

Ending gun violence — a radical call

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The outrage and organizing skills of high school students who survived the mass school shooting in Parkland, Fla., on Feb. 14 have grown and spread in the weeks after, until on March 24 more than half a million people demonstrated against “gun violence” in Washington, D.C. Hundreds of thousands more poured into “sibling marches” in more than 800 cities in the U.S. and internationally. The breadth of outrage echoed the mass turnout for global Women’s Marches after the election of right-wing President Donald Trump.

Most speakers from the podium in **Washington** focused on gun control and voting as solutions. But many young people are bent on more progressive and radical demands. Witness the list presented by Chicago youth to their City Hall on March 14, the day they joined the National School Walkout against “gun violence.” Their demands included: “No school closings, no guns in school, end the criminalization of youth, no police academy but fund schools in Black and Brown communities equitably, student committees for hiring staff, improve language access and culturally relevant curriculum, fully fund special education and bilingual service, invest in schools by making banks and business pay their fair share, and jobs for youth.”

The historical shadow of the “Children’s March” in Birmingham, Ala., hung over the D.C. demonstration. On May 2, 1963, thousands of Black school children, some as young as six years old, marched and defied police dogs, fire hoses and police beatings to protest the violence of racist segregation.

Here are several reports on the March for Our Lives from WWP activists who advocate delving deeper into the causes of and solutions for “gun violence”:

It was a chilly morning in Washington, D.C., when comrades from Baltimore, Md., Washington, D.C., Durham, N.C., and the New York metro area gathered for the March for Our Lives anti-gun rally. This rally was organized by students who survived the Feb. 14 shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School. That school serves a diverse but largely Jewish community in Florida. It is no coincidence that Nikolas Cruz, the shooter who expressed racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic views on social media, targeted this school. Indeed, of the 17 killed, more than half were Jewish, immigrants and students of color.

Reaching out to some of the 500,000 people in attendance, WWP members, candidates and supporters handed out newspapers, letters and flyers that called students to fight bigotry and advocated for the only solu-

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Stephon Clark • 20 shots • March 18



Protests have erupted against the assassination of 22-year-old Stephon Clark by Sacramento, Calif., police on March 18. See page 2.



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Responding to police murder

Protesters block entrance to NBA game

By Monica Moorehead

Another young Black man's life was tragically taken March 18 when three Sacramento, Calif., police officers emptied 20 shots into the body of 22-year-old Stephon Clark in his backyard. The police justified the murder by claiming that Clark had a gun in his hand. It turned out to be an iPhone. Clark was the father of two young children.

Four days after the shooting, hundreds of angry protesters took to the streets, chanting, "Stephon Clark, say his name" and "Black lives matter," as they marched onto Interstate 5 and then proceeded to the Golden 1 Center, home to the National Basketball Association's Sacramento Kings. The visiting Atlanta Hawks were the Kings' opponents that night. The protesters, however, had a different agenda.

Catching the police off guard, hundreds of protest-



Blocking entrance to Kings game. Kings players wore warm-up shirts pictured above.



ers encircled the entire center, preventing thousands of spectators from entering the arena. This dramatic action delayed the game for 20 minutes; only 2,400 people saw the game in person. Surrounded by the players before the start of the game, the Kings' principal owner, Vivek Ranadive, publicly offered condolences to Clark's family.

Before their March 25 game, the Kings players wore warm-up shirts that read: "Accountability. We are one. #StephonClark." At a March 23 protest, Clark's brother, Stevante, shouted "20 shots" in each police officer's face.

□

Herman Bell granted parole –

but cops, politicians try to nix it

By Greg Butterfield
New York

Supporters of Black liberation fighter and political prisoner Herman Bell held a packed news conference at the Center for Constitutional Rights March 23. They came out to show support for a recent New York State Parole Board decision to free Bell after more than 40 years – much of it spent in brutal solitary confinement.

The board's decision has come under attack from police groups, the corporate media and elected officials, including "liberal" Democrats Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Speakers, representing a broad coalition of prisoners' advocates, public officials, artists and activists, called for



WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Supporters of Herman Bell at Center for Constitutional Rights.

an end to this interference and for the Parole Board to stand by its decision to release Bell, who is now 70.

Bell's attorney, Robert Boyle, read a statement supporting parole from the son of one of the cops killed in a shootout with Bell in 1971. Boyle pointed out that his

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

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

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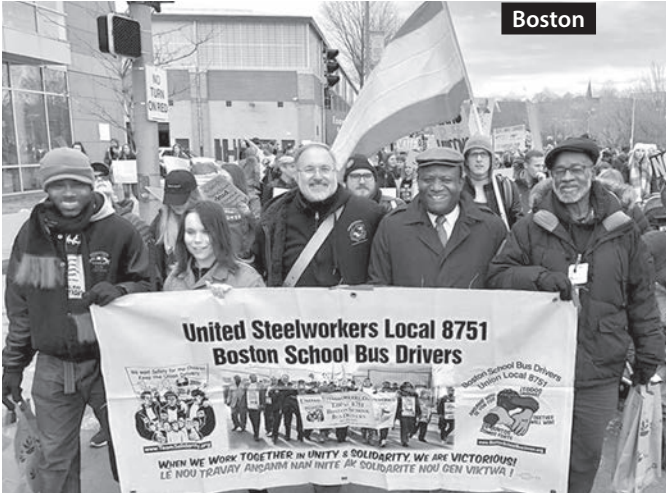
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Ending gun violence – a radical call



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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tion that will end systemic gun violence: socialism.

Many of those at the D.C. march carried signs advocating for a ban of assault rifles and semi-automatic weapons. But one could not ignore the irony that an anti-gun rally was being managed by heavily armed police, as well as by army tanks and soldiers carrying the very weapons the people were asking to ban.

The most targeted gun in mainstream discourse on gun violence today is the AR-15, one of the most popular guns sold in the U.S., and notoriously used in mass shootings. Since 2007, at least 173 people have been killed in mass shootings involving the AR-15.

Police shot and killed 258 African-American people in 2016 alone. Yet the majority of mainstream media and protest focuses on mass shooting deaths when discussing gun control. (tinyurl.com/yc76vurm)

“I don’t believe in gun control under capitalism” said Alec Summerfield from WWP-Baltimore. “Gun control laws are historically known to disproportionately affect Black and Brown people. The cops should be disarmed.”

Indeed, the rally took place less than a week after Stephon Clark, a 22-year-old unarmed Black man, was shot and killed in his family’s backyard by Sacramento, Calif., police. Patterns of police brutality are clear evidence that disarming the people while further arming the state would be a bad idea.

Harvey Jessup of the WWP-D.C. branch shouted this same message to marchers: “Instead of addressing the real cause of gun vio-



PHOTO: ALEXANDRA SHIFLETT

Herman Bell

Continued from page 2

client has met all the criteria for release.

Boyle also condemned the politicians and media for inflaming hateful pro-cop propaganda. He compared the campaign against Bell to the way Hillary Clinton’s racist rhetoric about “super-predators” aided the mass incarceration of a generation of Black and Brown youth.

New York State Assembly member Charles Barron declared: “I have a message for the governor and mayor: Shut up! Shut up and let justice prevail.”

Among the many speakers and supporters were Bina Ahmad of the National Lawyers Guild, New York State Senator Kevin Parker; CCR Board member Lumumba Bandele, and Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Readers are urged to take action to support Herman Bell. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/y72puqr2.

lence, politicians want to arm teachers and put more cops in schools. Ridiculous!”

Lee Patterson, an elder comrade from the Baltimore branch, held nothing back: “The democrackers won’t save you!” he urged, handing out WW newspapers to all who would take them.

WWP comrades rallied in the crowd for about four hours, advocating not for voting or gun control, but for examination of a system that empowers white supremacy and toxic masculinity. Engaging marchers in conversations about the historical and

economic roots of gun violence, comrades reached out to connect to future comrades in the struggle and stood in solidarity with all those impacted by the violence of capitalism both here and abroad.

— Alexandra Shiflett

In **Boston**, more than 100,000 people gathered and marched from the heart of the Black community outside Madison Park High on Malcolm X Boulevard. At the same location on Aug. 19, 2017, the Black Lives Matter movement led a march of more than 40,000 people united in anger and determination to stop white supremacy, Nazism, fascism and the Klan.

Chanting, “Enough is Enough!” and “Black Lives Matter!” the student-led protest was a growing expression of organized solidarity among students, unions and community organizations. There was strong participation from many school, health care and public sector unions, including the Boston Teachers Union, led by President Jessica Tang, and several other teachers’ unions; the Massachusetts Nurses Association; the Service Employees Union; and the immigrant-led Boston School

Bus Drivers Union, Steelworkers Local 8751, headed by Haitian President Andre Francois.

The march concluded on the Boston Common with a large rally and a sea of students surrounding the stage. The crowd listened to youth leaders address the many issues that intersect with gun violence and massacres in schools.

— WW Boston bureau

At least 50,000 mainly young people gathered in downtown **Denver**, hoping to end the domestic terror of a U.S. glutted with guns. Their energy and hope were clear, and

their goal was to change the laws and support candidates who fight for their safety.

What was not so clear was how the lives of these young people have been affected by a U.S. on war footing for the last 17 years, since before most of them were born. Their protests were loud against the National Rifle Association, but the connection was not made to the NRA as a powerful voice for the colossal U.S. arms industry. This profit-making behemoth legally and illegally supplies massive arms to every side of every conflict around the world in addition to supplying the huge U.S. military.

The cost is paid in the lives of children in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, many countries in Africa, as well as at home in the U.S. There will never be peace from guns at home while the U.S. continues its international military assaults with arms.

We must help draw the connection between U.S. “gun violence” and the arms industry that is costing children their lives here, as well as the youth who are victims of present U.S. wars of aggression in more than seven countries around the world.

— Viviana Weinstein

Also contributing to this report were Bettsey Piette and mYia X.

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

DOE workers fight union busting

The Betsy DeVos-led Department of Education canceled its contract with nearly 4,000 DOE workers on March 12. The American Federation of Government Employees Council 252 had voted down DOE’s proposed collective bargaining agreement on March 5.

The DOE’s deliberately misnamed March 12 “collective bargaining agreement” — which AFGE properly calls a “directive” — strips workers of “previously negotiated rights and protections” and enforces draconian takebacks. It also interferes with AFGE’s — and every U.S. union’s — legal right to defend workers by denying representational time on the job. AFGE shop stewards would have to represent members off the job. Expecting the union to function without representational time would be “like asking the fire department to operate without fire trucks or a firehose,” says AFGE.

The union is fighting back. It filed an unfair labor practice charge with the Federal Labor Relations Authority on March 12. Council 252 President Claudette Young said in a statement, “Secretary Betsy DeVos and her management team are attempting to strip employees of their collective bargaining rights and kill the union.” (afge.org, March 19) An injury to one is an injury to all. Solidarity with AFGE!

Workers trump bosses; keep tips!

In a victory for restaurant workers, Trump signed a budget bill March 23 that keeps tips in workers’ pockets instead of letting restaurant owners pocket them. The Department of Labor proposed a rule change Dec. 5 to allow bosses to keep tips from low-wage servers. The federal tipped minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour. (National Employment Law Project, March 21)

Restaurant Opportunities Center United mobilized tipped workers, as well as busers, cooks and dishwashers, to testify at congressional hearings, protest in 20 cities and drop a “Trump, Don’t Steal Our Tips!” banner outside DOL headquarters in Washington, D.C. The DOL was found to be guilty of suppressing analysis showing that the proposed regulations would cheat restaurant workers out of billions of dollars. (Nashville Pride, March 23)

This victory is a triumph over harassment from both the boss class and customers. Workers, predominantly young Black men and all women workers, have to deal with predatory patron behavior or lose tips needed for rent and food.

As ROC United co-founder and president Saru Jayaraman said in a statement: This “represents a historic victory. The National Restaurant Association wanted to steal workers’ tips, but the workers said no.” She called this win “a testament to the power of workers standing up together.”

Pittsburgh teachers’ strike averted, but no contract yet!

No wonder the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers voted overwhelmingly to strike. Their last five-year contract expired June 30, 2015, and the extension ran out in June 2017. The 2,400 teachers, 565 paraprofessionals and 20 technical-clerical workers haven’t had a raise in many years. After marathon bargaining ended Feb. 27 with a tentative three-year contract, the March 2 strike was called off.

But the teachers, likely emboldened by the successful teachers’ strike in neighboring West Virginia, still haven’t ratified a contract. Why? PFT President Nina Esposito-Visgitis told the Feb. 27 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that salary, health care costs and transfers were “still on the table.” Although neither side may discuss contract terms, some member comments on PTF’s Facebook page reveal anger about no raises and rising health care costs. Revised ratification ballots are in the mail and will be counted April 11.

Oregon faculty organizing, grad students unionize

Posters with the mission statement of United Academics of Oregon State University were signed by 1,000 faculty on March 5. Under Oregon law, if a majority of the faculty sign union authorization cards within 180 days, the union will be automatically recognized. Besides raises, shared governance of OSU and working conditions that promote excellence are union goals. UAOSU is a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors.

Portland State University graduate teaching and research assistants approved their first contract March 9. The three-year deal covers about 800 workers in a joint campaign organized by AFT-Oregon and AAUP. It doubles minimum hours to 12 a week and provides a \$184 signing bonus and annual inflation-based raises of 1.5-3.5 percent.

While the average PSU grad assistant currently clears about \$925 a month after fees and health insurance, next year the university will pay 45 percent of the fees, rising to 80 percent in fall 2020. “We’re excited,” said bargaining rep Neal Kuperman. Noting that grad assistants can’t afford to live in Portland, he adds that the university needs them: “Without grad assistants it would be nearly impossible to teach all the courses required or do the research needed.” □



Gender: An ideological weapon

This is the slightly edited version of a talk given at a Feb. 3 forum, “Women and the Struggle for Socialism,” hosted by Workers World Party in New York City.

By Cosmia Bohannan-Blumke

In 1969, the catalyzing of the LGBTQ movement during the Stonewall Rebellion made drag queens, trans women and the gender nonconformity of the gay community visible worldwide for the first time. These oppressed peoples, and the new, radical movements that they founded in the rebellion’s wake, were primarily seen by bourgeois, reactionary forces at the time as a threat to gender norms, to the nuclear family and, ultimately, to the stability of capitalist society. These perceptions were, in one way, correct.

Trans and gender-nonconforming people today embody a contradiction — a contradiction between the sex we were assigned at birth and ourselves. Bourgeois ideology tells us that assigned sex is a simple biological fact, immutable and eternal.

That absolute definition of the gender binary forms the basis of the gendered division of labor, which attempts to divide the entire human race into producers and reproducers. This division lies at the heart of class society and is embodied within the capitalist construction of the modern nuclear family.

This simplistic system, however, contradicts actual biology. Soviet medical scientists as early as the 1920s had remarked that human sexual difference was not binary but, in fact, infinite. This had been evidenced socially by the worldwide prevalence of multigendered societies throughout precolonial history.

Through our existence, trans people have proved this entrenched system of gender to be fallible. By demonstrating there is no inherent difference between people of different genders, transness can be used as a weapon against capitalist ideology and cut a way toward a more complete and accurate understanding of

gendered oppression.

Stigmatizing and criminalizing trans visibility

However, the path to our liberation wasn’t always so clear and has certainly never been light on obstacles. In the wake of Stonewall, the bourgeois state had its own answer to trans visibility: medical stigmatization and criminalization.

By labeling homosexuality and gender dysphoria as disorders for diagnosis, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people were socially “otherized.” Gender dysphoria still stands in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

This stigmatization was used to explain away the differences between the “queer” and the “ordinary,” as inherent differences in the form of disorders to be treated, giving trans people a tremendous hurdle to clear to social acceptance. At the same time, laws against men “impersonating women” were enforced by the police, giving the state free rein to arrest trans women. This was an attempt to protect no individual, nor even private property, but to maintain the ideology of assigned gender in the minds of the people.

These were the formal grounds of our exclusion from society, and could be described as attempts at the confinement of trans people and the growth of our communities through bourgeois medicine and law. It was obvious that trans people were being treated as a threat, but the exact nature of the threat we posed was difficult for even us to discern.

The trans movement struggled for recognition in order to stay alive and to achieve social and legal change, but in many ways it was limited by its lack of historical context. Trans people could

understand their own oppression perfectly well, but for many decades there was no theory or history explaining the place of our struggle in history or in the present world, nor the significance of understanding and combating gendered oppression as a whole.

Regardless, trans people at the time of Stonewall sought to organize around their shared oppression, building their own organizations, such as Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), and seeking to unite with other movements to which they belonged.

Overwhelmingly, trans women could find no respite in the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Ideological currents within the growing radical feminist movement were dominated by theory which essentialized the root of women’s oppression in biology, taking the supposedly universal genetic differences between the two sexes as their starting point instead of social relations, which, according to them, followed.

This view, as Marxist analysis makes clear, reinforces the institution of the gender binary, legitimizing the same fundamentally sexist ideology it claims to oppose. Radical feminists actively waged a culture war against the transgender community and its activists, publishing works on how trans women who transitioned “appropriated womanhood” and reinforced patriarchal gender roles. They even asserted that trans women sought to divide the women’s movement against itself.

Meanwhile, the liberal feminist movement found itself unequipped and unwilling to deal with any controversial issues that would obstruct its goal of “equality” through the further incorporation of women into capitalist production and the bourgeois state.

As a result, it was largely up to trans women to fight their own battles against the laws criminalizing them, against the police brutalizing them, against the men murdering them and against the culture vilifying them.

Feinberg explains gender nonconformity through Marxism

Finally, in the 1990s, the trans community received the theoretical leap it needed in the work of our late comrade Leslie Feinberg, who wrote extensively on gender and gender nonconformity throughout world history, from the perspective of historical materialism. Hir work explained how matriarchy, homosexuality and gender nonconformity were challenged and dominated by patriarchy at the advent of class society, how trans oppression was foisted onto the world by European colonizers and how the trans struggle was advancing in present-day socialist Cuba.

At the same time as this Marxist view on trans liberation was being made concrete, a tendency was beginning to grow within the liberal feminist movement that sought to appear inclusive of racialized people, LGBTQ people and disabled people. This shift in order to win over young progressive women has continued to the present.

It has since become widely accepted within liberal feminism that Black women, Brown women, lesbians, trans women and disabled women should be made part of that contemporary movement. Their use of terms such as “intersectionality,” a concept developed by Black feminists that attempts to connect different forms of oppression, is an example of the liberal tactic of adopting the guise of diversity and progressive ideas in order to broaden its appeal.

But this inclusion is superficial in a liberal tendency with only its own interests. The women whose primary political interest is putting a fellow white woman in the White House have nothing to offer multiply oppressed women whose needs are far greater and weigh far heavier.

It is relevant that this process occurred concurrently and not coincidentally with another such shift within the Democratic Party itself: a platform aimed at increasingly disenfranchised progressive youth. The Democrats are also responsible for a noticeable push to achieve the visage of “inclusiveness,” starting in the 2000s with cisgender LGB people and more recently with trans people. As a result, the very state that once arrested trans women for walking the streets of Manhattan, now employs trans people as public servants and even as soldiers and police officers.

This dichotomy demonstrates perfectly the choice available to trans people in the U.S. at present: either assimilation or liberation.

The prospect of assimilation into a white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist society appeals to some trans people, just as it did to lesbian, gay and bisexual people and to cis-heterosexual women before.

But assimilation is not enough for the trans community who are still struggling, racialized and nonconforming; who are still bound to the same cycle of poverty through the same means of economic oppression that the warriors at Stonewall were; who still rely upon sex work and who still find themselves homeless. Nor will assimilation do for anyone who is sincerely devoted to the interests of trans people.

The only path forward is one of deep understanding of the trans struggle as essential, not incidental, to the struggle against gendered oppression. This struggle is one that necessitates solidarity with the gains of women and trans people in socialist Cuba against imperialism. The struggle is one of militant dedication to our shared liberation. This is the only path which promises us any hope.

Trans people must wield gender as an ideological weapon against patriarchy and thereby against white supremacy, imperialism and capitalism. If they do not, they will wield it first and foremost against their own kind.

Furthermore, any organized movement that seeks to support the trans struggle must recognize and understand our unique position in the struggle against gendered oppression, and must not essentialize, delegitimize or tokenize trans and gender-nonconforming people.

This is the movement we must continue to build here and around the world.

This is why we say: Stonewall means fight back! ☐

Austin, Texas

Bombings caused by white supremacy

Following the suicide of the person suspected of committing the bombings that killed Black people in Austin, Texas, Jason Cohen, a student at the University of Texas at Austin, sent Workers World this commentary.

COMMENTARY

The string of bombings that wracked Austin, the so-called liberal bastion of Texas, is yet another manifestation of white supremacist terrorism that has been on the rise for the past few years.

The bombings targeted neighborhoods that are historically lower income and populated mostly by Black or Brown people. The bombings killed two African Americans in Austin and injured four other people throughout the city. Neither the federal government nor city government officials have declared these incidents as terrorism.

This is hypocrisy at its best. If the bomber had turned out to be from some oppressed sector of society, the media from the beginning would have labeled him as a terrorist. But it’s unheard of to call a white supremacist a terrorist. This is because white supremacy is so deeply intertwined within the culture of the United States that any discussion of white supremacy would threaten the he-

gemony of the U.S. government in both domestic and international affairs.

Revolutionary socialists in Austin and throughout the United States must respond to white-supremacist attacks like this in a multipronged way. First and foremost, we need to comfort the victims and their families. We need to build connections within the neighborhoods affected and help organize self-defense committees within each neighborhood in order to adequately respond to potential future attacks.

Second, we need to educate the public about the threat of white supremacists and how white supremacy is intertwined within U.S. institutions. We must remember that white supremacy is detrimental to the lives of minorities and workers. We must continue the fight for a socialist society that will abolish all class/racial/gender divisions and create an epoch of progress currently unknown to humanity. ☐

Find them at: www.workers.org/books

Leslie Feinberg’s 1992 “Transgender Liberation: A movement whose time has come.”

The first paragraph says: “This pamphlet is an attempt to trace the historic rise of an oppression that, as yet, has no commonly agreed name.”



Leslie Feinberg’s series on LGBTQ history, “Lavender & Red,” appeared in *Workers World* newspaper from 2004-2008.

Women and the Struggle for Socialism

By Monica Moorehead

How could you have not been horrified at hearing woman after woman share their painful experiences of being sexually assaulted by Michigan State University's Dr. Larry Nassar? He was sentenced to a prison term of over 100 years after pleading guilty to child pornography and sexual assault charges, mainly on behalf of gymnasts — some as young as six years old — through “medical examinations.” His final sentencing was on Feb. 5.

With all the horror these women expressed to the world, you can't help but be inspired by their courage in speaking out. Many of them stated how grateful they were to the #MeToo and #Timesup campaigns for giving them the strength to speak out.

CNN showed Randall Margraves, a father of three gymnasts whom Nassar assaulted, attempting to lunge at him as he was being sentenced on Feb. 2, directly after two of his daughters' testimony. Margraves, wearing an International Electrical Workers shirt, showed much anguish on his face. He wanted to mete out personal justice for what this sexual predator had done to his daughters. Who could blame him? Margraves later apologized and stated that he had no intention of upstaging his daughters.

Since the Nassar trial and sentencing, it has been reported that he sexually assaulted 265 gymnasts over a period of 25 years or more at MSU. These women will be dealing with post-traumatic stress and depression forever. A major question has arisen: How can just one person get away with so much sexual violence without being caught and only now brought to justice?

Gymnast Rachael Denhollander stated in court: “You don't get someone like Larry Nassar, you don't get a pedophile that is able to abuse without there being a culture surrounding him in that place.” When the gymnasts and their families attempted years before to expose Nassar, they were either dismissed or given the run-around.

It has now been documented that Nassar's crimes were well protected by a rape culture festering at MSU. Part of this culture involved MSU's president, gymnast coach and athletics director, members of the U.S. Olympics Gymnastics Committee and others. They have all resigned from their positions, and there will probably be more resignations before all is said and done.

The tip of the iceberg

But the Nassar scandal, as horrific and heinous as it is, is just the tip of the iceberg. On the heels of these developments was an investigation made by ESPN's “Outside the Lines” program of sexual assaults carried out against young

Smash rape culture and capitalism!

This is the slightly edited version of a talk given at a Feb. 3 forum, “Women and the Struggle for Socialism,” hosted by Workers World Party in New York City.

women at MSU by basketball and football players since 2009. These assaults were not new, but the Nassar case helped to shine an even brighter light on them.

Workers World newspaper published an article by Megan Spencer, a MSU graduate on Oct. 21, 2010, titled “Activists protest handling of rape charges.” She wrote: “The university administration has failed to suspend or expel the players from MSU, and has not even released a statement condemning the assault. In addition, Residence Life, the department in charge of on-campus housing, has failed to remove the players from their dorm room, further endangering women at MSU. Neither the director of MSU's Athletic Department, Mark Hollis, nor men's basketball coach Tom Izzo has commented publicly on the assault.”

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

Today Mark Dantonio, MSU football coach, and Izzo are once again on the hot seat for covering up for their players' acts, while women continue to suffer for these crimes, even to the point of committing suicide. Meanwhile, students and faculty members have organized protests in solidarity with the women survivors of these sexual assaults and to expose everyone involved with the cover-up. Also, students protested naming Michigan's former reactionary governor, John Engler, to fill the interim MSU president's seat. It was revealed that even National College Athletic Association President Mark Emmert was aware of what was happening at MSU before it became public.

No isolated incidents

The bigger question is: Are the sexual assaults at MSU isolated cases? What about similar assaults at Baylor University in 2014? Or at Oklahoma University in 2014? Or at the University of Missouri? What about the Duke Lacrosse rape case in the early 2000s? Are any of these incidents isolated? Hell, no! In fact, even sports analysts say that sexual assaults against women are systemic, especially at schools with large athletic programs that each year bring millions of dollars into the coffers of these institutions — which are run more like corporations than schools. These programs will do anything and everything to protect their reputations and profits, including cover-

ing up sexual assaults by their players. At the same time, these unpaid athletes are super-exploited like other workers.

When these universities seek the most talented players, many of whom are players of color and come from struggling families, they use sexual favors to recruit them — a common practice. This was just exposed at the University of Louisville when basketball coach Rick Pitino was forced to resign.

What analysts do not say is that rape culture against women is systemic to capitalism and is rooted in class society which gave rise to patriarchy. Women's oppression has been institutionalized throughout the various stages of class society — during ancient slavery, feudalism and the current stage of capitalism. But under capitalism, where all human interactions are defined by the buying and selling of commodities to make profits, women are treated like commodities — to be exploited on the job and objectified in mass culture. Sports culture, whether amateur or professional, is one of the greatest culprits in the exploitation of women.

This is not to excuse the unspeakable criminal behavior of these athletes, who, truthfully, are products of this rape culture. Like the Ray Rices and the O.J. Simpsons of the world, it's important to keep in mind that they did not create this culture, but they perpetuate it.

We cannot forget the repressive role of the state when it comes to sexual assaults and rape. While so many women depend on the police to help them get justice, the police get away with sexual assaults — even more so than athletes. Cops are the biggest culprits when it comes to domestic violence.

Courts work in tandem with the cops to systematically deny women justice, almost always siding with athletes, spouses and boyfriends. When white men assault women of color, justice is denied in disproportionately large numbers.

Recy Taylor's fight for justice

For example, Oprah Winfrey raised in her Golden Globes speech the kidnapping and gang rape of Recy Taylor, a Black woman, by six white men in 1944 in Alabama. A grand jury refused to indict any of these racist, sexist predators. Taylor fought for justice until her death in December at the age of 97. Her name and many others should be etched in our memories forever. Indigenous women and girls in this country have disappeared at an alarming rate, many of them found raped and murdered.

If the repressive state apparatus cannot end violence against women, how can we expect other capitalist institutions like MSU and Baylor University to end it? We fight for justice for people of color, women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, people with disabilities and any sector of our class under attack, because, as a revolutionary party, we know it is key to building class unity.

However, we also understand that capitalism cannot be reformed in order to bring lasting justice for oppressed sectors of our class because this economic system is inherently anti-people of color, anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-queer, anti-those with disabilities. In other words, capitalism is anti-human.

This is why we must continue to fight for socialism. The advancement of any society is measured by the advancement of women. Despite their lower level of production, the Cuban revolution and the former Soviet Union, in existence for 75 years, were able to liberate women so they could become full participants in society and not relegated to second-class status. Why can't we do the same in the richest country in the world?

What these countries have and had that we don't have is a revolution for socialism. This means that the old repressive state that exists to keep people of color, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities and workers downtrodden, and the ruling class on top, must be smashed so a new state can replace it. This new state must be run by the vast majority of workers of many nationalities, both women and men with equal authority, in order to produce everything we need to become productive human beings.

'Capitalism's war on women'

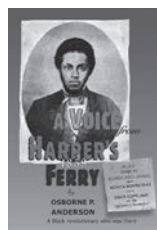
I quote an article I wrote in a 1995 pamphlet published by World View Forum, titled “Capitalism's war on women: Why the system is responsible for violence against women.” The article, “Domestic violence, racism and the state,” was prompted by the original O.J. Simpson case. It reads: “The state is a naked admission that not only do class contradictions exist between the working class and the ruling class, but that these contradictions cannot be reconciled with the intervention of the class struggle.”

The article asks: “How can young women, women of color, poor women, lesbians, [trans women,] and working-class women realize their full potential in capitalist society when all they face is violence, unemployment, exploitation, and oppression in their lives?”

Additionally, it explains: “[The] capitalist state cannot be reformed and will not change its class orientation without the intervention of the working class. The state, based on cruel and unjust laws, must be smashed as it was in Czarist Russia in 1917, in China in 1949 and in Cuba in 1959, and replaced with a worker's state that will defend the interests of all the workers of all nationalities in the name of socialist reconstruction and harmony.”

The article concludes, “Only through the class struggle and the overthrow of class oppression will women be liberated, along with their class brothers, from centuries of sexism and backward ideas. Smash women's oppression!” □

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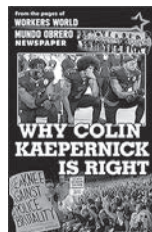


A Voice From Harpers Ferry

Osborne P. Anderson's account of the raid on Harper's Ferry appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War.

Includes essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Monica Moorehead, plus 'Unfinished Revolution' by Vince Copeland.

WHY COLIN KAEPERNICK IS RIGHT

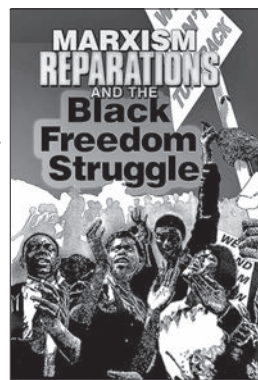


Articles from Workers World/Mundo Obrero Newspaper

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COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Empowered women march on International Women’s Day

By Kathy Durkin

International Women’s Day is commemorated on March 8. Established by women socialists in 1910, it is a day of solidarity with women in struggle against oppression, exploitation, racism, poverty and war.

With raised fists, militant marchers around the globe denounced the exploitative gender pay gap and anti-woman violence, both ills of capitalism.

Many demonstrators hit patriarchal capitalism itself. Empowered women workers demanded workplace respect and equal pay. Signs showed the #MeToo and #TimesUp campaign against job-related sexual misconduct is resonating around the globe. LGBTQ contingents were loud and proud, too.

Here are some highlights.



Saharawi women in Madrid, Spain

Strike wave across Spain

Strikes swept the **Spanish** state on March 8 as 5.3 million women workers and male allies left work in 200 cities and towns. Protesting the gender pay gap, workplace sex discrimination and domestic violence, women asserted, “If we stop, the world stops!” The March 8 Commission stated: “We call for a society free of oppression, exploitation and violence. We call for rebellion and a struggle against the alliance of the patriarchy and capitalism.” (CNN, March 8)

Ten unions called for a 24-hour strike. The CCOO and GTU, the bigger unions, called for two-hour work stoppages, saying these walkouts were “an unprecedented strike in our country’s trade union movement.”

At midnight, 24 hours of strikes and rallies began in Madrid. Trains stopped running. Women blocked roads there and in Barcelona. Students chanted, “Madrid will be sexism’s grave,” as 1 million people rallied in the capital’s Plaza de Cibeles. Thousands of women demonstrated in Vitoria, Bilbao and San Sebastian in the Basque country.

In **Italy**, a 24-hour strike by women workers was backed by labor unions and women’s organizations. Actions were held in dozens of cities. Air, road and rail transportation services and school and health programs were affected. Thousands of militant pro-choice students marched in Milan.

Throughout Europe, women joined in work stoppages and marches. In **France**, women called for pay equality and an end to anti-woman violence at the Place de la Re-



publique in Paris, Marseilles and other cities. Solidarity actions were held in **England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland** and elsewhere.



Free Palestinian prisoners!

Palestinian women in the **Occupied West Bank** rallied at the Israeli military checkpoint at Qalandiya, facing tear gas, and in **Gaza**, to protest the Trump administration’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. They called for an end to the occupations, freeing of all political prisoners and self-determination for Palestine. Thousands of women from throughout Gaza converged at the U.N. offices, calling for the release of the 63 Palestinian women, including 10 minors and 17-year-old Ahed Tamimi, jailed in Israel’s prisons.



In Ankara, **Turkey**, women shouted “Freedom!” Tens of thousands marched in Istanbul against workplace inequities. **Pakistani** women denounced gender violence in Islamabad. In Lahore, students shouted “Equal pay for equal work!” Karachi demonstrators called for transgender rights. Domestic workers and garment workers marched in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**.



Hundreds of women workers and students protested sexual and domestic violence and job and wage discrimination in New Delhi, **India**. Banners read: “Equal Rights for Women!” and “No rape!”



In Seoul, **South Korea**, women’s rights activists, together with labor unionists, held “#MeToo” and “Stop at 3 p.m.” signs, signifying that due to the gender pay gap women work for free after that time. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions called on workers to leave their jobs at 3 p.m., and join the #MeToo campaign. The Korean Women’s Association decried the patriarchal social structure.

The **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea** commemorated this special day with a national meeting at the People’s Palace of Culture. The Socialist Women’s Union of Korea, its president Jang Chun Sil, and women



officials and leaders of many sectors, participated. Women play an important role in all aspects of society; laws protect women’s rights, including in employment.

Thousands of women workers, farmers and others defied a ban and marched on Mendiola, the **Philippines**, against President Rodrigo Duterte’s regime. The women’s organization Gabriela organized the demonstration to “Fight Duterte’s misogyny and fascism.” In Manila, protesters condemned Duterte’s wave of extrajudicial kill-



ings and his brutal war on dissenters, and called him one of the worst violators of women’s rights.

Thousands of women rallied in Jakarta, **Indonesia**’s capital, to demand gender equality and an end to discrimination. On the prior weekend, thousands joined the Women’s March in Jakarta and protests in other cities. They demanded rights for domestic workers, migrants, Indigenous women, LGBTQ individuals, disabled women, sex workers and survivors of violence. The call resounded for reproductive rights for all women workers.

Australia: Defend Indigenous women

On IWD, Aboriginal activists called on all women in **Australia** to stand in solidarity with them in challenging widespread human rights abuses. Indigenous women are subjected to systemic oppression and multiple forms of racist and gender discrimination and violence. They face higher rates of police abuse and are the fastest growing prison population. The state is removing their children at rates exceeding those of “The Stolen Generations” of 1910-70.

A national campaign calls for self-determination, empowerment and respect for the human rights of Aboriginal people.

South Africa: Honor Albertina Sisulu

Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture Maggie Sotyu led a tribute to anti-apartheid resistance leader Albertina Sisulu in conjunction with IWD, in Gauteng, **South Africa**. When this hero died in 2011, at 92, she was the longest-serving African National Congress member — and had been persecuted and imprisoned by the apartheid state. Her spouse was ANC leader Walter Sisulu, who was imprisoned for over 25 years at Robben Island.

South Africa Women’s Day is commemorated on Aug. 9



because on that day in 1956, 20,000 women demonstrated in Pretoria against the identity pass requirement for Black women. Sisulu was a leader of this historic march, organized by the Federation of South African Women. In 1994, she was elected to Parliament due to her leadership in the ANC Women’s League and FSAW.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions commemorated IWD under the theme of “Time is now: Rural and urban activists transforming women’s lives.” The labor group pledged to fight for women’s emancipation and gender equality in all spheres and make “Equal pay for equal work” a reality for all women.

The National Union of Saharawi Women formally praised women in the **Western Sahara** for their role in the struggle for sovereignty and liberation from Morocco. The NUSW demanded an end to the Moroccan state’s violation of human rights and plunder of the Western Sahara’s resources, and called for release of all political prisoners.

A NUSW delegation, comprised of its leaders, women



representatives from the occupied territories and “Diaspora” women, traveled to Spain and joined the March 8 strike in Madrid to call for women’s equality. Other events in Madrid and Getafe ended with calls for solidarity with and freedom for Saharawi political prisoners in Morocco’s jails.

Mass marches in Latin America and the Caribbean

Hundreds of thousands of women marched throughout Latin America, including in **Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Nicaragua** and **Peru** where Andean women participated. In Buenos Aires, **Argentina**, an enormous rally said “no” to femicides and “yes” to reproductive rights. LGBTQ activists joined in San Salvador, El Salvador. A banner in **Mexico’s** capital, Mexico City, read: “Femicides, Negligence, Violence, Inequality.”

Five thousand women from 34 countries attended a summit in the Caracol of Morelia Tzotz Choj zone of Chiapas, Mexico, organized by women in the National Liberation Zapatista Army. The “First International Gathering of Politics, Art, Sport and Culture for Women in Struggle” aimed to bring together women fighting back against patriarchal capitalism.

Members of the Lenca community demonstrated on March 2, the second anniversary of the murder of Berta Cáceres, Indigenous leader, environmentalist and socialist, outside the Public Ministry in Tegucigalpa, **Honduras**. She had led successful protests to stop a U.S./European bank-funded hydroelectric dam. That day, David Castillo, CEO of dam builder Desarrollos Energeticos SA at the time of her murder, was arrested for helping orchestrate it. His hearing was held March 8.

Daughters Bertha Zuniga Cáceres, current leader of COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras), which her mother co-founded, and Olivia Zuniga Cáceres, a Liberty and Refoundation Party legislator, are carrying on their mother’s fight — campaigning for U.S. legislation to stop U.S. military aid to Honduras. Legislator Cáceres has proposed the government cancel the dam’s construction and honor her mother on International Women’s Day.

From Miraflores Palace in Caracas, **Venezuela’s** President Nicolas Maduro announced on IWD two decrees benefiting women: The National Humane Birth Plan provides for free midwifery services, while Democratic Parity guarantees every woman a monthly financial subsidy.

Taryn Fivek, of the International Action Center, attended the Todos Somos Venezuela (We Are All Venezuela) conference early in March. She heard Delcy Rodríguez, president of the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly, assert, “The Bolivarian Revolution is a sanctuary for women and feminism.”

Venezuelan women lead 55 percent of councils and communes. A 2007 law bans anti-woman violence — in the workplace, medical settings, prisons and elsewhere. The 2012 Organic Law guarantees equal pay and other benefits for women workers, including pregnant women and mothers. Health care and education are free. Trans women are given prominent platforms.

During International Women’s History Month, teachers — mostly women and led by women — struck on March 19 in San Juan, **Puerto Rico**, to oppose privatization of education. Five days later, mothers of children with special needs organized a demonstration of 16,000 parents, teachers, children and community members. There is justified fury at Washington for placing U.S. business people into key educational, tourism and energy positions, while cruelly withholding essential aid from the hurricane-ravaged island.

In socialist **Cuba**, thousands of women celebrated their achievements in the Plaza de la Revolución in Sancti Spiritus. Teresa Amarelle Boué, a member of the Cuban Communist Party’s Politburo and Secretary-General of the Federation of Cuban Women, and other women officials attended. On IWD, women on this revolutionary island celebrate their achievements in education, government, health care, scientific research — and all sectors.

Greg Butterfield, Taryn Fivek, Berta Joubert-Ceci and Donna Lazarus contributed to this article.



Women’s liberation, socialism linked



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

By Boston Workers World bureau

March 17 — “Women, Socialism and the Black Liberation Struggle,” a Workers World Party International Working Womens Day forum, drew a standing-room-only crowd March 17. The struggles of working and oppressed women were told through songs, speeches, music and videos.

Mahtowin Munro, of United American Indians of New England and Indigenous Peoples Day MA, gave a riveting talk titled “Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Women and the Question of Land.”

She told the audience, “The very category of who is, and who is not, considered to be a woman is a tool of settler violence. The state uses gender violence to enforce white supremacy, anti-Blackness and settler colonialism.

“Native women are attacked to destroy our families and our nations. Settler colonialism uses gender to colonize through centuries of rape and sexual mutilation, and through the widespread sexual violence of the residential schools and in foster care.”

Munro continued: “Two aspects of settler colonialism and capitalism are how they bring about violence against the land and against women. Our bodies are intertwined with the land and water. Our bodies are our homes that we have a right to protect, just as we have every right to defend the land and water. “

Nathan Heathman of Workers World Party, chair of tonight’s meeting, introduced Monica Moorehead, 2016 WWP Presidential Candidate, to the cheering audience.

“Workers World Party holds the view that all oppressed nationalities and all workers will eventually win their emancipation through socialism — no matter what road they decide to take to get there, up to and including separation,” she said. “But if we want to win our class to this view about socialism, we understand that this is a process that will only be achieved by building genuine solidarity within our class — the working class — through patience and perseverance. And in order to deepen that solidarity, we must avoid at all costs, the mistakes of the past.”

Moorehead continued, “The most central mistake was not recognizing that within the working class, there is not equality. That one should not have to marginalize or put to the side one’s identity as a person of color, a woman, a queer person, a person with disability, all for the sake of ‘class unity.’ Some characterize this as ‘identity politics,’ which is a cop out from doing the necessary work to build this unity.”

Stop deportations! Free the MOVE 9!

Marta and Doris, who are both from El Salvador and leaders in their unions UNITE HERE Local 26 and SEIU 32BJ, respectively, at Harvard University, educated the crowd about their fight to save TPS (temporary protected status) and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Rescinding both of them threatens thousands of migrants with deportation, especially people from El Salvador and Haiti. Marta and Doris helped found the Harvard TPS Coalition, which is growing in strength and numbers. Eliciting tears, Marta told of the emotional anguish she would feel if she were forced to be separated from her three young children and sent back to El Salvador. Her three daughters were in the audience, and it was the first time she had talked about this in front of them.

On Aug. 8, 1978, a massive racist police attack on the MOVE house in Philadelphia resulted in the death of a white police officer. Nine members of the predominantly Black MOVE family were falsely accused of murder and found guilty.

mYia X elevated the names of four of the MOVE 9 political prisoner members — Debbie Africa, Janine Africa, and Janet Africa — imprisoned for 40 years. Merle Africa was “murdered by the system in the toxic death jails of Pennsylvania.” (onamove.com)

mYia X called on the audience to support the upcoming May parole hearing for the MOVE 9. For additional info on how to submit letters for their parole packets, visit www.onamove.com or workers.org.

Other speakers included Christine Renee from Stonewall Warriors and WWP candidate Kristin Turgeon.

Fight for women’s liberation with WORKERS WORLD

Marxists strive not just to honor history, but to help make it — to promote major changes needed to put the workers and the oppressed first instead of last. Workers World always commemorates the socialist holiday of International Working 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 in 2018 on women in the U.S. who bear the brunt of Trump’s racist, sexist, bigoted, xenophobic agenda — working-class immigrant women who are being detained and deported for the “crime” of crossing borders to find work so they can provide for their families, and the “Dreamers,” whose Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status is still in limbo as both parties in Congress ignore their demands.

Struggle is the only way to bring about change. The Black Lives Matter movement, started by women and transgender activists, boldly countered racism and demanded redress for centuries of oppression. Women are

powering the fight for \$15 an hour and a union. Two-thirds of low-wage workers are women, often women of color and mothers solely responsible for their families. Inspired by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movement, women are speaking up on the job against harassment and for respect.

If you appreciate WW’s year-round coverage of struggles that advance the rights of women, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program and help build the newspaper.

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

Trump engineers right-wing takeover

By Fred Goldstein

March 24 — With the appointment of racist, militarist warmonger John Bolton to the position of national security adviser, Donald Trump has virtually transformed his regime into a bastion of ultrarightists.

With this transformation, Trump has demolished the original loose coalition that included establishment figures in the White House and the Cabinet. This coalition had been put in place by the broader ruling class to balance the ultrarightists around Trump, and Trump himself.

The transformation has sharply increased the dangers of war and economic hardship for the masses. Leaders of the workers and the oppressed should take this development seriously and prepare for resistance now.

Trump and his handpicked ultraright yes-men are basically in charge now. With the appointment of Bolton as national security adviser, virtually all the key positions in the White House and the Cabinet are now headed by extreme right-wingers and Trump lackeys.

The single exception is Secretary of Defense Gen. James Mattis. Known as “Mad Dog” Mattis, this Iraq war criminal and butcher of Fallujah has nevertheless sounded caution about nuclear war or first strikes against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Mattis has also advocated for the U.S. staying in the Iran nuclear pact and has differed with Trump’s pro-torture statements.

The key foreign policy positions in any administration are secretary of state, secretary of defense, national security adviser and chief of staff. The head of the National Economic Council and the trade adviser are also key positions.

Trump has used his firing and appointment powers to see to it that each of these positions is now occupied by an ultrarightist who is compatible with his belligerent, racist, militaristic program.

Hawk replaced by superhawk

Trump pushed out Gen. H.R. McMaster as national security adviser, even though he was a war hawk. The reasons are partly political, partly personal and partly factional. But the details are not as important as the fact that he has replaced McMaster with a superhawk, John Bolton.

Bolton on Feb. 28 wrote a major piece for the Wall Street Journal falsely arguing that there is a legal basis for making pre-emptive war against the DPRK. He is for regime change and for militarily removing the government of the DPRK, saying the south, which has been occupied by U.S. troops since 1945, should take over the north.

Bolton not only wants to get out of the Iran nuclear deal, but he also wants regime change in Teheran and would use bombing to try to accomplish that end.

He was an architect of the war in Iraq and still defends it. He was one of an influential group of neocons in the George

Trump has demolished the original loose coalition that included establishment figures in the White House and the Cabinet. This coalition had been put in place by the broader ruling class to balance the ultrarightists around Trump, and Trump himself.

W. Bush administration, along with Paul Wolfowitz, who gave policy fuel to Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld to start the Iraq war.

Bolton was so right wing that he could not get confirmation from the Senate to be the permanent U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He had been acting ambassador for a year in a so-called recess appointment by Bush. But he had to resign when his recess appointment was up because he could not get confirmed.

This ambassador to the U.N. once said, “If they cut the top 10 floors off the U.N. it wouldn’t make any difference.”

Purge began with Priebus and ended with McMaster

The “moderate” side of Trump’s initial coalition consisted of such establishment figures as chief of staff Reince Priebus, former head of the Republican National Committee; Gary Cohn, number two at Goldman Sachs, who was head of the National Economic Council; Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former head of ExxonMobil; Secretary of Defense Gen. James “Mad Dog” Mattis; and National Security Adviser Gen. H.R. McMaster. They are all gone now, with the exception of Mattis.

Priebus, former head of the RNC, was pushed out early to be replaced by Gen. John Kelly — a racist, pro-Confederate immigration hawk and former head of Homeland Security and the U.S. Southern Command.

More recently, Tillerson was ousted and is to be replaced by Islamophobic Iran war hawk Mike Pompeo, who was brought over from being head of the CIA and is closely connected to the Koch brothers. Trump and Pompeo have talked on a daily basis for months.

Next to go was Cohn of Goldman Sachs. Cohn had worked with Trump to push through the gigantic corporate tax-cut giveaways. But Wall Street was opposed to Trump’s trade war policies of imposing tariffs, especially on imports from China. However, Trump imposed the tariffs anyway, siding with anti-China tariff hawk Peter Navarro, his trade guru, and billionaire wheeler-dealer Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. Cohn was forced out, replaced as head of the National Economic Council by Reaganite fringe economist Larry Kudlow. Kudlow is a vicious, anti-working class, right-wing economist who advocates even greater corporate tax cuts as the cure-all for the economy.

‘Moderates’ are exploiters and war makers, too

It would be politically foolish to regard the ousted group of bankers, generals and corporate exploiters as “moderates.”

Certainly, with respect to the workers and the oppressed at home and abroad, they were anything but moderate.

Mattis and McMaster were commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as war planners and war criminals. Tillerson was head of a global oil empire that plundered the resources of countries on all the continents, especially in the Middle East.

Cohn was the number two executive in Goldman Sachs, the firm with a high degree of responsibility for the economic collapse of 2007-2009. Among other things, it had bundled and sold bad housing loans and then bet that the loans would fail. Those failed loans resulted in foreclosures and evictions for hundreds of thousands of homeowners and tenants.

Priebus, Cohn, Tillerson, Mattis and McMaster had been pushed into the Trump administration early on to insure that the broad ruling-class establishment would have policy input. The strategists of imperialism did not want Trump to wreck their world political, economic and trade apparatus. They have nurtured this apparatus, which includes the U.N., the IMF, the World Bank, NATO, the Organization of American States, the World Trade Organization, NAFTA and various imperialist trade agreements, immigration practices, etc. All this had been carefully constructed and painstakingly maintained for decades in the interests of fostering U.S. imperialist interests.

Trump’s campaign rhetoric was directed against all these institutions and policies. The ruling class was especially afraid of Trump’s attacks on China, the North American Free Trade Agreement, NATO and immigration policy, among other things. The bosses and bankers felt they needed a group in the administration that would give them a voice. They needed a way to counter Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller, Peter Navarro, etc., as well as Trump himself.

Trump has now silenced the voices of the establishment inside his administration, except for Mattis. No one knows where the dominant forces in the Pentagon will come down on the question of attacking the DPRK or Iran. But all mass organizations have to prepare themselves to resist an escalation in the war drive.

Tariffs, trade wars and the working class

The ruling class always carries on its wars at the expense of the working class and the oppressed. This goes for military wars as well as trade wars.

This fact is invisible to the labor bureaucracy. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Vice President Leo Gerard, head of the Steelworkers union, have

hailed the tariffs on steel and aluminum as a victory for creating jobs. These labor lieutenants of the ruling class are trying to protect their comfortable positions and their oversized salaries.

Meanwhile, tariffs will cost jobs. And not just the jobs of U.S. workers but the jobs of Chinese, Japanese and Korean workers, just on the basis of the contraction of steel and aluminum production.

China has already imposed limited tariffs on U.S. goods. The producers of those goods will engage in layoffs if the bosses are not stopped. Workers World newspaper of March 15 reported that when, for 13 months in 2002, President George Bush imposed tariffs, 200,000 workers lost their jobs.

Instead of hailing tariffs as a way to get jobs, true labor leaders would be fighting for all those steelworkers, coal miners and other industrial workers whose jobs have been destroyed by the bosses’ technology and offshoring. They would make the capitalists responsible for layoffs and unemployment and demand a jobs program for displaced workers.

The narrow-minded, selfish labor bureaucrats are hailing the tariffs in the same way they fought for the Dakota Access pipeline, which trampled on the rights of Indigenous people and was a blow to the environment.

A true working-class mentality puts the interests of the entire class ahead of the narrow interests of a tiny section of higher-paid workers.

It is worth noting that Trumka and company did little to support the teachers of West Virginia, who waged a heroic strike in a “right-to-work” (for less!) state.

People below move in opposite direction from Trump

Trump, the ruling class and the do-nothing heads of labor are all moving in the direction of political reaction. But the people are moving in the exact opposite direction.

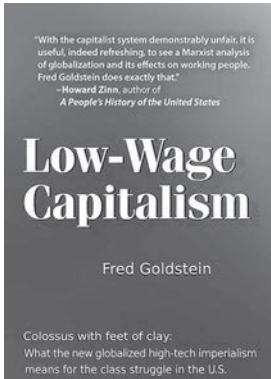
Over a million students came out in hundreds of demonstrations against the National Rifle Association on March 24. Their slogans were moderate, but the spirit of determination to push back the gun lobby and expose the politicians who take their blood money was something new.

Over a million women came out for the Women’s March last January to answer Trump’s hateful misogyny.

The Black Lives Matter movement laid the basis for a societywide consciousness about racist police murders.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals solidarity movement has raised consciousness about the inhuman deportations and the destruction of immigrant families.

The reactionary current emanating from the upper echelons in ruling-class society is bound to eventually clash with the progressive current coming from the lower echelons — the poorer sections of the workers, the oppressed communities, the immigrants, the women, the LGBTQ community and the students. Reaction cannot hold forever. □

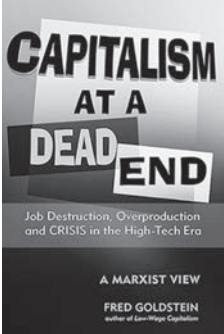


Low-Wage Capitalism describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing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



El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

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



Capitalism at a Dead End
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

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

France

Workers open spring strikes with mass protest

By John Catalinotto

Faced with layoffs, downsizing and privatization of public services, public workers in France numbering in the hundreds of thousands held a country-wide protest on March 22. Many railroad workers stayed off the job and announced a series of off-and-on strikes throughout the spring. Some teachers and workers in government administration also struck, as did air traffic controllers.

The mass protest opened a defensive action against the so-called “reforms” President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Édouard Phillipe plan to put

into effect, with little discussion in parliament. They want to cut more than 120,000 jobs in the public sector over the following four years and to transform the state-owned railroad company, the SNCF, into a private company traded on the stock market. The 149,000 railroad workers would lose their protected civil servant status, subjecting them to layoffs.

According to a report on the website of the Pole of Communist Revival in France (PRCF), there were 65,000 demonstrators in Paris, of whom 15,000 were high school students; 55,000 in Marseille; and thousands in each of two dozen smaller cities in various parts of the country. In



some places, police attacked the demonstrators with tear gas.

The struggle unites the interests of all public workers with the entire working class, all of whom require public services, including health care and education as

well as transportation.

Macron, closely connected to the big French banks, was elected president last year by a large margin. His party, which was newly created to support his election, also won a strong majority in Parliament. This puts his ruling-class grouping in a position to pass laws easily. The only way to stop him is by stopping work and taking to the streets.

Railroad workers plan to follow a schedule of two days of strikes followed by three days of working from April 3 to June 28. Other public workers are expected to also strike. □

India

Farmers march for rights, win concessions

By A. Majumder

Since the beginning of March, Indian farmers have been making themselves heard, and their voices are hard to ignore. Tens of thousands of farmers in the state of Maharashtra, in western India, gathered on March 6, for the start of the “long march,” from Nashik to Mumbai, the state capital and India’s financial and commercial center.

Numbering about 50,000 by the time they arrived six days and some 112 miles later, they raised several key demands to support India’s beleaguered small farmers. The demands included a complete waiver from crippling loans, adequate minimum support prices for their produce, adequate compensation for failed crops, individual and community land rights for forest dwellers, and adequate pensions.

Some of the farmers’ demands are already law but remain unenforced or underenforced. Some demands arose from election promises that were never fulfilled. Yet other demands stem from recommendations of a 14-year-old government report by the National Commission on Farmers.

As they approached Mumbai, the Ki-

san (“farmer”) Long March drew a lot of attention and public support throughout India and beyond. The state government appeared to have agreed to most or all of their demands, promising to resolve problems within six months. Organizers and protesters were cautiously optimistic of the success of their action.

The march was largely organized by the All India Kisan Sabha, and an umbrella alliance called the Bhoomi Adhikar Andolan (Movement for Land Rights), with agricultural workers mainly affiliated with leftist parties like the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Vijoo Krishnan, a leading AIKS organizer, framed the victory in Maharashtra as part of “an uprising of the agrarian sector, and it has been happening for the last two years. It has been happening in many parts of the country.” (News18India, March 13)

There have also been other labor struggles among farmers in the states of Rajasthan, in the north, bordering on Pakistan, and Uttar Pradesh, to the northeast, bordering on Nepal, and tea plantation workers around Darjeeling. In November, farmers held massive, nationwide strikes demanding reforms just

before the Parliament’s winter session.

70 years post-independence, plight of rural workers hasn’t changed

Seven decades after independence from Britain, the plight of India’s rural workers, still the majority of the country’s workforce, has not changed much. While India has experienced some high levels of growth in recent decades, it has been very uneven, benefitting the small elite, while much of the population, which now numbers about 1.35 billion people, still find living a daily struggle.

Farmers often become trapped in debt, as they borrow money to farm tiny plots of land and see little in return for their toil. In recent decades, reports of high rates of suicide among Indian farmers, struggling to provide for their families, have become common. One official statistic suggests 3,097 farmers committed suicide in 2015. Many others simply give up farming, move to cities in search of work and become exploitable cheap labor for other industries.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, a right-wing political party, promotes Hindu nationalism and promises business-friendly development. The BJP marginalizes re-

ligious and ethnic minorities, as well as Dalits and other lower castes, Adivasis (Indigenous) and others.

Since coming to power, the BJP has exacerbated the nationwide crisis of the agricultural poor, especially with its land acquisition ordinance. Land acquisition in India refers to the displacement of local populations and land owners for the “developmental needs of the country.”

In reality, the government offers inadequate compensation for the displaced people, while the ordinance is a great boon to large corporations. The recent fightback by farmers and the farmers’ victory in Maharashtra may mean trouble for the BJP-led government in upcoming elections at both national and state levels.

A change in the elected government will, at best, only ease the crisis facing farmers, whose problems have been decades in the making. During most of those years, Indian politics have been dominated by the Congress Party, BJP’s main electoral rival. Despite its relatively centrist reputation, the Congress Party, too, is pro-business, overseeing the liberalization of the Indian economy since the 1990s and ignoring the plight of the poor. □

Meeting exposes Philippine government abuses

By Sam Ordóñez
Boston

Human rights abuse is being carried out by the U.S.-backed Duterte government in the Philippines. A public forum to expose that injustice was hosted here on March 22 by the U.S. chapter of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines.

Members of the Filipino community in Boston, with their allies, heard informative talks given by members of ICHRP-US and BAYAN-USA, a coalition of Filipino organizations in the U.S. Then they broke into small groups to discuss the situation and create strategies to build local solidarity with the people of the Philippines. The meeting ended with a dynamic spoken word performance by Vijou Bryant, otherwise known as MC Baka.

The meeting highlighted the fundamental role U.S. imperialism has played in creating and supporting Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte’s “Three Wars,” which, since June 2016, have led to over 13,000 deaths through government-sponsored extrajudicial killings.

Bernadette Ellorin of BAYAN-USA described the history of colonialism and neocolonialism in the Philippines. The Philippines is the fifth most mineral-rich country in the world, mostly concentrated on the island of Mindanao, where, according to Ellorin, “The poorest people sit on the greatest riches in the Philippines.” In addition to its natural resources, the Philippines is located in a strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region: Most trade routes between Eastern and Western global hemispheres pass through its islands.

Originally colonized by Spain, the U.S. seized control of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War, when the islands were “transferred” to the U.S. by the 1898 Treaty of Paris, along with Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam.

The Philippines gained nominal political independence in 1946, but U.S. economic and military interests continue to dominate the country. Today, the Philippines receives millions of dollars in U.S. military aid, including new drone bases, and has granted virtually unlimited access to U.S. so-called counterterrorism missions. U.S. firms like Dole and Del

Monte control most economic activity on the islands, a phenomenon Ellorin described as “militarism for plunder.”

Ellorin’s talk highlighted the three wars Duterte has been waging on the people of the Philippines. The first is the drug war, which has killed over 13,000 people and forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands more. It targets low-level dealers and users, while leaving untouched the organized crime syndicates and oligarchs who profit from the drug trade. The second war is the so-called war on terror, which, much like its U.S. counterpart, is justified through “hyper-Islamophobia” and used to target the Moro, a group of Indigenous people of Mindanao who have historically resisted Christianization and foreign dominance.

The third war is the so-called war on the opposition. Under the guise of combatting the New People’s Army, which has been engaging in armed resistance to the U.S. puppet government since 1969, Duterte has begun arresting striking union leaders as “rebels” and labelling any popular dissent as a front for the Communist Party. Recently, an escalating number of



Filipino organizers, community members and allies meet in Boston on March 22.

peasant and Indigenous leaders have also been found dead as Duterte’s repression of all dissent intensifies.

Pam Tau Lee of ICHRP-US reflected on her recent fact-finding mission to the Philippines, specifically to the island of Mindanao. She described a six-year-old girl, who is already a “tested leader,” directing other students in chants as the Department of Education tries to decertify hers and other Lumad Indigenous schools.

The Indigenous Lumad people, much like Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and around the world, are fighting for the return of their land and an end to the destruction of that land for resource extraction. Tau Lee described the ongoing effort to bring a delegation of Lumad leaders to meet with Indigenous peoples in the U.S. to discuss their shared struggle against imperialism and the legacy of colonialism. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Join anti-war marches April 15

More than a million people marched in some 800 cities around the United States insisting on an end to violence on March 24. Whatever their specific demands, the demonstration, led by high school and even younger students, was directed against the ultrarightists of the National Rifle Association and the Trump regime, telling them to stop the violence.

No one threatens more violence these days than the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The political challenge for those who understand the threat the Pentagon poses to people all over the world is to bring this message to those same youths who took to the streets on March 24, many protesting for the first time in their lives.

The recent personnel changes in the Donald Trump administration, including appointing superhawk John Bolton as national security advisor and Mike Pompeo to run the State Department, have placed an even more ultraright gang to run the imperialist machinery. (See article by Fred Goldstein.)

There is an opportunity right now to bring this message to the youth and mobilize against the war drive. The United National Antiwar Coalition, supported by dozens of anti-war and anti-imperialist organizations, including the International Action Center, and hundreds of individuals, has called for anti-war demonstrations on April 14-15 in cities all over the country.

UNAC's demonstrations will call for:

- * End U.S. overt and covert wars, drone wars, sanction/embargo wars and death squad assassination wars.
- * Close all U.S. bases on foreign soil. Dismantle all nuclear weapons.
- * Bring all U.S. troops home now. Self-determination, not military intervention. U.S. hands off the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- * End military aid to apartheid Israel. Self-determination for Palestine. The

U.S. cannot be the cop of the world.

* \$Trillions for human needs ... for jobs and social services, quality, debt-free education and single payer health care. No to anti-union legislation. For \$15 and a union now.

* Defend the environment against life-threatening, fossil-fuel-induced global warming. For a just transition to a 100 percent clean, sustainable energy system at union wages for all displaced workers.

* No to white supremacy, police brutality/murder. End racist mass incarceration. Black Lives Matter.

* No human being is illegal. No to mass deportations. Yes to DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program] and TPS [temporary protective status].

UNAC says in its call: "The U.S. government and its leading Pentagon generals openly and repeatedly threatened nuclear war or massive military intervention against sovereign nations. Such is the case today with North Korea, Iran and Venezuela. Simultaneously, U.S. military forces are at war

in several nations including Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia. Hundreds of U.S. military bases circle the globe in more than 170 foreign countries at the cost of \$trillions while these same \$trillions are subtracted from critical social programs at home. \$Trillions in tax cuts and corporate bailouts are granted to the super rich while the war at home takes on virulent racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, Islamophobic and homophobic forms. Join us!"

Neither the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party establishment will stop the drive to war. Only a mass movement of the people can do it.

Join the march. Build the protest. Make sure the youth who have begun to challenge power know they are welcome to join the fight against imperialist war — the greatest source of violence.

For more information, see unacpeace.org. □

TURN THE GUNS AROUND Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions by John Catalinotto

Weaving together GI letters, interviews and first-hand narratives with historical research, the author brings to life GI resistance in the Vietnam War era, shows its relation to capitalist state power and highlights why breaking the military chain of command is an essential step to ending oppression around the globe.

"If schools in the United States really wanted to impart historical truth, Catalinotto's 'Turn The Guns Around' would be required reading. He tells the true story of this epoch. Few participants know more about the massive GI rebellion against the Vietnam War, the anti-war veterans' movement or the history of soldier revolts from the Paris Commune to the Portuguese coup."

— Pvt Larry Holmes *GI resister and organizer for the American Servicemen's Union 1972-74.*

Available at online booksellers



National Conference to Defeat Austerity



Ricardo Santos Ramos speaks.

The photographs shown here were taken at the National Conference to Defeat Austerity on March 24 at the St. Matthews-St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in the North End district of Detroit. The event brought together hundreds of delegates from around the United States. Special guest Ricardo Santos Ramos, the former president of the Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers Union of Puerto Rico, delivered a major address on the economic crisis in this U.S.-controlled colony.

Other speakers from Detroit, New York City, Baltimore, Boston, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Durham, N.C., and other cities discussed situations in their areas while hammering out solutions to the problems involving education, housing, water services, neocolonialism, food justice, imperialist war, labor organizing, cultural work and environmental justice. Solidarity statements were delivered on the common struggles in Palestine, Lebanon, the Philippines, Spain, Colombia, Italy and and on ending the blockade of Cuba. A warm video message from Venezuela focused attention on the upcoming May 20 presidential elections there.

— Report by Abayomi Azikiwe

Film showing builds solidarity with Anti-fascist Caravan to Donbass



WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD
Part of audience at film showing.

By Workers World New York bureau

It's been four years since a far-right junta supported by Washington seized power in the former Soviet republic of Ukraine and began a war of extermination against the people of the Donbass mining region bordering Russia. On March 18, a film showing was held at the Solidarity Center in New York to shed light on this crisis and efforts to build solidarity.

Introducing the films, Kayla Popuchet of Workers World Party explained, "The eastern Ukrainian region of Donbass has made a militant resistance to the fascists, as they are composed of working-class folks who hold anti-fascist beliefs. In the U.S. we do not hear about the war going on in Ukraine because our bourgeois media do not want us to be aware of what the government here is supporting. It is more convenient for them to silence the resistance. But with us, their words and struggles are alive. We see you, we hear you, and we love you."

The first film shown, "Ukraine: Masks of the Revolution," by filmmaker Paul Moreira, caused a scandal throughout Europe when it was broadcast on French television in 2016. Moreira exposed the role of neo-Nazi gangs in Ukraine's so-called "revolution of dignity"; the massacre of anti-fascist activists in Odessa on May 2, 2014; and the role of U.S. and European officials in covering up their crimes. The Ukrainian government tried to have the film banned.

Commenting on Moreira's film, Greg

is the similarity of the actions by the fascists in Ukraine to the white supremacists who attacked Charlottesville last year, including how they try to justify themselves to the media. And second, the U.S. war drive against Russia didn't start with the allegations of 'election tampering' in 2016. It has been building for a long time, under both Democratic and Republican regimes."

After the Moreira film, "Banda Bassotti: The International Brigade" had its first public showing in North America. The film documents the history of the Italian revolutionary music collective Banda Bassotti and several international solidarity caravans the group has organized, since the 1980s, to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Palestine and other locations. This year Banda Bassotti is organizing its fourth Antifascist Caravan to Donbass, which will bring humanitarian aid and political solidarity to the people of the besieged Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics.

The film showing attracted many young people, as well as veteran activists, who participated in a lively discussion afterward. They enjoyed homemade borscht (beet soup) and kasha (buckwheat porridge). More than \$200 in donations was collected to support the next Banda Bassotti Antifascist Caravan to Donbass.

Activists also announced plans to participate in the upcoming anti-war spring actions set for April 15 in many cities across the U.S. and to hold a protest in New York on May 2, the fourth anniversary of the Odessa massacre. □

Interview with Borotba's Victor Shapinov

'We cannot allow Ukrainian fascism to spread further'

By Greg Butterfield

On Feb. 22-23, 2014, a violent coup overthrew Ukraine's elected government. It brought to power the right-wing "Maidan" movement, with backing from both Democrats and Republicans in Washington.

The new regime, headed by oligarch Petro Poroshenko, has waged a brutal civil war against the people of the Donbass mining region of eastern Ukraine. People there declared independence and formed the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. The war has cost more than 10,000 lives so far, and has been exploited by U.S. and Ukrainian politicians to push a warmongering campaign against neighboring Russia.

The Ukrainian regime outlawed communist organizations, imprisoned hundreds of political opponents and unleashed armed fascist gangs throughout the country, including in Odessa, where over 40 anti-fascists were massacred on May 2, 2014. At the direction of the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund, Poroshenko's government has sped up privatization and the sell-off of the country's natural resources to Western capitalists.

Workers World spoke to Victor Shapinov, a coordinator of the outlawed Ukrainian Marxist organization Borotba (Struggle), about the situation faced by workers and the anti-fascist resistance four years after the coup.

Workers World: It's been reported that Ukraine now has the lowest standard of living in Europe. In January, the Ukrainian Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, passed a law aimed at accelerating the privatization of 3,000 state-owned enterprises to appease the International Monetary Fund. What does this mean for workers and youth in Ukraine? Can the labor movement respond in any meaningful way under the current regime?

Victor Shapinov: The Ukrainian working class is faced with a catastrophic decline in industry and production, comparable to the crash the country suffered after the destruction of the USSR in the 1990s. The main reason is the violent rupture of economic cooperation with Russia and other former Soviet countries, which the new government made after the victory of the Maidan for exclusively political reasons.

Today, the authorities declare a course toward building an "agrarian superpower," actually agreeing to the loss of Ukraine's industrial status. In turn, the decline in production and the economy as a whole leads to the fact that the youngest and most active part of the population is looking for work abroad — mainly in the European Union and Russia. In a sense, the "Euro-integration" which was discussed in the Maidan took place. But this integration is not of Ukraine, but rather of Ukrainians as cheap labor in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Of course, all this, along with the defeat



Victor Shapinov

of the left and progressive forces during the Maidan, had a demoralizing effect on the labor movement. The regime and the media try to present any social protest as inspired by Russia and Putin, so the activity of workers and other strata of the people is low.

WW: Recently, the head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, criticized the government of President Petro Poroshenko for backsliding from so-called "corruption reform." How do you assess the relationship between the junta and the IMF today?

VS: The issue of corruption is used by international capitalist institutions to control the Ukrainian ruling class. The IMF's demand is to create an independent system to investigate government corruption and an anti-corruption court independent of the Ukrainian authorities. At the same time, these bodies should be controlled by Ukraine's international creditors. In fact, it is a question of creating elements of a colonial administration that would look after the local oligarchy.

Naturally, Poroshenko is not enthusiastic about such control, but this is a logical step along the path that Maidan started. Once again, it's not about public control over corruption, but about control by international creditors — something like what we saw in Greece.

WW: From here it seems there has been a steep escalation in confrontations between the neo-Nazi groups and the Poroshenko government, especially on the streets of the capital. We know that a presidential election is scheduled for March 2019. How do you think this situation may develop over the coming year? What candidate or grouping has the support of the Western backers of the coup?

VS: So far, regardless of the pressure exerted by the West on Poroshenko, he remains the main contender, the favorite of the U.S. and EU. However, other politicians of the Maidan camp are also being considered as an alternative — Wladimir Klitschko, Yulia Tymoshenko and even the rock star Slava Vakarchuk. However, all these candidates are united by a clear nationalistic and pro-Western orientation. In their public statements, they all support the war in the Donbass and the course of so-called "European integration" — that is, the further destruction of the country under the control of Western

imperialism.

As for the neo-Nazi formations, they are still used as a tool by oligarchic groups and are not an independent force capable of coming to power. However, they are increasingly challenging the state's "monopoly on the use of violence." They are similar to the Latin American death squads that served the reactionary state, organized crime and imperialism.

WW: Repression and political arrests continue to be widespread, such as recent arrests of people in Odessa for making social media posts critical of the regime. How do you view the situation of the anti-fascist resistance inside Ukraine and in exile? What kind of work is being done?

VS: Unfortunately, we can't say that the anti-fascist resistance movement has recovered after the defeat in 2014. Right-wing radicals still control the streets, working together with the police and secret services, helping to suppress dissent. The resistance was forced to turn to underground methods — from forming illegal organizations to guerrilla attacks. However, these forms of resistance are not widespread. The majority is still demoralized and prefers to remain silent.

WW: The junta's war against the Donbass republics has been in a holding pattern. Ukraine regularly violates the terms of the Minsk ceasefire agreements and causes casualties among civilians, but so far it has not undertaken a major offensive. However, it is said that a lot of work has been done with the help of NATO forces to train and rearm the Ukrainian Armed Forces and volunteer battalions. How do you see the standoff in the coming period?

VS: Negotiations are now underway between Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France on the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping contingent in the conflict zone. Under the preliminary agreement, these will be peacekeepers from Brazil, Sweden and Belarus. If this is done, then the number of periodic outbreaks of fighting may decrease. However, we have already seen in the case of Yugoslavia that peacekeepers can be used as a screen for the actions of one of the parties, so the bellicose statements of Kiev cannot be dismissed.

WW: The previous U.S. administration tried to keep some distance from the worst excesses of the junta and the fascists by legally forbidding the direct sale of heavy weaponry to Ukraine. Now, under Trump, those restrictions have been removed. How do you think the shift in

the U.S. imperialist government has affected the situation, if at all?

VS: Yes, the Trump administration is clearly leading the way in aggravating the international situation. Sadly, Russian officials associated Trump's arrival with the hope for better relations and detente. Experience shows that the right wing always leads to war.

Whether Ukraine will be used as an instrument of aggression depends on many factors. It's important to note that the ruling elites of Ukraine are much more belligerent than the most right-wing "hawks" in the White House. They offer themselves as cannon fodder to Washington, constantly declaring that they are waging a "war with Russia."

WW: Recently there was a meeting in Dubai between U.S. State Department envoy Kurt Volker and Russian presidential advisor Vladislav Surkov to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Surkov said there was general agreement between the two sides. Do you foresee any shift in Moscow's stance toward the Donbass after the upcoming Russian presidential elections?

VS: Russia's ruling circles are looking for ways toward a rapprochement with the West, especially the United States. They did not expect such strong pressure and are now ready to alter their positions. However, they are not ready to capitulate completely. The ambiguity of this situation gives rise to constant attempts to agree with the West, then, on the contrary, issuing some sharp anti-Western statements. Unfortunately, the initiative here is on the side of the West — the Russian regime is only reacting.

WW: What is your message to communists and anti-fascists, especially in the Western countries?

VS: The Western media prefer to "forget" about Ukraine — they say and write little about both the civil war, which continues, and the destruction of the economy and lives of ordinary people, according to the recipes of the IMF and other international institutions.

It's important to understand that Ukraine is a testing ground for imperialism's war against the people. Here, the popular forces were clearly defeated, which undoubtedly will inspire imperialism to new attacks. The defeat of the revolution in Spain in 1939 was a direct prologue to the great leap of reactionary fascist forces throughout Europe. We cannot allow the example of Ukrainian fascism to spread further. □

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO

Trabajador de Amazon:

'Los trabajadores se sienten extremadamente explotados'

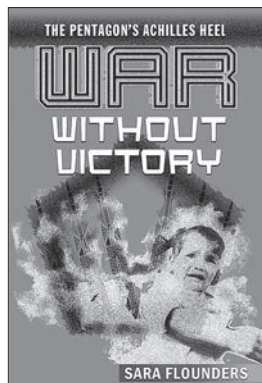
Continúa de página 12

JC: El CEO de Amazon, Bezos, ha superado a Bill Gates en riqueza para convertirse en una de las personas más ricas del mundo. La mayoría de las/os trabajadoras de Amazon tienen un nivel de salario por debajo de lo normal. Eso es inaceptable. Que Bezos empuje para aumentar las ganancias, cuando las/os trabajadoras de Amazon no pueden pagar las necesidades básicas, expone la naturaleza de súper explotación por los patronos.

MG: ¿Cómo un entendimiento económico marxista explica cómo te trata Amazon?

JC: Mira la forma en que se desarrollaron las corporaciones bajo el capitalismo. Se ve que ocurre la automatización. Se ve una tecnología que podría facilitar la carga de trabajo y una experiencia de mayor calidad, pero no conduce a que las/os trabajadoras tengan un día de trabajo más fácil. En cambio, los patronos usan esa tecnología contra las/os trabajadoras mientras crean los márgenes de ganancia más altos para las corporaciones.

Los patronos usan la tecnología para fomentar la explotación y despedir a las/os trabajadoras en lugar de facilitar el trabajo. □



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Trabajador de Amazon: ‘Los trabajadores se sienten extremadamente explotados’

Por Martha Grevatt

Jeff Bezos, el director ejecutivo [CEO por las siglas en inglés] de Amazon tiene un obsceno valor neto individual de más de \$124 mil millones. Sin embargo, las/os más de medio millón de trabajadores de la compañía en todo el mundo luchan por sobrevivir económicamente mientras son llevados a sus límites físicos para maximizar la productividad en los “centros de distribución” de Amazon. El camarada James Costello fue contratado en el almacén de Indianápolis en octubre, justo antes de la temporada pico que comenzó en el “viernes negro”. Amazon tiene cinco almacenes en Indiana, cada uno empleando alrededor de 2.000 trabajadoras/es. Amazon es ahora el 15° empleador más grande en el estado. Recientemente, Costello habló con la periodista laboral de WW—MO Martha Grevatt sobre su trabajo en Amazon.

MG: Cuéntanos sobre las condiciones de trabajo.

JC: En un turno completo, independientemente de la cantidad de paquetes que lleguen, se espera que saquemos al menos unos 20.000 paquetes, a veces más, a veces menos. Puede ser peligroso cuando tenemos 30.000 paquetes o más porque la otra parte del trabajo es cargarlos en los vehículos, y es difícil sacarlos a todos. Los paquetes se acumulan y la gente termina tropezando. La gente trata de levantar paquetes más pesados ellas mismas y sufren esguinces y otras lesiones, incluso en la espalda. Pequeñas lesiones como esa no están cubiertas por Amazon. Puedes irte a casa, pero es una ausencia sin excusa. Si estás gravemente herida/o, el seguro lo cubrirá, pero sólo si se puede demostrar que la lesión ocurrió durante el horario de trabajo. En la instalación de Plainfield, Indiana, una persona murió durante la temporada alta el año pasado. La mató una grúa. Estaba sacando paquetes, y la grúa cayó mientras estaba debajo de ella. Esto demuestra tanto la falta de una capacitación de seguridad adecuada como la falta de mantenimiento del equipo.

MG: ¿Hay una alta tasa de lesiones? ¿Cómo se trata a las/os trabajadores lesionados?

JC: Hay muchas lesiones, pero muchas no se notifican. Realmente es un problema para las personas mayores que trabajan allí, sólo los requisitos físicos y las lesiones. Las personas trabajan lesionadas porque no pueden darse el lujo de tomarse el tiempo libre para mejorarse. Entonces la carga está en ti para demostrar que te lastimaste en el lugar de trabajo. Si no puedes probar eso, Amazon no te ayudará.

MG: ¿Cuántas horas se requiere trabajar por día y por semana?

JC: Ahora trabajo a tiempo completo, de siete a ocho horas por día, cinco días a la semana. Sin embargo, si hay una mucha carga, esas horas pueden extenderse o las horas pueden acortarse en un día lento.

MG: ¿Qué tipo de descansos recibes?

JC: Hay un descanso de 15 minutos si trabajas menos de ocho horas. Si trabajas más horas, puede haber un receso opcional de 30 minutos sin paga para el almuerzo.

MG: ¿Es esto adecuado?

JC: Personalmente no creo que sea adecuado. Cuando estás parado todo el día y corriendo por todo el lugar, 15 minutos no son suficientes. Si hay muchos paquetes, comenzarán el receso pero luego esperarán que vuelvas a la línea después de que hayan transcurrido los 15 minutos. Así que yendo y viniendo al área de descanso está incluido en esos 15 minutos.

MG: ¿Entonces estás de pie la mitad de tu descanso?

JC: Si trabajas lejos del área de descanso, sí.

MG: ¿Las/os trabajadores tienen problemas para poder usar el baño?

JC: Sí. Se obliga a hacer estas cuotas y si se usa el baño, lo consideran no ser “productivo”. Un compañero de trabajo que trabajó en varios lugares me dijo que lo habían reportado por usar el baño porque eso significaba estar bajo la cuota establecida. Entonces debes trabajar sin usar el baño.

MG: Ha habido mucho en los medios sobre el seguimiento de Amazon de las/os trabajadores y la vigilancia en el lugar de trabajo. ¿Puedes hablar sobre esto y qué tipo de atmósfera de trabajo crea?

JC: En cualquier aspecto en el que se esté trabajando: recolección de pedidos, empaque o distribución, cada categoría tiene su propio proceso de seguimiento laboral. Distribución [fulfillment en inglés], es el término de Amazon para el proceso de recolección (ubicación del artículo comprado en el inventario y pasando por el proceso de selección), embalaje del artículo, clasificación, carga y envío del artículo fuera de la instalación. Estos son los pasos que sigue el artículo desde el inventario hasta la entrega. Hay un dispositivo de computadora móvil que escanea un producto que ingresa al sistema y tienes que cumplir con una cuota horaria en los paquetes que procesas. No cumplir con la cuota puede llevar a que se te envíe a casa temprano o una posible terminación si se repite varias veces.

El otro aspecto de esa pregunta es la atmósfera. Las/os trabajadores realmente se enfrentan a la gerencia hasta el punto de que se sienten extremadamente explotadas/os. Cuando toman agua o van al baño, saben que están siendo vigiladas/os constantemente. Esto crea una atmósfera de inquietud. Incluso hablar puede crear problemas porque las/os trabajadores se centran en “tener que ser más productivo”.

MG: ¿Cuánto te pagan?

JC: \$13 por hora en turno de noche, turno de día \$12. Después de 90 días, normalmente se recibe un pequeño aumento, pero algunas personas no lo reciben.

MG: ¿Hay algún beneficio además de tu salario?

JC: Hay beneficios de los que se debe

pagar parte del costo. No tengo esos beneficios porque no puedo pagar mi mitad. Muchas/os trabajadores no tienen beneficios. No hay beneficios totalmente cubiertos.

MG: ¿Tienes compañeras/os de trabajo en asistencia pública como cupones de alimentos?

JC: Sí. Amazon es una compañía donde el CEO es una de las personas más ricas del país y del mundo, pero debido a que el salario es tan bajo, muchas/os trabajadores no tienen otra opción que buscar asistencia en otro lugar, trabajando en múltiples trabajos o mediante cupones de alimentos y otros programas de supervivencia.

MG: ¿Hay una alta tasa de rotación?

JC: Hay. Muchas/os trabajadores son explotados hasta el punto de querer renunciar o ser despedidos por no cumplir con las cuotas u otros factores. Entran muchas/os trabajadores que han sido despedidos pero vuelven a solicitar. Las personas son despedidas antes de su aumento, y luego son contratadas a tasa más baja.

MG: Describe los datos demográficos de la fuerza de trabajo. ¿Hay discriminación?

JC: En las instalaciones donde trabajo, en su mayoría son personas de color más jóvenes y especialmente mujeres de color. Muchas/os trabajan múltiples trabajos. Amazon no es un lugar seguro para las personas que enfrentan opresión especial. La discriminación racial tiene lugar, no es amigable para las personas LGTT, y no es segura para las personas que no son binarias.

MG: ¿Serías despedido si intentaras sindicalizarte?

JC: Lo más que probable, sí. Ninguna de las ubicaciones de EUA está sindicalizada. Son muy estrictos sobre no sindicalizarse, diciéndonos en orientación que no hay necesidad porque todas/os tienen derecho a hablar con sus gerentes. Sería muy hostil. Las/os trabajadores de Amazon solo han ganado el derecho a un sindicato a nivel internacional. Las luchas y huelgas laborales fueron el resultado de las campañas sindicales internacionales, que encontraron un alto nivel de resistencia por parte de la empresa.

MG: ¿Se habla de traer una unión?

JC: Se habla entre las/os trabajadores sobre cómo las condiciones podrían mejorarse. Sin embargo, muchas/os trabajadores también hablan de lo difícil que sería organizarse con éxito en Amazon.

MG: ¿Qué querrías ver tú y tus compañeras/os de trabajo si pudieras sindicalizarte?

JC: Quisiéramos un salario que refleje el costo de vida en nuestra área, un salario digno por el cual podríamos pagar las necesidades básicas y no tener que depender de programas de supervivencia. Exigiríamos que se eliminen las políticas y dispositivos invasivos de seguimiento del trabajo. Exigiríamos descansos adecuados con una mejor política sobre cuándo comienzan, para que cuando llegue al área de descanso se pueda comer,

descansar e hidratarse.

MG: Walmart es conocido por su terrible trato hacia las/os trabajadores, los de almacenes y los minoristas. ¿Ves una comparación?

JC: Sí, lo hago. Cuando miras a Amazon y Walmart, es la misma política de sacar una gran cantidad de productos mientras mantienes los salarios bajos, y al mismo tiempo tratan de imposibilitar la sindicalización. Ambos impulsan material fuertemente antisindical en el proceso de orientación, mientras imponen la naturaleza altamente explotadora del trabajo.

MG: ¿Podría haber una manera de construir una solidaridad de trabajadoras/es de bajos salarios entre las/os trabajadores de las grandes cadenas como Amazon y Walmart?

JC: Sí, mucha gente piensa que Amazon — por el aumento en las compras en línea y la caída en las tiendas minoristas - fue la razón por la que Walmart está despidiendo gente. Pero eso no es realmente cierto. La verdad es que Walmart busca aumentar el salario de los jefes de alto rango mientras mantiene los salarios de las/os trabajadores lo más bajo posible, y Amazon está hablando de despedir trabajadoras/es ahora que la temporada alta ha terminado. Sabemos que las ganancias de Amazon no están disminuyendo, pero aún busca disminuir el número de trabajadoras/es para explotarles a un nivel aún más alto y aumentar así sus ganancias.

Hay una base para la solidaridad entre las/os trabajadores del comercio minorista para organizarse en una sola lucha. E incluiría a las/os trabajadores de entrega. Muchas/os de ellos están sindicalizados como en UPS y han obtenido tremendas victorias a través de la lucha sindical. Pero muchas de sus victorias se han revertido y hay mucha presión sobre su sindicato, los Teamsters. Hay formas en que las/os trabajadores de Amazon y los trabajadores de UPS podrían mostrarse solidarios entre sí contra los patronos que buscan explotarles tanto como sea posible.

MG: ¿Cómo podemos apoyar a las/os trabajadores de Amazon y ayudarlos a recibir un mejor tratamiento?

JC: Hay un gran impulso para un boicot completo de Amazon y Walmart. Pero lo que las personas realmente pueden hacer para apoyar a esas/os trabajadoras/es es exigir a las empresas que las/os trabajadores sean tratados de manera justa. Las personas pueden llevar la lucha de esas/os trabajadores a su propia unión y a su propio lugar de trabajo. Esa sería la principal forma en que se podría construir la solidaridad.

MG: ¿Dirías que tú y tus compañeras/os de trabajo son una fuerza laboral altamente productiva? ¿Cómo contrasta tu compensación con la cantidad de riqueza que produces?

