also came from around the country, some staying for a month to help. Some 60,000 leaflets were distributed in harsh winter weather.

While it was clear that some 2,000 people attended the rally, as reported especially by the international press, the Buffalo News changed its count from 2,000 in the day’s first edition to only 400 in the final edition.

Progressives and revolutionaries — and our class enemies — have never forgotten this historic anti-racist victory. In the years since then, the Nazis several times have tried to rear their ugly heads, only to be vehemently beaten down. □

#J20 in Portland, Ore.



More than 1,000 demonstrators marched Jan. 20 in downtown Portland, Ore., blocking a major four-lane street and protesting a year of Donald Trump’s racist, misogynist, white supremacist policies. They danced alongside a marching band, yelling rhythmic chants, including “Get up! Get down! There’s a peo-

ple’s movement in this town!” and “From Palestine to the Philippines, stop the U.S. war machine! From Honduras to the Philippines, stop the U.S. war machine!” Workers World Party members joined the strong International League of People’s Struggle contingent.

— Report and photo by Lyn Neeley

Turkey invades Syria to save U.S. war

By Joe Mshahwar

Jan. 27 — While shelling the Syrian Democratic Forces-occupied Afrin district in Syria, Turkey announced Jan. 19 the beginning of “Operation Olive Branch.” This ironically named operation is an open-ended aggression on Syrian territory with broad aims to take land from the U.S.-backed SDF. Turkey claims the SDF, and their leading Kurdish force the People’s Protection Units or YPG, pose an existential threat to Turkish national security.

The shelling was followed by airstrikes and an invasion of anti-government contras/mercenaries with the support of Turkey’s military. More SDF-occupied areas have reportedly been shelled in various parts of Northern Syria. Reports vary heavily on the scale and success of this operation so far.

Operation Olive Branch has been a long time coming. Turkey has raised so-called national security threats for years. January’s aggression was preceded by and built off of Operation Euphrates Shield in the neighboring Azaz and Al-Bab districts of Aleppo province in 2016. Turkey used a parallel strategy then, with the Turkish armed forces operating as an auxiliary force to the contras it was backing.

Turkey seized land from Daesh, which it occupies to this day. It appears that Turkey seeks to merge these areas into a contra-occupied protectorate across swaths of Northern Syria. This is NATO’s new strategy to rescue the nearly defeat-

ed counterrevolutionary forces they have relied on to wage war against Syria. It also serves to buy time for longterm maneuvering in the region and to prolong the war, further destroying Syria.

The statements out of Syria and its primary ally Iran confirm this perspective. Syria’s President Bashar Al-Assad said in an official statement, “The brutal Turkish aggression on the Syrian town of Afrin cannot be separated from the Turkish regime’s policy from the first day of Syria’s crisis, which was essentially built on supporting terrorism and terrorist organizations, whatever their names.” (presstv.com, Jan. 21)

Bahram Qassemi, a spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, underlined that the “continued crisis in Afrin can strengthen the Takfiri-terrorist groups in Northern Syria again and will ignite again the fire of war and destruction in the country.” (farsnews.com, Jan. 21)

Junior partner to U.S. imperialism

On the surface, Turkey’s escalating aggression in Syria is being portrayed by the bourgeois press, as well as Turkish and U.S. government officials, as a “contradiction” because of U.S. strategic support for the SDF.

A lot of fuss was made over U.S. statements that it was creating a 30,000-strong “border security force” comprised of the SDF in Syria. Turkey condemned the plan and the U.S. publicly backpedaled on this supposed strategy. (washingtonpost.com, Jan. 18)

It is impossible to believe the U.S. couldn’t foresee the action by Turkey; the original Pentagon statements were utilized by Turkey as the primary pretext for Operation Olive Branch. The reality is that the U.S. greenlit this operation and has done nothing to prevent it from going forward. The U.S. was consulted before Turkey advanced.

Secretary of Defense James Mattis stated, “Turkey was candid. They warned us before they launched the aircraft they were going to do it in consultation with us, and we are working now on the way ahead through the ministry of foreign affairs.” Mattis also said Turkey “is the only NATO country with an active insurgency inside its borders, and Turkey has legitimate security concerns.” (dailymaverick.co.za, Jan. 21)

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also defended Turkey’s actions. “We recognize and fully appreciate Turkey’s legitimate right to protect its own citizens from terrorist elements that may be launching attacks against Turkish citizens and Turkish soil from Syria.” He also denied the notion that the U.S. would do anything to stop Turkey. “I don’t think you’re going to find two NATO allies facing off at all,” said Tillerson. (CNN, Jan. 22)

Also on CNN, Marine Maj. Adrian Rankine-Galloway said senior U.S. defense officials were in Ankara to discuss security matters, including the situation in Northern Syria. “I can confirm that senior leaders from the Department of Defense are fully engaged in working with their Turkish counterparts to de-escalate tensions along the Turkish-Syrian border and to ensure that operations to defeat ISIS [the Islamic State group] continue without interruption,” said the Pentagon spokesperson.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert also stated, “We urge Turkey to exercise restraint and ensure that its military operations remain limited in scope and duration and scrupulous to avoid civilian casualties.” (Reuters, Jan. 20)

This is the same mode of operation Washington has used time and again to absolve itself of complicity in the actions of U.S. allies in the region, whether Turkey or Israel.

The notion that U.S. support for the SDF poses a security threat to Turkey because of the YPG affiliation with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) is entirely disingenuous. The PKK is the only Kurdish force genuinely challenging NATO hegemony by actively resisting Turkey. Even if the YPG had the resources and desire to support them materially, their dependence on the U.S. stops them from doing so.

Thousands of U.S. soldiers embedded with the YPG, special forces, intelligence operatives and advisors would not permit the possibility of a genuine insurgency in their NATO ally to become a real security threat.

U.S. and NATO, hands off Syria!

Operation Olive Branch, given tacit

support by the U.S., represents the culmination of the U.S. and NATO’s revised strategy to partition Syria since the Russian intervention spelled the defeat of their main contra-army Daesh.

Faced with this development, the U.S. has focused on providing support to the SDF/YPG/YPJ (Women’s Protection Units) forces as their primary proxies in their war against Syria. The SDF have gained massive tracts of land that they have handed off so the U.S. can build air bases, providing solid footing for further imperialist excursions.

The U.S. effectively used the SDF to keep Daesh land out of the hands of the Syrian state and allied forces. Considering Turkey was (and perhaps still is) a main backer and coordinator of Daesh, the U.S. likely planned this with their NATO ally’s consent.

The SDF/YPG was never a solid basis for permanent U.S. occupation of Syria. Kurdish separatism has historically been much weaker in Syria than inside Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Syria has the smallest Kurdish population of these countries, which many Kurds believe contain pieces of Kurdistan.

With the absolute failure of a Kurdish independence bid in Iraq last year, the momentum was missing for anything similar to develop in Syria. The YPG and their allies in the SDF, especially following the near defeat of Daesh in 2017, were more than likely to negotiate a path of reconciliation with the Syrian state, perhaps pushing for some framework of autonomy in territory they occupy. It seems the main reason they prolonged this process was a false confidence instilled in them by Washington. U.S. assurances that they would be protected and strengthened had them fooled until they were handed to Turkey on a silver platter.

Even preceding Operation Olive Branch, the Foreign Deputy Minister of Syria Faisal Mekdad stated Jan. 15 that Turkey must end its aggression and violation against Syrian sovereignty. Regarding the Kurdish forces, Mekdad said, “We believe that it is those Kurds who act in the interests of the U.S. who open the door to the Turkish forces. We can declare that those who oppose the homeland and its interests become accessories to the enemies of Syria and the Syrian people.” (ijc.ir)

In contrast to this, Mekdad highlighted that “the majority of Kurds are patriots of Syria” and that the Syrian Arab Army would be willing to enter a military alliance with the SDF to cooperatively counter Turkish aggression. So far, no such alliance has materialized. (sputniknews.com, Jan. 15)

The primary task of all people who oppose imperialism and support Syrian sovereignty is to oppose Turkey’s Operation Olive Branch as part of NATO’s plot to prolong the destruction of Syria. As Syria itself has stated countless times, all foreign aggression and unwarranted intervention must cease.

NATO out of Syria! U.S. out of the Middle East! □

Paris is flooding



By G. Dunkel

The Seine, the river that flows through the center of Paris, is expected to reach 19 feet above its normal level on Jan. 29.

This flood is having a major impact on tourism, one of the main industries in France, particularly in Paris. Millions of visitors from all over the world come to the French capital, the City of Light, to see the treasures of art that French imperialism has plundered from almost everywhere.

While they are visiting the museums, they also see the sights — the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, the Left Bank, Montmartre — enjoy fine French food and wine, take a boat trip on the River Seine in a bateau mouche (open excursion boat), walk in the Luxembourg Gardens and travel through the beautiful countryside.

The only tourist activities that are definitely closed are the boat trips — the boats can no longer fit under the bridges. The Louvre has had to close its Islamic collection, which is below ground level. Walks along the Seine are dangerous, gardens are squishy, a couple of hospitals are closed, but life and tourism in Paris go on.

Some hundreds of Paris residents have been evacuated by the authorities; others have left on their own. Portions of the mass transit system, the RER, are

closed until further notice. Some roads are flooded out, but people can still get to work.

For the 240 communities in the Paris basin outside the capital, the flood has had more severe consequences. Schools are closed, many more roads and houses are flooded, and delivery of cooking gas, electricity and water is sporadic.

What worries Anne Hidalgo, the Socialist Party mayor of Paris, who accepts the reality of global warming, is repetition of these floods. There was an earlier, slightly more serious one in 2016, 18 months ago. She tweeted, “Beyond emergency, this recurrent flooding makes adapting our city to confront climate change much more important.”

Florence Habets, a leading hydrologist at CNRS, France’s main scientific research center, predicts that the risk of both droughts and floods will increase in years to come. At a conference in December, Habets proposed a series of natural steps, such as making soil more permeable, putting greenery on roofs, developing prairies and planting forests. (oise-aisne.net) □

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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

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Trump and the ruling class, from Davos to DACA to Mueller

By Fred Goldstein

Jan. 29 — Donald Trump, the racist, bigoted, authoritarian, right-wing chief executive of U.S. imperialism, who is despised by the workers and oppressed masses of the world, was operating on several fronts last week.

Trump went to Davos, Switzerland, to attend a gathering of billionaires and millionaires. The representatives of the European ruling class there played to his ego, flattering him and treating him like an emperor.

At the same time that he was hobnobbing around Davos, rubbing shoulders with fellow members of the ruling class, Trump’s two immigration hawk henchmen, Chief of Staff Gen. John Kelly and adviser Stephen Miller, were in Washington working on his proposed draconian, punitive immigration bill, which has been denounced by the immigrant movement as a “white supremacist” hostage bill.

As Trump deplaned in Davos, he was confronted by charges, corroborated by numerous news sources, that he had illegally tried to have Special Counsel Robert Mueller fired last June. His reply: “Fake news.”

Yet the European bankers gave Trump the royal treatment, taking their cue from the Saudi princes who provided a string of musicians to play for him as he entered the conference hall. He was praised by the corporate financiers for his tax cuts and deregulation, which sent their stock prices soaring. Corporate Europe organized a dinner for him with the heads of the top 15 European corporations.

Their goal was to placate Trump enough to keep him from launching an attack on the European imperialists, the European Union and NATO — customary punching bags for his chauvinist, imperialist arrogance. In this, they largely succeeded. Trump stuck to a mild, 15-minute speech drawn up by his handlers. But he was booed when he went off script and denounced the “lying press.”

Trump took personal credit for the rise in the stock market and the tax cuts. Undoubtedly the parasitic European bondholders were elated. Trump’s key line was “America is open for business,” aimed at enticing European investors to cash in on low tax rates and minimal regulation.

Trump’s Davos speech a sign of weakness

His speech was a muted attempt to partially get back into the imperialist fold without backing away completely from his super-power, reactionary, nationalist arrogance. He tried to assure the audience that “America first does not mean alone.”

It is not that Trump has had some inner conversion from his great-power chauvinism. Rather it is dawning on the Trump camp that by breaking the U.S.-European alliance, he has weakened the entire imperialist camp on both sides of the Atlantic, especially the U.S. side.

The Pentagon needs NATO, along with German and French imperialism, in its

struggle to subordinate Russia and to complete the conquest of Ukraine. The Pentagon and the State Department need the collaboration of French and British imperialism in Africa, where both former colonial powers have deep roots. And Trump needs the cooperation of European imperialism if he hopes to undermine the Iran nuclear treaty.

Neither camp is able to deal with the state-planned, socialist side of China’s economic, commercial and diplomatic expansion. China is steadily progressing with its One Belt One Road project to establish an international network of railways, roads, pipelines and utility grids linking China with Central Asia, West Asia and parts of South Asia.

In a concession, Trump even spoke about the possibility of re-engaging with the Trans Pacific Partnership — a sure sign that the weakness of Washington and the strength of China are beginning to sink in.

And as the Trump administration edges closer and closer to war with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and potentially with China and even possibly Russia, it will need the backing or at least the neutrality of European imperialism.

Neither imperialist camp — the U.S. or Europe — is capable of dealing with the oppressed and the working class of the world without the other. Neither camp is capable of reining in the inter-imperialist antagonisms or of keeping a war from breaking out that could destabilize the capitalist, imperialist system. Trump, of course, may revert quickly to his old arrogance. But, for the moment, that is what accounts for Trump’s “moderate” behavior at Davos.

Trump’s DACA proposal: a white-supremacist hostage bill

Before going to Davos, Trump announced he had a proposal that would solve the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals crisis by giving a path to citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers and for people eligible to be Dreamers but who had never signed up. These young immigrants would get a so-called path to citizenship over a period of 12 years.

However, the Trump proposal, called the Dream Act, also demands \$30 billion for his border wall. And it would sharply curtail family reunification immigration, a major component of legal immigration, by excluding the parents of Dreamers from any legalization. It also shuts down the system that each year allows some 55,000 people from all regions of the world to get visas to enter the U.S. on a lottery basis.

The White House proposal would limit family sponsorship to spouses and minor children. It would eliminate a number of existing categories, including adult children, both married and unmarried; parents of adult U.S. citizens; and siblings of adult U.S. citizens. Experts have estimated that cutting these categories would reduce the roughly 1 million green cards

His speech at Davos was an attempt to partially get back into the imperialist fold without backing away completely from his super-power, reactionary, nationalist arrogance. It is dawning on the Trump grouping that he has weakened the entire imperialist camp.

given out yearly by 25 to 50 percent. A document obtained by CNN goes into more detail: “The framework [of the bill] could allow detaining individuals indefinitely as they await deportation for months and years — something that has been curtailed as the result of constitutional concerns from courts. The proposals could also vastly expand the definitions of criminal offenses that could subject an individual to deportation.” (Jan. 26)

The immigrant rights movement and representatives of the Dreamers have denounced the Trump proposal, refusing to put other immigrants at risk in order to get a bill for themselves.

Greisa Martinez Rosas, advocacy director for United We Dream and a potential beneficiary of the Dream Act, commented: “Let’s call this proposal for what it is: a white supremacist ransom note. Trump and Stephen Miller killed DACA and created the crisis that immigrant youth are facing. They have taken immigrant youth hostage, pitting us against our own parents, Black immigrants and our communities in exchange for our dignity. “To Miller and Trump’s white supremacist proposal, immigrant youth say: No.” (unitedwedream.org, Jan. 25)

DACA-recipient Juan Escalante, in a release from America’s Voice, wrote: “It’s no secret that Miller, along with Gen. John ‘Adult in the Room’ Kelly, has been penning some of the most heinous immigration policies coming out of the White House. One might even wonder if Miller and Kelly, not President Donald Trump, are running the government from the sidelines — exploiting Trump’s short attention span. ...

“What the White House is selling the American people is nothing but a nativist wish list that would reduce the number of immigrants, especially people of color born in countries that Trump considers ‘shitholes.’” (Jan. 26)

Trump, Mueller: bourgeois legality vs. mass struggle

Inside the Davos meeting hall, Trump was besieged with questions about how he tried to fire Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is leading a criminal investigation into Trump’s relationship to Russia and his financial connections to the Russian oligarchs. Trump branded the charges as “fake news.”

But according to the New York Times of Jan. 26, Trump ordered his attorney, Don McGahn, to fire Mueller last June. McGahn, fearing his own criminal liability, refused the order. The number of witnesses interviewed led even Fox News to confirm the story.

The story has been the subject of endless network talk shows, news shows and the capitalist press.

The thrust of the discussion is that the

attempted firing of Mueller fits in with Trump’s efforts to get FBI head James Comey to go easy on National Security Adviser Michael Flynn. When Comey refused to do so, Trump fired him.

The anti-Trump moderates and liberals are going over and over the various possible legal violations, procedural violations, violations of protocol, etc., that Trump has committed.

However, they won’t fight him politically for his racism, his misogyny, his militaristic jingoism, his threats of nuclear war, his anti-immigrant chauvinism, his support for voter suppression, etc. When they talk about undermining “our democracy,” they always refer to the Russians allegedly interfering with the elections. But they do not bring up the most serious interference with capitalist democracy: voter suppression.

Millions of African Americans, Latinx, Native people and poor whites have been kept from voting because of photo ID laws, redistricting to reduce the weight of the vote in poor neighborhoods and urban areas, shutting down polling stations, disqualifying people with felony convictions, etc.

All the bourgeois commentators keep referring back to the resignation of Richard Nixon, who faced impeachment over the Watergate break-in. But so far Trump has given no indication that he would honor bourgeois legality. Furthermore, the House of Representatives is far to the right, and it is the House that would be charged with initiating impeachment proceedings.

These commentators and the Democratic Party leadership repeat over and over again that Russia tried to “subvert our democracy.” Whatever Putin did or did not do, the democracy in this country is a very restricted version of capitalist democracy. The capitalist class has access to all the levers of government, communications, and the powers of the state. It is their democracy. What democratic rights exist for the workers and the oppressed within this suffocating capitalist system have been fought for, often with blood, for generations.

African Americans have fought for civil rights. Labor unions have fought for workers’ rights. Women have fought for equality. So has the LGBTQ community, from the uprising at Stonewall to all the battles that followed. Immigrants have battled against deportations, disabled people have struggled for accessibility, and so on.

Yet no matter what rights the workers and oppressed have won under capitalist society, these rights are truncated, narrowly confined and under constant attack. The bosses are the ones who are in a constant struggle to take back the democratic rights the working class and oppressed have won.

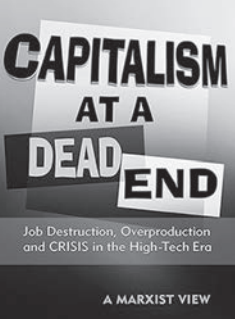
Class-conscious workers should not fall for this phony pro-war investigation of Russia to get leverage against Trump. What we need is a massive movement to push back the entire right-wing Trump agenda and challenge the cops, ICE and the FBI who are oppressors of the people.

We do not benefit when one faction of the ruling class removes another faction if the masses sit idly by. □



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

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



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Murder in the desert

A video made public on Jan. 17 showed U.S. Border Patrol agents fiendishly destroying water bottles meant for desperate migrants in the Arizona desert. The solidarity group No More Deaths leaves the water along the “Devil’s Highway,” a corridor of land on the border.

Hours after the video’s release by NMD, one of their volunteers was arrested by the Border Patrol in obvious retaliation. He was hit with a felony charge for “harboring undocumented immigrants” — for providing food, water and clean clothes to two migrants.

International news has shown in heart-breaking detail how fatally dangerous migrant journeys can be across the globe. At the southwestern U.S. border, the temperature can soar above 110 degrees during the day and become bitterly cold at night. By the Border Patrol’s own count, some 7,209 migrant people have lost their lives there. (USA Today, Dec. 14)

The actual number of deaths must be much higher, with those found by ranchers or local sheriffs uncounted. Many are buried in mass and unmarked graves. Many are women and children.

For the Border Patrol to deny a few sips of water to those crossing the desert is more than cruelty. It is torture and it is murder, administered on top of U.S.-spawned death squads and turmoil in their homelands that migrants are fleeing.

The continued intensification of attacks on migrants is part and parcel of the Trump administration’s far-right, white-supremacist agenda. This includes revoking temporary protected status for hundreds of thousands of Haitian, Nicaraguan and Salvadoran migrants;

voiding regulations that allow migrant families to stay together; and promoting intransigent plans to build a racist “Wall” on the U.S.-Mexican border.

Now the attack on migrants is accelerating to include migrant rights organizers and humanitarian groups. According to a Jan. 17 report by No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos, Border Patrol agents “routinely intimidate, harass and surveil” their volunteers. (intercept.com)

In recent months, eight former summer volunteers have been arrested around the country on federal charges, including driving in a wilderness area and “abandoning property.” That refers to leaving blankets, water and food on migrant trails, which groups have been doing for years. Earlier, armed Border Patrol agents surrounded and entered a No More Deaths encampment near Arivaca, Ariz., and arrested four undocumented migrants receiving medical treatment from volunteers there.

No More Deaths has demanded “an immediate end to any interference with humanitarian-aid efforts” by the Border Patrol, including stopping “the destruction or removal of water, food, blankets and any other ... supplies left for border crossers,” with such destruction being a “fireable offense” for Border Patrol agents. (forms.nomoredeaths.org, Jan. 18)

We agree with those demands. And we also know that it is mass organizing — like the gigantic airport rallies against Islamophobia in January 2017 — that will stop these assaults by the U.S. state.

Onward to organizing that will stop all attacks on migrant peoples and on immigrant rights organizers! □

‘Wormwood,’ the DPRK, and germ warfare

By Deirdre Griswold

In 1952, a six-person international scientific commission, led by the preeminent British biochemist, Joseph Needham, visited the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The U.S. was carpet bombing the DPRK then. Air Force Gen. Curtis LeMay later bragged to the Office of Air War History of his exploits: “Over a period of three years or so, we killed off — what — 20 percent of the population.” (Washington Post, March 24, 2015)

But it wasn’t only exploding bombs and napalm that were being rained down on the DPRK. The international commission found evidence that the U.S. had engaged in germ warfare that sickened and killed villagers in this young socialist country — which had so recently liberated itself from 35 years of Japanese colonial rule.

The team took films of insects crawling on the snow-covered ground next to canisters dropped from the sky. They interviewed villagers who had strange lesions all over their bodies and who had become ill with contagious diseases after U.S. planes flew overhead.

When their findings were made public, the U.S. government and obedient media were shocked and scandalized. What an outrageous charge! This country, leader of the free world, would never do such a thing! What liars, what dupes are these “fellow travelers” of the “commies”!

Viewers should keep all this in mind when watching “Wormwood,” the six-part documentary series now being aired on Netflix. “Wormwood” is about the death in 1953 of Frank Olson. At that time he was a leading scientist at the U.S. Army’s germ warfare facility at Fort Detrick, Md., and an employee of the CIA.

Olson’s body was found on the pavement in front of the Statler Hotel in New York on the night of Nov. 28, 1953. The authorities explained to the press that

Olson had plunged to his death from a 13th-story room in the hotel in either an accident or a suicide. Neither explanation was easy for his shocked and mourning family to accept.

One of Olson’s sons, Eric Olson, couldn’t let it go. He turned over and over in his mind the circumstances of his father’s death; the official explanation just didn’t add up. So he began what turned into decades of probing and prodding to try to find out the truth.

CIA secrets exposed

In 1975, secrets of the CIA’s MKUltra mind-control program finally came out. Then came a “confession” from the government: Olson had jumped out of the window because of a CIA experiment with LSD that had “gone wrong.”

Eventually Olson’s family met with CIA head William Colby, as well as President Gerald Ford, who both apologized for the unfortunate “accident.” Olson’s relatives were given a monetary settlement for his “wrongful death.”

But still Eric Olson persisted. Without revealing a “spoiler” for those who intend to watch this series, it is enough to say that the film makes a strong case for Olson being deliberately murdered by the CIA because he wanted “out” from his job of perfecting horrible weapons, like aerosolized anthrax.

Seymour Hersh, the investigative journalist, appears in the series. He is cagey not to reveal any sources, but agrees with Eric Olson that the CIA murdered his father. This film uncovers a lifetime of government deceit.

Doesn’t this tell us a lot about the vicious U.S. lies and defamation of the leaders and people of north Korea that persist today and have reached a crescendo just because that country has finally developed a powerful way to defend itself from another horrible U.S. war? □

BRAZIL

Appeals court condemns Lula in political trial

By John Catalinotto

An appeals court in Porto Alegre, Brazil, upheld 3 to 0 a judgment for alleged corruption against former President Luis Ignacio “Lula” da Silva on Jan. 24, while thousands of Lula’s supporters protested there and in other Brazilian cities. The court even extended his sentence from 9 1/2 to 12 years in prison.

Not only Lula’s Workers Party (PT), but also the Landless Movement and its leader João Pedro Stédile, the Communist Party of Brazil and the newspaper Brasil de Fato condemned the original trial and now the Jan. 24 decision as politically motivated. Intellectuals from around Latin America and the world signed a petition exposing the political

nature of the trial.

Lula had more than 40 percent support in polls on the presidential election scheduled for next Oct. 7, much more than any of the other candidates. The current right-wing president, Michel Temer, who was put in office by an impeachment coup, has barely more than an 8 percent approval rating. Lula would likely win the election if he can run.

Lula’s supporters, who include many but not all left parties and movements in the biggest South American country, consider the ruling to be a partisan political judgment aimed at stopping Lula and the PT from winning the October presidential election. While he still has the possibility of appealing or outflanking the court’s decision, it throws up an

enormous obstacle.

Lula was president from 2001 to 2008, followed by Dilma Rousseff from 2009 until she was ousted by a political coup in May 2016, thinly disguised as an impeachment for misuse of government funds. Although no solid evidence was presented against Rousseff, the Senate voted 55 to 22 to impeach her.

Brazil’s economy and politics

Lula was president at a time when the Brazilian economy was growing and Brazil’s raw materials could be sold at high prices on the world market. His government was therefore able to use available funds to help tens of millions of extremely poor Brazilians, mostly from the North and Northeast, to achieve an adequate standard of living.

In other words, his policies rescued millions from starvation. This made the PT government popular among workers, especially in the poorer states.

But Lula could do this while still satisfying Brazilian big business, which was growing. Rousseff’s presidency took place under more difficult conditions for Brazil, especially after the 2008-09 collapse of the world capitalist economy led to much lower prices for raw materials and curtailed growth.


Rousseff’s administration made more concessions to the neoliberal rich of Brazil, which cost her government support among its working-class base. Despite the PT’s concessions, the Brazilian oligarchy treated the PT and its leaders as obstacles to its exploitation of the people and the environment.

Temer’s government has been cutting social security for workers and retirees, weakening employment rights for workers, opening up Brazil’s interior and seabed for exploitation, and reducing government controls on business.

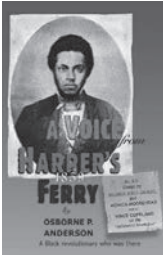
Many of the members of the Brazilian Congress are under investigation for corruption — no surprise for any country where capitalism runs rampant. However, in Brazil the ruling class is attempting to use the judiciary to direct corruption charges against the PT and others on the left. This even has a name: “lawfare,” the combination of law and warfare.

Washington is much more comfortable with politicians like Temer, who has been accused of collaborating with the CIA and other neoliberals. The PT leaders, including Lula, have been more protective of Brazilian sovereignty and have friendlier relations with Cuba, Venezuela and other countries that challenge U.S. hegemony in the hemisphere. □

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Solidarity with Honduran people's resistance

By Workers World staff

Demonstrations and other activities took place in several cities around the U.S. in solidarity with the people of Honduras and against the electoral fraud in that country's presidential election.

Hondurans living in the **New York City** area and some North American supporters gathered with signs, leaflets and sound equipment on the afternoon of Jan. 27 in Union Square to inform thousands of passersby that the Honduran people will not accept the electoral fraud of Nov. 26. The International Action Center supported the protest, which was organized by local Hondurans.

Atlanta was tuned in to the struggle of the Honduran people on Jan. 29 when the Labor Forum on WRFG (Radio Free Georgia) hosted United Auto Workers Local 869 Executive Board member Martha Gre-vatt speaking on what workers should know about the fraudulent Honduran elections. Immigration paralegal Raymond Partolan was also on, discussing the crisis for Deferred Action Childhood Arrival youth in relation to immigration legislation. The Labor Forum features labor headlines, labor history and



WW PHOTO: JEFF SOREL

interviews with labor and community activists every Monday from 4 to 5 p.m. EST on WRFG 89.3FM. For additional information, go to wrfglaborforum.org.



WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

Over 150 people turned out in **Chicago** for a Jan. 27 teach-in on the growing people's struggle in Honduras. Victoria Cervantes of La Voz de los de Abajo provided background on the current situation, telling the crowd that a Honduran protester is killed each day merely for opposing the U.S.-backed dictator's attempt to stay in power through massive electoral fraud. A panel of speakers from Black Lives Matter Chicago, the Chicago Teachers Union, National Nurses United and the US Palestinian Community Network linked the struggle in Honduras to the fight against racism, exploitation and oppression in the U.S. and throughout the world. A march through the Loop followed the teach-in.

Hondurans and supporters gathered in **San Francisco's** Mission District on Jan. 27 to protest the illegal inauguration of Juan Orlando Hernández as president of Honduras. The rally was initiated by the Honduran Alliance USA/Nor-Cal. Co-sponsors included the Answer Coalition; Central Americans for Em-

powerment; CISPES Bay Area; Clínica Martín-Baró; the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FLMN); Global Exchange; Haiti Action Committee; International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity; School of Americas Watch; Task Force on the Americas; and Workers World Party.

Oregonians gathered in **Portland** on Jan. 27 to protest the current illegal Honduran dictatorship "made in the U.S." A lively group of demonstrators met downtown in support of the Honduran people, who are protesting the illegal election of JOH (Juan Orlando Hernández) and are calling for a general strike in Honduras. With placards denouncing JOH's U.S.-backed regime, members of Workers World Party met up with folks from the Portland Central American Solidarity Committee and the Portland Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines. As speakers read aloud the conditions in Honduras, protesters echoed back the facts: the martial law imposed by Hernández, the murder of over 40 Hondurans in the protests, the torture and imprisonment of hundreds more and the powerful Honduran people's movement that is rising up against the U.S.-backed repression.

Contributing to this report were John Catalinotto, Terri Kay, Dianne Mathio-wetz, Lyn Neeley and Jeff Sorel.

HONDURAS

Protests continue as U.S. puppet sworn in

By John Catalinotto

The rich supporters of the U.S.-backed president of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández, watched his Jan. 27 swearing-in ceremony at the national stadium in Tegucigalpa, the capital. JOH claimed a second term based on a widely disputed Nov. 26 electoral process.

Thousands of cops and military units kept tens of thousands of opponents from coming closer than a half-mile from JOH. Hundreds of meters from the stadium, demonstrators threw stones at a bus carrying supporters of the president. The police drove forward with armored vehicles and used tear gas. In San Pedro Sula, the second largest city of Honduras, around 10,000 people took to the streets. The police used tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition against protests across the country.

The opposition Alliance Against the Dictatorship considers JOH's Nov. 26 re-election a fraud. On Jan. 27, Salvador Nasralla, presidential candidate for the Alliance, demanded new presidential and parliamentary elections and said the protests would continue.

At a rally of Hondurans and supporters in New York City on Jan. 27, one of the demonstration's organizers, Carlos Hernández, told Workers World: "Since Nov. 26 the cops and military have officially killed 30 people who were demonstrating. The people's movements say this number is really about 60, and that many of the people are uncounted, as their families remove their bodies and bury them to avoid drawing the government's attention to the family and bringing down more repression."

When asked about reports soon after the Nov. 26 election that some units of the military were refusing to enforce a curfew, Hernández said, "Yes, these were special units, like the Tigers and the Cobras and the traffic police, at a time when it was undecided even on top who won the election. The people's movements were able to establish contact with some units of police at that moment, and this contact continues, which can be good in the future."

Pro-U.S. regimes in Honduras since 2009 have presided over a massive increase in murders of ordinary people and popular organizers like environmentalist Berta Cáceres.



In Tegucigalpa, police used tear gas against Nasralla's supporters.

Military and police repression continues. The Facebook site Alianza de Oposición USA D19 contains short videos of current confrontations between popular demonstrations and repressive forces. One shows a man being shot by the military and bleeding in the street.

In Tegucigalpa, police used tear gas against Nasralla's supporters on Jan. 26 when they drove hundreds of

cars and motorcycles through the city, honking in unison against the election manipulation.

Former President Manuel Zelaya, who was overthrown by a U.S.-backed military coup in 2009, told the media on Jan. 27 that Honduras is heading for a "popular uprising." Zelaya added, "We are ready to fight to enforce the will of the people." (Junge Welt, Jan. 29) □

¿Por qué estudiar el marxismo?

El artículo siguiente es de una clase sobre marxismo dada por Sam Marcy, el fundador del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero, en 1993 después del desmantelamiento de la Unión Soviética.

¿Por qué tenemos que repasar el marxismo? ¿Por qué no podemos simplemente asignar camaradas a que lean esto y aquello y luego continúe con lo que pasa en la guerra en Nicaragua, o lo que está pasando en los ataques imperialistas contra la RPDC, o lo que está pasando con los palestinos?

Tenemos que tener una evaluación básica de lo que está sucediendo. Un examen de nuestras armas ideológicas. Cuáles son más útiles. Cuáles son las que más probablemente se usen en el futuro cercano. ¿Cuáles se reservarán para una fecha posterior?

La burguesía considera su sistema como eterno, no sujeto a cambio fundamental. Esto difiere radicalmente del marxismo, que nos enseña que el capitalismo es una formación social transitoria. Como el feudalismo y la esclavitud, tendrá que ceder el paso a una forma superior de sociedad.

La burguesía no puede dar una evaluación objetiva de las tendencias reales en la sociedad capitalista. Todo lo que hacen está calculado para servir el interés propio.

Nuestro propósito al revisar el marxismo es prepararnos para las tormentas y tensiones del próximo período. Tenemos toda la confianza de que la predicción de Marx de una tormenta revolucionaria se hará realidad. Necesitamos reexaminar nuestra armadura de base con vistas a su eficacia operativa. Esa es la razón de nuestro estudio. Pasaremos de lo abstracto a lo concreto esta vez.

No necesitamos una recitación escolástica y pedante. Necesitamos un examen crítico, no desde el punto de vista del revisionismo y la renuncia sino desde el punto de vista de reforzar y fortalecer el patrimonio que nos ha sido legado por los grandes líderes del pasado.

En esta breve sesión examinaremos la última fase del capitalismo, que Lenin llamó imperialismo. Muchas décadas atrás, él escribió el folleto 'Imperialismo, la etapa más alta del capitalismo'. Estoy seguro de que todos ustedes están familiarizados con eso. Cada uno de nosotros está obligado a leerlo y estudiarlo.

Las cinco características de Lenin sobre el imperialismo

Hay al menos cinco características del imperialismo que Lenin creyó importante en la caracterización de esta etapa del capitalismo. Y siguen siendo ciertas unos 77 años después.

Primero mencionó la concentración de producción, de capital, el desarrollo de la competencia en monopolio. ¿Cómo sucede? ¿Cuál es la interacción entre el monopolio y la competencia? Uno no reemplaza el otro. Ambos existen. ¿En qué se diferencia hoy del período de Lenin?

La burguesía siempre está discutiendo la competencia y el monopolio. Existen miles de casos en los tribunales que se ocupan de monopolio y competencia desde el punto de vista de sus problemas.

Por un lado, quieren frenar el monopolio pero también quieren fortalecerlo. Han tenido dos guerras mundiales y otra podría venir. ¿Cómo se restringe y se fomenta el monopolio al mismo tiempo? Es un proceso dual.

Lenin nos cuenta sobre la fusión del capital bancario con el capital industrial y la creación de capital financiero.

Luego está la exportación de capital que se ha vuelto extremadamente importante a diferencia de la exportación de productos básicos. Estados Unidos exporta no solo mercancía, sino también préstamos por todo el mundo. Eso tiene que ser estudiado. ¿Cuán importante es esta diferencia?

Lenin también escribe sobre la formación de monopolios capitalistas internacionales que comparten el mundo entre ellos.

General Electric, Westinghouse y una o dos empresas japonesas comparten su mercado a nivel mundial. Pero no es un acuerdo estable. Ellos establecen árbitros y tribunales de arbitraje para emitir veredictos y todo eso, pero no cumplen los acuerdos, básicamente porque son ladrones y piratas. Es utópico esperar que tengan acuerdos entre caballeros ellos mismos, especialmente cuando están en juego miles de millones de dólares.

Redivisión del mundo

Según Lenin, el mundo ya estaba compartido entre los grandes poderes capitalistas cuando escribió el Imperialismo en 1916. Las guerras desde entonces han invalidado mucho de esto. Algunos países imperialistas se han vuelto más fuertes y otros más débiles. Japón se ha vuelto más fuerte. Bretaña, Holanda, Bélgica y otros se han vuelto más débiles. Lo que ha tomado su lugar, por supuesto, es el imperialismo estadounidense que intenta apoderarse de todo lo que no está anclado.

Una característica fundamental del imperialismo es también la fusión del estado capitalista con los bancos y la industria. Los industriales luchan para mantener una cierta forma de independencia entre ellos en contra de los capitalistas financieros, pero esta independencia es trastocada y gigantes corporaciones financieras e industriales se fusionan. Esto no resuelve la contradicción, pero la lleva a una cierta área de acuerdos.

Henry Ford y capital financiero

Permítanme darles un ejemplo de lo que Lenin quiere decir acerca de la fusión de la industria con el capital financiero. Henry Ford y su imperio existieron durante un período considerable como una unidad familiar. Ni bancos ni compañías de seguros eran propietarios de la compañía Ford. Todo pertenecía a una familia.

Estaba tan temeroso de que Wall Street, es decir, los banqueros, tomaran su emporio, que lanzó una campaña antisemita. Subsidió dos o tres publicaciones antisemitas para castigar y exponer a Wall Street.

¿Cuál fue el verdadero problema? No quería que su imperio industrial sucumbiera al capital financiero. Él quería que permaneciera en la familia.

Desde la concepción leninista de imperialismo, esto significaba que Ford, como industrial, intentaba evitar la fusión del capital financiero con su imperio industrial. Al final, él y su hijo capitularon. Lo convirtieron en una compañía de acciones donde todos podían comprar las acciones.

Esto mostró cómo no es posible ser una entidad independiente en la época imperialista. Lo peor de todo es que no se puede mantener a los bancos fuera a menos que se quiera perder dinero. En última instancia, Ford capituló ante los financieros porque habría perdido la ventaja competitiva si intentaba mantenerse independiente.

The Thinking Machine Corp.

Me gustaría darles un ejemplo más moderno. Hay una empresa llamada The Thinking Machine Corp. Desarrolla una tecnología informática muy sofisticada y avanzada. No es una de las compañías Fortune 500, pero vende computadoras en todo el mundo, por una suma de \$100 millones.

Recientemente, esta pequeña empresa con aproximadamente 500 trabajadores estaba pasando por un disturbio sobre el liderazgo, todos ellos expertos en alta tecnología. Decidieron que querían un nuevo presidente ejecutivo de afuera. A veces, cuando una organización no puede funcionar debido a desacuerdos entre ellos, lo mejor es buscar a alguien por fuera.

Entonces, ¿qué hicieron? Consiguieron a alguien llamado Harold Fishman, abogado de la mayor firma de abogados corporativos de EUA, y le pidieron que se convirtiera en el director de The Thinking Machine.

Si querían a alguien del exterior, ¿por qué elegir a un abogado de Wall Street que no sabía nada sobre tecnología? ¿Cómo va a dirigir la corporación? Las preguntas fueron hechas públicamente. ¿Por qué ir a Wall Street? Es muy brillante, tiene todas las cualidades que deberían tener un abogado y un gerente corporativo. Pero él no es un líder tecnológico. Entonces, ¿por qué lo escogieron?

IBM había despedido a muchos ejecutivos expertos en tecnología. Lo mismo hicieron otros. Un gran grupo de talentos está desempleado. ¿Por qué ir a Wall Street para contratar a Fishman?

Indica que los intereses financieros, el marketing y el negocio de las ganancias y pérdidas tienen prioridad sobre las necesidades de los desarrollos tecnológicos.

Hay un principio socialista involucrado en esto. En una nación socialista, la producción sería regulada por los trabajadores en interés de la producción para el uso común. Si esto fuera un proyecto en un país socialista, podría ser necesario llamar a alguien para resolver las diferencias. Pero no sería un abogado corporativo. Sería otro líder tecnológico.

Por un tiempo, era beneficioso para el capitalismo industrial ganar ventajas en el mercado a través de los financieros. Eso financió la base industrial y la ayudó a crecer. Pero habiendo establecido eso, fortaleció el parasitismo.

Es importante para nosotros entender el funcionamiento interno, el mecanismo



MO/WW FOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Nueva York, 27 de enero.

de la relación entre la industria imperialista y las finanzas imperialistas. Y si esto no es un ejemplo de la decadencia del imperialismo, entonces no sé qué es.

Este ejemplo de The Thinking Machine también ilustra la fusión del estado capitalista con la industria y las finanzas, porque no podrían vender muchas supercomputadoras en todo el mundo a menos que el vasto ejército de oficiales estadounidenses fuera útil para vencer a la competencia.

Fusión del capital financiero y el estado

Todavía hay otro aspecto del imperialismo que debería mencionar. Entre las cinco características que tenemos, esta es útil para comprender otras.

El estado capitalista tal como lo conocemos tiene tres brazos: el ejecutivo, el legislativo y el judicial. El legislativo es el más popular y tiene el poder del dinero.

La clase dominante siempre ha tenido miedo de un cuerpo elegido por el pueblo, especialmente después de la aprobación de la Ley de Derechos Civiles.

Pero si le entrega a los miembros del Congreso el presupuesto de los Estados Unidos, o un proyecto de ley sobre cómo vender plátanos o computadoras, muy pronto verá que su congresista puede no saber mucho.

La clase dominante ha establecido un estrato de personal extra-gubernamental extra estatal que forma un brazo político no oficial del estado capitalista. Se les llama cabilderos. Son un poder superior a los representantes electos.

Si le pregunto a mi congresista acerca de cómo ingresar al negocio azucarero, me dirán que regrese después de que lo hayan investigado. Pero si yo fuera un gran burgués en los negocios, no iría a la congresista. Iría al cabildero. El cabildero tiene todas las legislaciones sobre el azúcar. Tan pronto como la primera sale de la imprenta, el cabildero ya la tiene.

Si necesita una interpretación, el cabildero la tiene. Si pregunta qué miembro del Congreso votó por una cosa u otra, ellos también le dirán eso. Y además, trabajan día y noche y están omnipresentes en Washington, en algunas de las casas más lujosas y modernas.

El cabildeo ha erigido un aparato gubernamental por encima del Congreso que se ha fortalecido más en la época del imperialismo. Es un aparato extralegal que elude el proceso legislativo tal y como se describe en la Constitución.

Por esa razón, los leninistas siempre han considerado el sufragio y las elecciones populares como un mero método de movilización de las masas, de tratar de educar a las masas. Pero algo que realmente no logra nada. □

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

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

