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Trump gang in crisis

Attacks on people spread

By Fred Goldstein

March 6 — The Trump administration's crisis deepens as accusations of ties to Russia multiply and surround him and his aides. Meanwhile, this authoritarian, racist, misogynistic bigot is opening up a war on the people and what is left of gains won over the last 50 years. Especially under attack are the millions of undocumented workers.

The war within the capitalist state has reached a boiling point, with Trump accusing former President Barack Obama of wiretapping Trump Towers during the 2016 election campaign. It is being assumed that Trump heard this on Mark Levin's right-wing talk show, promoted by Breitbart News. Steve Bannon, Trump's special "strategy" advisor, previously ran Breitbart.

Trump made the accusations against Obama in a tweet after he flew into a rage when racist Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who now heads the Justice Department, recused himself from all investigations about the campaign. Sessions' recusal came after he was found to have lied to the Senate Judiciary Committee about having contact with Russians.

What Trump did not consider, in his rage, was that electronic eavesdropping would have to be carried out by the FBI. Eavesdropping on the presidential candidate would be a crime, unless there was a warrant. Since there was no such warrant, according to James Clapper, the former director of National Intelligence, Trump's charges against Obama would implicate the FBI in a crime.

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LYNNE STEWART

With deep sorrow we report that the courageous people's attorney, Lynne Stewart, has died. She spent more than four years behind bars for defending a blind Muslim cleric, and was released only after her cancer metastasized. Her death is mourned by many. WW will honor her life in future issues. ☐

Solidarity with Standing Rock!

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Some 1,000 people defied a huge police presence to march to Trump Tower on March 4 to protest government actions clearing protesters at Standing Rock, N.D., and pushing through the oil pipeline that threatens water and Indigenous lands.

One of those speaking, Stephanie Hedgecoke, of Tsalagi, Huron and Creek descent, and a regular contributor to Workers World newspaper, told of the struggle at Standing Rock for Indigenous sovereignty and defense of the environment.

With no reason or pretext, cops arrested three people on the march, including two leading Black activists in the People's Power Assembly. Charged with disorderly conduct, they were out after a few hours.

March 4 pro-Trump events took place all around the country, with the one at Trump Tower much smaller than the protest in solidarity with Standing Rock. New Jersey college student Heather Graham initiated the Standing Rock protest in New York on social media and asked the PPA to help organize the march after thousands of people indicated they might be coming.

— Workers World New York Bureau

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Anna Julia Haywood Cooper
Vital to Pan-African movement

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

African-American women from the late 19th century to the early 20th century played a pivotal role in the internationalization of radical philosophy and political organization.

Anna Julia Haywood was born into slavery on Aug. 10, 1858, in Raleigh, N.C. Her mother, Hannah Stanley Haywood, was an African woman. Her father's identity was not clear due to slavery's legacy and the exploitation of African women. Many white "owners" of enslaved people, male relatives and employees routinely sexually assaulted and exploited African women. The perpetrators often denied paternity of these offspring. These children of African women were subjected to the same degree of discrimination and repression as others not of mixed ancestry.

Haywood's mother was reportedly illiterate, and therefore, she encouraged her daughter to learn. By the age of nine, Haywood was attending St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute, an institution in Raleigh designed for formerly enslaved Africans. She studied math, Greek and philosophy. Overcoming gender barriers, she consistently excelled in a curriculum designed exclusively for males. Her academic achievements landed her a teaching position at the school.

Later, Haywood married George Cooper, a teacher of Greek and the second African American in North Carolina to be ordained an Episcopal minister. Haywood took a leave of absence from teaching for two years until her husband suddenly died. Returning to her academic pursuits, Haywood Cooper studied at Oberlin College in Ohio and earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1884. Three years later, she completed a master's degree; returned to teach math, Greek, Latin and science; and became a renowned public speaker.

'A Voice from the South'

Haywood Cooper produced her seminal work in 1892 titled "A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South." The book is considered a milestone in African women's social and political philosophy. Undergirding the thesis laid out in the text is the belief that African-American women are quite capable of achieving higher levels of education. Also, the education of women and their involvement in public life would make a monumental contribution not only to African-American communities, but U.S. society as a whole. Harnessing and unleashing of enlightened women's power were transformative and led to greater awareness of human potentialities.

A chapter entitled "Higher Education of Women" asserts: "Now I claim that it is the prevalence of the Higher Education among women, the making it a common everyday affair for women to reason and think and express their thought, the training and stimulus which enable and encourage women to administer to the world the bread it needs as well as the sugar it cries for; in short it is transmitting the potential forces of her soul into dynamic factors that has given symmetry and completeness to the world's agencies. So only could it be consummated that Mercy, the lesson she teaches, and Truth, the task man has set himself, should meet together: that righteousness, or rightness, man's ideal — and peace, its necessary 'other half,' should kiss each other."

The "woman question" in the U.S. is linked with racism and national oppression. African-American women face discrimination on the basis of national origin as well as gender and class.

Laying the groundwork for broader global intervention, Haywood Cooper addressed the World's Congress of Representative Women in May 1893. One of five African-American women to speak there, she said she was speaking for the Black women of the South.

The WCRW was held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair (also known as the World Columbian Exposition, named after colonizer Christopher Columbus). Some 500 women from 27 countries addressed 81 meetings about the conditions of women. The WCRW was organized amd funded through the women's branch of the World Congress Auxiliary. This section of the Chicago gathering was directed by the President of the Women's Auxiliary Bertha Honoré Palmer, spouse of wealthy Chicago retailer Potter Palmer. The men's section of the Auxiliary ran 17 departments and convened over 100 panels, but the women's division, which organized only one phase of the event, the Women's Congress, had the largest attendance.

Haywood Cooper spoke at the First Pan-African Congress held in 1900 in London. She was also on the executive committee of this historic event, which attracted international attention.

Lifelong activist Anna Julia Haywood Cooper died in 1964 at the age of 105. □

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MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Who we are & what we're fighting for

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

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

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

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

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March 8: WOMEN STRIKE!

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

An International Women's Strike has been called for March 8, International Women's Day, by women in more than 50 countries. The call states that the day of action is specifically "organized by and for women who have been marginalized and silenced by decades of neoliberalism directed towards working women, women of color, Native women, disabled women, immigrant women, Muslim women, lesbian, queer and trans women."

Organizers announce this March 8 as the beginning of "a new international feminist movement that organizes resistance not just against Trump and his misogynist policies, but also against the conditions that produced Trump, namely the decades-long economic inequality, racial and sexual violence, and imperial wars abroad." (womenstrikeus.org)

March 8 has been identified as International Women's Day since 1910. This emerging and exciting new radicalization has deep roots.

IWD in 1970

It's March 7, 1970: A militant crowd of more than 1,000 women, male supporters and multigendered people are surrounding the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village, chanting "Free our sisters! Free ourselves!" Women prisoners wave from the windows, shouting, "Power to the people!"

Cops push against protesters holding banners demanding free and legal abortions on demand, equal pay for equal work, no job discrimination and freedom for women political prisoners.

The crowd yells, "Women, let's unite and fight!"

On this day in 1970, the Women's Caucus of Youth Against War & Fascism reclaimed the celebration of International Women's Day in New York City as a day of revolutionary struggle in the streets against women's oppression. YAWF was the youth group of Workers World Party during the Vietnam War.

The day began with a spirited rally in Union Square, site of many historic socialist and labor rallies, which was chaired by Deirdre Griswold of the YAWF Women's Caucus. Speakers included representatives from many women's organizations: African American attorney Flo Kennedy, about her work to repeal New York's anti-abortion laws; Sue Davis, of the YAWF Women's Caucus on the revolutionary history of IWD; Dr. June Finer, of the Medical Committee on Human Rights on health care for women; and Kathy Ellis, of the New University Conference on the fight for daycare.

The Women's Caucus of the Young Lords Party — the revolutionary Puerto Rican youth group — sent a delegation. Iris Benitez, lieutenant of information for the Young Lords, spoke about how Antonia Martinez had been killed the day before in a struggle against ROTC — the U.S. military's Reserve Officers' Training Corps — at the University of Puerto Rico. (WW, March 26, 1970)

After the rally, protesters marched to the Women's House of Detention between 6th and Greenwich avenues. Before its relocation to Riker's Island in the mid-1970s, the jail housed political prisoners — from Ethel Rosenberg to Angela Davis.

The year before the demonstration, two members of the embattled Panther 21 — Joan Bird and Afeni Shakur — were held there after their arrest on April 2. The Panther 21 were members of the Black Panther Party arrested in a U.S. government Cointelpro frame-up, who were acquitted of all charges in 1971.

But most of the women at the "House of D" were in jail for alleged crimes of survival, driven by poverty and desperation into prostitution or theft.

The arrest of three YAWF women at the protest led to the formation of the Women's Bail Fund. To show solidarity with their sisters in prison, the group raised money to help women get out of jail and back on their feet financially.

Griswold, who since became editor of Workers World newspaper, says of that 1970 protest, "Marching from the rally to the House of Detention drew attention to the plight of poor and working-class women in particular and to women political prisoners. This revival of IWD was important because it took the day from being just a historical commemoration back to what it was originally — a struggle of the most oppressed women for their rights."

Communist roots!

IWD, traditionally held on March 8, began in 1908 as a day of action organized by socialist working women in the U.S.

A common misconception about IWD is that it began simply as a strike by women garment and textile workers in New York, either in 1857 or in 1908. However, research by feminist historian Temma Kaplan shows that this explanation is erroneous, and perhaps originated to separate IWD from its communist origins. Although there were strikes by women shirtwaist workers during those years, these were not related to the establishment of International Women's Day. (Feminist Studies, Spring 1985, 163-171)

In 1907, German socialist Clara Zetkin organized an International Conference of Socialist Women where participants, including Russian Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai, discussed ways to publicly support a struggle for women's equality and liberation.

Socialist women in New York City acted on this discussion in 1908 by holding a mass meeting on women's suffrage on March 8. Women workers also held a march.

In 1910, Zetkin proposed an International Women's Day at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen, and European socialists began to celebrate IWD in 1911. (Marian Sawer, "International Women's Day," Canberra Times, Feb. 17, 1997)

The focus of these efforts was not to establish a day of speeches and floral bouquets, but rather to bring poor and working-class women and women of oppressed nationalities into the class struggle and support the liberation of these women, as well as that of their sons, husbands, brothers, fathers and comrades.

Kollontai described IWD as "a day of international solidarity in the fight for common objectives and a day for reviewing the organized strength of working women under the banner of socialism." ("International Women's Day," Encyclopedia of Marxism, marxists.org)

The fiery power of working women in class struggle erupted on International Women's Day in Russia in 1917 in an event that culminated in the first of two revolutions that year. In Petrograd, on Feb. 23 in the Gregorian calendar, now March 8, thousands of women needletrade workers walked out of their factories and marched through the streets, chanting their demand for "Peace, bread and land!"

As working-class men joined them, the crowd swelled to 90,000, and the spark of revolution lit that day led first to the overthrow of the czar and then to the class struggle that culminated eight months later in the communist revolution in Russia.

Reviving IWD as a day of struggle

Spanish women demonstrated against the fascist forces of Gen. Francisco Franco to mark International Women's Day in 1937. And Italian women observed IWD in 1943 with militant protests against fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, who sent their sons to die in World War II. (WILPF Newsletter, findarticles.com)

But in the U.S. during the Cold War witch hunts of the McCarthy era, IWD demonstrations in the streets ended. By the 1950s, IWD celebrations were mainly small, indoor commemorative meetings.

Yet by the 1960s, a revolutionary wind was blowing new force into the struggle against women's oppression. Many women of all nationalities were increasingly inspired by the power of a people's fight — the Black Civil Rights and antiwar movements, La Raza and the American Indian Movement.

The women's liberation movement emerged out of the confluence of these great mass movements. And many women began to study Marxism and communist history, inspired in part by Mao Zedong's statement that "women hold up half the sky," as exemplified by Vietnamese women armed and fighting in a communist-led war for national liberation.

In 1968, socialist Laura X wrote an article calling for a renewal of IWD after watching Pudovkin's 1929 Soviet film, "The End of St. Petersburg," which highlighted the 1917 women workers' demonstration on IWD. In 1969 she joined with members of Berkeley Women's Liberation to organize an IWD street demonstration, which she believed to be the first in the U.S. since 1947.

IWD – 'a multinational, international movement against women's oppression that is part of a worldwide struggle against imperialism and war'

In 1970, 30 events took place worldwide on International Women's Day. (Laura X, ncmdr.org)

The 1970 YAWF revival celebrating IWD as a militant day of struggle in the streets was followed by biweekly meetings of the Women's Caucus. YAWF women combined theory with practice. They read and discussed Dorothy Ballan's "Feminism and Marxism" based on Frederick Engels' "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State." And they studied works by Zetkin, Kollontai and V.I. Lenin, that chronicled the revolutionary communist approach to women's oppression and struggle for liberation.

Today, the importance of that 1970 rally and the march to the Women's House of Detention blazes out from the past. With that event the YAWF Women's Caucus re-ignited the celebration of International Women's Day in the streets of New York as part of the militant, communist tradition.

Remembering the fighting spirit of that day, Griswold explains how its lessons are crucial in today's struggles: "Economic pressures today in the U.S. are forcing more and more women into the army or into prison.

"They need an alternative — a multinational, international movement against women's oppression that is part of a worldwide struggle against imperialism and war."

Monica Moorehead, Naomi Cohen, Sue Davis, Kathy Durkin and Sharon Eolis also provided information for this article, an earlier version of which was published in Workers World on Feb. 23, 2005.

March 25-26

Midwest WWP conference to link theory and practice

By Joe Mshahawar
Detroit

The Detroit branch of Workers World Party is co-hosting a Midwest Fightback Conference on March 25-26 with the Wayne State University branch of Students for a Democratic Society. WWP members from across the ravaged rustbelt will come together to put forward an analysis, forged in struggle, of the austerity, economic crises and national oppression that have come to characterize the region.

Guest speakers, such as the Venezuelan Consul General in Chicago and representatives of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, will help elevate these struggles and analyze both locally and beyond the Midwest, attacking imperialism at its very roots here and internationally.

Detroit was once an epicenter of working-class power and the Black Liberation struggle. Today it is at the heart of capitalist decay, financial dictatorship and genocidal national oppression. Though these assaults have permeated throughout the U.S., Detroit has long served as the frontline in the war against workers and oppressed people. Bankers, desperate for every last dollar of profit, imposed the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history on the city of Detroit, looting hundreds of millions of dollars from the people.

Thousands of families have had their water shut off to help clear neighborhoods for corporate scum intent on colonizing the city. This ethnic cleansing was preceded by hundreds of thousands of home foreclosures in pursuit of the same goal. The devastation wrought to Detroit by Wall Street's insatiable greed is very tangible and apparent. The homes, water, schools and communities of Detroit have all served as variables in an experimental project the ruling class wants to export throughout the U.S.

Confronting capital directly

The Detroit branch of WWP and its allies in the community have challenged this massive offensive head on, organizing revolutionary intervention and direct confrontations with the might of finance capital. Long before the municipal bankruptcy began, the very nature of capitalist relations were challenged. WWP raised the slogan "Make the banks pay!" — a demand that became the rallying cry of the movement.

Before the bankruptcy, during years of the ongoing foreclosure crisis, WWP members and friends were in the communities physically preventing foreclosures when court struggles failed. Throughout this fight, activists maintained the demand for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions, while raising legal precedents and analysis proving a moratorium is a feasible, no-cost demand. At every turn Detroit comrades have faced down the guns of finance capital, forging a revolutionary analysis of late-stage capitalism through this struggle.

Detroit WWP, our allies in SDS and other Midwest WWP cadre are holding this conference to bring our depth of experience to the new period we have entered. Many officials in the Trump administration are taking their devastating austerity policies from the Midwest to the federal level, giving our cadre in this region a unique perspective on the new attacks facing the workers and oppressed. The conference will also dive into the deep crisis of the imperialist empire, bringing analysis on conflicts from Syria to Africa and tying them to the war at home against racism, fascism and exploitation.

If you want to truly see the lengths capital will go to secure its profits, and the lengths the masses will go to resist, be in Detroit March 25-26 to hear it from revolutionaries on the frontlines.

For details, view the Facebook event page at tinyurl.com/zpnhrej; complete online registration at tinyurl.com/hqcpc2h.

Nurses strike multibillion hedge fund, defend patient care

By Joe Piette
Upper Darby, Pa.

A couple hundred community, political and labor activists rallied and marched on March 5 in support of 370 registered nurses and technical employees on the first day of a strike at Delaware County Memorial Hospital in the suburban Philadelphia town of Upper Darby. The workers are represented by the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals.

On the Facebook event page for the rally, the union gives some corporate background: "Prospect Medical Holdings' facilities across the country have come under critical scrutiny. Some of their hospitals have the worst possible patient satisfaction scores and are among the worst ranked in the nation. The company is under investigation by the IRS and the state of California and, despite operating hospitals in Delaware County, the hedge fund is registered in the state of Delaware and does not pay Pennsylvania corporation taxes." The company is a subsidiary of the multibillion-dollar hedge fund Leonard Green & Partners. (tinyurl.com/hrhtzgj)

The PASNAP union explains why all working people should support the strike: "The hospital's new owner, a for-profit, multibillion-dollar hedge fund, has refused to negotiate seriously over staffing and patient safety. ... For patients, our community and families, we must win a fair contract that ensures safety for the Delaware County community!

"DCMH is owned by Prospect Medical Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of the multibillion-dollar hedge fund Leonard Green & Partners. After months of contract negotiations, the hedge fund owners won't agree to critical patient safety issues. Nursing and technical staff deserve working and patient care conditions that prioritize high-quality health care.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

"Prospect has failed to live up to its promise to be a good community partner by investing $200 million in the hospital system to improve services," the union says. Instead, it notes: "This has resulted in an increased number of patients per individual employee, creating unsafe conditions for patients and staff alike. As a result, employees are leaving DCMH and staff are facing a shortage of basic equipment necessary to provide patient care. Currently, patient call-bell systems are broken and not functioning on at least two nursing units in the hospital. Prospect says it will be several weeks before the call-bell system is repaired or replaced. Meanwhile, patients are forced to use old-fashioned bells to call for their nurses, leading to great frustration for both patients and staff.

"In addition to differences concerning staffing, patient safety and the cost of health insurance, the union has brought charges against Prospect at the National Labor Relations Board because of their refusal to provide information, [their] illegal changes to employee health insurance rates, decreased number of staff at the hospital and other unilateral changes." ☐

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Illinois state workers fight back

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31, representing almost 40,000 state employees in Illinois, scored a small victory March 3 when an appellate court agreed to hear testimony about whether an impasse should be declared for negotiations between the union and Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration.

Contract negotiations have been at a standstill since January 2016, when Rauner left the bargaining table. (AFSCME31.org, March 3) Rather than negotiate in good faith, Rauner went over the workers' heads and had the state labor board "declare an impasse," meaning the state would be given power to unilaterally impose its contract terms. For Illinois state workers, who are majority women and people of color, this would mean a four-year wage freeze and more than a 100 percent increase in health plan premiums, amounting to $10,000 annually. (chicago.suntimes.com, March 3)

Not limiting their fightback to the courtroom, the workers voted 81 percent for a strike, if necessary. This is the first such authorization by state workers in Illinois history. (afscme31.org, Feb. 23)

The union announced plans to rally outside a Rauner Republican fundraiser on March 30 to demand the governor return to the bargaining table. For more information on the rally, go to tinyurl.com/ztowxuz.

Thousands march in Mississippi for Nissan union

Thousands of workers and their supporters marched to the Nissan plant in Canton, Miss., on March 4 to demand the company recognize the workers' civil and labor rights to join the United Auto Workers without threats or intimidation. At the rally, estimated at more than 4,000, actor Danny Glover, NAACP President William Brooks, Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba and Sen. Bernie Sanders supported what has become a national labor issue. Not only have unsafe working conditions and racist discrimination been exposed, but the nearly 5,000 Nissan auto workers — 80 percent African American — are determined to stop the mistreatment of temporary workers and gain a secure retirement.

Two days before the march, Nissan revealed its blatant anti-union bias. In violation of federal labor law, a security guard stopped workers, who were outside a plant gate, from handing out union literature and cards authorizing a union vote. This unfair labor practice charge joins several others filed with the National Labor Rights Board in a very long union campaign. (AP, March 3)

To sign a petition supporting the workers' right to unionize, visit drivingchangeatnissan.org.

Yale grad teachers vote union

Graduate students who teach classes or do research in six academic departments at Yale University voted Feb. 23 to join UNITE HERE Local 33. However, the vote in two other departments was too close to call, and one department voted not to join.

After the Aug. 23 NLRB ruling that student teachers at private universities could join unions, grad students at Columbia and Harvard voted for union representation, while those at Yale began to organize. Then Yale hired the traditionally anti-union law firm Proskauer Rose to defeat the union's voting strategy.

One union supporter told the Yale Daily News that a recent communitywide email against unionization from Lynn Cooley, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, helped: "Cooley's email was a welcome sign of desperation." Yale has fought grad student unionizing since the Graduate Employees and Students Organization — the precursor to Local 33 — was founded in the 1990s. (March 23)

Beware Trump's 'Right-to-Work' laws

Although candidate Trump vowed to create millions of jobs for unemployed or underemployed workers, President Trump is doing exactly the opposite. His viciously anti-worker agenda promotes so-called "right-to-work" (for less) laws designed to benefit bosses. Kentucky rammed through a RTW law in January, followed by Missouri and Iowa in February. A national RTW law is threatened.

Workers need to know the truth about RTW laws; they are the exact opposite of their title. Research conducted by the Economic Policy Institute shows both union and nonunion workers in RTW states have lower wages and fewer benefits, on average, than comparable workers in other states. EPI reports that wages in RTW states average 3.1 percent lower than those in non-RTW states, or $1,558 less for the typical full-time, full-year worker. To sign a petition to congress and state legislatures that exposes RTW, go to tinyurl.com/hnp44cq. ☐

NORTH CAROLINA

People's Assembly builds resistance

By Dante Strobino
Durham, N.C.

The People's Assembly held in Durham, N.C., on Feb. 25. WW PHOTO

Since the election of Donald Trump as president, activists across the country have been experimenting with various forms of resistance and power-building. As millions of women and their supporters marched on Jan. 21 in Washington, D.C., across the country and the world, tens of thousands demonstrated in cities across North Carolina to protest the administration's far-right program.

Mass protests coast-to-coast denounced Trump's Muslim ban, including at the Raleigh-Durham Airport. Tens of thousands of immigrant workers refused to go to work on Feb. 16, "A Day Without Immigrants," including in this state.

Additionally, some 3,000 people earlier demonstrated against the Ku Klux Klan's pro-Trump, so-called "victory kavalcade" on Dec. 3 in North Carolina.

A broad formation of grass-roots organizations has come together in North Carolina to build a People's Assembly, pulling together many of the local struggles for Black, immigrant, Muslim, worker, women's, LGBTQ, environmental and electoral rights. The assembly seeks to turn spontaneous actions into sustained organizing.

Over 100 people converged Feb. 25 at the third People's Assembly since November in Durham. They came from throughout North Carolina's Triangle region, including from Raleigh and Chapel Hill. Organizers seek to develop the People's Assembly as the frontline of resistance, uniting all forces in local communities, schools and workplaces, and engaging newly active people.

Coming on the heels of the Day Without Immigrants, the assembly's opening panel featured organizations which mobilize with undocumented workers, mostly Latinxs. These included Comité Popular Somos Raleigh and Alerta Migratoria NC from Durham. Organizers opened up with this struggle to allow participating workers to draw out lessons of this important strike, including how it relates to the Black freedom struggle, Trump's attacks on Muslims, the capitalist economy and all people's movements.

Since the November election, police and state troopers in Durham have killed three Black men: 24-year-old Kenneth "Simba" Bailey Jr.; 34-year-old Frank "Scooter Bug" Clark; and 31-year-old Willard Eugene Scott Jr. The People's Assembly will work with many forces to help organize future actions against police terror.

To continue developing mutual fightback plans, the assembly works to pull together activists from four key areas of struggle. These include those organizing around Black Lives Matter, police violence and prisons; immigrant rights; Islamophobia, repression against refugees and anti-war issues; and workers' rights, unionization and the Fight for $15.

At the assembly, participants broke down into these four areas and were encouraged to discuss how they could "go deeper" and reach out and build bases. They were asked to identify strategic workplaces, communities and schools where the movement should focus attention.

One example concerns a historically Black neighborhood in Durham, known as Lakewood. Due to recent gentrification, a lot of middle-income white people have moved into the area. The new residents are monitoring Emerald City, a Black-owned bar and community center, to document evidence of alleged wrongdoing in order to have the city shut it down. Assembly participants discussed building a presence in Lakewood as an act of solidarity with the Black community.

Build mass action on May Day!

Coming off the momentum from the Day Without Immigrants and hearing calls for a National General Strike — a day with no work, no school and no shopping — assembly participants discussed plans for local mass actions on May Day, International Workers Day. High school students discussed the potential for walkouts on May 1; workers took up the possibility of calling in sick to work.

Teachers with Organize2020 and the NC Educators Association announced plans to have morning "walk-in" rallies at flagpoles in front of their schools before the facilities opened in order to engage students, education workers and the community.

In fact, Chapel Hill schools have recently announced an optional teacher workday on March 8, International Women's Day, because so many teachers have announced they will not be at work that day. Other actions are being planned in the state to honor women's struggles on that historic date.

These are stepping stones to bigger, broader actions on May Day. Others encouraged plans to disrupt business as usual.

May Day originated in 1886, when workers, mostly immigrants, staged massive protests to win the 8-hour workday. In 2006, a massive countrywide strike by immigrant workers showed the potential for May Day this year.

There are many critical struggles going on now at the local, national and international levels. This year, May Day will show how people's power can be harnessed to shut down the racist, anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-worker system and build a new society. □

Protests erupt after Anaheim cop fires weapon

By Rebecka Jackson-Moeser
Los Angeles

A mixed group of Anaheim students were walking home from school on Feb. 21, when an off-duty Los Angeles police officer verbally harassed one of them for allegedly walking on his lawn and then grabbed 13-year-old Christian Dorscht. Videos of the incident show the white officer, Kevin Ferguson, who is at least a head taller than the youth, grabbing Dorscht's body and clothing and dragging him toward his house as the student attempts to break away. (tinyurl.com/hz72z7z)

Dorscht says the off-duty cop hit him in the genitals while dragging him away from his friends. He asked Ferguson to show proof of his claim that he was a police officer and informed his attacker he would sue him, which the cop then claimed was a threat to "shoot" him. During the kidnapping, Dorscht's resolute school companions did not abandon him. They protected their friend, calling out, "Let him go!" and recording the belligerent officer cursing at them.

One video shows that as Ferguson attempted to make away with Dorscht, dragging him through the yard, two of the student's friends made a gallant rescue effort: one child attempted to pull the officer's hand off Dorscht while another rushed him, trying to push him away. At this point, Ferguson pulled out his gun and discharged it, only inches away from several children.

Meanwhile, the police were called in. Although this was an active hostage situation involving children, when the LAPD arrived they did not arrest Ferguson, who was still holding onto Dorscht. Instead, they arrested two of the children.

After this disgusting incident, hundreds of protesters claiming child abuse and endangerment, child abduction, and illegal use of a firearm and assault, came out to support Dorscht the next day, Feb. 22. They openly condemned the officer's reckless actions and demanded justice from the historically racist and violent Anaheim Police Department. Police arrested 24 of the protesters.

The only thing done to the officer was to place him on leave. More than a week later, no charges have yet been pressed against him.

Damion Ramirez from the Young Survivors — Legacy Support Network was there to support the action. "The power of united people that day was overwhelming. Every single one of us rushed to defend a child who could be our own son, brother, friend. We in the movement to end police terror were inspired by the courage it took for a young Black brother to risk his life to save a young Brown brother from a stranger bullying him in the manner of every cop who is the problem," said Ramirez.

A YouFund campaign to help cover Dorscht's legal fees has raised almost double its expected goal and his family plans to sue Ferguson for attempted abduction. Dorscht suffered injuries to his neck, head and face while being dragged away by Ferguson. □

Vallejo, Calif.

Vigil demands justice for man cops killed

Nephew of Angel Rico Ramos.

By Terri Kay
Vallejo, Calif.

Angel Rico Ramos, age 21, was killed by Vallejo, Calif., police on Jan. 23. To add to the tragedy, his death was witnessed by many of his family members, including children.

The grieving family held a vigil for him in front of the Vallejo Police Department on Jan. 28, with the support of the Anti Police-Terror Project. When the Aztec dancers used the street in front of the VPD for their ritual dance, the police viciously started to threaten everyone with arrest.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Not willing to back down in seeking the truth about the killing of their loved one, the Ramos family invited community members to attend and make their voices heard during public comment at the next Vallejo City Council meeting, which was Feb. 28.

The family had two simple demands: The release of the officers' body camera footage and the naming of the officer(s) who killed Ramos.

Dozens of family, community and APTP members turned out at the City Council meeting and spoke in support of the family's demands. One of Ramos' sisters talked about how her 9-year-old son was interrogated by the VPD all night long after the murder and was not allowed to fall asleep. She said the boy still has nightmares about it and can't sleep.

City Council members were put on notice that the community will not tolerate a cover-up or failure to investigate. □

Trump speech 'his finest moment?'

Labor bureaucrats betray the working class

By Martha Grevatt

The ultra-rightist president of this country gave his first speech to Congress on Feb. 28. In the opening paragraph he employed liberal-sounding platitudes about "condemning hate and evil in all its forms." He then laid out a program of tax giveaways and deregulation for capitalists, union-busting school voucher schemes, a federal worker hiring freeze (blaming immigrants for unemployment and low wages) and "one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history."

Trump left unsaid the obvious fact that the working class, especially the poorest and most oppressed, will pay for this massive giveaway to the military and corporations. Everything is potentially on his chopping block -- from food stamps, Medicare and Medicaid, to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

One would expect even the moderate labor leaders in this country to issue a swift condemnation. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka or Change to Win General President James Hoffa Jr., who is also Teamsters president, could have shredded the ludicrous claim that "American companies are taxed at one of the highest rates anywhere in the world." In fact, General Motors, General Electric, Pfizer, Citibank and others have managed to shield billions in profits from taxation and even obtain tax credits.

'Class-collaborationist tradition'

Yet the day after the speech Trumka stepped into the studios of Fox Business News and called the speech "one of [Trump's] finest moments." He gave the president credit for the demise of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, knowing full well that the anti-worker trade agreement was already dead before Trump took office.

Worst of all, Trumka agreed with the racist lie that immigration brings down wages!

Trumka is not alone in his treacherous positioning. In January, days after the inauguration, Hoffa made back-to-back statements praising Trump for having "taken the first step toward fixing 30 years of bad trade policies" and for "executive orders today that will advance the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline and the Dakota Access Pipeline, creating thousands of good union jobs." Even before the president took office, leaders of the Building Trades unions, autoworkers and steelworkers unions all expressed a willingness to "give Trump a chance."

This accommodationism is a throwback to the racist craft unionism of Samuel Gompers, who founded the American Federation of Labor in 1884. Except for a brief one-year interlude, Gompers was president-for-life until his death in 1924. Though British-born himself, Gompers supported anti-immigrant legislation and advocated its strict enforcement, from the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act to the 1924 Immigration Act.

Instead of uniting the whole working class, the AFL fostered division; many AFL unions denied membership to workers of color and women. The AFL eschewed organizing the vast industrial workforce, organizing primarily skilled trades workers along narrow craft lines. Gompers supported the imperialist war machine in World War I.

After Gompers' death, William Green maintained the divisive orientation. Green denounced the heroic sit-down strikes of the 1930s and red-baited the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which organized the unorganized after splitting from the AFL in 1935. Green too served as president-for-life until his death in 1952.

It was Trumka's United Mineworkers, under the former leadership of John L. Lewis, that led the breakaway from the AFL. But now Trumka epitomizes that conservative, class-collaborationist tradition. Class-collaborationists behave as if by making nice with the class enemy -- through "labor-management cooperation" -- they can bargain a few more crumbs for their membership.

This current has dominated the U.S. labor movement since the purging of left unions and leaders during the McCarthy era. Not long after the purges, the AFL and CIO reunited under the third president-for-life, George ("I never walked a picket line") Meany.

By the 1980s, making concessions during bargaining became the labor movement norm. The capitalist class used the bargaining process to intimidate unions into giving up what they had fought for in the past. Union leaders peddled givebacks to their membership in order to keep U.S. companies profitable or "competitive." Workers were led to believe they could lose jobs if they fought back.

Now Trumka, Hoffa and their ilk have taken class-collaboration to its extreme manifestation. Going beyond partnership with individual companies, Trumka used the word "partner" to describe working with the fascistic administrator of the capitalist state on trade issues.

Many rank-and-filers are disgusted. If the labor "leader" fakers continue on this disastrous, suicidal course, they could find themselves walking past a picket line to get to their own plush offices.

Let's talk strike!

Even as hyper-speculation pushes the stock market to unseen heights, wages are falling, inflation is killing workers' budgets, and millions are still unemployed and underemployed. Organized labor should be among those "Shutting Shit Down." Trump's plan to cut federal jobs should be answered by a demand for a shorter work week -- with no cut in pay -- to spread the work to more people.

Even with only about 10 percent of the U.S. working class in unions, labor represents millions of workers strategically positioned to bring the economy to a standstill. What a crisis it was for Wall Street during the last New York City transit strike!

If the labor movement supported a call for a general strike, not only for their own members but the whole working class, it would provide a safety net for all workers who walk out. It would say to immigrants and low-wage workers: If you are courageous enough to risk your jobs by walking out on May Day, organized labor has your back.

There are voices that support this orientation. SEIU United Service Workers West, representing over 40,000 property service workers across California, issued a statement that reads in part: "It's time to stand up as a people against fascism and autocratic leadership.

"It's time to RESIST. It is time to defend all people, including workers, immigrants, Muslims, women, LGBTQ people. It is time to defend our climate, our schools and our unions.

"This is a call to all working people, to all communities: Join us in the streets in a general strike on May 1, 2017!

"The time has come to shut it down!"

MICHIGAN

Beating back billionaires' agenda

By Jerry Goldberg
Sterling Heights, Mich.

A militant demonstration organized by the Michigan Peoples Defense Network countered a Trump rally here on March 4. The anti-Trump demonstration was especially significant because Sterling Heights is located in Macomb County, a predominantly white working-class area where Trump decisively won the vote in the presidential election.

Sterling Heights has also been a place of struggle against racist elements attempting to shut down the building of a Muslim mosque in the city. The MPDN rally took place despite numerous threats against the organizers.

Chanting "No Trump! No KKK! No fascist USA!" "No hate! No fear! Immigrants are welcome here!" and "From Palestine to Mexico, tear down the walls!" a hundred demonstrators lined the sidewalk as Trump supporters entered "Freedom Hill," their rally site. When some of the right-wingers attempted to attack the MPDN demonstration, activists held strong and pushed them back.

The pro-Trump rally was poorly attended, with only several hundred people, well below right-wing organizer estimates, and seemingly characteristic of other pro-Trump actions that day across the U.S.

At a rally after the MPDN demonstration, speakers emphasized they will not abandon any section of the working class to Trump and his billionaire cabinet, who are using racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry to sow division among workers. The billionaires are pushing an agenda of tax breaks for the rich, abolition of the minimum wage and destruction of public education and health care. Ten percent of Macomb County residents stand to lose their health care if the Affordable Care Act is eliminated.

A young woman summed up the significance of the spirited counterprotest: "I am a Muslim immigrant. I came to Sterling Heights as a refugee queer woman. I am from Sterling Heights, but Sterling Heights did not represent me [in the election]. It voted against my dignity as a human being. To have everyone come out in such numbers ... means a lot." □

PHOTO: MOTOR CITY MUCKRAKER

Defending the people against billionaire bigots, March 4, Sterling Heights, Mich.

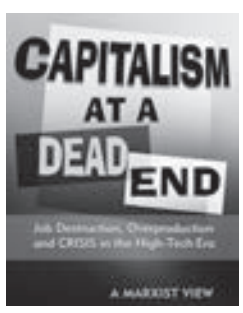
Youths disrupt pro-Trump bigots

By Jim McMahan

Anti-racist demonstrators besieged an "America First" rally in support of ruling-class President Donald Trump in Washington state's capital of Olympia on March 4. The pro-Trump rally was in concert with other rallies around the country.

The counterprotest of Olympia-area youth was attacked right at the beginning by state troopers, who arrested four demonstrators. Undeterred, the youth broke through the police tape and barricades and confronted the racist rally up close, with chants such as "No war! No KKK! No fascist USA!"

The action greatly disrupted the Trump bigots throughout their rally, which folded up an hour and a half before its scheduled ending time. The counterprotest was right on time, refusing to let the racists take the field unchallenged. □



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For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to **LowWageCapitalism.com**
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Trump gang in crisis, attacks on people spread

Continued from page 1

The head of the FBI, James Comey, has now demanded that the Justice Department refute these charges because, according to Comey, they are false. So far the Sessions Justice Department has refused to disavow the charges.

This public dispute between the White House, the Justice Department and the secret police spy agency has created the biggest political crisis for the capitalist government since the Watergate crisis that forced President Richard Nixon to resign in the summer of 1974.

Crisis of repression for undocumented workers

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is quietly expanding its arrests and harassment of undocumented workers. There was big coverage in mid-February when 680 undocumented workers were seized in raids in a one-week period.

The Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement have now changed their public relations strategy. The government is continuing raids all over the country, just not publicizing the total roundups. Take last week as an example. Three workers were picked up in Detroit and 16 were arrested in Ypsilanti, Mich. (freep.com); four workers were arrested in Trenton, N.J. (nj.com); six youth were arrested in Charlotte, N.C. (Charlotte Observer); a restaurant was shut down for two weeks when four workers were detained in York County, Pa. (phillyvoice.com); nine workers were arrested in Grand Island, N.Y., and 23 in Hamburg, N.Y., both near the border with Canada (wkbw.com).

These are random examples of at least 65 workers rounded up in one week at a wide variety of locations. The reports surfaced only on local radio stations and in local newspapers. They show that ICE agents are everywhere and are exercising their newfound authority to arrest any of the 11 million undocumented workers in this country.

More widely publicized was the arrest of the Dreamer Daniella Vargas in Jackson, Miss., after she spoke at a press conference denouncing the recent arrests of her relatives. ICE is supposedly not authorized to arrest Dreamers. Alongside this was the deportation of Romulo Avelica-Gonzalez while taking his daughter to school. These arrests were publicized only because cell phone videos were taken and distributed.

In addition to the government campaign against the undocumented, there is mounting murderous racism fomented by Trump and his Islamophobic rants. Two Indian men, Srinivas Kuchibhotla and Alok Madasani, were shot in Kansas. Kuchibhotla died as the alleged killer, Adam Purinton, yelled, "Get out of my country." Purinton also shot and wounded bystander Ian Grillot, who was trying to stop the attack. (New York Times, March 4)

> **'In addition to the government campaign against the undocumented, there is mounting murderous racism fomented by Trump and his Islamophobic rants.'**

A similar racist hate crime took place near Seattle a few days earlier when someone shot a Sikh man, Deep Rai, who was working on his driveway. The shooter also told Rai to "Go back home."

Furthermore, during the past month there have been numerous desecrations of Jewish cemeteries across the country, as well as bomb threats at dozens of Jewish community centers.

In another ominous sign, Attorney General Sessions has indicated he will not enforce the Justice Department's consent decrees, issued under the Obama administration, to rein in local police departments, most notoriously in Chicago. This can only be interpreted as a green light to police forces everywhere to step up already murderous repression.

In addition, Trump has rescinded protections for transgender students to use school bathrooms of their choice, and the Supreme Court has returned the case back to the lower court without a ruling.

Movement must deal with anti-Russia barrage

The movement is faced with a barrage of anti-Russian propaganda. The problem is that the anti-Trump forces in the capitalist political establishment, the media and especially the Democratic Party leadership are also at the present time the anti-Russia forces — i.e., the military hawks, the party of belligerence and militarism.

The tendency to root for the anti-Russia forces as long as they bring down Trump is very strong. It is the line of least resistance and a convenient political tool for Democratic Party leaders as well as many Republican politicians. Unless the movement resists this anti-Russia demagogy, it will align itself with the hawks of the ruling class.

The long-term goal of the U.S. ruling class with respect to Russia is to weaken Russia's independent government and turn it into a vassal state — the way it was under Boris Yeltsin, during the first eight years after the collapse of the USSR. Wall Street and the Pentagon want Moscow to follow Washington's lead, hand over investment rights and open up access to its vast resources.

Trump and especially ultra-right ideologue Bannon have a strategic vision of a rapprochement with Russia in preparation for a conflict with China and a conflict of civilizations with the Islamic world. (See WW, Feb. 23.) Their vision is not a peace plan.

In the torrent of accusations about Russian ties, some may be true, some may be false, and some are insignificant. In any case, they are part of a massive attempt to block any move by the White House to relax relations with Russia and make concessions on sanctions, in the Ukraine or anywhere else.

On the other hand, no one should be swayed by false nostalgia for the USSR, which was a socialist country. Putin is the agent of Russian nationalism, which means he represents the Russian ruling class, made up of anti-socialist oligarchs. Reactionaries throughout Europe and Russia consider Putin the "great white Christian hope."

Putin is helping the Syrian government for strictly geostrategic reasons; Russia is defending a base in the Mediterranean that dates back to the USSR. He is helping the resistance in Ukraine in order to keep the country, which borders Russia, from being swallowed up by the West. Progressives should support these efforts, without falling under the illusion that because Putin is backing some progressive causes, he and his oligarchic regime are progressive.

Trump and Russian money

In addition to strategic political goals, one cannot discount the possibility that Trump's relations with Russia are also based on financial interests. Trump has adamantly refused to release his tax returns. He has claimed that he has nothing to do with Russia. These are dubious claims.

One example is the case of his Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and his connections with Russian money. Ross is a billionaire parasite who specializes in buying up companies in financial difficulty, stripping them of their assets and selling them off.

According to multiple sources (Miami Herald, New York Times and Rachel Maddow of MSNBC), Ross is the primary owner of the Cyprus Bank. This bank is known as a haven for laundering money for Russian oligarchs. When Cyprus had a banking crisis in 2014 and depositors could not get their money, Ross participated in the rescue, together with the Russian government.

Ross then invited the head of Deutsche Bank to head Cyprus Bank. Deutsche Bank recently had to pay a $630 million fine for laundering $10 billion in Russian money. Deutsche Bank has been the only major bank to loan money to Trump.

Another partner in Cyprus Bank was Dmitry Bybolovlev, a Russian multibillionaire potash king. Bybolovlev was trying to hide his assets and in 2008 bought a Trump property in Palm Beach for $95 million — a U.S. record at the time. Trump had bought it in 2004 for $41 million. So Trump made a $54 million profit on the sale. P.S.: Bybolovlev never set foot in the mansion, and it has since been torn down.

There are numerous other connections between Trump and Russian money, including the admission in 2008 by his son Donald Jr. that "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross section of a lot of our assets." (deathandtaxes.com) There are also recent reports of Trump dealings in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. So political and financial interests may merge in the case of Trump. His greed is legendary, and that has been a powerful force all his life.

Massive removal of regulatory protection for workers and environment

Steve Bannon, the Trump ideologue, has used the phrase "deconstruction of the administrative state." Translated into ordinary language, that means the destruction of all regulations that protect workers, oppressed people and the environment.

The Trump administration is rushing to destroy all regulatory restrictions on corporate greed. Over 90 major regulations are in the process of being stayed, delayed or removed since Trump took office. (NY Times, March 5)

Seventeen automakers have submitted a list of regulatory changes they want, including removal of mileage standards, emission controls, etc. The pharmaceutical industry is asking that restrictions be removed on prescription drugs for unapproved uses. Trump has already lifted regulations on coal mining and oil and gas exploration.

Trump has overturned a rule that protected pension investors from fraud and another that protected drinking water from pollution.

Banks no longer have to charge fees to their high-income customers to protect against high-risk losses. The Business Roundtable has submitted a list of 16 rules it wants removed.

Rules regarding air pollution, unemployment compensation, endangered species, credit card fees, drilling on the Arctic Shelf, data security, internet neutrality and many other issues are under review. In each case the requests for reviews come from corporate pressures. It's no wonder the stock market is surging.

Such regulatory protections embody a century of struggle to protect the environment, consumer safety, workers' health and safety, wages and working conditions. They have already been eroded in many cases. But Trump and Bannon are making a full-scale assault.

This calls for a massive fightback.

There has already been a good national turnout, especially in Wisconsin, for the Day Without Immigrants. Women are planning a Day Without Women on International Women's Day. And May Day demonstrations are being talked about across the country.

Waiting for Trump to be toppled from above is conceding to the class enemy the primary role of getting rid of Trump. Trump needs to be toppled from below — by mass resistance. That is the only road to victory. □

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No, he's not crazy, he's a capitalist

By Ava Lipatti

The writer self-identifies as a person with mental illnesses.

A common insult hurled at President Donald Trump by the liberal media is that he's "crazy," "insane" or "mentally ill." But what is the impact of using such insults against a fascistic bigot?

Calling Trump "mentally ill" implies that people with mental illnesses are inferior or that it's shameful to have a mental illness. Capitalism already demonizes, ostracizes and discards people with mental illnesses. To call Trump mentally ill passively supports this oppressive system, which is inherently ableist.

The capitalist class promotes ableism because they find it economically useful. People with disabilities may have more difficulty carrying out their labor, or they may require special accommodations to do so. The capitalist class, which values profit over people, seeks to streamline the labor process, to cut costs and maximize profits wherever possible.

The needs of people with disabilities can throw a wrench in this simplification process. In fact, people's disabilities are often defined and understood in business terms through what types of labor they hinder.

The capitalist class promotes the idea that people with disabilities are "useless" because they get in the way of profits reaped through exploiting workers. A measure of their being "expendable" under capitalism is that people with disabilities, especially those of oppressed nationalities, are disproportionately targeted by police terror. Nearly half of people murdered by U.S. cops are identified as "disabled." (tinyurl.com/zn79rup).

Ableism cannot be anti-fascist

In a fascist system, in a last-ditch effort to save capitalism, all systems of oppressions are intensified to crush the working class and oppressed into submission. In Nazi Germany, an estimated 600,000 to 675,000 individuals were sterilized or killed under medical rationalizations. This included an estimated 250,000 people diagnosed by doctors as having schizophrenia. (tinyurl.com/hlpshjg)

Nazis gave an ableist and racist reason for the genocidal extermination of people with disabilities, saying their deaths would "purify the Aryan race." This bigoted rationale is called eugenics. The United States has a long history of ableism and eugenics, which was adapted by the Nazis. (tinyurl.com/o6bgjz8)

In fact, the Nazi regime committed the crime of genocide against a wide range of people, from communists to Jews to Romani people to left-wing Christians to LGBTQ people to people with disabilities, in an effort to break all peoples' political and worker resistance in the midst of Germany's collapsing capitalism.

To demonize Trump as mentally ill is to fall into lockstep with fascism, capitalism and white supremacy, because ableism goes hand-in-hand with all three.

Class interests, not personalities

Ableist attacks on Trump are not only bigoted, they're also unscientific and ahistorical. Marxists understand that imperialist capitalism isn't about personalities or individuals, it's a system. Analysis starts by understanding the social and economic relations that permeate all of society. Specifically, the history of society is that of a class struggle between the "haves" and the "have nots."

Liberalism says that personalities, individuals and policy are decisive in making history, rather than class struggle. Thus, liberals focus on Trump's personality, rather than his class interests. Part of painting Trump as "mentally ill" is painting him as "irrational" as an individual.

But Trump is a capitalist billionaire. From his perspective, there's nothing irrational about his worldview! He acts in the interests of his class, the capitalists, just as we act in the interests of our class, the working class, and oppressed.

As long as capitalism exists, the ruling class will promote bigoted views, because it is in their class interest to target and divide the working class.

Painting reactionaries as "crazy" or "irrational' will not make them change either their behaviors or beliefs. These are tied by a thousand threads to the interests of the capitalist class.

Attack from the left

As revolutionary socialists, we must level our attacks on Trump from the left. It is crucial that we understand the class interests of Trump, Bannon and the Wall Street billionaires who increasingly support them.

When we criticize our enemies from a reactionary perspective, rather than a revolutionary perspective, we only hurt ourselves. The ableist insults thrown at Trump distract us from the real reasons why Trump is bad. A similar distraction is the Russophobia and homophobia directed at the alleged Trump-Putin connection.

That narrative only draws attention away from Trump's and Bannon's proto-fascist policy and the everyday violence of imperialist capitalism as a whole. The Democratic Party and the liberal media push this bigoted narrative because their primary goal is not to resist Trump. Rather, they want to save the corrupt Democratic Party establishment — and capitalism.

Trump's actions should be named what they are: white-supremacist, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, anti-woman, war-mongering and anti-worker!

We have so many reasons to fight Trump, and none of these have to do with mental illness. □

Letter from the South:

On mental illness and movement unity

This is a statement about what it is like to be mentally ill in a time when all of your "progressive" Democrat friends keep writing the "fascist president" off as being mentally ill, instead of confronting his white supremacist, right-wing extremist views and actions.

I was 22 years old when I was finally diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I say "finally" because I had known for years. But due to living in a capitalist society, I often have to prioritize rent and electricity over my own health — both mental and physical. I could not afford to see a professional for long enough to be diagnosed.

The diagnosis came after ten years of battling depression as a result of trauma I faced as an adolescent. These days, my depression is not as bad. I take medication for it, though I still have my days.

Being an organizer, there are many intersections and oppressions I must and do recognize, and one of those intersections is mental illness. I am a mentally ill, queer, transgender, working-class communist and Southerner. I am not ambiguous about these intersections because I cannot afford to be.

All of these things that I am are facing new threats of violence every day with the rising tide of hatred unleashed by the election of Donald Trump and his reactionary administration.

At this point, we are out in the streets disrupting, organizing and struggling together almost every day, as we should be. Communities are striving for the necessity of unity. Each day, solidarity across all oppressed communities grows more and more.

And there is nothing quite as dangerous as the power of the united people.

But in our communities there seems to be a unity-breaking trend in activist discussion. (I say "our" as I see this in all of my own communities.)

Instead of continuing to confront the right-wing extremism and white-supremacist views of the Trump administration, people are quick to write Trump and his cronies off as being "crazy" or "having some kind of mental illness."

People seem to not want to say Donald Trump is, for instance, a stone-cold racist bigot. Rather they find solace in saying: "He is mentally ill! He is crazy!" And then come the multiple diagnoses: "He's schizophrenic!" "He has narcissistic personality disorder!" and "He is bipolar!"

That last one hits me personally, especially when comrades and friends who keep saying it also know I also have bipolar disorder.

When Trump's reactionary views are reduced down to a mental illness, it perpetuates a stigma against me and every other neurodivergent person that our mental illnesses are synonymous with awful, reactionary views and behavior. And they are not.

Neurodivergent people lead!

Neurodivergent people are in the leadership of the movement. But due to our intersecting identities, we have often had to put our own illnesses on the backburner.

If Donald Trump or any of his administration do have a mental illness, that is not the reason they are Nazi sympathizers or hate LGBTQ people. That does not absolve them of their reactionary views. It is dangerous to assume that mental illness is the reason why they are the way they are.

This is like saying white-supremacist Dylann Roof was "crazy" because he murdered nine Black people in cold blood while they worshipped in their Charleston church. People who use this horrid rhetoric are not acknowledging and confronting their own place in white supremacy either. This is a practice all white people, myself included, must self-criticize and work on changing if we truly wish to dismantle and destroy white supremacy once and for all.

Accusing Trump and his ilk of being mentally ill comes off as either trying to absolve them of their bigoted actions or as demonizing mentally ill people. Even neurotypical people who are calling for an end to ableism perpetuate ableism themselves when they deem Trump "crazy."

If you cut mentally ill people out of our movements, then that is counterrevolutionary, and there is no real progress made.

In order for any revolution to occur, ableism must truly be crushed, and stigmas must be done away with. This means those who call themselves revolutionaries or communists, or dedicate themselves to a path of freedom and liberation, must also dedicate themselves to crushing all forms of oppression.

Smash ableism! Call Trump what he is — a far-right-wing extremist, a racist and white supremacist, an Islamophobe and anti-Semite, a woman-hater, a vile bigot against LGBTQ people, a fascistic friend of the KKK, an authoritarian xenophobe.

But do not call Donald Trump mentally ill.

Devin Cole, a trans organizer and organizer of the Pensacola Airport protest, is president of Pensacola STRIVE (Social Trans Initiative) and director of operations for the Florida Transgender Alliance.

Rainbow Solidarity
In Defense of
CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg author of 'Stone Butch Blues'

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

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

Available at major booksellers online

Women workers opened Russian revolution

100 years ago

One hundred years ago the women workers of St. Petersburg, Russia, began a strike on ***International Women's Day*** *which opened the struggle that soon ended the 370-year rule of the czars and led in eight months to the first socialist state. A key factor was the change in consciousness of the soldiers in the city's garrison. The following is excerpted from John Catalinotto's new book, "Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions."*

On Feb. 23, 1917, by the Julian calendar used in Russia at that time — March 8 in the rest of Europe — a 25-year-old revolutionary sailor, whose Bolshevik party name was Raskolnikov, looked out his window in Petrograd, Russia's industrial center and capital.

The Russian rulers had decided calling the city Petrograd instead of Saint Petersburg would sound less German, as they were at war with Germany. Raskolnikov thought, "Today is Women's Day. Will something happen in the streets today?" Something did happen. Some 128,000 workers were on strike. The whole city was seething.

As things turned out, "Women's Day" was fated to be the first day of the revolution. Working women, driven to despair by their hard conditions and prey to the torments of hunger, were the first to come out onto the streets demanding "bread, freedom and peace." The crowds were facing down police mounted on horses, who would push the people around or smack them with the flat side of their swords.

Wrote one observer: "[A]s soon as the mounted policemen had returned to the roadway, the crowd would close up again into a solid mass. In some of the groups we could see men, but the overwhelming majority consisted of working women and workers' wives."

Eight weeks earlier, as 1917 was beginning, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, whose party name was Lenin, was in exile in Zürich, Switzerland, where he had been organizing and speaking against the great imperialist war. In a talk to young students, he remarked that Russians as old as he was — forty-six at the time — would likely never see a revolution overthrow the Russian czar, but that the youth would.

Even this most revolutionary leader of the working class was surprised by the explosive speed of change in Russia. One can only imagine how oblivious Czar Nicholas II was at that time to his imminent fate.

As Raskolnikov wrote, the first of the two 1917 revolutions in Russia began on Feb. 23 with a strike of women workers on International Women's Day. The action grew into a general strike and mass political revolution in the capital city that overthrew the czarist monarchy that had ruled Russia since 1547. The attitude and actions of low-ranking soldiers and sailors were a determining factor in the revolution's success.

Background to the revolution

The czarist empire had ruled over many subject peoples — Finns, Lithuanians and Estonians in the Northwest; Poles and Ukrainians in the West; Georgians, Armenians and many Turkic and mostly Muslim peoples in the Caucasus and South; plus Indigenous peoples throughout the Arctic and Siberian regions; and Jews and other minorities throughout its vast territory.

Czarist Russia was far less developed economically than the major imperialist powers in Western Europe — Germany, France and Britain. Some five-sixths of Russia's 185 million people were peasants, who had been liberated from legal serfdom in 1861, but were still in the thrall of the landlords and the nobility. About twenty-six million of its people were wage laborers in 1917, including 6.5 million farm laborers and another six million in private and state-owned industry.

Although a smaller part of the total population than in Germany, Britain and the United States, the workers in Russian industry were more concentrated, toiling in recently established giant factories that employed thousands and even tens of thousands of workers.

Russia was by far the poorest of the major countries, yet some fifteen million men, mainly peasants, were drafted and thrown into the battles of World War I, with little training or equipment. They were cannon fodder. By 1917, more than two million had died and another four million were wounded.

With so many men under arms, a large number of women were employed in heavy industry in Petrograd; women made up about one-third of the workforce there. More than 100,000 of these women went out on strike on Feb. 23, defying the czarist state, defying the cautions of their political parties, defying everyone. That first day, the striking women escaped clashes with the police generally unscathed.

Encouraged by this success, male workers joined the women the following day, and in all more than 200,000, or half of the city's workers, were in the streets. General Sergei Khabalov, who commanded the Petrograd army garrison, was responsible for controlling the demonstration.

But the workers, and especially the women, many of whom were soldiers' wives, were talking with the garrison troops. They were even approaching the Cossacks, who were mounted troops often used in punitive actions against crowds, but who showed the workers they were weary of this unpleasant duty. On the other hand, the workers were hostile toward both the regular police and the secret police; the latter especially were enemies of the people and staunch defenders of the czar.

A political intellectual named N.N. Sukhanov, who was in the internationalist wing of the Menshevik Party (the right wing of the old Russian Social Democratic Labor Party), wrote a detailed eyewitness account of the 1917 Revolution. In this book, he described one telling moment when a Cossack became so riled up seeing a police inspector attack one of the demonstrators with his sword that he "flew at the inspector and slashed off his hand."

Soldiers turn the guns around

On Feb. 26, as ever-friendlier fraternization between the workers and the troops was going on, something special happened. Something like this has probably taken place in every successful revolution in urban society. Soldiers from the Pavlovsky regiment, a major military unit of the Petrograd Garrison, witnessed a police unit on one side of a river fire on the people protesting on the other. Sukhanov wrote:

"Seeing this shooting at unarmed people and the wounded falling around them, and finding themselves in the zone of fire, the Pavlovskys opened fire at the police across the canal."

When a regiment as big as the Pavlovsky breaks with tyranny, its soldiers have only one road forward: Spread the rebellion — or die. That same day representatives of the workers and peasants' parties — the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries — gathered to form the Petrograd Soviet, the Russian word for "council." This political leadership of the revolution, for its part, had to help spread the soldiers' rebellion.

That evening, the Provisional Executive Committee, elected from the Petrograd Soviet, convened, declaring that the Soviet was now open. Its first task was to begin organizing emergency rations for the garrison troops who had come over to the revolution. The mutinous soldiers knew they were still a minority of the garrison, and their lives were on the line if the revolution was not carried through to the end. They needed to act.

They began to arrest members of the ordinary police, still loyal to the czar, and of the hated secret police. One by one the troops of a dozen other regiments met and decided to pledge their allegiance to the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Their representatives went to the Petrograd Soviet and reported from the regiments' assemblies:

"They told us to say that we refuse to serve against the people any more, we're going to join with our brother workers, all united, to defend the people's cause. ... We would lay down our lives for that. Long live the revolution!"

Soviet reaches out to the troops

At this point the political leaders changed the name of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, thus fusing the spontaneous rank-and-file soldier organizations to the workers' councils.

The Soviet received a report that a regiment loyal to the czarist regime was arriving, which caused some nervousness, but Sukhanov ended his text with this description that showed how much the population and all of the army had turned against Czar Nicholas and the war:

"Later we [Soviet members] became persuaded that any attempt to dispatch troops for the pacification of Petersburg was fruitless. All the 'loyal' troops preserved their loyalty and obeyed their commanders only as far as the railway stations, then immediately went over to the side of the revolution, and the commanders obeyed them."

The Bolsheviks, Lenin's party, may have been as surprised as everyone else with how quickly the revolutionary movement was developing, but they were the first to adapt to the new situation. Groups of Bolshevik workers raided police stations, took weapons and passed them out to their supporters. The soldiers, who as a whole were still wavering, could then see there were armed, determined and well-organized contingents of workers who were ready to see the revolution to its end.

With tens of thousands of troops already in a state of mutiny and facing deadly punishment if the revolt were to end before overthrowing the czar, the troops who had already mutinied had no option but to reach out to their brother soldiers and win them over to the revolution. It was no difficult task, as the rank-and-file soldiers were completely fed up with the hated czar and the rest of the nobility, and most were anxious to return to their farms. In the next few days the entire Petrograd garrison joined the Revolution.

The empire ends

Pressured by the bourgeois parties in a new government, on March 1 Czar Nicholas II attempted to abdicate in favor of his brother Mikhail, but Mikhail refused to take over the sinking ship. The czarist ministers were arrested.

Armed soldiers answering to the Soviet arrested any police who were still on the streets interfering with the masses, who were in turn tearing down the symbols of czarist rule. On March 3, the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet ordered the arrest of the czar, who attempted to flee. He was captured, along with the rest of the royal family. The empire had ended.

It was the first big step that was to lead over the next eight months to a revolution that would not only remove the nobility but end the rule of the capitalists and change the course of the 20th century.

Sources: Raskolnikov's "Kronstadt and Petrograd in 1917"; Sukhanov's "The Russian Revolution 1917," Vol. 1; and "1914-1918-Online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War (WW1)."

NEW

TURN THE GUNS AROUND
Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions

by John Catalinotto
Available at online booksellers

WORKERS WORLD editorial

‘An injury to one...’

The new immigration ban order signed by President Donald Trump on March 6 is a continuation of the all-out assault on the multinational U.S. working class by the extremist far-right administration.

The Islamophobic ban, tweaked from an earlier version to try to evade legal challenge, still bars entry into the U.S. of citizens of Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya. Iraq was exempted by request of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to aid U.S. military action there.

Omar Jadwat, the director of the Immigrants' Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union, described the order clearly: “[I]t's just another run at a Muslim ban.”

This presidential order is one more wave in a torrent of repression and terror against all immigrants unleashed by the election of the xenophobic president. The attack on immigrants had previously been ramped up under President Barack Obama whose agencies deported almost 3 million people between 2009 and 2014.

The bipartisan attacks on immigrants reveal a consistent ruling-class strategy of “divide-and-conquer” — an attempt to defeat a rising U.S. worker movement.

The U.S. working class is increasingly young, of color, multinational, multigendered, low-wage — and reeling economically from the continued effects of the 2007 Great Recession. These workers are forging closer and closer ties with each other. And immigrant workers, with traditions of resistance in and connections to their countries of origin, threaten the ruling class with unity among the international working class.

Daniela Vargas exemplifies the militant challenge by young immigrant workers. She held a press conference on March 1 to denounce Trump's first immigrant ban and the aggressive Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency raids that detained her family. Now Vargas, herself undocumented, is threatened with deportation, despite being brought to the U.S. as a 7-year-old and knowing no other home.

Vargas and other young “Dreamers” who came undocumented as children to the U.S. were offered some protection under the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. But now they find themselves threatened by the racist, anti-worker ideology enforced by ICE, as well as the Department of Homeland Security, both of which particularly target people of color.

The racist terror campaign against immigrants ratcheted up March 4 when DHS announced tentative plans to separate children from their families trying to enter through the U.S. southern border with Mexico.

Meanwhile, a horrific sweep of raids continues across the country. This unprecedented oppressive attack includes hiring 10,000 new ICE agents, building more detention centers and “deputizing” local law enforcement to arrest and detain oppressed people. (For a detailed WW article on the raids, see Teresa Gutierrez, “Wave of Terror Unleashed on Immigrants,” Feb. 28)

The challenge for all revolutionaries, for all in the multinational working class, for all on the path to liberation and justice is to forge solidarity with those being targeted.

We must live the old union slogan: “An injury to one is an injury to all.” If we hesitate and underestimate this threat, we will weaken the struggle to smash racism and the threat of fascism.

If we unite and move boldly forward in solidarity against these attacks, we will strengthen working-class unity and the struggle for revolutionary socialism. □

Behind the new lies about Korea

By Deirdre Griswold

The establishment media are suggesting that Donald Trump's tweets accusing Barack Obama of tapping his phones are just a diversion to keep the media from focusing on why Attorney General Jeff Sessions had to recuse himself from a federal investigation into the Trump campaign's connections with Russia.

It's a likely assumption. Trump has a history of flooding the media with wild accusations.

But here's the question: Why aren't the media equally skeptical of the even more melodramatic story coming from the ruling group in south Korea accusing the government of north Korea — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — of assassinating a half-brother of that country's leader in an airport in Malaysia? Why do they report this bizarre charge with a straight face?

In both cases, there are compelling reasons to suspect that the stories given out are false and self-serving. In the Korean case, it draws attention away from a much bigger scandal involving the south Korean ruling authorities.

Yet, in all the U.S. media reports of the Seoul regime's accusations, there is not one word about the huge political crisis now facing the ruling group in south Korea and the billionaires who are embroiled in it.

The head of Samsung, the country's biggest corporation, was arrested on Feb. 17 and charged with giving a $38 million bribe to the south Korean president, Park Geun-hye, who had pardoned the Samsung head of earlier criminal charges.

For nearly a year, millions of south Koreans have taken to the streets demanding the resignation of President Park. The parliament voted on Dec. 9 to impeach her for corruption. She has refused to go, and the Park dynasty (her father became president in 1961 through a military coup) is hanging by a thread.

U.S. uses south Korea as military base

The DPRK in the north has remained independent of foreign domination ever since its socialist revolution in the 1940s.

A guerrilla struggle had liberated the people in the north from Japanese colonial rule, and the leader of that struggle, Kim Il Sung, became the north's first president.

The south, on the other hand, has been under the control of Washington and Wall Street ever since U.S. troops landed there at the end of World War II. The first president installed in the south, Syngman Rhee, had safely sat out the war in New Jersey and was flown back to Korea in a U.S. military plane in 1945.

Now, the U.S. military has begun its largest war “games” ever, called Foal Eagle and Key Resolve, in south Korea. Lasting until April, these involve nuclear-equipped air and sea forces in a simulation of an invasion of north Korea. In last year's exercises, 300,000 troops participated, including both south Korean and Japanese personnel.

The Pentagon is also preparing to install its THAAD missile system, which is aimed at China and Russia as well as the DPRK, in south Korea. China and Russia have denounced this escalation of military threats in the region as raising the danger of nuclear war.

It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to see that the U.S. ruling class — including both the Trump camp and those against him — has a great deal at stake in diverting attention away from the mass uprising threatening to topple the corrupt Park regime in south Korea. □

Rally denounces anti-Semitic attacks in Philly

When news surfaced on Feb. 26 that hundreds of gravestones had been toppled and damaged at the Mount Carmel Jewish Cemetery in northeast Philadelphia and several Jewish centers had received bomb threats, area communities were quick to respond. On March 2, thousands turned out for a lunchtime “Stand Against Hate” rally outside the Liberty Bell at 6th and Market streets.

The desecration of headstones at Mount Carmel followed a pattern seen earlier in St. Louis, Mo., and Rochester, N.Y. An increase in bomb threats against Jewish centers across the country has also been reported. These anti-Semitic attacks are taking place at the same time as a spike in fire bombings of Muslim mosques across the U.S.

All these attacks are a clear reflection of the agenda of far right elements now serving as advisors in President Donald Trump's White House.

The rally in Philadelphia was heavily dominated by Democratic Party politicians who have done little to expose Trump's racism and links to the right wing, while themselves embracing policies that support attacks on immigrants and other people of color.

However, some signs in the crowd spoke to the need for solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Several speakers linked the attacks on Jewish cemeteries to Trump's policies of excluding Muslim immigrants, his raids on undocumented immigrant families and the rash of fire bombings of Muslim mosques.

— Report by Betsey Piette, photo by Joe Piette

‘No surrender, no retreat’

“We come here to honor them — to commemorate Black resistance both inside and outside the walls!” announced Dequi Kioni-Sadiki to a very large crowd at the Harlem State Office Building. She said this as chairperson of the “21st Annual Dinner Tribute to Political Prisoners and their Families” on March 4.

The Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and the Black Panther Party sponsored this event for the many dedicated advocates of men and women incarcerated, as many say, because of their struggles with the BPP and the many liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These political prisoners include Herman Bell, Seth Hayes, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Move 9, Leonard Peltier, Sundiata Acoli and Verona Bowers.

“When we say ‘Black resistance matters: No surrender, no retreat,’ it is because neither our captured freedom fighters, their families or the movement lawyers and doctors we will be honoring have [surrendered or retreated],” said Kioni-Sadiki. She went on to salute the “unsung legal warriors” representing the prisoners. Those who were hailed at the event and who attended were Jill Soffiyah Elijah, Joan Gibbs, Florence Morgan, Bob Boyle, Nkechi Taifa, Susan Tipograph and Eve Rosahn. Also cited were Lynne Stewart, who is gravely ill, and Michael Tarif Warren, who could not attend.

This annual tribute was established 21 years ago by Iyaluua Ferguson, spouse of the late co-founder of the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and former political prisoner Herman Ferguson. This dinner was called to build support for political prisoners and to raise funds for their commissary needs.

There were cultural performances by Harlem's own spoken word and dancing artists and revolutionary Brooklyn hip-hop artist “Spirit Child & The New Black Arts Movement.”

— Photo and story by Anne Pruden

‘White Helmets’ exposed

Requiem for U.S. war propaganda

By Taryn Fivek
New York

Dozens of musicians pretended not to know each other while carrying huge instruments across Manhattan. They sat on steps inside Grand Central Station, texting on their phones and keeping an eye out for notifications. About 50 musicians had been hired to perform the famous “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s 9th Symphony.

They were supposed to appear as a “flash mob,” an event that draws the attention of crowds by appearing spontaneously in a public space. Of course, the flash mob had been planned far in advance, but its success would depend on its secrecy.

However, when the musicians took their places and unpacked their instruments, about a dozen activists from different anti-racist, anti-imperialist organizations gathered nearby with a banner. It seemed part of the sudden event and no one moved to stop them. As Beethoven’s 9th rang out across the main hall of Grand Central Station, the multinational, multigender comrades held up the 30-foot banner with a simple yet powerful message: “USA Out of Everywhere.”

A firm called Big Hit Events had been contracted to pull off Beethoven’s 9th in Grand Central as part of a video propaganda campaign to promote the White Helmets. As reported in WW and other media, the White Helmets were started by British mercenary James Le Mercier. They have been sold to the public as a “humanitarian organization” when, in reality, they are a front for regime change and increased U.S. intervention in Syria.

The argument for a war on Syria is weak, as people in the United States are sick of war. Millennials have not lived in a world without the U.S. wreaking havoc and destruction. They also favor socialism over capitalism, according to a survey published on Salon.com last July.

Any public relations agency, such as The Syria Campaign (based in London) and its parent company Purpose (based in New York), would be hard-pressed to sell war to such a population. That’s why their strategy has been a high-gloss propaganda campaign to confuse and demoralize anti-war sentiment.

This campaign includes the Oscar-winning White Helmets documentary on Netflix and ready-for-YouTube spectacles like the Grand Central flash mob. Nobody expects this will produce a giant march to demand war. But, by portraying the Syrian government as evil, it is meant to discourage the anti-war movement from mobilizing to stop U.S. intervention. What the ruling class wants is for everyone to stay home.

As the banner wound its way around the musicians, three activists made their way into the impromptu orchestra pit, holding up signs that read “Hands off Syria!” “This is U.S. war propaganda” and “No U.S. bases in Syria.”

The activists were silent and did not interfere with the concert, allowing the music to serve as a powerful backdrop to the action itself. The PR agency that had spent tens of thousands of dollars to argue for war was now providing a platform for an anti-war agenda instead.

At Grand Central Station, protesting U.S. intervention everywhere.

“This was a really creative action,” said one organizer. “We made a big impact with just a handful of people, and nobody got picked up” — meaning kidnapped by the police.

While the flash mob was contracted by a PR agency, the actual client remains unknown. However, after the action, an army of journalists, artists, writers and so-called activists all connected to a shady PR firm, The Syria Campaign, took to social media to loudly condemn it. Anna Nolan, director of The Syria Campaign, accused the activists of being paid by the Russian government.

In the end, though, praise far outweighed the negative feedback: Tweets from the action were shared more than 2,000 times, and video taken of the peaceful disruption received more than 70,000 views.

The musicians, who worked wonderfully under pressure, expressed frustration that they hadn’t been informed of the purpose — or the true patron — of the performance. Activists were careful not to touch or disturb the musicians’ musical instruments at any time.

With Trump in the White House, only a suicidal left would support more imperialist war. Anything that enables the capitalists to pass more guns off from the military to the police must be vigorously opposed. Anything that encourages more working-class and oppressed people in the U.S. to kill and oppress their sisters, brothers and siblings overseas, with a good chance that they’ll end up dead or hurt themselves, is completely reprehensible.

As the warm reaction to this most recent anti-war action showed, the working class and oppressed are waking up to the fact that the U.S. establishment has nothing to offer them under a capitalist system. □

New York:

‘No NATO, no Trump, U.S. out of Ukraine!’

By Greg Butterfield

Opponents of the U.S.-Ukraine war against the Donbass region of eastern Europe picketed in frigid weather at United Nations headquarters in New York on March 5.

They chanted: “No NATO! No Trump! U.S. out of Ukraine!” Signs demanded: “Trump, Poroshenko — Stop bombing Donbass” and “Down with oligarchs and fascists from Kiev to Washington.”

The protest was part of the International Day Against Genocide of People in Donbass, held in at least 16 cities worldwide. Demands included an immediate end to Ukrainian military attacks on the independent Donetsk and Lugansk republics; an end to the economic blockade of the Donbass region; that the international community force Kiev to respect the terms of the Minsk peace agreement; and an International War Crimes Tribunal for Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

New York, March 5.

In New York, activists also raised the case of Alexander Kushnarev of Odessa, who was detained by the Kiev regime on Feb. 23. He is the father of Gennady Kushnarev, one of 48 anti-fascists killed by Ukrainian nationalists on May 2, 2014, at the Odessa House of Trade Unions.

Larry Holmes of Workers World Party emphasized: “We are opposed to the [U.S. President Donald] Trump regime and its attack on the workers and oppressed here and around the world. And we are opposed to the campaign by Trump’s bourgeois opponents to whip up a war fever against Russia and our brothers and sisters in Donbass. International solidarity against imperialism is essential to stopping the threat of a wider war.”

The New York action was called by the International Action Center. □

Seattle

Youth denounce racist attacks

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

A huge Black Lives Matter march of around 2,000 people took place in Seattle on the evening of March 4. The youthful, multinational crowd overflowed the plaza at Seattle Community College.

Some in the march carried signs saying “Justice for Ben Keita,” an 18-year-old Black Muslim student in Lake Stevens, Wash. His body was found hanging from a tree in the woods on Jan. 9. The medical examiner and the cops ruled it a suicide, but his parents are skeptical since Keita was upbeat and ambitious about going to college.

The police investigation into Keita’s death has been very slow, and the medical examiner has now called the cause of his death to be undetermined. The state Council on American-Islamic Relations has called for a federal investigation into this apparent lynching, especially due to the rise of hate crimes permitted and enabled by the regime of U.S. President Donald Trump.

The demonstration marched to the site of a youth jail, where a long street meeting was held. Black Lives Matter leaders denounced the $210 million plan to expand and remodel the jail, including the expansion of a massive new youth courthouse. The complex, which is right in the Black community, jails a disproportionately high percentage of people of color.

Only days before, forces opposed to the youth jail were double-crossed by the liberal Seattle city administration. The city had promised opponents of the jail the right to appeal the construction permit, but that right was turned down in the permit hearing.

The protesters also marched to the Umoja Peace Center in Central District, a Black community. Omari Tahir-Garrett, a longtime activist and resident of the Peace Center, had recently been jailed for a week and evicted from the property, where he has lived for many years.

Tahir-Garrett spoke to the marchers from his front porch about the violence of his arrest and eviction, which was done illegally in the interests of new investors in the property. The Peace Center, which houses the homeless, has attracted interest as a center of opposition to the gentrification of the community over many years.

The demonstration then marched one block further to Uncle Ike’s, a high-end, high volume, white-owned marijuana shop. Demonstration leaders pointed out that Uncle Ike’s flaunts its ability to peddle marijuana as the “face of capitalism” while huge numbers of Black people remain in prison for selling marijuana nearby before the drug was legalized.

The demonstration remained in front of Uncle Ike’s until all the customers had left and the parking lot was empty. □

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Marxismo-Leninismo y sindicalismo

Lecciones de la victoriosa huelga del comedor de Harvard

Por Ed Childs

Las/os 750 empleados de la Universidad de Harvard - cocineros, lavaplatos, camareros y cajeros – hicieron arrodillar a la multimillonaria Universidad de Harvard el 25 de octubre. Después de una huelga de tres semanas, los patronos de la universidad cedieron, dando a las/os miembros de UNITE HERE Local 26 incluso más de lo que habían exigido inicialmente. Y más importante aún, todas las demandas que la Corporación Harvard exigía, se eliminaron.

La victoria de la huelga ofrece lecciones valiosas para las/os trabajadores y oprimidos en esta era del capitalismo global, particularmente ahora bajo la administración de Donald Trump y con el surgimiento de elementos racistas y fascistas. Martha Grevatt, de Workers World-Mundo Obrero, entrevistó al Jefe de Delegados, Ed Childs, cocinero y líder en la Local 26 por más de 40 años. Este es el cuarto de una serie de artículos basados en las entrevistas, en las que Childs explica cómo ganaron las/os trabajadores.

El derrotar los ataques al cuidado de la salud - protegiéndolo del 1% - es el comienzo de algo con importancia nacional e internacional. La gente ve a Trump atacar incluso la limitada Ley de Cuidado Asequible de Obama y siente desesperanza sobre la lucha por el cuidado de la salud. Pero hemos demostrado que sí podemos ganar.

A la tercera semana, la posición de Harvard se desmoronaba. Los empujamos al límite cuando las/os estudiantes ocuparon el edificio donde estábamos negociando. Tomar los medios de producción no se limita a las fábricas. Cuando se enfrenta a una universidad con fines de lucro, donde el capital financiero entrena a los suyos, un edificio de aulas es el medio de producción.

Las ocupaciones son una táctica de la izquierda que las/os comunistas perfeccionaron en los años treinta. Como Sam Marcy explicó en el libro "High Tech, Low Pay" (Alta tecnología, bajos salarios), "La incautación y ocupación de las plantas y otras instalaciones tienen el efecto de acelerar una crisis en la relación entre empleadores y trabajadores. ... Puede cambiar la forma de la lucha, sacarla de sus estrechos confines e impartirle una perspectiva más amplia. Realmente, saca a la superficie una nueva perspectiva de la clase obrera sobre la lucha entre trabajadoras/es y patronos. Dice en resumen que no estamos atados a un tipo de lucha unidimensional con los patronos en un momento en que tienen en sus manos las palancas de la autoridad política".

Eso es tan cierto en un restaurante, hospital o universidad como dentro de una planta.

En medio de la ocupación, el Boston Globe y el Boston Herald, que no nos habían cubierto nunca, de repente sacaron un editorial diciendo que se debía llegar a un acuerdo con las/os trabajadores. Las noticias televisivas, que habían sido negativas, decían lo mismo. Incluso representantes de la misma prensa de Harvard dijeron a los medios de comunicación que era hora de que Harvard llegara a un acuerdo.

Ahora, UNITE HERE Internacional ha declarado que la huelga de Harvard es su obra. Como tuvo tanto éxito y tuvo tanto apoyo, quiso convocar a una huelga general el Día de la Inauguración. El presidente internacional del sindicato no pudo convencer a nadie en la AFL-CIO, pero dijo que la huelga de Harvard demuestra que sí se puede hacer. El sindicato también pidió a sus empleadores dar a las/os trabajadores el día libre para protestar contra la ola anti inmigrante. ¿Estaría sucediendo esto dentro de nuestra unión si no hubiéramos emprendido una huelga exitosa contra Harvard - e indirectamente contra Wall Street?

Empleando tácticas comunistas

Ya que la victoria de la huelga queda atrás, ahora tenemos que absorber sus lecciones. ¿Cuál es el papel de las/os comunistas en los sindicatos: ¿qué hacen? Todas nuestras tácticas tienen que ser vistas como tácticas leninistas, distintas del ultra-izquierdismo. Necesitamos revivir una perspectiva revolucionaria de los sindicatos leninistas y no dejar que se pierda el trabajo sindical de Lenin.

Lo que Lenin escribió en "La enfermedad infantil del 'izquierdismo' en el comunismo" describe perfectamente las tácticas revolucionarias. Lenin estaba preocupado de que su experiencia al conducir con éxito la Revolución Rusa se perdiera porque Rusia era un país atrasado y la burguesía estaba organizada para aplastar la revolución.

Líderes sindicales como Samuel Gompers en Estados Unidos y otros en Europa se rieron de Lenin, pero Lenin dijo que se luchara la burocracia sindical!

Veamos el liderazgo sindical en EUA desde la fundación de la Federación Americana de Trabajo (AFL) en 1886. Sólo han existido seis presidentes: Gompers, Greene, Meany, Kirkland, Sweeney y Trumka - y los primeros tres fueron de por vida.

Pero Lenin dijo que a pesar de todo, se quedaran las/os trabajadores en los sindicatos.

Ha habido un disputa en el movimiento sindical sobre qué fue lo que ganó nuestra huelga, pero fue el leninismo clásico: ganamos con una lucha política. He aprendido de Sam Marcy, Milt Neidenberg y otros cómo debemos luchar - "suave en la forma, audaz en el contenido" - atrayendo a los funcionarios, pero controlando nuestro mensaje y consiguiendo exponer nuestra política. Si ignoramos el hecho de que esta lucha fue liderada y alimentada por comunistas, perdemos la mitad del significado de esta huelga.

Todo mi trabajo en el sindicato ha sido sobre aplicar un enfoque clásico marxista-leninista a una situación actual. El Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero ha sido la luz rectora de este sindicato desde el momento en que organizamos por primera vez, a través de huelgas pasadas y la batalla del año pasado. WW-MO fue la única fuente de noticias que registró todos los acontecimientos de la huelga desde el punto de vista de las/os trabajadores.

Lo que Marx escribió en "Los sindicatos: su pasado, presente y futuro" en 1866 se aplica totalmente hoy: "Aparte de sus propósitos originales, los sindicatos deben ahora aprender a actuar deliberadamente como centros organizadores de la clase obrera, en el amplio interés de su completa emancipación. Deben ayudar a todos los movimientos sociales y políticos que tienden en esa dirección. Considerándose a sí mismos y actuando como los representantes campeones de toda la clase obrera, que no puede dejar de enlistar a los no-trabajadores de la sociedad a sus filas.

"Deben vigilar cuidadosamente los intereses de los oficios peor pagados, como los trabajadores agrícolas [y hoy el proletariado de servicios, incluidos los trabajadores precarios], que quedaron impotentes por circunstancias excepcionales. Deben convencer al mundo en general de que sus esfuerzos, lejos de ser estrechos y egoístas, apunten a la emancipación de los millones oprimidos".

El Primer Secretario del Partido WW-MO Larry Holmes, en reunión con los cuadros laborales-sindicales del partido en septiembre, dijo: "La organización de la clase obrera debe avanzar para abarcar más y más números, independientemente de sus circunstancias, no en base a una industria o a un país, sino en derrocar al capitalismo". □

¡Estados Unidos, no se meta con Ecuador!

Un cuidadoso recuento de votos en las elecciones ecuatorianas del 19 de febrero demostró que Lenín Moreno, el candidato presidencial del actual partido gobernante Alianza Pais, quedó muy cerca de la victoria en la primera vuelta, terminando muy por delante de los otros siete candidatos.

Como la elección para presidente pasará a una segunda vuelta el 2 de abril, queda la posibilidad de una intervención activa por parte de Estados Unidos y el imperialismo de la Unión Europea para impedir una victoria de Moreno, el candidato más progresista. La intromisión y subversión imperialista para apoyar fuerzas reaccionarias en América Latina ya ha resultado en una victoria electoral en Argentina y un golpe parlamentario en Brasil. También están maniobrando para derrocar a Nicolás Maduro en Venezuela y a Evo Morales en Bolivia, además del gobierno de Alianza País en Ecuador.

Rafael Correa, quien ha sido presidente del Ecuador por tres mandatos, respalda a Moreno, quien obtuvo el 39,4 por ciento de los votos. Moreno obtuvo más de 11 puntos por delante del banquero Guillermo Lasso, el principal candidato del gran capital ecuatoriano y el imperialismo, que recibió el 28,1 por ciento. Los neoliberales ecuatorianos se dividieron, con un segundo candidato pro-imperialista obteniendo aproximadamente el 16 por ciento de los votos.

Moreno tiene paraplejia y ha sido un veterano defensor de las personas con discapacidades.

De acuerdo con la ley electoral del Ecuador, para ganar en la primera vuelta un candidato debe obtener más del 50 por ciento de los votos o recibir el 40 por ciento de los votos y estar 10 por ciento por delante del otro candidato. Así que Moreno se quedó corto por muy poco. En las elecciones a la Asamblea Nacional, sin embargo, Alianza País ganó casi el 60 por ciento de los escaños, una clara victoria.

Aunque podría parecer que el gran margen que separa a Moreno de Lasso le daría una fácil victoria en la segunda vuelta, no hay una garantía. El imperialismo estadounidense, bajo la dirección de Donald Trump, como antes Barack Obama, está empeñado en frustrar cualquier movimiento de los países al sur de la frontera hacia la soberanía y la independencia económica. Especialmente desde que Hugo Chávez fue elegido presidente de Venezuela en 1998, Washington ha tratado todas las medidas progresistas en esos países como una amenaza para los intereses económicos y estratégicos del imperialismo estadounidense.

Las/os ecuatorianos saben que el gobierno de Trump quisiera ver una marioneta de la Casa Blanca en Quito que arrancara la herencia progresista de Rafael Correa. En sus tres términos, Correa desarrolló una política internacional de afirmación de la soberanía nacional, rompiendo la sumisión histórica de la clase dirigente ecuatoriana a las demandas de Washington. Esto incluyó expulsar a la base militar estadounidense en Manta.

Aunque Lenín Moreno sea elegido, como muchas/os todavía esperan, el nuevo gobierno se enfrentará a grandes problemas en un clima político y económico desfavorable.

Al igual que otros países de Sudamérica que se movieron en una dirección progresista, Ecuador bajo Correa pudo utilizar los fondos que obtuvo a través de los altos precios de materias primas en la primera década del siglo XXI para financiar programas sociales que beneficiaron a las/os más pobres de sus residentes .

Con la caída de precios de estos productos en los mercados mundiales, se ha hecho más difícil para los gobiernos progresistas financiar estos programas y mantener una economía estable, dejándolos más susceptibles a la subversión imperialista. De todos los países al sur de la frontera de los EUA, sólo Cuba ha llevado a cabo una revolución socialista que puso el Estado y la economía firmemente en manos de las/os trabajadores y las/os agricultores.

Las/os antiimperialistas dentro de EUA deben oponerse a cualquier interferencia estadounidense en la elección presidencial ecuatoriana y apoyar la derrota de Lasso y sus ricos partidarios en Ecuador que quieren enriquecerse aún más sirviendo al imperialismo mundial. □