

# Gov't squeezes workers, bloats Pentagon

By Carl Lewis

A recent hiring freeze for federal employees is one of a barrage of anti-worker laws and executive orders recently put forth by the Trump administration. These serve as a cover-up for gutting the people's social safety net, on the way to implementing brutal capitalist austerity.

Existing legal "safety net" protections have been woven and won through decades of struggle by oppressed communities and workers' organizing. These are the victories under attack when Trump's white-supremacist "special adviser" Steve Bannon boasts in coded language that his plan is the "deconstruction of the administrative state."

Right now, federal workers and the unions representing them are being hit on three fronts: wages and hiring are being frozen, worker due-process rights are being destroyed, and labor union strength is being weakened. One in five federal workers are Black (opm.gov), in a sector that has historically provided them with job security and growth.

Particularly hard hit are both Maryland and Virginia, home to approximately 300,000 federal workers in the Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. President Trump's proposed \$54 billion to the DOD will not trickle down nor benefit civilian employees who work there. The money will only increase the profits and power of the military-industrial complex and the promotion of imperialist wars and invasions in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

The Department of Veteran Affairs already needs 45,000 new workers due to the injuries of soldiers who have served as cannon fodder for capitalism in recent wars. The hiring freeze hurts workers and the injured vets.

Federal worker unions are under direct attack by the administration's proposal to do away with "official

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Women in Seoul, south Korea demand equal pay on International Women's Day.

## Diversions about Russia, lies about Korea

By Fred Goldstein

March 20 — Two issues today have been brought to the forefront by the capitalist establishment. Each one aims to push the people in the U.S. along dangerous political paths.

The first is whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia during the U.S. election.

The second is the big lie that the U.S. is under threat from north Korea.

As this is being written, all eyes of the big business media are focused on congressional testimony by the heads of the two top spy agencies, FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence Mike Rog-

ers. The two have now testified that Trump lied about being wiretapped by Obama and also affirmed that there is an ongoing investigation into whether there were connections between the Trump campaign and Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election. They are looking to see if criminal charges are warranted.

The common line of the Democratic Party leadership and much of the capitalist establishment is that the Russian government interfered with "our democracy" by influencing the election in favor of Trump. The united front between the FBI and the DNI during the congressional hearing might very well be the beginning of an attempt to severely undermine Trump. This would sharply accelerate the political crisis in U.S. capitalist

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## MIDWEST SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

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# From a PA prison

# Stop firing of legal aid prisoner

By Sehu Kessa Saa Tabansi

Revolutionary greetings to all the workers worldwide!  
 When does being a laborer and doing right become the wrong thing to do? The answer is, apparently, when you are a prisoner working inside a prison law library in Pennsylvania.  
 In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, prisoner work, if you can even call it that, pays as low as \$0.17 per hour (six hours a day, five days a week), and as high as \$0.42 per hour (eight hours a day, five days a week). Anybody can do that math and see that the money is not the reason why incarcerated men, women and children work.  
 Some people in life simply enjoy being of assistance to other people, regardless of compensation. Also, some people are excellent at their profession and take genuine pleasure in it.  
 Such is the sad case of Mr. Jules Jetté, a middle-aged French-Canadian man who has dedicated his legal knowledge to explaining the law’s complex intricacies to a large variety of prisoners, including the illiterate, mentally challenged, emotionally disturbed, juveniles, elderly, handicapped and many more. Now, he himself is in need of help!  
 Mr. Jetté, who has been incarcerated at State Correctional Institution Houtzdale for over 15 years and who has worked faithfully as a legal aid worker for his fellow prisoners daily for nine years, is now facing job removal.  
 That’s right, I said job removal — for being of selfless service to others. What other reason would the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections have for removing him from his position of service to prisoners? Mr. Jetté has not had any misconduct reports as a prisoner his entire time here, no exaggeration. He does not even have any negative block card (housing unit) reports at all, which is something very hard to do under imprisonment for any length of time.  
 Sadly, the Department of Corrections does not care about the work Mr. Jetté does. Quite a few prisoners that benefit from Mr. Jetté’s self-taught legal knowledge have attested to his good character and effective service. How-

ever, SCI Houtzdale’s security office has taken notice of prisoners’ improved success rate in court with Mr. Jetté’s help, and are now retaliating against him and those of us who support him.  
 The public, whose taxes go to fund the prisons, including prisoner (poverty) wages, have a right to know what is going on here. [U.S.] America is supposed to guarantee equal protection under the law and access to the courts. Yet thousands of prisoners are abandoned by Pennsylvania lawyers, have had ineffective lawyers, or have been barred from being heard in courts (a “jurisdictional bar”).  
 That is where Mr. Jetté comes in: Where there are already scarce legal resources for prisoners at SCI Houtzdale, the administration wants to remove him. Both Mr. Jetté and all those prisoners that will be affected by his job removal are desperately in urgent need of individual workers and labor unions to flood the governor’s and DOC secretary’s offices with letters, faxes, emails and phone calls voicing concerns and outrage over the plans to remove a prisoner employee from a job that he has been working for nine years with perfect behavior and work effort.  
 In solidarity with Mr. Jetté, contact:  
 Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf:  
 Phone: 717-787-2500  
 Fax: 717-772-8284  
 Mail: Office of the Governor,  
 508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120  
 Online: https://www.governor.pa.gov/contact/  
 PA Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel  
 Email: ra-crpadocsecretary@pa.gov  
 DOC Phone: 717-728-2573  
 SCI Houtzdale Phone: 814-378-1000  
 (address calls to Barry Smith)  
 Sample email or letter message: Please do not allow SCI Houtzdale to fire inmate legal aid worker Jules Jetté! The service he provides, for which he is severely underpaid, is of great assistance to inmates who wish to exercise their constitutional right to redress of grievances in the courts. Save Mr. Jetté! □

## WORKERS WORLD

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## 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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# Syracuse protest defends migrant worker

By Minnie Bruce Pratt  
Syracuse, N.Y.

In minus-degree wind chill and blowing snow, dedicated pro-migrant community members came out on March 15 in Syracuse and in Batavia, N.Y., to support Dolores Bustamante, who was recently detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and threatened with deportation. Bustamante faced a court hearing that day.

When Bustamante came to the U.S. with her daughter, fleeing 13 years of domestic violence, she became a farmworker to support herself. She became a board member of the Workers' Center of Central New York (WCCNY), Las Mujeres Divinas of Western New York and the national Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, the latter organizations especially supporting women farmworkers' empowerment.

When New York state police turned Bustamante over to immigration authorities for a minor traffic violation in 2014, she became a leader in a successful campaign to stop New York state troopers from racially profiling and questioning a

person about their citizenship.

At the Syracuse rally, Nikeeta Slade of WCCNY said, "Driving to work, driving your children to school, or driving yourself or a loved one to a hospital, should never end with the possibility of being separated from your family or community." The WCCNY has been doing frontline work to legalize drivers' licenses for all, regardless of immigration status, through the campaign Green Light NY: Driving Together.

WCCNY continues to fight for other detained migrant workers including José Coyote, who was recently detained and jailed in the Buffalo Federal Detention Center in Batavia although his case had been administratively closed in September. Like Bustamante, Coyote is a leader in his community and at the forefront of the struggle for immigrants' and workers' rights.

Rebecca Fuentes of the WCCNY said: "We want to send a strong message that when this administration comes for one of our friends and neighbors, we are united to protect and defend them."

By the end of the day, Bustamante had

some months' reprieve through a new hearing set for May. She issued a public message to her daughter: "Do not let what is happening now stop you. On the contrary, may it make you stronger so that you can continue fighting for your dreams." □

Syracuse community rallies for Dolores Bustamante and migrant neighbors.

PHOTO: HERVE COMEAU



PHOTO: WORKERS' CENTER OF CNY  
Dolores Bustamante speaks to supporters in Batavia, N.Y.



## Bay Area rallies against Trump's 2nd Muslim ban

By Dave Welsh  
San Francisco

On March 16, the day Trump's second Muslim travel ban was due to take effect, more than 500 people rallied at the Federal Building in San Francisco to denounce it. The action was called by the Arab Resource & Organizing Center, along with its partners in a coalition called Third World Resistance.

Organizers passed out an AROC statement "demanding and asserting our Freedom to Stay, Freedom to Move, and Freedom to Return for Arabs and Muslims targeted by this ban, but also for all oppressed communities threatened by the Trump administration." This extremely clarifying statement linked, in a new way, the demands of immigrants with the struggles of workers and all the oppressed here and abroad. Here is the statement:

### Freedom to Stay

**Migrant Rights.** When we demand the Freedom to Stay for Arabs and Muslims, we stand in solidarity with all immigrants regardless of documentation or place of origin.

**Indigenous Struggle.** The Trump administration's commitment to build pipelines and repress Native American movements such as Standing Rock is a continuation of the settler colonialism this country was founded on. We stand with Indigenous communities everywhere struggling for their Freedom to Stay on their land.

**Fight Gentrification.** In our very own Bay Area, we fight for our Freedom to Stay in our homes and communities, against the gentrification and displacement facing poor, working class and people of color everywhere.

### Freedom to Move

**No Ban, No Wall.** We join with the millions demanding No Ban, No Wall because we believe that people should have the Freedom to Move without borders or



PHOTO: TRISTEN SCHMIDT

racist xenophobic immigration policies.

**Sanctuary Everywhere.** From those fleeing wars in the Arab World, to those seeking escape from U.S. backed economic policies that have devastated Latin America, Asia and the African Continent, we fight for the Freedom to Move.

**End Israeli Apartheid.** Just as Trump's executive order restricts Arabs and Muslims from coming across the U.S. border for 'security' reasons, Israel's apartheid wall and network of military checkpoints restrict the daily movement of Palestinians. We fight for the Freedom to Move, both here, and for those facing occupation, apartheid and settler colonialism in Palestine.

### Freedom to Return

**End Imperialism.** The six Muslim majority countries listed in this ban have all been targeted by the U.S. through bombing, military intervention and sanctions, resulting in forced migration and people becoming refugees. We stand against imperialism and for our people's Freedom to Return to their lives and homes with dignity.

**Free Our People.** Our struggle against bans and immigrant detention is part of the struggle against the repressive imprisonment system that targets working class and communities of color. We fight for imprisoned people to have the Freedom to Return to their families and communities.

**Refugees Right of Return.** From Syria to Haiti to Palestine, we fight for Indigenous people and migrants everywhere to be able to travel, visit and return to their homelands. We fight for their right and Freedom to Return. □

## Philadelphia

# ICE abducts worker at hearing

By Cornelius Moody  
Philadelphia

Marcos, a migrant worker living in Philadelphia, was stolen from his family and community on March 16.

Marcos reported for his mandatory parole hearing with full knowledge that two of his friends had been abducted by Immigration, Customs and Enforcement the previous week after their probation hearings. He contacted the New Sanctuary Movement, which put out a call for an action in support of the trial he faced. About two dozen people were able to be with him, offering words and prayers of encouragement, as he entered the building.

Security in the building treated NSM members harshly, preventing them from waiting in the lobby for Marcos and eventually ejecting them from the building. They did not even allow a member to stay with him to act as an interpreter.

While some demonstrators remained in front of the building to raise awareness of what was happening, part of the group gathered around the back exit in preparation for the possibility that Marcos would be "discreetly" removed and sent to an ICE detention center.

About an hour after he entered the building, I saw Marcos briefly once again. We made eye contact as he sat handcuffed in the back of an unmarked, midnight blue SUV. The drivers smiled and waved before driving away with Marcos in custody.

### 'Sanctuary' city cooperates with ICE

The practice of seizing migrants in Philadelphia is a very visible routine, in contrast with claims that the city is a "sanctuary" for immigrants. Mayor Jim Kenney promotes the image of Philadelphia protecting the immigrant community by not forcing city institutions to cooperate with ICE. This image has con-

tributed to Kenney's support and acceptance as mayor, as well as to the success of his 2015 election campaign, but it is notably void of any substance.

Although the city's policies limit some exchange of information from its criminal system to ICE, in practice Philadelphia still cooperates with ICE. The Adult Probation and Parole Department had nearly 50,000 people in its system as of March 2009. ICE has such an entwined relationship with this department, it is able to regularly keep transport vehicles at parole hearings and detain people on site.

This departure of Kenney's proclaimed values from material reality is a common trend. The Philly Coalition for REAL Justice has been pursuing an ongoing campaign to end the Philadelphia Police Department's stop-and-frisk policy. Mayor Kenney has admitted the practice is unconstitutional, denounced it publicly and gathered support for his campaign by promising to end it.

However, after all these promises and over a year in office, Kenney has yet to introduce any additional form of accountability or legislation to end stop-and-frisk. Police officers have continued harassing Black and Brown communities unhindered by Kenney's empty words. Kenney's two-faced treatment of the city's "sanctuary" status is more of the same.

The overlap of conditions facing Black, Brown and migrant communities is no coincidence. The struggles of different communities in the working class have similar patterns because our enemy is shared. The only way we will truly end harassment and detainment from cops and ICE is through solidarity and principled unity. The only way we can attain true victories for our communities is with the support of our comrades — not crumbs and empty promises from politicians. □

# Gov’t squeezes workers, bloats Pentagon

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time.” That is the time a union representative uses to represent workers in grievances, negotiate contracts or address issues with management. This union work gets done on employer time with no loss of pay for the representative.

Now, to add insult to the administration’s injury, Rep. Jody Hice (R-Ga.) has introduced a bill to penalize union representatives by not counting “official time”

toward the representative’s retirement or pension. (Washington Post, March 8)

A further attack on VA workers is the proposed VA Accountability First Act of 2017. This would gut worker protection by lowering the burden of proof an employer must provide for a termination and eliminate the “just cause” factor, to be replaced with “just because!” In addition, the proposed law would drastically

limit the amount of time a federal-sector union is given to appeal worker discipline, suspension or termination notices.

The attacks on federal workers are part of a larger assault on workers and oppressed people as a whole. Facing cut-backs are vital social services like Meals on Wheels for seniors lacking full mobility and environmental protections that prevent corporations from increasing

profits by endangering people with water and air pollution. Housing in poor and oppressed communities is being cut back or “left up to the states to decide” — to discriminate.

It will take more than letters to Congress to oppose these draconian measures. It will take street heat and mass protests. A good start would be a massive general strike on May Day! ☐

# Diversions about Russia, lies about Korea

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society. Only time will tell.

**‘Russian interference’ a diversion**

Despite the unfolding gravity of the struggle against Trump within the ruling class, the basis for the workers and oppressed to oppose Trump should not rest on connections with Russia. That is a problem for the ruling class and its foreign policy.

The problem for the working class is that he is promoting Islamophobia as well as racism against Mexicans and immigrants, while fostering police terror, sexism, anti-Semitism and a belligerent and militaristic foreign policy, especially in the Middle East and Asia.

The campaign to prove that Russia interfered in the election, despite its potential major political consequences, is both a diversion and a political trap. Focusing on Russia takes attention away from the issues vital to the workers and the oppressed.

**Phony promises of jobs and health care**

For months and months Trump spouted bombastic demagoguery aimed at getting the working-class and small-business vote. He declared he was going to bring back jobs, preserve Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, and guarantee “great health care,” among other promises.

On the jobs question, he has got his friends in big business — such as General Motors, General Electric, Ford and Intel, among others — to talk about investment plans, which had been long in the making, as if they were part of Trump’s “bring back jobs” campaign. But everyone should know that no corporation decides to make a billion-dollar investment after one meeting with Trump. Such investments are planned months and years ahead of time and are strictly based on profit projections.

The bosses are stroking him because he has promised them tax cuts and deregulation. But when they get back to the boardroom and meet with their investment bankers, their decisions will depend on cold calculation of the bottom line, Trump notwithstanding.

On the question of “great health care,” Trump has already exposed himself by getting behind a health care bill that is basically a transfer of wealth from the workers and the poor to the ultra-rich. The bill would give them tax cuts of \$600 billion. At the same time it would cut \$880 billion from Medicaid. It would leave at least 24 million people without health insurance by 2026 and raise insurance premiums for millions, especially for the elderly. (Congressional Budget Office report, March 13)

As for the broad masses, Trump’s budget says it all. He will hand over an additional \$54 billion to the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex. At the same time, the budget will cut social services, environmental protection, science

and art across the board.

Community programs such as aid to coal miners in Appalachia, community development programs in cities and towns across the country, help for the hungry such as Meals on Wheels, funds for opioid clinics, early education and child care, and a myriad of other projects will be either eliminated or cut to the bone. While many of Trump’s supporters are rich or well-off, there are poorer ones who believe his demagoguery. Now they will be hurt badly by these cuts.

**Democratic Party trap**

Liberals and the Democratic Party leadership, who are tied hand and foot to big capital, are hoping to bring down Trump and at the same time push people into the Democratic Party camp, even those who were opposed to Clinton. Russia is an easy target. The last thing these politicians want is a genuine mass struggle of resistance against Trump.

The anti-Russia howl from all quarters of the ruling class and the political establishment has to do with blocking any attempt by Trump and his ultra-rightist adviser Steve Bannon to shift foreign policy away from emphasizing conflict with Russia and direct it toward conflict in Asia and a “civilizational” conflict with Islam. This is the prevailing ideology in the clique around Trump.

The bourgeoisie may strongly suspect, and with much justification, that Trump could be hanging on to Russia out of business considerations. Even if Trump’s motives are based purely on greed, they dovetail with Bannon’s ideology.

In any event, the movement must not get swept into the trap of trying to oust Trump on an anti-Russia wave. The way to fight Trump is not to take sides with the Democratic Party’s top leadership, who for years have promoted war and neoliberalism.

Nor should anyone fall for the “interference in our democracy” argument. This is a democracy of the capitalist class, of the rich. When they talk about “our democracy,” they mean the “democratic right” of the various factions in the capitalist class to push the masses into electing one or another political grouping that will help the bosses exploit and plunder the workers and the oppressed, at home and abroad.

To avoid that trap, the workers have to have their own independent party that speaks in the name of all the oppressed and exploited and has a program of struggle to advance their class interests.

**U.S. threat to north Korea**

that “the era of strategic patience is over.” Tillerson said, “Nothing is off the table.” This was widely interpreted by the capitalist media to mean threatening military action.

Tillerson’s remarks, in conjunction with the Pentagon launching massive military maneuvers in Korea, amount to a dangerous threat by Washington against the DPRK.

**Operation Foal Eagle**

Right now the Pentagon has embarked on two months of massive military maneuvers involving both the U.S. and the Seoul regime on land, in the sky and in the waters off the Korean peninsula.

Operation Foal Eagle involves 7,500 U.S. troops and 300,000 south Korean puppet troops in a simulated invasion of the DPRK. The central organizing force is the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, decked with F-15 and F-16 fighter bombers. F-22s have also been flown into U.S. bases in south Korea. The Carl Vinson is accompanied by the guided-missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer, among other warships. Armed drones have also been dispatched to the area by the Pentagon.

A London newspaper reported that the Navy SEAL unit which assassinated Osama bin Laden is participating in the massive U.S.-south Korean war maneuvers for the first time. It added that “Along with other elite U.S. units including the Army Rangers, Delta Force and the Green Berets, SEAL Team Six will take part in annual training exercises alongside south Korean forces, according to Yonhap News.

“A bigger number of and more diverse U.S. special operation forces will take part in this year’s Foal Eagle and Key Resolve exercises to practise missions to infiltrate into the North, remove the North’s war command and demolition of its key military facilities,” a South Korean official told the news agency.

“SEAL Team Six would practice removing Kim Jong-un and destroying North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction, South Korea’s Defence Ministry told the Joong Ang Daily newspaper.” (The Independent, March 15)

**The message of regime change is loud and clear.**

To add to the U.S. imperialist threat, the Pentagon has begun deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-missile system to south Korea. THAAD is aimed not only at the DPRK but also at the People’s Republic of China. Despite its name, it is a highly aggressive system aimed at blocking retaliation after the power that has it launches an attack. The goal of THAAD is to give the U.S.-south Korean forces first strike capability.

The Pentagon rushed to get THAAD deployed because south Korea’s former president, Park Geun-hye, has been ousted for corruption and political reaction

after a year of mass demonstrations. It was urgent to Washington that THAAD be installed before new elections, as Moon Jae-in, a liberal who favors reestablishing relations with the north, is expected to be elected the next president.

To listen to Washington, you would think that the DPRK had stationed soldiers and nuclear missiles pointing at the U.S. in bases in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, across Canada and on submarines in the waters off the Atlantic and Pacific.

But the opposite is true. The DPRK is a small socialist country of 25 million people. It is surrounded by the most powerful military forces on earth. The Pentagon has tens of thousands of troops, ships and planes surrounding the DPRK. There is a ring of U.S. bases strung from south Korea to Japan, Hawaii, Guam, the Mariana Islands and elsewhere.

**DPRK deserves solidarity**

The DPRK began its nuclear weapons program in earnest after President George W. Bush, in his January 2002 State of the Union address, designated Iran, Iraq and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea as the “Axis of Evil.” Shortly thereafter the Pentagon invaded Iraq with “shock and awe” and captured and killed President Saddam Hussein.

In 2003, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi surrendered his nuclear program for fear of a similar U.S. invasion. But in 2011 Washington, the French and the British invaded Libya and Qaddafi was captured and killed, just like Saddam Hussein.

The DPRK drew the only conclusion it could: the need for a deterrent that would stay the hand of imperialism.

In fact, the DPRK, contrary to Pentagon propaganda, is not trying to develop its missile system and its nuclear weapons in order to attack the U.S. It is trying to develop a credible deterrent to a U.S. or south Korean invasion.

Washington has threatened the DPRK with nuclear attack or attack on its nuclear installations numerous times. The DPRK agreed to suspend its nuclear program several times, during the Agreed Upon Framework in 1994 and during the six-party talks, which began in 1998. Both times the U.S. walked away from its commitments under the talks and instead imposed sanctions on the DPRK.

The bottom line is that the Pentagon had suffered its first military defeat during the Korean War of 1950-53, when it invaded the north twice and was driven back twice. The U.S. military wants to reverse that defeat and has been trying to do so for nearly 65 years.

Right now the DPRK is immersed in a valiant and desperate struggle to survive against overwhelming odds. It deserves the support of all progressive humanity and especially of the movement here, in the belly of the beast. ☐



# Nissan workers want the right to vote union

*“Labor Rights Equal Civil Rights” was the theme of a historic “March on Mississippi” held March 4 outside the Nissan plant in Canton. Over 5,000 people from labor and the community turned out to demand “Stop voter suppression!” Workers want the right to vote in a union representation election free of intimidation. Over 80 percent of the plant’s workforce is African-American. Of Nissan’s 45 plants worldwide, this is one of only three without union representation; the other two are in Smyrna and Decherd, Tenn.*

*Martha Grevatt interviewed two leaders of the United Auto Workers’ Volunteer Organizing Committee, Morris Mock and Ernest Whitfield, about the need for a union and the way forward after the hugely successful march. Both have 13 years in the plant.*

**WW:** What is the role of a volunteer organizer?

**Morris Mock:** I help motivate, get cards signed and educate my co-workers. The main thing now is making sure workers know what a union is about and what we can and can’t do so they will make an informed decision when the anti-union campaign starts up. The main thing we are trying to do is get the most fair election possible from Nissan. [Nissan CEO Carlos] Ghosn says he respects unions, but the question is why not us, why not Canton, Miss.?

**WW:** When did you realize you needed a union?

**Ernest Whitfield:** For me, about 2012 is when I first got on board. I came on board because of what I seen happening with my co-workers. There’s no checks and balances with management; they make decisions as they see fit. With safety they do what they figure is industry standards but they were not up to par as far as [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] standards. Injured people were having to go on leave; when they come back they get put back on the same job where they got injured. Insurance cost was going up and since 2010 they have a points system. You have to get 100 points to get 100 percent coverage; with 75 points you have to pay 25 percent. There are different ways to get your points: walk so many steps per day, complete a questionnaire, different fitness activities, diet, exercise, etc. It can be hard to keep 100 points if you are not paying attention.

**WW:** When did you start to try to unionize?

**MM:** One of the workers called the UAW [the United Auto Workers] in 2003 and we had organizers on the ground trying to mobilize and find out the problems. We began the card check [getting union authorization cards signed] in 2012.

**WW:** Why do workers need a union?

**EW:** We need to have a way to defend ourselves and to speak to issues that management brushes under the rug like health and safety. To protect ourselves against false termination. Now there’s no recourse; false drug test results, you’re terminated.

**WW:** What has the company done to get in your way of getting a union?

**MM:** We have Kelly workers, which are temp workers. Any new worker is subject to an anti-union video or PowerPoint that literally tells these workers to stay away from the union. They are forced to listen to these managers. I’ve personally been threatened by managers saying the factory would close like the rubber factory they worked in.

Even the NLRB [the National Labor Relations Board] has said Nissan has been using intimidation and they even had to write a letter of apology to a worker, Willard Wells. The NLRB agreed he was [wrongly] terminated. I’ve got merits and awards but as soon as I started supporting the union my work has been scrutinized heavily.

**WW:** Why is this a civil rights struggle?

**EW:** When your dignity is in question when you come to your job that’s a problem. We are an 80

percent African-American plant; all of that Old South stigma that goes along with it. We are being denied a fair election so that is a basic civil right for any American.

**MM:** That’s a great question. Every time I think of this I think about the 60s and Martin Luther King and two [sanitation] workers: Cole and Walker. What caused the sanitation strike was they were crushed and they died. Derrick Whiting [a Canton Nissan worker] lost his life and the mom still questions, “What happened?” The children are saying, “Where’s my dad?” It was a civil rights struggle then and the way companies like Nissan are drawn to poor people and cheap labor, it is still a civil rights fight for equality on the job. We had a worker’s fingers cut off. OSHA investigated. Nissan was fined. There were four OSHA claims in past few weeks. Safety and all of these things and respect of the working class, whether slave labor or child labor or poor labor.

**WW:** Why do you think the plant was closed the day of the march?

**MM:** They closed the factory and even got maintenance technicians out. Normally, maintenance never takes a day off. Nissan lied, saying sales goals were met, but statistics and their computers show they increased the line speed to make up for Saturday. The normal workweek is five days so why are we still working 6 to 7 days after the march? They didn’t want a visual, for workers to see what was going on. The march was during lunch break, so they would have seen us protesting. It was a strategic move, but with national and local media coverage, it didn’t help their situation. It made them look scared.

**WW:** Was it a historic march?

**MM:** Yes. We’ve never marched on labor here in Mississippi in this magnitude. This will go down in history, especially after we win this, in terms of working-class expectations. Companies should know we want to be treated just as any other factory in the world. We need to be treated equally.

**EW:** The truth, it was historic in its nature. The fact is that the issue with Nissan is a microcosm of what’s going on in Mississippi, with many companies experiencing the same type of disparities. It’s historic in terms of it’s going to weigh heavy in us getting this election because we will be the first transnational automaker to be unionized in the United States

**WW:** What are the next steps going forward?

**MM:** Right now, the main thing is to get all the cards signed so we can have a good group signed up. We’re trying to get over 50 percent to file [for an NLRB election] because we understand periodically you may lose support because of intimidation. We get [those who signed cards in the past] to sign authorization cards again. In the process we are getting new signers; those numbers are looking extremely well. People were losing hope, but since the march, people have hope and realize we mean business. □



## Fast food workers protest at NY City Hall, strike

Majority Black and Latinx retail and fast food workers rallied outside New York City Hall on March 3 to demand passage of legislation to end unpredictable on-call scheduling. Showing solidarity were members of Service Employees Local 32BJ, Communication Workers, the National Action Network and the New York Immigration Coalition, among others.

According to Department Store Union (RWDSU) President Stuart Appelbaum, "On-call scheduling is a pervasive and exploitive employment practice where workers do not find out until just before a scheduled shift if they will be required to work or not." As Domino's delivery worker José Sánchez explained, "You can have a schedule, but then they can change the hours without really notifying us." Chipotle restaurant worker Harmonie Higgins, who is pregnant, added, "I find it hard to find time to go to doctor's appointments and find time to rest." (rwdsu.info, March 3)

Workers at a Washington Heights Domino's restaurant, led by Sánchez, walked off the job the same day and held a picket line demanding fair scheduling. "We have a life," Sánchez said at the protest. "The heads of these billion-dollar companies are home with their families, and we're out making money for them. They should have a little more respect for us." (manhattantimesnews, March 8)

## Boston public school teachers protest as talks lag

After 15 months of failed contract negotiations, Boston public school teachers are turning up the heat on the Boston Public School District. On March 10, teachers, who are 76 percent women and are represented by the Boston Teachers Union, protested outside schools across the city to demand a fair contract.

The teachers have been working without a contract since August. "We're fighting for working conditions that support our most vulnerable students, reducing class sizes in schools with the highest needs and providing paid family leave for all our teachers." noted btu.org.

The BPSD has dug in and refused to provide support for students with special needs or to guarantee equal pay for workers at autonomous schools. The district even went so far as to demand that workers get a second medical opinion before going on family leave! (dailycaller.com, March 15)

The union is encouraging members and supporters to protest outside a BPSD budget meeting on March 22. "We'll be there to let the committee and others know that we are determined to obtain a fair contract settlement," said BTU President Richard Stutman.

## Support the Coal Miners Protection Act!

If Congress fails to pass the Coal Miners Protection Act by April 30, about 12,500 retired union miners and widows of retirees will lose their pension and health care benefits. The miners, who spent their lives working in terrible conditions and sacrificed their health in the process, took lower wages to secure a healthy retirement. Congress has been debating since 2015 whether or not to pay them now that the companies they worked for have gone bankrupt. And you better believe the bosses don't have to worry about their own survival and health care in their old age!

The plan does not require taxpayer dollars, but would transfer money from the Abandoned Mine Land fund to the 1974 Mine Workers' pension plan to prevent insolvency.

Tell Congress to stop playing games with the health of retirees and pass the Miners Protection Act! Sign the petition at supportmineworkers.org.

## Unions help Blacks, Latinxs advance in NYC construction industry

A detailed study by the Economic Policy Institute, titled "Diversity in the New York City Union and Nonunion Construction Sectors," showed that Black and Latinx workers advanced in the NYC construction industry between 2006 and 2015 thanks to unions. Not only did the number of Black and Latinx workers accepted for apprenticeships grow compared to 20 years ago, but they were paid more thanks to union representation. Now they make up 55.1 percent of NYC union construction workers.

These changes must be measured in relation to the long history of racial and gender discrimination in the building trades nationally and in particular in New York City, where change was resisted for many decades. Only after a bitter fight led by various civil rights organizations and a few governmental agencies to extend union representation to all workers, white and of color, men and women, are unions today helping to close racial and ethnic wage gaps. The study concluded that "a significant transformation now seems to be happening." (epi.org, March 2) □

### MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

**Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes

**Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy

**Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell

**The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead

**Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry

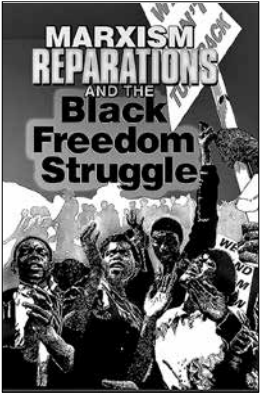
**Black & Brown Unity: Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad

**Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee

**Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker

Available at online booksellers.



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SEES GLOBAL ACTIONS

By Kathy Durkin

Following the successful demonstrations on Jan. 21 — when 5 million women and their supporters in the U.S. and 40 global cities expressed solidarity and resistance to racist, anti-woman President Donald Trump — globally coordinated protests were planned for March 8, International Women's Day.

The call went out for an International Women's Strike; many called it "A Day Without a Woman." Some call signers said events would not promote so-called "pro-corporate feminism," but rather would kick-off a new global anti-racist, anti-imperialist, multigenerational, multigendered, and anti-heterosexist feminist movement.

This mobilization posed the question of whether capitalism can support real gender equality. It cannot. The system is based on racism, national oppression, women's oppression, homophobia, global theft of resources and exploitation of workers.

Corporate globalization impoverishes and exploits women and girls, who are 70 percent of the world's poorest people. Women migrants face abuse. U.S./NATO wars devastate women and their families, and refugees flee imperialist-caused wars and poverty.

These horrific conditions necessitate increased solidarity with working and oppressed women abroad. This is true to IWD's legacy as intended by its socialist founders, led by Clara Zetkin of Germany, in 1910.

The global strike took place in more than 50 countries, with various themes and demands. Many actions focused on the gender pay gap and misogynist violence, including in **France, Spain and Italy**; 20,000 marched in Rome. The government of **Iceland** mandated pay equity for all workers. Some 1,000 childcare workers walked off the job in **Australia**.

In **England**, women protested government plans to increase women's retirement age and cut services for domestic violence survivors. Demands for reproductive rights and health care prevailed in **Ireland**, where women stopped traffic in Dublin calling for repeal of the abortion ban. Women in 80 **Polish** cities marched for reproductive rights and against gender discrimination, following last year's successful fightback against an abortion ban.



Turkey

## FROM YEMEN TO THE PHILIPPINES

In other IWD events, women protested outside U.N. headquarters in Sana'a, **Yemen's** capital, against the U.S.-backed Saudi coalition's brutal war in Yemen, which has killed civilians and destroyed homes, hospitals and infrastructure.

Yemeni human rights activist Mason Iryani stressed, "We came out today to



Yemen



Gaza

send a message to the United Nations and the whole world to stop their blockade of Yemen and let the Yemeni people live. Yemeni women have suffered enough." (almasdarnews.com, March 8)

Hundreds of Palestinian women marched to the U.N. office in **Gaza**, calling for the agency to pressure U.S.-funded Israeli occupation troops to stop violations against Palestinian women. They honored the 44 Palestinian women and 12 female children, now brutally held in Israeli jails. Israel has imprisoned 10,000 Palestinian women since its occupation began in 1967. (Addameer, March 7)

In Istanbul, **Turkey**, tens of thousands of women marched for their rights; many opposed President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's expansion of powers. Organized by women's rights groups, participants included LGBTQ individuals and youth. Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party members attended; some of its leaders are imprisoned.



Dhaka

Women marched in **Japan, Thailand, India, and Indonesia**. A major issue was sexual abuse and misogynist violence. In Dhaka, **Bangladesh**, women garment workers also rallied for equal treatment and improved working conditions. Women in Seoul, **South Korea** called for equal pay and reproductive rights and stopping gender discrimination. Their signs read, "3 O'Clock. Stop," referring to the gender pay gap; women say they work for free after 3 p.m.

Gabriela Women's Party and the Gabriela National Alliance led protests throughout the **Philippines**, criticizing President Rodrigo Duterte's failure to improve women's lives. They marched to the U.S. Embassy in Manila with a banner that read, "Women of the world unite! Resist against U.S. imperialism." Outside the presidential palace, a large rally demanded jobs, land, justice and peace.



Philippines

Gabriela Rep. Arlene Bosas said Duterte is intensifying "fascism and militarism, targeting activists, civilians and critics" and called for peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front.

## AFRICA

Activities were held throughout Africa, from **Mali to Zimbabwe**. Women marched in Nairobi, **Kenya** and in Dakar, **Senegal**,



Pelos 55 Anos da OMA e Dia da Mulher Angolana PARABÉNS a NÓS Mulheres

with a banner reading, "Solidarity is our weapon," as part of the global strike.

The Organization of **Angolan** Women met in early March to celebrate its 55th anniversary. The OAM participated in the liberation movement that won independence from Portugal in 1975, and now it promotes literacy programs and educational opportunities for women.

The African National Congress celebrated the achievements of women, thanks to the policies of the ANC, "working with the people of **South Africa**." Problems, including poverty, still exist for African women; however, women have "proven to be strong and resilient in the face of challenges and triumphs." The ANC remains confident that "led by women and working with all progressive allies, South Africa will do more to dismantle patriarchal structures, and accelerate gender parity and economic inclusion."

The Congress of South African Trade Unions called for global economies to refocus on "economic redistributive measures ... to ensure the poor, mostly women, are empowered to access decent jobs and to live decent lives with decent benefits and comprehensive social security nets." COSATU called on governments to eliminate poverty, workplaces abusive to women, gender violence, trafficking and other inequities.

The African Union said it is time to "appreciate the significant contributions that African women have made to the continent's development and especially the fight against colonialism, the elimination of apartheid and eradication of gender inequalities, discrimination and injustices against women."



Honduras

## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Indigenous women lead environmental movements worldwide, including in Latin America. There, women mobilize to protect natural resources, land and human rights and face repression and violence.

"Berta hasn't died; she's multiplied!" chanted thousands of Indigenous people and other protesters from Honduras and elsewhere, as they flooded Tegucigalpa on the first anniversary of the assassination of Berta Cáceres, the Indigenous leader and environmentalist. The Council of People's Indigenous Organization of Honduras (COPINH), which Cáceres founded, co-organized the protests at the start of March.

Demonstrators defied a new "anti-terrorism" law criminalizing public protest that was "pushed through by the U.S.-backed Honduran dictatorship." (Honduras Resists, March 1-4) Thousands marched to the Supreme Court, chanting, "Long live Berta. The struggle continues." They also honored National Front of Popular Resistance Coordinator Margarita Murillo, who was murdered in 2014.

Miriam Miranda, representing the Garifuna people, called for punishment of those behind Berta's murder. So far, eight people have been charged.

Thousands of women stormed government offices across **Brazil** and marched against reactionary President Michel Temer's austerity measures, including raising rural workers' retirement age. A popular chant was "Against Capital and Agribusiness." The Movement of Landless Rural Workers organized protests in Sao Paulo and other cities. In other actions, women stopped working in 60 cities for an hour to protest misogynist violence.

Temer led a parliamentary coup against Dilma Rousseff, the country's first woman president, named an all-male cabinet, closed the Ministry of Women and slashed funds for gender equality programs. Women condemned his insulting IWD talk.



Ecuador

In Quito, **Ecuador**, a march of 10,000 women acknowledged the thousands of women who suffered in the 1999 banking crisis and called for social justice. They denounced presidential contender and banker Guillermo Lasso as an accomplice in the banking crisis.

Erika Toala, a youth from the Afro-descendant province of Esmeraldas, told Telesur, "We are women who struggle, revolutionaries, so we demand respect and our place." (March 8)



Venezuela

Thousands of women, including Indigenous activists, marched through Caracas, **Venezuela**, to celebrate the inclusion of legendary Indigenous warrior Jefa Pacuana and Afro-Venezuelans Hipolita Bolivar and Matea Bolivar in the National Pantheon of Heroes mausoleum. This fulfilled a promise made by late President Hugo Chávez.

An IWD demonstration affiliated with the global strike and held outside a maternity hospital demanded ethical treatment during childbirth and an end to femicide. Trans women participated and addressed transphobic violence.

At one activity in **Haiti**, the Movement of Women of the Homeland in Action (MOKALAK) and KOD15 called on politicians to respect the 30 percent quota for women's participation in government agencies. "The somber tableau [that the political situation presents] shows the necessity for the women who live in Jerusalem and Canaan [two Port-au-Prince shantytowns] to rise up to take their destiny in hand. We must act as long as we are able because societal change concerns all of us," they said at a press conference.

Women's organizations in **Puerto Rico** shut down a main avenue in San Juan during "Women's Week." They also tried to close Milla de Oro (Golden Mile), a site of many banks, to oppose their squeeze





on the island’s workers and poor people. In Guaynabo, women pushed through a police barricade and entered City Hall to oppose sexual harassment and assault by municipal bureaucrats.

In socialist **Cuba**, Federation of Cuban Women founder and “eternal leader” Vilma Espin Guillois was honored for her contributions to women’s equality at the mausoleum for revolutionary heroes in Santiago. (Granma, March 9)

In Bayamo, women celebrated their gains and honored late President Fidel Castro, who wholeheartedly supported women’s struggles for equal rights and opportunities. Federation of Cuban Women General Secretary Teresa Amarelle recognized Fidel’s role and expressed the country’s solidarity with women worldwide. □



Cuban women honor Vilma Espin, leader in struggle against sexism and LGBT bigotry. Espin shown here during Cuban revolution.

# Rasmea Odeh’s defense gears up for trial

By Ava Lipatti

The legal defense team representing Palestinian-American activist Rasmea Odeh, including Michael Deutsch and Jim Fennerty, have filed important motions in anticipation of her trial on May 30.

Odeh, who was exiled from her village in Palestine by Israeli forces in 1948 and again in 1967, was “convicted” by an Israeli military court for alleged participation in bombings in 1969. This conviction was based on a false confession Odeh made after she was physically, psychologically and sexually tortured by Israeli military officers for weeks. She served 10 years in Israeli prison, where she was subjected to harsh living conditions and brutal treatment.

In 2013, Odeh was arrested in her Chicago home by agents of the Department of Homeland Security because she failed to disclose her 1969 conviction on her immigration application. When her case went to trial, the Israeli military court conviction was allowed to be entered into evidence. However, despite being documented by the United Nations, Odeh’s testimony about her torture was barred from the trial. Also barred was the testimony of clinical psychologist Dr. Mary Fabri, who had diagnosed Odeh with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Odeh was convicted in the unjust trial; in March 2015 she was sentenced to

18 months in prison and subsequent deportation. However, she remained free on bond due to the effort of organizers. Since then, an appeals court has affirmed that Odeh suffers from PTSD, and thus her right to a full defense was violated in the original trial. The appeals court overturned the original decision, forcing a retrial.

Prosecutors added two new allegations to the indictment on Dec. 13: first, the “crimes” she confessed to after being subjected to torture constitute “terrorist activity”; and second, she failed to disclose a supposed association with a “designated terrorist organization.” This brings the severity of the case far beyond immigration fraud.

Odeh’s defense team filed a motion on Jan. 31 to dismiss this new, politically motivated indictment on the grounds that it significantly broadens the scope of the case and that it was filed beyond the statute of limitations on the alleged 2004 immigration offense.

During the week of March 13, attorneys representing Odeh filed new motions in an effort to force the court to consider the role of torture in Odeh’s 1969 conviction. One motion calls on Judge Gershwin Drain to dismiss all evidence obtained through torture, citing the Fourth and Fifth amendments of the Constitution, in addition to



international law. In a second motion, Deutsch is requesting that the prosecution provide all evidence relating to Odeh’s arrest and torture by Israeli forces. “Use of force” guidelines and other documents will help the defense team demonstrate that torture is a systemic tool that Israeli forces use against Palestinians.

Judge Drain will rule on all the motions at the next pretrial hearing scheduled for April 25.

Odeh is a beloved activist in the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities in Chicago. She has been an organizer with the Arab American Action Network since 2004, helping hundreds of immigrant women.

It is ultimately Odeh’s status as a Palestinian woman and activist that has put her under attack by the U.S. government. But Odeh has received widespread support, both in Chicago and worldwide. The Odeh Defense Committee continues to fight on her behalf.

Odeh’s case is another in a long string of U.S. and Israeli state repression against Palestinian freedom fighters. Like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, the MOVE 9, Oscar López Rivera and the thousands of other political prisoners targeted by the U.S. government, Odeh must be defended! □

# Women’s hockey team threatens boycott over unequal pay

By Monica Moorehead

March 20 — As everyone knows, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, both sat and kneeled in protest during the playing of the national anthem during the 2016 National Football League season to bring attention to racist oppression, especially police brutality.

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

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

In a major development, members of the U.S. women’s hockey team announced on March 15 that they will be boycotting

the upcoming world championship games scheduled March 31 through April 7 in Plymouth, Mich.

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

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

“Out of a four-year cycle, USA Hockey pays for only six months out of an entire four years. They pay us \$1,000 per month in those six months. So, for the other 42 months we don’t get paid at all by USA Hockey,” Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson,

a two-time Olympic silver medalist, told ESPN. “It is a full-time job, and to not get paid is a financial burden and stress on the players, obviously.”

This amounts to a measly \$6,000 per six months whenever the team trains in preparation for the Olympic games. During the rest of the three-and-a-half years of training, the United States Olympic Committee can supplement their salaries. But that is capped at \$24,000 depending on the degree of “accomplishment” of certain players. In other words, the USOC has various tiers of wages, like many other corporations. Those players viewed as average or below average receive no more than \$700 a month from the USOC.

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

Besides the terrible pay, women players have complained to USA Hockey officials about goalies having to use their

own antiquated college equipment; horrible, cramped, unsanitary living quarters resulting in spider bites; and strenuous travel that none of their male counterparts are asked to endure to get to competitions.

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

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

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

# Addie Waites Hunton: PAN-AFRICAN

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Addie Waites Hunton was a central figure in the development of the Pan-African movement. She was born in 1866 in Norfolk, Va., to Jesse Waites and Adeline Waites. Waites earned a high school diploma at the Boston Latin School, and in 1889 she became the first African-American woman to graduate from the Spence-rian College of Commerce in Philadelphia.

Waites married William Alpheus Hunton Sr. in 1893. He was a pioneer in Young Men’s Christian Association work among Africans in the U.S. The family moved to Atlanta, where she worked as a secretary at Clark College. After the 1906 racist terror leveled against the African-American community, the Huntons relocated to New York City.

Between 1906 and 1910, Addie Hunton worked as a staff organizer for the National Association of Colored Women. She was an advocate for women’s suffrage in the campaign for the ratification of the 19th amendment, which granted voting rights to women. She urged leaders of the white suffrage movement to support access to voting for African people in the U.S.

Toward the end of U.S. involvement in imperialist World War I, Hunton, along with Kathryn Johnson, served on behalf of the YMCA in Paris, assisting the hundreds of thousands of African-American troops deployed there. The women published a book in 1920 about their observations and experiences in France titled “Two Colored Women with the American Expeditionary Force.”

This book provides first-hand accounts of the horrendous conditions that Afri-

can-American troops were subjected to during their terms of service in France. The U.S. armed forces carried out widespread discrimination against Black soldiers who were routinely denied food, medical treatment and access to public accommodations.

Hunton attended the Pan-African Congress organized by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1919 in Paris. The event has been labelled the Second Congress by historians. Du Bois requested the intervention of Blaise Diagne, a Senegalese representative in the French Assembly, to hold the gathering.

According to Du Bois, “Diagne secured the consent of Clemenceau to our holding a Pan-African Congress, but we then encountered the opposition of most of the countries ... to allowing delegates to attend. Few could come from Africa; passports were refused to American Negroes



and English whites. The Congress therefore, which met in 1919, was confined to those representatives of African groups who happened to be stationed in Paris.” Of the 57 delegates from 15 countries, nine were from African countries with 12 delegates, 16 were from the U.S. and 21 from the West Indies. (Andrew G. Paschal, editor, “A W.E.B. Du Bois Reader,” Macmillan, 1971)

Subsequently, Hunton remained active with the NACW and became an official of the NAACP. As a member of the executive board of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, she traveled with a women’s delegation to Haiti in 1926. Afterwards, she wrote a condemnation of U.S. occupation of the island and advocated for Haiti’s independence.

Addie Waites Hunton died on June 22, 1943, after a life of activism. □



# Protests erupt after Israel’s killing of Basil al-Araj

By Joe Catron

Protests erupted worldwide after Israeli occupation forces killed Basil al-Araj, a prominent Palestinian activist, during a predawn raid on a West Bank home the morning of March 6.

Basil, 31 years old, returned the invaders’ fire and fended them off for two hours, reportedly succumbing to their gunfire and rockets only after exhausting his supply of ammunition.

Within hours of his death, thousands of Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza, Ramallah, el-Bireh and Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem in Palestine; Haifa in Israel; and Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon.

Over the following days, demonstrations spread to Arab and international cities, including Amman, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, Cairo, London, Milan, Rabat, Tunis and Vienna.

The Palestinian Youth Movement organized protests March 13 outside the offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s delegation to the U.S. in Washington, D.C., and the Palestinian Mission to the U.N. on New York’s Upper East Side.

Meanwhile, Israel played a grisly game with Basil’s body, promising to return it to his grieving family on March 10, then refusing to do so for another week. Israel sought to impose restrictions on the time and location of his funeral as conditions for releasing his remains.

Only late in the afternoon of March 17

did Israel finally deliver its hostage, by then dead more than 11 days, for a delayed but momentous burial.

Thousands of Palestinian mourners descended on Basil’s hometown of al-Walaja near Bethlehem. Meanwhile, Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network held a rally outside the Best Buy in Manhattan’s Union Square to remember Basil and protest the store’s sale of products made by Hewlett Packard, a major supplier of the Israeli occupation forces who killed him.

### ‘A martyr’s deed’

The violent deaths of Palestinians at Israeli hands, while each is tragic, are not unusual. In 2016 alone, individual Israelis or — much more commonly — agents of the Israeli state killed at least 109 Palestinians, most of them men younger than Basil. (maannews.com)

But among the untold thousands of martyrs remembered over nearly a century of Palestinian struggle, several factors set Basil apart as an inspiration for mobilization.

While resistance fighters often keep low profiles out of necessity, Basil’s back-



Samidoun protest at a New York Best Buy on March 17.

PHOTO: BUD KOROTZER

ground in popular campaigns — including the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and the “Palestinian Freedom Rides” protest of settler buses in 2011, as well as his prolific writing and commentary — made him well-known among Palestinian and international activists alike.

His final moments, after fighting back for hours against overwhelming odds, inspired many, due in no small part to his own words of seeming or actual anticipation.

“The biggest insult against a martyr would be to say that he was obedient, submissive and polite in the face of his killer,” Basil once said (electronicintifada.net, March 14). He asked in his will, “Is there anything which is more eloquent and clearer than a martyr’s deed?” (maannews.com, March 6)

Basil’s earlier imprisonment and torture by the Palestinian Authority, which led inevitably to his pursuit and killing by Israel, made his death a potent catalyst for outrage.

Starting between late March and early April 2016, Basil and five other young Palestinian men were arrested by the PA security forces and imprisoned in its Beitunia jail.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas boasted of the arrests, telling Der Spiegel, “Just a couple of days ago, three young men were tracked down and arrested. They were planning an attack. In this context, our security cooperation with Israel is functioning well.” (April 18)

Amid Palestinian protests and reports of their torture, the six launched a hunger strike on Aug. 28, forcing the PA to release them 10 days later.

### ‘Oslo regime does not represent us’

Israeli occupation forces quickly arrested four of them — Seif al-Idrissi, Mohammed al-Salameen, Mohammed

Harb and Haithem Siyaj — ordering them into “administrative detention” without charge or trial under terms similar to their PA incarceration.

The PA continued to press its own charges of unlicensed possession of weapons for resistance operations against all six, including Ali Dar al-Sheikh, the only one of the group not currently imprisoned, and Basil despite his death.

As demonstrators gathered outside the PA court in Ramallah on March 12, BDS National Committee member Omar Assaf said, “We are protesting against the Palestinian Authority which imprisoned Basil in the past and today wants to judge him.” (aljazeera.com, March 12)

Palestinian Authority police soon attacked the growing protest as well as Palestinian journalists covering it, arresting several and injuring at least 11. Included were former “administrative detainee” and celebrated hunger-striker Khader Adnan and Mahmoud al-Araj, Basil’s be-reaved father.

The PA court finally dropped Basil’s charge later that day after a formal presentation of his death certificate. But it refused to do the same for the four in Israeli prisons, reasoning they might be released before the court reconvenes on April 30.

The PA attacks infuriated Palestinians across the political spectrum, sparking widespread calls for Abbas’ resignation and an end to the PA’s “security coordination” with Israel.

Khalida Jarrar, a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, announced that the party would boycott West Bank municipal elections in protest. (pflp.ps, March 12) Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem called the attacks “a national crime that entails accountability.” (hamas.ps, March 15)

A global network of Palestinian activists called for demonstrations against “security coordination” on April 17, the annual Palestinian Prisoners’ Day and 40 days after Basil’s death.

“The Oslo regime does not represent us,” their statement read. “Now is the time for us to come together and rebuild our collective struggle for the liberation of all of Palestine.” (tinyurl.com/lyo2bh3)

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

## Hands off Syria! Protest war, Islamophobia



WWPHOTO: LYDIA BAYONETA

By Gene Clancy  
Rochester, N.Y.

Amidst swirling snow and freezing temperatures, demonstrators gathered at the Liberty Pole in downtown Rochester on March 18 to protest the escalating U.S. war and invasion of Syria.

The protest was called by the Rochester International Action Center and endorsed by the U.S. Peace Council, the United National Antiwar Coalition, and the Hands Off Syria Coalition. Several local progressive and community groups also participated.

The demonstration was part of a nationwide series of protests and other activities called for the week of March 11-18 to focus attention on the blatant intervention and outright invasion of U.S. forces in Syria and the Middle East.

Within the past two weeks, aggression by the U.S. and its allies has increased sharply. Four hundred Marines and their equipment have been deployed in Syria, and the Pentagon is considering sending 1,000 more troops. (Washington Post, Mar. 15) The total is expected to reach 3,000.

On March 9, Gen. Joseph Votel said that U.S. forces will be “required” to stabilize the region as U.S. officials anticipate that “America’s allies” — i.e., anti-

Assad rebels — will need assistance from the U.S. military to establish “Syrian-led peacekeeping efforts” in the area. (Army Times, March 9)

This is a frank admission that U.S. troops will not be going anywhere even after the Islamic State group is removed, despite the fact that the presence of the IS is the only justification the U.S. military has offered for its technically illegal presence within Syria.

Recent propaganda barrages from groups like the “White Helmets,” a supposed nongovernmental organization in Syria which is actually a tool of Western propaganda directed by a non-Arab “missionary” operating out of Britain; and a now debunked report by Amnesty International accusing Syria of “war crimes,” show the need for actions like the one which happened here in Rochester.

The protest received many honks of support from passersby in cars and an overall friendly reception, although coverage by the local mainstream press was notably absent.

Progressive and peace-loving people everywhere must be alert and prepared to counter the U.S. war drive, which has regime change in Syria and complete domination of the Middle East as its ultimate goal. □

## Solidarity against racism



More than 30,000 people protested against racism in London on March 18. The demonstration took place within the framework of the “Day Against Racism” set by the United Nations for March 21. People in Athens, Berlin and Vienna also took to the streets on the same issue. Or-

ganizers said they were in solidarity with refugees and migrants who had been subjected to racist insults and attacks since the Brexit referendum last year and the election of U.S. President Donald Trump.

– Translated from the German daily newspaper Junge Welt of March 20.



# Caravanistas meet Cuba hero doctors

By Cheryl LaBash

On July 22, 2016, the 27th Pastors for Peace Friendship-Caravan participants met in Cuba with doctors who were veterans of the international campaign against Ebola in the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. The caravan travels yearly in solidarity with Cuba, challenging the U.S. travel ban. To volunteer or apply to be a caravanista, contact [friendshipmentcaravan@ifconews.org](mailto:friendshipmentcaravan@ifconews.org) or 212-926-5757, ext. 6.

The following excerpts were transcribed from a video produced by Joe Friendly for IFCO/Pastors for Peace.



Dr. Enrique Betancourt

**Dr. Jorge Delgado**, deputy director of the Central Unit for Medical Cooperation, who led the brigade in Sierra Leone: [Cuba has] been in 117 countries of the world in these 55 years, with more than 160,000 persons involved who work in the health care sectors. Today we have 49,500 health workers in 62 countries. We have a special program in support of Venezuela that has been going on for a number of years.

Cuban medical collaboration has always been solidarity, mainly in support of the people. In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck our brothers and sisters in New Orleans, we proposed to the U.S. administration that we would send a medical brigade.

More than 10,000 health sector workers answered Fidel's call to form a special medical brigade to go to the U.S., named "Henry Reeve" after a young person from New York City who fought for Cuba's independence against Spanish colonialism. In 1876 Reeve died in combat in Cienfuegos.

Everyone knows that Bush did not accept the proposal to send the medical brigade after the Katrina disaster. To demonstrate that the Henry Reeve Brigade was here to stay to help the world, half of the brigade went to Guatemala to help after flooding there.

And just to show we were not fooling around, there was the earthquake in Pakistan in October 2005. In two months, 2,500 workers were sent to that country to help. They were located in 32 hospitals that Cuba also sent, with all equipment included, with nothing asked in exchange. We are Creoles, we are not accustomed to snow — we were there for eight months!

The Henry Reeve Brigade, after the events we have mentioned, has been in

another 17 countries. We gave support to Haiti for the cholera epidemic and the earthquake, with 1,500 health workers.

When the Ebola epidemic took place in Western Africa, the United Nations and World Health Organization requested support from four countries — three rich countries, the U.S., France, England — and Cuba, where we are rich in solidarity, with human resources who have the training and ability to help other countries of the world in situations like these.

From July to September 2014 the international media spread the news of the catastrophe the countries were undergoing. It seemed that Ebola would invade all parts of the world. But for each person who died from Ebola, ten per day died from malaria — as is happening today in poor countries in Africa. But Ebola could spread throughout the world, so it had to be controlled where it was in order to prevent the spread.

The World Health Organization requested 165 doctors for Sierra Leone, 55 for Liberia and 37 for Guinea. We have many anecdotes from Cuba, considering all who traveled there. In a week, or to be more precise, in three days, there were more than 400 Cuban volunteers ready. In a week, 12,000 doctors and nurses were ready go and struggle against Ebola. Many were upset because they were not able to go.

On Dec. 17, 2014, our colleagues from the U.S. heard the news about restored U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations, along with those of us also serving there. So there was applause, greetings, but no hugs. In the protocol for prevention of Ebola you cannot hug or touch hands, but we touched our hearts; it was expressed that way.

The feeling was, OK, but we are working here together already. So although we

*'We know [Ebola] is a critical disease, many die, but they should die with dignity, with someone to care for them until the end. ... The Cuban medical brigade [was] able to reduce the mortality rate from its height of 85-90 percent. In Sierra Leone, we lowered that to 32-36 percent. So many lives were saved — the product of the medical attention of Cubans and the doctors and nurses of other countries, too.'*



Dr. Jorge Delgado

STILL PHOTOS:  
JOE FRIENDLY  
VIDEO

were grateful for the official relations, the perception was we are already here on site, but now the working relations are official.

I finally want to say that our Minister of Health had a personal interview with Dr. Chan, secretary of the World Health Organization, in which our minister said, yes, Cuba is going to be there. Dr. Chan said, we know it is a critical disease, many die, but they should die with dignity, with someone to care for them until the end. That was the Cuban medical brigade.

We were able to reduce the mortality rate from its height of 85-90 percent. In Sierra Leone, we lowered that to 32-36 percent. So many lives were saved — the product of the medical attention of Cubans and the doctors and nurses of other countries, too.

**Dr. Enrique Betancourt**, who served in Liberia: Everybody knows the enormous tradition of solidarity our country has had. In my case, I also had this tradition at home. My parents were among the first doctors and nurses who in the 1970s helped in the Republic of Angola. Going into my history, my father died in 1986 with Mozambique's President Samora Machel. So my mother always had this legacy of my father present in our home.

On Sept. 19, I was just changing duty, I was finished, I was at my work center, when I was asked if I was willing to participate in the struggle against Ebola. In spite of the tears of my wife who worked with me, the pride I felt at saying "yes" was very great — to undertake the legacy my father had given us.

I worked in Angola from 2010 to 2012, and the deaths from malaria were many, but nothing like Ebola. Not only because of the quantity, but also the degree of danger and the number of deaths that happened, the way the patients arrived, and above all the children.

**Enrique Ubieta**, the Cuban author of "Zona Roja: La experiencia cubana del ébola" ("Red Zone: The Cuban Experience with Ebola"), also spoke on the panel. The book tells the story of the 265 volunteer Cuban doctors and nurses who served in West Africa to combat Ebola. Many practitioners detail conditions on the ground created by imperialist ravages in the region that contributed to the spread of the deadly epidemic.

*The New York launch of the next Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan will be held on April 15 at 7 p.m. at Holyrood Episcopal Church Iglesia Santa Cruz, 715 West 179 St.* □

## No triumph for ultra-right in Netherlands; French vote looms

By G. Dunkel

Polls predicted that the Islamophobe Geert Wilder's Party of Freedom (PVV), a racist, xenophobic party that also opposes the European Union, would win big in the March 15 Dutch election. It didn't. Its vote rose from only 10 percent to 13 percent.

Interest in Wilder's fate was great not only in the Netherlands. It was closely watched because of what it might foretell about the possibility that Marine Le Pen, the candidate of the ultra-right National Front (FN) in France, might be elected president in late April elections there.

In the Netherlands, while the center-right Liberal-Democratic party (VVD) of Prime Minister Mark Rutte saw its vote decline from 26 percent to 21 percent, it still came in first, and will try to form a coalition government. Its two allies, the Christian Democratic Party and a center-left party, saw their votes increase from 16 percent to 24 percent.

The vaguely ecologist, left-wing party "Groenlinks" went from 2 percent to 9 percent, and the Denk, a new party based

in the Moroccan and Turkish communities, got three seats.

Since voting is strictly proportional nationwide, the number of seats equals the percentage of votes, and the VVD will have to pick up another coalition partner to form a government. It is normal in the Netherlands to govern with a broad coalition.

Wil van der Klift, the secretary general of the New Communist Party of the Netherlands, in an interview with the German daily newspaper Junge Welt said following the elections, "We must be able to talk more about the everyday life of people. We try to be more visible in businesses and neighborhoods. I think we have a good chance of doing that because there are quite a few young people who are interested in our positions lately."

Although Wilder's PVV did less well than predicted, this was partly because its right-wing and centrist competitors adopted major portions of its anti-immigrant platform, but with a softer voice. According to some analysts, Dutch voters, frightened or repulsed by the Donald Trump presidency, were hesitant to back someone

like Wilders, who identified closely with the Trump program and style.

### France

In France, the FN also opposes the European Union and is just as anti-Islam, racist and xenophobic as Wilder's PVV. Islam is the religion with the largest number of adherents in France, which is a nuclear-armed, major economic power in Europe and a major imperialist presence in Africa and the Middle East. About 20 percent to 30 percent of French electors have voted for the FN in recent elections.

The two parties that have alternated control of the French government — the Socialist Party (PS), which is socialist in name only, and a center-right party now called The Republicans (LR) — have kept the FN out of office. Now both face serious electoral trouble, which could open the door to Le Pen.

Benoît Hamon, the PS candidate, was a minister in the most unpopular French administration in recent decades, and has been unable to rally the PS behind his candidacy. The Republicans' candidate is

François Fillon, who is under the French equivalent of an indictment for corruption.

Emmanuel Macron, who was a minister of the economy in the PS government and part of the party's right wing, quit to form his own party, Onwards! Before that, this elite, rich, privileged politician was a private banker at the Rothschild Bank in Paris.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the major progressive candidate in the race, is running on the Indomitable France ticket, which has the support of France's Communist Party. Mélenchon is polling fifth.

Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen are leading the polling, with Fillon and Hamon in third and fourth place, well behind Macron and Le Pen.

France's election involves two rounds, scheduled for the end of April and the beginning of May. The two top finishers in the first round — most likely Macron and Le Pen — compete in the second round a week later.

Polls favor Macron over Le Pen, but an expected demagogic attack on Macron's elitist history could still favor the FN candidate. □



# WORKERS WORLD

## editorial

# Call him by his real name

As dissatisfaction with this stagnating capitalist system has grown in most of the Western imperialist countries, pundits and the media have come up with a label for politicians who rail against the “establishment” and speak in the name of “the people.” That word is “populist.” But, like the politicians they pin the term on, the media are deliberately confusing the public.

Reactionaries like Donald Trump, Geert Wilders in The Netherlands and Marine Le Pen in France aren’t populists, they’re racist demagogues.

Populism originated in the 19th century in the United States. Here’s one short description of the Populist movement:

“The first movement of this kind was started in the 1880s, by farmers who were suffering because of plummeting cotton prices in the South and a drought in the Great Plains. As farmers sank deeper into debt, their simmering resentments of Eastern elites were ignited, especially

by bankers charging exorbitant lending rates and railroad barons charging high prices. The farmers, labor unions, and their sympathizers formed what they officially called the People’s Party but was commonly known as the Populists. The Populists felt ‘squeezed by the unfettered capitalism of the Gilded Age,’ says Rutgers University historian David Greenberg. The Populists wanted to nationalize railroads, break up big trusts, and get rid of the gold standard, which restricted the money supply. They also advocated an eight-hour workday, women’s suffrage, and a progressive income tax.” (theweek.com)

Vince Copeland, a co-founder of Workers World Party along with Sam Marcy and Dorothy Ballan, in his book “Market Elections” quoted Mary Ellen Lease, a farm woman and leading Populist orator: “Wall Street owns the country. It is ... a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street and for Wall Street.” And popu-

lism wasn’t just a white movement. Many Black farmers in the South, betrayed by the Republican Party of the northern bankers, were in the Populist movement.

Really, even in the wildest stretch of the imagination it would be false to call Donald Trump a populist. Will he nationalize the railroads? Break up big trusts? Support shorter hours with better pay for workers? Hit the billionaires with a progressive income tax?

Trump and his grouping shudder at all these things. They want to lower taxes on the rich while cutting social programs for the masses. They don’t want to nationalize anything profitable, rather they want to privatize education.

Trump’s cabinet appointments read like a Who’s Who of big business, from former Exxon-Mobil head Rex Tillerson as secretary of state to a flock of bankers, especially from Goldman Sachs, that include Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Special Adviser Stephen

K. Bannon. And there are the actual billionaires: Wilbur Ross as commerce secretary and investor Carl Icahn as special adviser on regulatory reform. Ad nauseam.

Are all the rich ruling class for Trump? Obviously not. He is under attack from plenty in the ruling class who fear he and his “alt-right” advisers are going to mess up the political system in this country, which has served their interests so well.

Trump is a living example of not a populist but a demagogue. He preys on the vulnerabilities of millions who feel they have been losing ground and turns their anxieties and anger into fear and hatred of people who themselves are even bigger casualties of imperialist globalization. His campaign mixed vicious, racist rhetoric with promises he never intended to keep — all to get the votes of workers and the middle class.

Populism? No. Right-wing demagoguery? You bet. □



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Participants and supporters, March 18.

## Women change history: BUILD WORKERS WORLD!

Workers World always commemorates the socialist holiday of International Women’s Day, March 8, with a roundup of women’s protests for freedom, justice and equality the world over. While all issues are women’s issues, WW focuses this year on women bearing the brunt of Trump’s racist, sexist, xenophobic agenda, such as working-class immigrant women being deported for the “crime” of daring to cross borders in search of work so they can provide for their families.

Women are already in motion around the globe this year. On Jan. 21, there were more than 600 women’s marches, over 5 million strong in total. That was followed in the U.S. by “A Day without Immigrants” on Feb. 16, when thousands upon thousands of workers and students walked out across the country, demanding their rights. An unprecedented International Women’s Strike occurred on March 8, with actions in more than 50 countries. And then there is May 1 — May Day — with WW joining the call for a global workers’ strike.

As Marxists, we strive not just to honor history but to make it — to bring about major changes needed to put the workers and the oppressed first instead of last. Struggle is the only way to bring about change. Like the struggle of the Black Lives Matter movement, started by women and transgender activists, which boldly counters racism and demands redress for centuries of oppression. Women are also powering the fight for \$15 an hour and a

union. That’s because two-thirds of low-wage workers are women, often women of color and mothers solely responsible for their families.

If you appreciate WW’s year-round coverage of struggles that assert and advance the rights of women, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program and help build the newspaper. We established the WWSP some 40 years ago so readers could invest in the paper and promote working-class truth needed to make revolutionary change.

You can always make a one-time contribution, or you can join the Workers World Supporter Program and build the paper all year long. We established the program 40 years ago in 1977 so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build campaigns needed to make the revolutionary change that crushes capitalism and ushers in socialism.

Members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free trial subscriptions to give to friends — all for a donation of \$75 a year. For \$100 you also get a new publication or book from World View Forum. For \$300 or more a year (only \$25 a month), you get your pick of five books or videos from the Peoples Video Network.

Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at [workers.org/donate/](http://workers.org/donate/). We are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □

## Women resist global oppression

### Special to Workers World

The New York City branch of Workers World Party held a special forum on March 18 in honor of International Working Women’s Month. The theme of the forum was “Global Women’s Fightback against Trumpism.” Workers World Party members Teresa Gutierrez, Monica Moorehead and Stephanie Tromblay

spoke on migrant women and May Day, solidarity with Black and trans women’s lives, and defending Standing Rock and Indigenous women, respectively. Guest speaker Jennine Ventura, a leading member of Gabriela USA, presented a slideshow on women resisting militarism and plunder in the Philippines. LeiLani Dowell, WW managing editor, chaired the forum. □



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

## Detroit WWP hosts women’s speakout

International Women’s Day was commemorated in Detroit on March 11 at a women’s speakout for justice and liberation, hosted by the women of Workers World Party. The event started with a delicious meal and desserts prepared by men comrades and friends. This was a program where only women, including trans, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming women, could speak on whatever topic or struggle they chose. The men listened, learned and played a supportive role.

Kayla Pauli, a skilled-trades





# Midwest conference to build socialism

By Workers World Staff

Revolutionaries from throughout the Midwest and beyond have mobilized to build and attend the fightback conference, “Resistance Against Racism and Capitalism: The Struggle for Socialism.” The Detroit branch of Workers World Party and the Wayne State University branch of Students for a Democratic Society are co-hosting the event March 25-26.

Registrants are from 12 U.S. states and over 20 cities. The Venezuelan consul general, based in Chicago, will be speaking, along with many other people’s fighters, like a delegation from the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751.

The conference talks include: Resistance to capitalism in Detroit and beyond; solidarity with migrants under siege by ICE; a special tribute to Fidel Castro; Fight for \$15 and other labor struggles; mobilizing against imperialist attacks on Africa, Yemen, Syria, China, Russia, Central and Latin America, and the anti-fascist forces in Ukraine; supporting public education; the 100th anniversary of the Russian revolution; and the struggles and fightback of people of color, youth, students, retirees, women, LGBTQ people and their communities.

**To free all working-class and oppressed peoples**

Workers World recently spoke to some revolutionary cadre on why they’re attending the conference. Mond Jones, a Workers World Party candidate from Detroit and member of the Michigan Peoples Defense Network, commented:

“As a young Black revolutionary, it is important for me not only to be at the forefront of the people’s liberation movement, but also to understand and study Marxist-Leninist theory, and connect with other organizers in the struggle. The Midwest Socialism Conference is going to link theory with praxis, with the understanding that a socialist revolution is the only thing that will free not only Black people, but all working-class and oppressed people worldwide, from the chains of capitalism and oppressive hierarchies. It will be a great opportunity to understand and develop ways on how to further that cause. This conference can only bring us closer to our goal and aid us in bringing true power to the people.” (facebook.com/MichiganPeoplesDefenseNetwork) (facebook.com/WWP.michigan)

A WWP and friends’ delegation is traveling to the conference from Chicago, an epicenter of people’s struggles, including immigrant rights, the Chicago Teachers Union and the Black Lives Matter fight against police terror. Adjoa Achiaa, a member of the WWP Chicago branch and a BLM Chicago organizer, explained why: “I am excited to be going to the Midwest Conference because I want to engage in serious dialogue about capitalism, imperialism and a Trump presidency.

apprentice and WWP youth organizer, kicked off the speakout by giving a history of the working-class and socialist origins of IWD. Yvonne Jones, of the Detroit Association of Retired and Active Employees, talked about community leaders making a difference. Baheejah Shakoor, a retired nurse who refused orders to go to war in Iraq, spoke about the movie “Hidden Figures” and about providing youth with needed skills.

Other women talked about the impact of domestic violence and racism;



“I am dissatisfied with notions that impeaching Trump or having a so-called democratic president would improve conditions of oppressed people. Black, Brown, Muslim, queer, trans, Indigenous, migrant lives cannot be liberated under neoliberal reforms, domestically or abroad. While Bernie made socialism a hot topic, I am interested only in discussing decolonization and true revolutionary socialism. Power to the people!” (facebook.com/ChicagoWWP)

Working-class and oppressed peoples in the state now known as Wisconsin have been fighting against brutal Jim Crow austerity, including ruling-class attacks against private and public sector collective bargaining for unions. But the people have resisted at every turn, most notably with the February-March 2011 state Capitol occupation in Madison.

Zach Gevelinger, a WWP candidate from southwestern Wisconsin and a member of the Rockford, Ill., branch of WWP, wants to intensify that resistance: “I’m attending the Midwest Conference because it is necessary to consolidate our forces against a growing racist, sexist, capitalist, bigoted enemy represented by Trump’s administration.

“Building networks of communists and socialists is essential to building a vanguard party capable of defending the gains of the working class and of building socialism in our communities. Power is the organized masses. Developing our consciousness both in struggle and through conference discussion can give us weapons necessary to make capitalism a system of the past.” (facebook.com/rockfordwwp) (facebook.com/workersworldpartywisconsin).

**The Global Class War**

Some attendees are coming from beyond the Midwest. Mattie Boyd, of the WWP Philadelphia branch, said, “I’m traveling from Philadelphia to Detroit — two of the poorest big cities in the country. The forces of racist, imperial-

Indigenous leader Berta Cáceres, who was assassinated last year in Honduras; women’s oppression in class society; why all working-class women are needed to help overthrow capitalism; keeping up the fight against foreclosures and utility shutoffs; the struggles facing transgender women; the important roles women carry out in socialist Cuba and how to help stop the U.S. blockade; and much more. Shown here are some of the participants.

— Report and photos by  
Kris Balderas-Hamel

ist austerity that have laid siege to both working-class Philadelphians and Detroiters are not isolated from each other.

“These exist as part of a global class of exploiters — the same class that wreaks havoc in Latin America, Northern Africa and the Levant. Only on the basis of the united struggle of all working and oppressed people against our common imperialist enemy will our class create the conditions for lasting peace.” (facebook.com/WWPhilly).

Right-to-work (for-less) laws in the Midwest are part of the rapid increase of racist, anti-working-class austerity under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Since 2013, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin have also become RTW states. Many of the capitalist henchmen who put these laws in place are now part of the Trump administration, including former Indiana governor and now Vice President Mike Pence.

In West Virginia, the legislature passed a RTW bill in 2015. Benji Pyles, WWP member from Huntington, W.Va., outlined the devastation wreaked by colonization and capitalism on his region: “The territory currently referred to as ‘West Virginia’ (actually Shawnee, Haudenosaunee and other Native nations’ territories) has been utterly ravaged by white supremacist capitalism that still reigns supreme here.

“From the moment colonists came into the region with ethnic cleansing, committing genocide against the Native nations, the status quo has been to steal resources, mine and burn fossil fuels and cut down forests. This has led to poisoned

land and water, harmful emissions and killing off of many species. According to the National Women’s Law Center, an Indigenous woman makes about 50 cents for every dollar a white man makes, while Black and Latina women make about 60 cents. Of course, given [racist] patriarchy, a white woman makes 70 cents.” (facebook.com/groups/WorkersWorld-WV).

Added Pyles: “West Virginia currently faces massive budget shortfalls that are being balanced on the backs of the poor, the workers and the oppressed nations through cuts to vital programs and through the implementation of regressive sales taxes. I urge West Virginians to come to the Midwest Regional Conference to learn how to challenge the wealthy and their capitalist system and fight for the power to establish a new economic system based on democratic planning by the working class and the oppressed.

“We need a socialist system that allocates resources according to the needs of the overwhelming majority and not for the profits of the banks and those few who ‘own’ the tools with which we labor. Trump, whom white West Virginians strongly voted for, is no ally in this struggle. He is more interested in spending billions on bombing workers in Yemen and invading Syria.Truth is, neither the Democrats nor Republicans have any interest whatsoever in these tasks. It’s up to us!”

For conference schedule, registration and more information visit [workersworlddetroit.org](http://workersworlddetroit.org).

View the Facebook event page at [tinyurl.com/zpnhrej](http://tinyurl.com/zpnhrej). □



## ‘ICE’ aterroriza migrantes

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clima tan temible que más musulmanes que nunca en EUA buscaban refugio en Canadá. Se ha visto un video en el que migrantes caminan por pequeñas áreas boscosas del norte de Nueva York para cruzar “ilegalmente” hacia Canadá.

Según varias fuentes de noticias, la ley canadiense menciona que las personas que tratan de hacer una solicitud de refugio son rechazadas en Canadá si ingresan al país “legalmente”. Sin embargo, si un migrante entra “ilegalmente” - o mejor dicho, irregularmente - la ley canadiense permite reclamar la condición de refugiado. Más de 2.000 personas han hecho esto desde la elección de Trump, muchas/os de ellos con estatus legal en EUA. Esto demuestra el miedo, incluso teniendo documentos.

**Condiciones empeorarán para migrantes**

La entidad burguesa y pro-empresarial de análisis de riesgo global Verisk Maplecroft, publicó recientemente un informe titulado “Perspectivas de los Derechos Humanos 2017”. (The Guardian, 10 de marzo) El informe declara que la endurecida política de inmigración de Trump aumentará el riesgo de esclavitud moderna y abusos laborales. Obligar a las “redes criminales a utilizar rutas de tráfico aéreo y marítimo más costosas y potencialmente más peligrosas”.

The Guardian escribió: “Saket Soni, director ejecutivo de ... National Guestworkers Alliance, dijo que las nuevas regulaciones de la administración Trump sólo exacerbarán los problemas existentes y demuestran que el gobierno de

Estados Unidos es parte del problema. “Las políticas de Trump son un regalo para los traficantes de personas”, dijo Soni. “Sabemos de primera mano lo que confirma el informe de Verisk Maplecroft: la criminalización de los inmigrantes los hace más vulnerables al trabajo forzado, a la trata humana y a la esclavitud moderna. La criminalización masiva de Trump llevará a las/os inmigrantes aún más a las sombras, donde un número creciente de ellos enfrentará condiciones de trabajo forzado”.

Cada día la cuestión de la migración en todo el mundo se convierte cada vez más en una gran crisis humanitaria.

A pesar de las políticas de terror de Trump/Bannon/ICE, esto no detendrá la migración forzada. Hasta que las políticas económicas y del exterior del imperialismo estadounidense sean anuladas, las/os trabajadores se verán obligados a abandonar sus tierras para poder sobrevivir.

Los Angeles Times reportó el 9 de marzo que en 2016 “los agentes fronterizos vieron un aumento sin precedentes en las/os migrantes que viajaban desde países lejanos; desde Haití, India, Bangladesh y partes de África. Alrededor de 15.000 migrantes de fuera de América Latina atravesaron Baja California el año pasado, casi cinco veces más que en 2015”.

Los movimientos obreros y revolucionarios EUA y en todo el mundo deben abordar la cuestión de la migración forzada de una manera primordial. Ahora es el momento de ir ala defensa de las/os migrantes. □





## Editorial WW-Mundo Obrero

# Primero de Mayo: ¡Luchar por una huelga de masas!

Más de una docena de llamados han sido emitidos para una huelga general en EUA el 1 de mayo, Día Internacional de las/os Trabajadoras/es. Estos llamados han venido de una amplia gama de organizaciones de trabajadores migrantes, mujeres, prisioneros, revolucionarios socialistas y otras/os.

Los medios de comunicación están enviando señales de alarma al cubrir el 1 de mayo sólo como una “historia” más. Los grandes negocios están empezando a preocuparse, mientras difunden estrategias sobre cómo “neutralizar” un levantamiento de trabajadoras/es y del poder de las/os oprimidos el 1 de mayo.

Desde el comienzo de la administración de Trump, ha habido dos días de huelgas nacionales que involucraron a miles. Hubo el Día Sin Inmigrante el 16 de febrero y el Día Sin Mujeres el 8 de marzo. Otras acciones de huelga locales se están multiplicando, como la de la Alianza de Trabajadores de Taxi de Nueva York cuando se negaron a recoger pasajeros del aeropuerto en solidaridad con las protestas contra la prohibición de entrada de musulmanes.

Ha habido algo de apoyo en los sindicatos para las/os trabajadores que quie-

ren “paralizarlo todo”. Por ejemplo, SEIU United Service Workers West, que representa a más de 40.000 trabajadoras/es de California, dijo en un comunicado: “Es hora de levantarse como pueblo contra el fascismo y el liderazgo autocrático”.

Una huelga general, como tradicionalmente es convocada por los sindicatos organizados, es una demostración del poder de la clase obrera contra el capital y los patronos. Tal huelga demuestra la poderosa conciencia de clase de que hay un “todas/os nosotros” que se extiende mucho más allá de una local.

Las/os trabajadores y las/os oprimidos ahora saben que Trump y Compañía están intentando aplastar a la clase obrera, destruyendo nuestra solidaridad, dividiéndonos por líneas de opresión. La clase dominante está tratando de hacernos luchar entre nosotras/os en vez de contra el capitalismo y el imperialismo.

Una huelga masiva del Primero de Mayo podría ser no sólo para las/os trabajadores sindicalizados, sino para todas/os nosotros que estamos en la mira: personas de color, migrantes e inmigrantes, trabajadoras/es temporales y de bajo salario, desempleadas/os y subempleados, personas LGBTQ , prisioneras/

os, mujeres que trabajan dentro y fuera del hogar, jóvenes y estudiantes, personas con discapacidades que están trabajando o quieren trabajar y se les niega esa oportunidad, personas que están perdiendo acceso al cuidado de salud, la protección del medio ambiente y tanto más.

Una huelga de masas de todas/os los obreros y oprimidos combatiría de manera militante y directa la guerra capitalista que se libra contra nosotras/os a través del nacionalismo el imperialismo racista, anti-obrero y anti-mujer.

Un llamado de los sindicatos a una huelga general o de masas afirmaría la solidaridad de los sindicatos organizados con la totalidad de la clase trabajadora y de las/os oprimidos. Tal llamado debe incluir protección para aquellas/os que se arriesgan tanto ellas/os mismos como sus trabajos al participar en las acciones del Primero de Mayo.

El 13 de marzo, el Consejo Laboral de San Francisco “respaldó con entusiasmo las acciones de solidaridad de las/os trabajadores previstas para el 1 de mayo, el Día Internacional de las/os Trabajadores ... para protestar contra los recientes ataques a inmigrantes, el cuidado de salud y el derecho a tener una voz en el

trabajo”. La resolución llamó a un “NO A LAS REPRESALIAS contra cualquier trabajador/a – en sindicato o no” que participe ese día.

Necesitamos más de esta unidad como un trampolín para convertir el 1 de mayo en una huelga de masas contra un estado cada vez más represivo que regala dinero a los súper ricos mientras ataca a las/os trabajadores y oprimidos. ¡Y como un trampolín hacia el socialismo y el poder obrero!

Y necesitamos una huelga de masas global, porque el capitalismo en su forma altamente globalizada no puede ser combatido con éxito ciudad por ciudad, región por región o país por país.

¿Puede haber tal huelga? Como la gran revolucionaria comunista Rosa Luxemburgo escribió sobre la huelga de masas: “La rígida concepción mecánica-burocrática no puede concebir la lucha sino como el producto de la organización en una cierta etapa de su fuerza. Por el contrario, la explicación viva y dialéctica hace que la organización surja como un producto de la lucha”. (Tinyurl.com/hw4wlg1)

Luchemos, y en esa lucha construyamos lo que necesitamos para ganar.

¡Adelante con la huelga del Primero de Mayo! □

## ‘ICE’ aterroriza migrantes

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Cientos de seguidores acompañaron al activista inmigrante Ravi Ragbir a la oficina de ICE de Nueva York el 9 de marzo, impidiéndole ser deportado.

La hija de Rómulo Avelica-González, de 13 años, estaba grabando un video mientras los agentes de inmigración lo aprehendían, justo después de que la dejara en la escuela en Los Ángeles.

Mientras grababa, ella sollozaba. (Washington Post, 4 de marzo)

El incidente sacudió no sólo a la hija de Avelica-González y a toda la familia, sino también a las/os estudiantes y maestras/os de toda la ciudad.

Los informes llegan rápidamente de inmigrantes que son aprehendidas/os de la misma manera, no sólo en escuelas, sino en los tribunales, en eventos que abogan por los inmigrantes y en los lugares de trabajo.

En otras palabras, ningún lugar es seguro.

En los Estados Unidos, las comunidades de inmigrantes se preparan desesperadamente para las redadas. Muchas/os, si no todas/os, viven en completa ansiedad, sin saber qué hacer o cómo. Las/os maestros consuelan a sus estudiantes, pero también están haciendo preguntas difíciles: “¿Has hablado con tus padres? ¿Tienes poder legal?” (Los Angeles Times, 3 de marzo)

Este es el tipo de ansiedad y terror que los padres y madres, las/os niños y las/os trabajadores inmigrantes están viviendo con cada momento de sus vidas desde la inauguración del presidente Donald Trump.

Los niños no están yendo a la escuela. Las citas médicas y con abogados están siendo canceladas. Los restaurantes y los comercios están sufriendo a medida que más y más migrantes se quedan en casa sin ir a la escuela, a sus trabajos o a hacer compras.

Sin embargo, este terror escalofriante en la comunidad migrante en los EUA es un gran negocio para el complejo industrial penitenciario. Mientras que las/os migrantes viven en el miedo, los ejecutivos del sistema penitenciario salivan.

### Rentables redadas Trump/Bannon/ICE

Toda la campaña presidencial de Trump fue predicada en contra de las/os trabajadores inmigrantes en este país. La ley y el orden, la construcción de un muro y la prohibición de musulmanes son las piedras angulares de su administración. Todos son racistas, odiosos y anti-obreros. Todo esto mientras su administración destruye el acceso a la atención médica.

Todo apunta a dividir a la clase obrera en un momento en que la unidad es más urgente si la clase obrera va a luchar contra los crecientes asaltos contra todas las personas en este país.

Mientras que Trump abiertamente señala a las/os inmigrantes, el racismo y el terror policial contra las comunidades afroamericanas son también piedras angulares de su administración. La alianza impía Trump/Bannon/ICE es un gran impulso para las fuerzas racistas de ocupación que es la policía.

Las prisiones y la policía van de la mano. Un titular del periódico New York Times del 10 de marzo decía: “La

represión por Trump contra la inmigración es excelente para las acciones de las prisiones privadas”.

Dos empresas que se han ganado el odio del movimiento en contra del encarcelamiento, CoreCivic (anteriormente Corrections Corporation of America) y GEO Group, operan prisiones con fines de lucro y centros de detención de inmigrantes en muchos estados y para el gobierno federal.

Entre octubre del 2015 y septiembre del 2016, más de 350.000 inmigrantes indocumentadas/os fueron detenidos - un número que aumentará drásticamente bajo la represión de Trump.

Como escribe el Times, “mientras más mala la noticia para los inmigrantes y sus abogados, mejor ha sido para las dos empresas. Cuando un miembro de la administración Trump emite un memorando o una orden ejecutiva o una rueda de prensa o tuit sobre la represión de los inmigrantes, las acciones de las dos compañías aumentan: Desde la elección presidencial, las acciones de CoreCivic han subido en un 120 por ciento, y Geo ha aumentado un 80 por ciento”.

Bajo la administración de Barack Obama, las deportaciones masivas llevadas a cabo fueron manejadas de manera diferente que bajo Trump. El presidente Obama declaró el 18 de agosto de 2016 que su administración estaría eliminando las prisiones con fines de lucro en la Oficina Federal de Prisiones. Las acciones de las compañías se desplomaron.

El gobierno de Obama ordenó a la Agencia de Inmigración y Aduanas llevar a cabo una política de “captura y liberación”. Las/os trabajadores indocu-

mentados iban a ser puestos en libertad si esperaban su deportación y no eran los llamados “criminales endurecidos”.

Trump, a través de las acciones del supremacista blanco, el fiscal general Jeff Sessions, ha cambiado esa política. Ahora, sin importar su estatus en el sistema, todas/os los trabajadores indocumentados serán retenidos. Estas/os trabajadores necesitan un lugar para estar antes de la deportación, de ahí el auge reciente en el complejo industrial penitenciario.

NBC News informa, “La relación de la Oficina Federal de Prisiones ‘... con las cárceles privadas gira sobre el alojamiento de los inmigrantes. Casi todas las 21.405 personas que actualmente cumplen con su condena ... han sido designadas como ‘extranjeros criminales’ – no-ciudadanos que probablemente serán deportados después de cumplir con su condena, según estadísticas de la oficina”. (5 de marzo)

Desde hace varios años, artículo tras artículo y defensor tras defensor han documentado todas las horribles condiciones de estas prisiones. Las/os niños se encierran con sus padres. Las cárceles pueden ser frías y la comida es a menudo rancia. Muchas/os prisioneros heroicos han emprendido una huelga de hambre para protestar por estas condiciones.

Todas estas condiciones se intensificarán bajo la administración de Trump. No es de extrañar, por tanto, que un sector de migrantes huya de EUA en cifras récord.

El secretario de Seguridad Nacional John Kelly tuvo que admitir que las políticas de Trump estaban creando un

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