

Puerto Rican deaths exposed

Anger spurs resistance

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The plaza in front of the Capitol in San Juan, Puerto Rico, has given the most truthful account so far of how many deaths occurred as a result of last fall’s Hurricane Maria. Relatives and friends of the dead have placed their loved ones’ shoes there as evidence of their demise. Over three days, close to 3,000 shoes, marked with their owners’ names and moving stories, claimed their place in history.

This time they will be counted. No longer can the

deaths of so many be ignored by both the Puerto Rican and U.S. authorities, who still insist on a mere 64 killed by the storm.

A revealing Harvard study titled “Mortality in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria,” published on May 29 in the New England Journal of Medicine, has shredded the official figure. Based on more than 3,000 surveys of households throughout the archipelago, it concluded that between Sept. 20 and Dec. 31 of last year, at least 4,645 people died, either directly because of the hurricane or indirectly because of delayed or interrupted

health care. That number could easily double, since people continue to die from lack of electricity to run life-support machines, as well as from suicides, lack of appropriate health care services and other storm-related causes.

Immediately after publication of the Harvard report, Puerto Rican activists formed Project 4645. Through social media, it called on people to bring to the Capitol shoes of those they knew had died as a result of Maria, in order to validate the study’s numbers. It was a strong rebuttal to the Ricky Roselló government’s refusal to

Continued on page 9

Solidarity for

LGBTQ Pride Month

“It’s only a cake.” Some people say that about the June 4 U.S. Supreme Court decision ruling in favor of a Christian baker who refused to make a wedding cake for two gay men.

But it was no accident that the decision, Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, was delivered on the first Monday in June, LGBTQ Pride Month. Delivered like a fist in the face of LGBTQ people everywhere.

Some commentators are trying to minimize the blow by noting the ruling was “narrow,” based on a minor “procedural” point. Others point to how justices also solemnly affirmed the “need to protect” LGBTQ rights. For instance, Justice Anthony Kennedy said “that these disputes must be resolved with tolerance, without undue disrespect to sincere religious beliefs, and without subjecting gay persons to indignities.”

Those dangerous, sanctimonious words hide the murderous violence that’s historically been done to LGBTQ people under patriarchal class society.

The words whitewash the raw, brutal history of “sincere religious belief,” i.e., Christian belief, used in the U.S. alone to justify unrelenting massacres of Indigenous peoples, kidnapping of their children, theft and desecration of their lands. This Christian “sincere belief” justified the kidnapping, enslavement, torture and theft of the labor of millions of African peoples and the murderous col-

onization of more billions in their homelands around the globe.

Within living memory, the “sincere religious belief” of Christianity made rape within marriage legal — “the duty of the wife to submit.” To this day, this “belief” is used to create barbed-wire laws to keep women from making decisions about their own bodies and reproductive lives.

In 1987 an infamous SCOTUS decision re-asserted that lesbian and gay people were a crime — against Judeo-Christian tradition. The Supreme Court upheld “sodomy laws” that justified LGBTQ people being evicted from their homes, fired from their jobs, denied medical assistance and public accommodations, having their children taken away and being forbidden to ever see them again — and more.

Historically, the use of reactionary Christianity has always been to uphold the ruling class — and 21st century U.S. is no exception.

The presence of extreme right-wing Christian forces in the Trump administration is no secret. Vice President Mike Pence, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and other administration figures are linked to Christian nationalism and aligned with the billionaire Koch brothers, the Bradley Foundation and other capitalists. Their agenda is to reconfigure the U.S. as a “Christian nation,” one

Continued on page 3

Israeli sniper murders



Razan al-Najjar, Palestinian nurse 10

Google workers & the Pentagon 4

Trump’s trade war 5



NFL bans anti-racism protests 6

Marxist view of working class 7

Editorial Korea and imperialist liberalism 10

Rallies in U.S. defend Bolivarian Venezuela 9

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Border Patrol murder denounced in the streets

Claudia Patricia Gómez González was en route from Guatemala to rejoin her life partner in Alexandria, Va., when U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents shot her on May 23. The Alexandria community responded on May 30, one week after her killing, with a protest at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of Customs and Border Patrol and a community vigil that evening. According to the Washington Post, the community and immigrant rights activists demanded justice and a transparent investigation into her death, as well as ending the separation of migrant children from their families.

At the evening vigil, organizers announced that the crowd had swelled to 200 in the parking lot behind Tenants and Workers United. The vigil honored the young woman, who would have been part of their community. They said she was “shot dead by a brutal inhumane, un-



May 30, Alexandria, Va.

just system.” Donations for her burial expenses were accepted.

— Cheryl LaBash

Migrant organizers, activists and allies gathered in Jamaica Plain, Mass., on June 2 to mourn the death of Claudia Patricia Gómez González. The vigil was called by the migrant rights organization Cosecha and attended by a delegation from Workers World Party-Boston. Between chants and songs, attendees shared stories of how they and their families migrated to the U.S. Speakers highlighted the continued lack of economic opportunity, especially for Indigenous women in Central America, and the role of U.S. foreign policy in creating this situation.

— Workers World Boston bureau

Seattle rally for migrant children and families

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

In Seattle 300 people demonstrated June 1 at the U.S. Courthouse to denounce the Trump/Sessions’ racist separation of migrant families. The local protest, a Day of Action for Children, was part of a national day of such actions held all over the country.

The family separation policy, announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions on May 7, is an attack against people and families seeking asylum and protection at the U.S./Mexico border.

Rally speakers said that 658 children had been ripped from their families by U.S. border forces during the first

13 days of this policy. As a result of Trump’s terroristic policies, families have lost track of their children, and do not know how to find them.

Organizers at the rally announced that more actions and marches would be held around the country in the days and weeks ahead.

Participating groups included Moms Rising, Refugee Women’s Alliance, National Domestic Workers Alliance, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and the American Civil Liberties Union. □



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WORKERS WORLD this week

★ In the U.S.

Border Patrol murder denounced in the streets	2
Seattle rally for migrant children and families	2
Worker pressure makes Google end Pentagon contract.	4
On the picket line	4
Trump unleashes steel and aluminum tariffs.....	5
Five-state strike hits AT&T	5
Syracuse, N.Y.: Tenants on rent strike.	5
NFL owners ban players from protesting	6
Faculty Forward fights at the U. of Iowa.....	6
‘Marx’s view of the working class includes all struggles’.	7
Homeless camp residents battle evictions	7

★ June is PRIDE month

Transgender activist wins asylum	3
LGBTQ communities win legal protection in Michigan.....	3
Buffalo Pride Parade.....	3

★ Around the world

Anger spurs resistance in Puerto Rico	1
Italy: Racist government unstable	8
Greece: General strike hits austerity, demands benefits....	8
Rightist Bannon urges Italian ‘sovereignty’ from EU, not U.S.	8
Protests greet Washington’s attack on Venezuela.....	9
Nurses: Speak out for Razan al-Najjar	10
Israeli sniper murders medic in Gaza.	10
France: ‘Act your age and shut up!’	11
British imperialism laid ground for Israeli apartheid....	11

★ Editorial

Imperialist liberalism and Korea	10
Solidarity for LGBTQ Pride Month	1

★ Noticias en Español

Indignación boricua, camino a la resistencia	12
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Transgender activist wins asylum

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Estrella Sánchez, a Mexican transgender woman, emerged on May 22 from immigration court in the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Ga., with her asylum papers in one hand and her other hand raised in a fist.

Despite a long, hard-fought battle that took 6 years, multiple denials of her asylum petition, months in detention, physical attacks and psychological trauma, Sánchez had prevailed.

The details of her story are brutally painful to recount, but not so unusual for those fleeing violence in their home countries, whether from anti-LGBTQ violence, drug cartels or political repression.

In her asylum petition, Sánchez recounted years of sexual abuse and rape while growing up in Mexico, beginning when she was 8 years old. Family members, as well as local authorities, directed their anti-trans animus at her, leaving her isolated and fearful. At 19, she fled for her life and crossed into the U.S.



Estrella Sánchez

Promised work as a caregiver, she was instead held against her will in a Texas brothel for almost a year before making her escape.

When she was picked up by police for driving without a license, she was sent to the Stewart Detention Center to await deportation. Stewart is an all-male facility, and Estrella Sánchez was subjected to harsh treatment and abuse by other detainees and guards. The for-profit facility responded by putting her in solitary confinement. When she was finally released from prison to await a hearing, she was

ordered shackled with an ankle monitoring device.

The immigration judge who heard her case was Dan Trimble, one of the most intransigent members on the U.S. Immigration Court. From 2012 to 2017, he denied asylum to immigrants in 95.8 percent of his cases, according to Transactional Records Clearinghouse.

On three separate occasions, he denied Estrella Sánchez's petition, rejecting her claims of abuse because of being transgender. The Department of Homeland Security, which also opposed her appeal, claimed that the social situation in Mexico had improved, and her life would no longer be in danger if she returned.

When Sánchez was first scheduled to be deported back to Mexico, she finally found legal assistance, first, with Immigrant Equality and then, with pro bono lawyers from the Kilpatrick law firm in Atlanta.

While all the legal work was being done, Sánchez became politically active in Atlanta and beyond. She is a constant presence at demonstrations and rallies

for immigrant rights and against mass incarceration and deportation. Always wearing her traditional clothing, she has spoken at numerous conferences nationally and supported trans organizations. She was named a marshall for Atlanta's 2017 Pride Parade, and there is a large, beautiful mural of her in the immigrant community along Buford Highway.

In April, the Board of Immigration Appeals overturned Trimble's third denial of Estrella Sánchez's petition, finding no evidence that conditions in Mexico had improved so much that she would not suffer persecution as a transgender woman. It instructed Trimble to grant her asylum.

Sánchez can now apply for a green card and, after five years, will be eligible to apply for citizenship.

Sánchez plans to continue her advocacy for transgender immigrants, a mission she has carried out for the last six years with the threat of deportation always on her mind. Relieved of that burden, Estrella Sánchez is now considering becoming an immigration lawyer. □

LGBTQ communities win legal protection in Michigan

By Martha Grevatt

As of May 21, in time for a Pride Month celebration, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act protects LGBTQ people in Michigan from discrimination in employment, housing, education, public services and public accommodation. The Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) voted 5-1, with one abstention, to reinterpret the act to treat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identification as a form of sex discrimination.

Michigan is the first state in the country to reinterpret longstanding legislation to the benefit of LGBTQ communities, following similar action at the federal level under the Obama administration. The Elliott-Larsen Act was originally passed in Michigan in 1976.

Only 18 states have the words "sexual orientation" written into their civil rights laws, and not all of those have "gender identity" and "gender expression." Legislative efforts to add those categories to Elliott-Larsen have been voted down. The movement to have LGBTQ-specific language added legislatively is ongoing.

That means the recent reinterpretation by the commission is a huge victory for those who previously could legally be fired, evicted and otherwise subjected to the indignity of discrimination because of

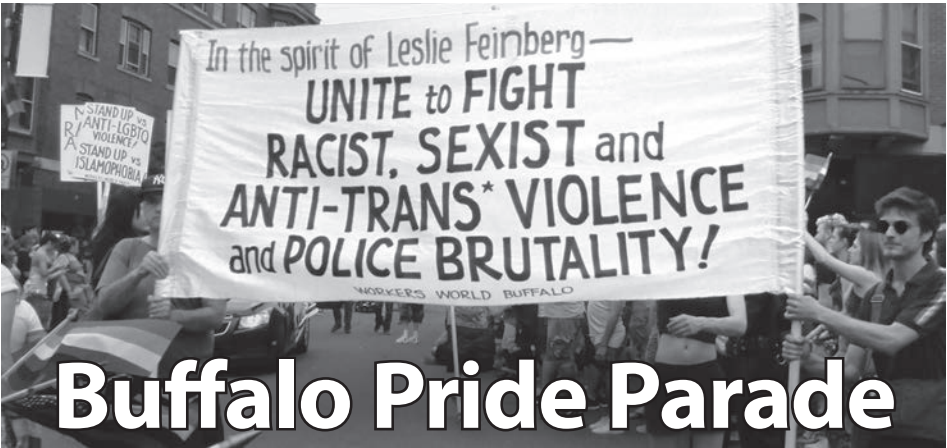
sexual orientation or gender identification.

Civil rights groups launched the Michigan campaign for legal protection in 2017. The commission heard from dozens who testified at public hearings about their experiences with discrimination and read hundreds of pages of public comment. In September, after Attorney General Bill Schuette weighed in against the LGBTQ community with his Tea Party politics, the commission voted not to adopt any changes. However, after the community came back with legal arguments from 30 different legal scholars and experts, the commission reversed its position and extended the protections.

The one commissioner who voted in favor of the status quo, Ira Combs, was appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder in February over the objections of LGBTQ organizations. Combs is a right-winger who has campaigned against local human rights ordinances that protect LGBTQ people.

Attorney General Schuette is claiming that only the state Legislature can make changes to the law and is vowing to overturn this recent victory. The MCRC has countered that legislators can only pass laws; it's up to the agencies that enforce them to interpret them.

For the time being, after decades of struggle, the movement against patriarchal oppression under capitalism can claim a win. □



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Youth from Queers for Racial Justice and Workers World Party marched in the Pride Parade in Buffalo, N.Y., on June 3 in a fightback contingent that challenged the tone of the otherwise heavily corporate celebration and became a magnet for militants. They carried banners and signs confronting anti-LGBTQ oppression, racism, sexism, war and Trump's entire anti-worker program. Placards raised support for immigrants, the Black Lives Matter movement, defense of trans women of color, and demands for economic justice and affordable housing. Many other placards had photos devoted to the victims of police brutality. The contingent got enthusiastic cheers from the packed crowd all along the parade route.

— Garrett Dicembre and Ellie Dorritie

Solidarity for LGBTQ Pride Month

Continued from page 1

where their class can impose austerity and extract maximum profit from workers and oppressed people.

So the recent SCOTUS "cake" case is far from trivial. It signals to right-wing forces that the highest court of the land is willing to use the fig leaf of religion to hide the crimes of the current capitalist system.

Though Supreme Court decisions in 2003 and 2015 decriminalized "gay sex" and legalized same-sex marriage, these victories were no "gift." It took massive organizing in all sectors of LGBTQ communities to force the federal government to concede the new rights.

Heed the alarm

This Pride Month, let's heed the alarm raised by the recent Supreme Court decision and redouble organizing for LGBTQ liberation at all levels. In 31 states, LGBTQ people can still be fired, evicted or denied services because of their sexuality and/or gender expression.

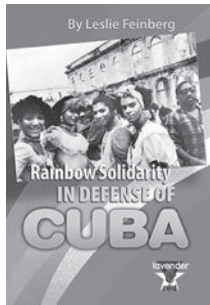
Some states still have vicious laws targeting trans people's access to a bathroom, a basic need. The U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services recently announced it would "more vigorously" protect "religious freedom." These code words would allow medical providers to deny treatment to LGBTQ people and families.

Right now, right-wing attacks at the federal level are not most visibly against LGBTQ people. Across the country there are outright cop murders of Black and Brown people and racist persecution of im/migrants and asylum seekers when border guards arrest them and tear children, screaming in terror, from their parents' arms.

With the pretext of "austerity," the government has waged attacks from Wisconsin to Puerto Rico on education workers and on secular public education for a decade.

This Pride Month offers a chance to strengthen solidarity and build power with all those under attack by hateful right-wing forces. Let's use this month to build that solidarity. Let all the banners of people fighting back against right-wing oppression fly together. That would indeed be an LGBTQ liberation march to be proud of. □



Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of 'Stone Butch Blues'
Feinberg's book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes. A compilation of articles from the Workers World series entitled **Lavender & Red**, online at workers.org. The book is available at major online booksellers



This ground-breaking book reveals how the Cuban Revolution has grappled with the pre-revolutionary legacy of 450 years of persecution and exploitation of homosexuality. Rainbow Solidarity answers the demonization of the 1959 Cuban Revolution by Washington, Wall Street and Hollywood by demonstrating that the process of solving these problems is the forward motion of the revolution.

Worker pressure makes Google end Pentagon contract

By **Sven Ferrari**

Google’s parent company, Alphabet, made an internal announcement on June 1 stating — as reported by Gizmodo, the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal — that the company would not be renewing its contract with the Pentagon in 2019 for its work on the Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Functional Team.

Also known as Project Maven, the AWCFT utilizes artificial intelligence to automate aspects of target selection for the U.S. fleet of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), more commonly known as drones. Coverage had been relatively sparse on how the tech giant was following in the footsteps of other big transnational corporations and assuming this major role in the U.S. military-industrial complex. However, the corporate press all ran stories on Google’s decision not to renew and acknowledged that the company was responding to what has been described as sustained “employee backlash.”

What happens when we stop thinking of people as employees and start talking about them as workers? What’s the significance of Project Maven and how does it fit into the broader struggle against U.S. imperialism at a time when anti-war movements are small?

Tech is an industry infamously devoid of organized labor. Google “employees” enjoy a benefit package that is relatively generous. They are white collar, comfortable and in many ways far removed from the militant, worker-led union movement that once existed in the now depleted U.S. manufacturing sector.

Yet worker power exists at the point of production. Whether production centers around material commodities or intellectual properties, the fundamental relationship of workers to the means of production remains intact. The worker backlash at Google can also be viewed essentially as a conflict between workers and management that, if unresolved, could have led to a disruption in the flow of business.

After the disclosure of Google’s involvement with Project Maven in a March internal memo, more than 4,600 of its workers signed a petition demanding the company terminate its contract with the Pentagon. The petition stated simply, “We believe Google should not be in the business of war.” In addition to the petition, at least 13 workers resigned in open protest and more than 700 workers joined an online group called “Maven Conscientious Objectors” to strategize forms of resistance that would apply pressure to the company.

According to emails leaked to the New York Times and reviewed on June 1, one of the engineers who resigned had proposed a boycott and a public rally at an upcoming Google Cloud conference scheduled for July at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. It was to be titled “Occupy Moscone,” an obvious reference to the Occupy Wall Street movement that spread across the globe in 2011.

Growing worker consciousness

The decision by Google to yield to worker demands is both a victory for worker power and a blow to the future stability of the U.S. military-industrial complex and its war agenda.

It’s another sign of the emerging workers’ consciousness reflected in the recent wave of teachers’ strikes in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona and Colorado. While there is nothing to suggest that workers at Google are about to unionize, their action has significance beyond the immediate display of worker power.

Recent civil unrest has resulted in some of the largest protests in U.S. history, rallying around women’s rights, gun violence, racist police brutality and the brutal criminalization of the undocumented. What’s even more promising is that many people are making connections between these issues and the capitalist system.

However, this growing movement has been relatively silent on the fact that the U.S. is in its second decade of an unending “War

on Terror,” conducting drone strikes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Pakistan.

The Bush administration’s ground offensives in Afghanistan and Iraq are by and large discussed in the corporate media as a “failure.” However, the Obama administration’s pivot toward “unmanned” offensives succeeded in convincing many people in the U.S. that they no longer have to worry about their family and friends fighting in far-off lands.

While much attention is paid to Trump’s heightened repression at home, little is said about his escalation of bombing campaigns abroad. The increased dependence on drones represents a fundamental shift in the social relationship between the mechanisms of war and the public, further removing people from a process already completely lacking in humanity.

Attempts to harness artificial intelligence are clearly related to the ongoing struggles the U.S. military has faced regarding the extraordinarily high attrition rates for drone pilots. According to a 2015 article from the website TomDispatch, the Air Force’s 12-month RPA training program graduates around 180 pilots a year. In that same amount of time, an average 240 RPA pilots resign, largely because the drone program is consistently understaffed, leading to increased levels of burnout and post-traumatic stress disorder. So despite Google’s withdrawal, Project Maven will continue.

As long as wealth accumulation remains the guiding principle of U.S. foreign policy and military spending accounts for the majority of the federal budget, the state will do whatever it can to justify the flow of public money into private hands. This move by Google workers represents the articulation of a potential anti-war movement. Considering that other U.S. tech giants such as Microsoft and Amazon have extensive contracts with the Department of Defense, it opens up a previously unexplored point of pressure against the U.S. war machine. □

On the picket line

– By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis



50,000 Las Vegas workers win with strike threat

Some 99 percent of Culinary Workers Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165 members voted May 22 to strike if they didn’t get a decent contract by the May 31 expiration date of their current contract with the two biggest Las Vegas casino-hotel groups. As a result, MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment folded over the weekend and reached agreement with the unions.

While details of the agreement were not published as of June 4, the 50,000 workers — bartenders, housekeepers, cocktail and food servers, porters, bellmen, cooks and other kitchen staff, the majority immigrants and female — demanded a wage increase of 4.2 percent effective June 1 and 4 percent annual increases thereafter under the 5-year contract. They also sought improved job security against increasing use of technology at the 34 hotel-casinos and strengthened language against sexual harassment.

“The companies are making millions and millions of dollars,” said Local 226 Secretary-Treasurer Geoconda Arguello-Kline. “They are growing and that’s excellent. We want them to share with the workers their success.” (culinaryunion226.org, June 2) The billionaire companies caved because they knew from the unions’ many rallies, walkouts and protests that they meant business. It’s estimated that the casinos could have lost up to \$10.5 million a day; they lost millions during the 67-day strike in 1984. That’s the workers’ power behind the strike threat!

Striking Tecnocap workers hold line for eighth week

Skilled workers, represented by Machinists Local 818 at metal packaging manufacturer Tecnocap in Glen Dale, W.Va., have been striking since voting down the company’s austerity contract offer on April 9. Tecnocap wants to end all union job classifications, kick a third of the bargaining unit off the contract, and make workers pay 50 percent of their health insurance premiums, among other crimes. Workers voted to strike instead, and Local 818 has filed an unfair labor practice suit with the National Labor Relations Board.

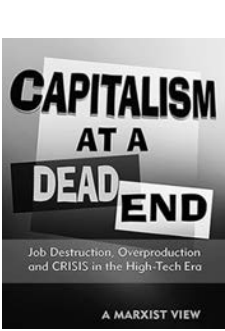
While the company continues to refuse to bargain, local unions rallied behind Local 818 on May 29. District 54 President & Directing Business Representative T. Dean Wright said, “Until Tecnocap is prepared to enter into lawful bargaining for a fair contract ... we’ll continue to be on this picket line.” The secretary-treasurer of the West Virginia AFL-CIO denounced the state’s right-to-work (for less) law which “brought some of these issues on.” He condemned its “slow attack on all workers. We’re fighting back together.” (wtrf.com, May 29)

West Virginia newspapers had refused to cover the strike under orders from anti-worker newspaper owner and casino billionaire Bob Nutting, who also owns the Pittsburgh Pirates. (He’s facing a Major League Baseball grievance for violating its collective bargaining agreement.) However, after Payday Report exposed this censorship, one Nutting-owned newspaper covered the strike and others followed. (PayDay Report, May 25 and 29) Defend workers’ right to strike!

St. Louis drivers fight Transdev with a union

St. Louis drivers dealt a ballot blow against one of the most toxic multinational corporations, Transdev, by voting 68 percent to join Food & Commercial Workers Local 655 on May 17. These drivers provide shuttle services to patients and medical workers at Barnes-Jewish Hospital as well as students at Washington University. The drivers told union organizers they need more respect at work, higher wages and better vacation time. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 17)

While celebrating their victory, the drivers should be aware of the history of Transdev’s parent company, Veolia, a French-based corporation with a long record of violating human and labor rights globally. The largest privatizer of public services in the world, it routinely overcharges residents for once-public services like water, while underinvesting in infrastructure. Veolia/Transdev has supplied water to illegal Zionist settlements in Jerusalem as well as provided Israeli-only transportation to illegal settlements in the West Bank. But unions like the Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers Local 8751, have fought and won against this behemoth. Veolia/Transdev is surely smarting from this union victory, but it’s a win for everyone who has to work for a living. □



CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END

Job Destruction, Overproduction and CRISIS in the High-Tech Era

A MARXIST VIEW

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



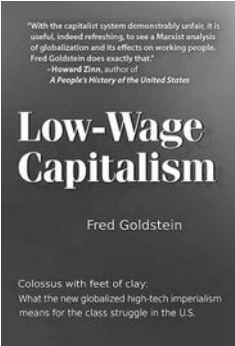
EL CAPITALISMO EN UN CALLEJÓN SIN SALIDA

Destruction de emplois, surproduction y crisis en la era de la alta tecnología

UN PUNTO DE VISTA MARXISTA

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

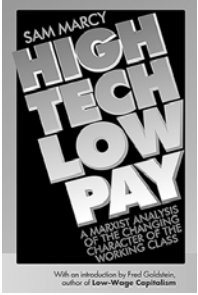
Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



Low-Wage Capitalism

Colossus with feet of clay: What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

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.



HIGH TECH LOW PAY

A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF THE WORKING CLASS

With an introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of Low-Wage Capitalism

High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein

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

Available at all major online booksellers.

Trump unleashes steel and aluminum tariffs

By Chris Fry

“You can get a lot farther with a smile and a gun than you can with just a smile.”

— **Al Capone,**
1920s-1930s Chicago gangster

The Trump regime announced on May 31 that it will impose a worldwide 25 percent tariff on imported steel and a 10 percent tariff on imported aluminum. President Donald Trump had announced these tariffs back in March, but had held off implementing them supposedly to negotiate “more favorable” trade terms with other capitalist countries.

This regime has already imposed separate tariffs against China. But now the U.S. president has gone ahead and imposed new taxes on these imported products worldwide.

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress, not the executive, the power to impose tariffs. Trump is bizarrely calling these tariffs “national security” measures to cover his illegal actions.

U.S. imperialism’s “junior partners” — that is, its less powerful imperialist allies — immediately voiced outrage and threatened retaliatory tariffs of their own. A May 31 Guardian article quoted European Union head Jean-Claude Juncker: “The EU had no choice but to hit back with tariffs on U.S. goods and a case at the World Trade Organization in Geneva.”

The Guardian article continues: “The French president, Emmanuel Macron, called the U.S. tariffs illegal and a mistake, while the Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, issued an immediate like-for-like response — announcing tariffs of up to 25 percent on U.S. imports worth up to 16.6 billion Canadian dollars, which was the total value of Canadian steel exports to the U.S. last year. The tariffs will cover steel and aluminum as well as orange juice, whiskey and other food products.

“Mexico also denounced the move, saying it ‘deeply regrets and disapproves’ the U.S. decision. The economics ministry said it would adopt equivalent measures on a variety of products, including flat steel, lamps, pork legs and shoulders, sausages and food preparations, apples, grapes, cranberries, various cheeses, and other products, ‘up to an amount comparable to damage caused by the United States’ action.”

Many U.S.-based multinational corporations, whose profits depend on the exploitation of workers around the globe, voiced outrage over Trump’s move.

“The Business Roundtable issued a blistering statement, condemning the move: ‘The Administration’s decision to drop steel and aluminum tariff exemptions for America’s allies only worsens a self-inflicted wound on our economy and unnecessarily exposes U.S. exporters to foreign retaliation.’” The Chamber of

Commerce stated that some 2.6 million jobs could be lost because of Trump’s trade policies, with 1.8 million jobs lost in the first year. (Washington Post, June 1)

Corporate servants like Sens. Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, Lamar Alexander and Patrick Leahy, among many others, all voiced their opposition to Trump’s tariffs.

In March, when these tariffs were first announced, the leadership of the Steelworkers union hailed #45 for supposedly “protecting American jobs,” even though most of the benefit would go to nonunion shops like Nucor Corporation. Much to the USW’s horror, the president has refused to exempt Canada, threatening the jobs of many of USW’s 225,000 Canadian members, including many steel and aluminum workers.

Of course, Boss Trump has relentlessly attacked workers’ unions by supporting the anti-union Janus case before the Supreme Court and by attacking teacher unions. Not surprisingly, by raising prices on these metals, which are used to make a huge number of products, the tariffs threaten far more U.S. workers’ jobs than they will save. In every sense, Trump is an enemy of working people everywhere.

This tariff hike enrages U.S. capitalist partners, sparks opposition from many huge corporations and their politician minions, and will rob many workers, some of whom are Trump voters, of their jobs. So why is he doing it?

Gangster Trump weaponizes trade policy

A May 31 article in the pro-business Bloomberg magazine provides an answer: “Trump’s hope seems to be that the threat of tariffs gives him leverage to get the cooperation he wants on European defense spending and sanctions on Iran. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin recently told the U.S. cable news network CNBC that President Trump would factor military contributions to NATO into the application of a 25 percent tax on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum.

“One in every two jobs in German industry (and one in every four jobs generally) is directly or indirectly related to German exports. Trump’s threat may spur these export interests to pressure Berlin for more German (and European) cooperation with the U.S. on Iran sanctions or defense spending — whatever it takes to return to business as usual.

“Trump’s demands on the defense spending front are not some new red line. They actually echo those of previous administrations, with the difference being that he is willing to force the issue with his linkage tactics.”

The U.S. war industry stands ready to reap billions in profits if Europe is forced to purchase high-priced planes, tanks, drones and other hardware. And, of course, U.S. Big Oil favors Trump’s sanctions against Iran, which help prop

up global oil prices and force workers to pay more at the pump.

Since taking office, Trump has become the number one salesperson for the U.S. weapons industry, openly boasting of selling missiles, aircraft and other arms to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel and dozens of other countries.

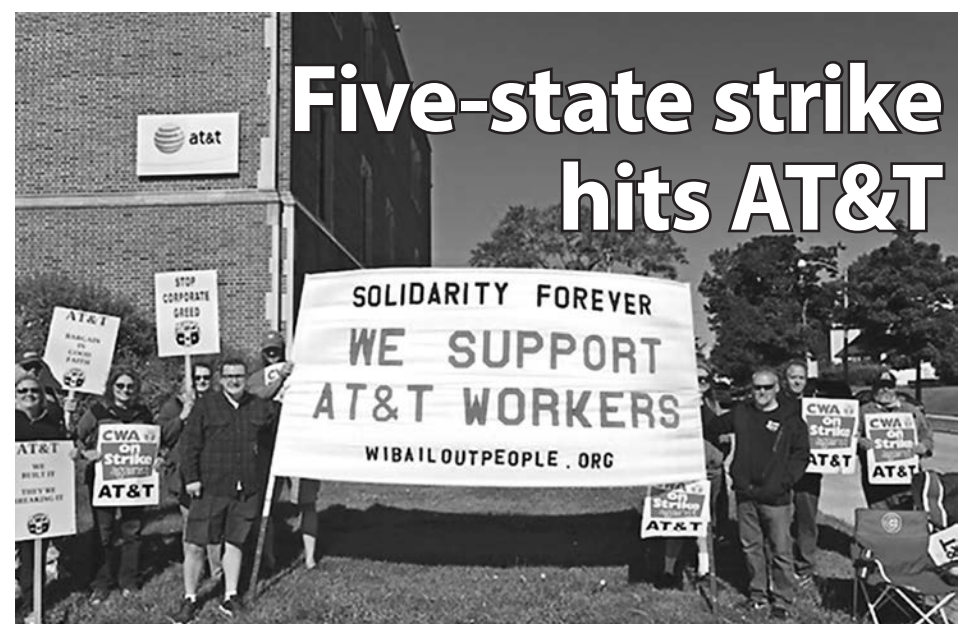
The April 2 Nation noted: “The Trump administration is poised to release a new policy directive on global arms transfers. A report by Politico, based on interviews with sources at the State Department and a National Security Council (NSC) official, suggests that it will seek to further streamline the process of approving arms sales, in part by increasing the already extensive role of U.S. government personnel in promoting such exports. ...

“In keeping with that priority, according to the NSC official, ‘the administration is intent on ensuring that U.S. industry has every advantage in the global

marketplace.’”

The war industry reaps huge profits from these sales for products, whose only purpose is to kill and destroy. But they provide fewer jobs overall than civilian industry does. As a May 2017 report by Brown University’s Watson Institute indicates: “Military spending creates fewer jobs than the same amount of money would have if invested in other sectors. Clean energy and health care spending create 50 percent more jobs than the equivalent amount of spending on the military. Education spending creates more than twice as many jobs.

“If over the years 2001-2014 the U.S. had not been at war but instead had channeled resources into expanding the clean energy industry, broadening health care coverage, and increasing educational opportunities, between 1 and 3 million more jobs would have been created, reducing unemployment significantly.” □



WW PHOTO

June 4 in Wauwatosa, Wis.

By Martha Grevatt

About 14,000 AT&T phone service technicians and call center workers in five states have walked off the job in an unfair labor practice strike. These members of the Communication Workers in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin began picketing May 31 after the company engaged in an illegal “unfair labor practice” known as “direct dealing.” Bypassing the union’s bargaining committee, AT&T sent emails directly to workers to try to get them to accept a final contract offer.

AT&T’s action exposes how companies try to undermine and bust unions. But an advantage for workers in a ULP strike is that it is illegal for companies to fire workers or permanently replace them during the strike. Companies cannot use replacement “scabs,” and striking workers can collect unemployment benefits.

The current contract expired in April. The biggest issue is the outsourcing of call center jobs. The company prom-

ised to hire thousands of workers with the windfall in profits that came from Trump’s corporate tax break. Instead, thousands of workers have been laid off as call center jobs are outsourced to low-wage countries.

After the federal tax bill was passed, AT&T announced it would close its Detroit call center, throwing 100 workers, with 15 years or more seniority, out on the street.

Speaking at a May 24 Detroit rally, CWA President Chris Shelton said, “AT&T, are you listening? You’re not getting a deal in District 4 unless it comes along with jobs.” CWA District 4 is headquartered in Cleveland and represents the five-state region currently on strike. “We’re organized and we’re going to fight back. We’re ready to do whatever it takes. No jobs, no deal,” added CWA Local 4004 President Merle Milton. (cwa-union.org, May 24)

“Enough is enough,” pronounced George Walls, president of CWA Local 4603 in Milwaukee. (wtmj.org, May 24) □



PHOTO: BEN KUEBRICH

Syracuse

Tenants on rent strike

By Michael Kelly

Syracuse Tenants United held a march, rally and press conference June 1 to announce that a group of Syracuse Quality Living tenants will continue their rent strike into June.

The SQL is a major landlord in the Syracuse University area. The 10 SQL tenants withholding rent have experienced infestation, mold, lack of heat in the winter and maintenance personnel entering their apartments without notice.

Tenants marched to the company office and read prepared statements to the press and supporters. An SQL employee called police on the lawful gathering, and three police cars arrived shortly after.

“It is evident that SQL doesn’t care about the well-being of its properties, maintenance staff, or especially its tenants,” said Isaiah Nins, a rent-striking tenant, following the event.

The tenants plan to withhold rent until management meets their dire habitability needs or voids their leases. □

NFL owners ban players from protesting

By Monica Moorehead

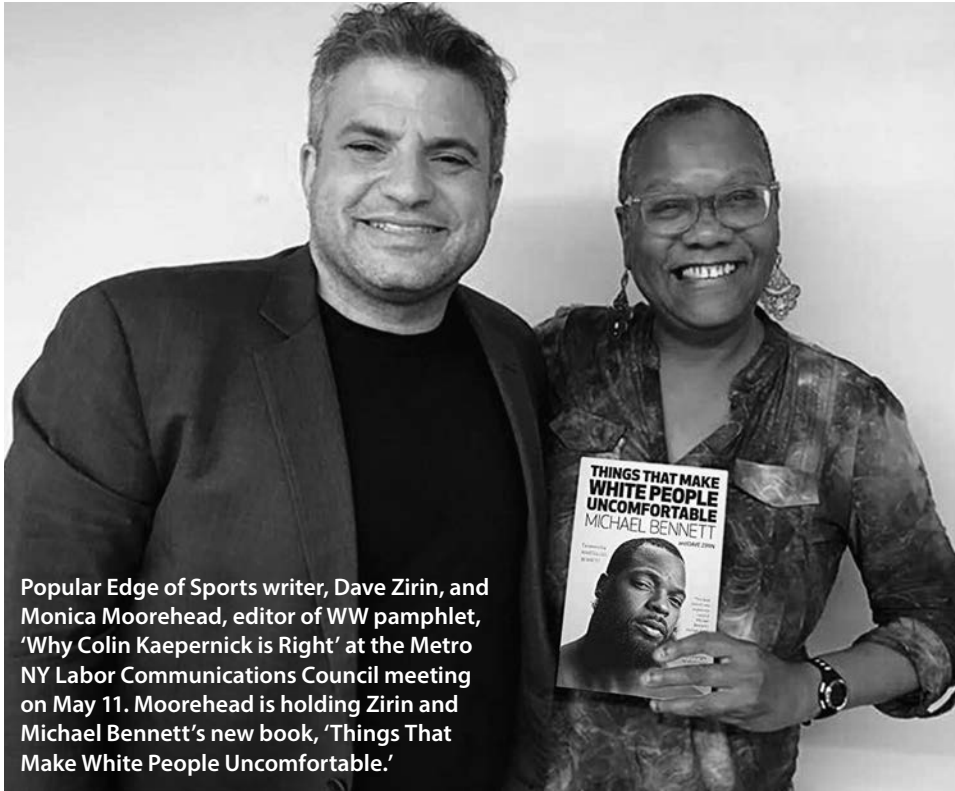
An overwhelming majority of the National Football League’s 32 CEOs voted on May 23 to ban peaceful protests by players in the form of kneeling during the playing of the national anthem in the upcoming 2018-19 season. Only Jed York, owner of the San Francisco 49ers, abstained.

Since former 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick began to sit and then kneel at the beginning of every game during the 2016-17 season to protest racist police brutality, his actions became, and continue to be, a source of national debate that have transcended the sports world. Kaepernick actually began to protest during the 2016 preseason immediately following the police murders of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, La., and Philando Castile in a suburb of St. Paul, Minn., both captured on video.

Once other African-American players joined the protests from other teams, bigot in chief Donald Trump took to Twitter in September 2017, aiming a vicious attack on all protesting players, calling them “sons of b—ches” and demanding that owners fire them. He called on fans to boycott the games.

The NFL’s Game Operations Manual will be updated to remove the requirement that all players be on the field when the anthem is played. The six main points in the new rules are the following: “Personnel who choose not to stand for the Anthem may stay in the locker room or in a similar location off the field until after the Anthem has been performed; A club will be fined by the League if its personnel are on the field and do not stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem”; and “Each club may develop its own work rules, consistent with the above principles, regarding its personnel who do not stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem.”

Also, “The Commissioner will impose appropriate discipline on League personnel who do not stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem; Each club may develop its own work rules, consistent with the above principles, regarding its personnel who do not stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem”; and “The Commissioner will impose appropriate discipline on League personnel



Popular Edge of Sports writer, Dave Zirin, and Monica Moorehead, editor of WW pamphlet, ‘Why Colin Kaepernick is Right’ at the Metro NY Labor Communications Council meeting on May 11. Moorehead is holding Zirin and Michael Bennett’s new book, ‘Things That Make White People Uncomfortable.’

WW PHOTO: LALLAN SCHOENSTEIN

who do not stand and show respect for the flag and the Anthem.”

Trump has cancelled a June 5 visit to the White House by the current Super Bowl football champions, the Philadelphia Eagles, because a number of this team’s players, most notably, Malcolm Jenkins and Chris Long, refused to attend due to their opposition to Trump’s reactionary view on the NFL protests.

Players union responds

The NFL Players Association criticized the new rules: “The NFL chose to not consult the union in the development of this new ‘policy’” and the union will “challenge any aspect of it that is inconsistent with the collective bargaining agreement.” (thehill.com, May 23)

The owners, along with Trump, have attempted to change the narrative of the protest’s origins from opposing police murders of unarmed Black and Brown people to disrespecting the U.S. flag and the military. Once Trump’s attacks elevated this false narrative, even members of the military — both retired and rank and file — defended the players’ right to protest based on the First Amendment.

The owners have not only scapegoated the protesting athletes in the name

of defending “patriotism,” but have also blamed these conscious athletes for the games’ declining TV ratings and ticket sales. These games are played in stadiums named after banks and corporations and located in affluent, mainly white suburbs.

Other Black athletes are targets

The vast majority of the billionaire and multimillionaire owners are white, while 70 percent of the NFL players are Black, wrote the Washington Post. Many of the players have personally experienced police brutality and mass incarceration many times in their young lives — so it is not a stretch that they feel a strong affinity for Black communities besieged by the police.

Take Michael Bennett, an outspoken activist, defensive end with the Philadelphia Eagles, and Super Bowl champion. Las Vegas police brutalized him last Aug. 26 following a boxing match. Videotape showed two cops chasing him, throwing him to the ground and pointing a gun to his head. According to Bennett’s statement on Twitter, the cops’ excuse for this act of brutality was that he was “simply being a black man in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

On the same day that the new NFL anti-protest policy was codified, the Mil-

waukee police released to the public a video cam of five white Milwaukee cops attacking and tasing twice Sterling Brown, a member of the National Basketball Association’s Milwaukee Bucks team, on Jan. 26. They cited him for a parking violation! While the Milwaukee police have publicly apologized to Brown, he is filing a lawsuit for violation of his civil rights on behalf of all known and unknown Black victims of police terror.

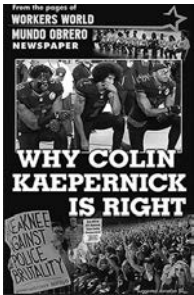
Kaepernick’s actions and the repercussions he has faced have been compared by many to Muhammad Ali losing his heavyweight title in the late 1960s for refusing to fight in the Vietnam War. Also, Kaepernick has inspired other athletes of all ages and other sports to protest injustice by kneeling on fields and courts all over the country.

Kaepernick and Eric Reid still unemployed

Kaepernick and his former 49ers teammate, defensive safety Eric Reid have not been picked up by any team as of June of this year. Reid was kneeling right next to Kaepernick during every game this past season.

Many players have accused NFL owners of “blackballing” both players for taking a stand against racist oppression. There are rumors that some players plan to protest the new NFL rules during the upcoming season — and show solidarity with Kaepernick and Reid if they continue to be without jobs.

Kaepernick filed a grievance last October charging collusion by the NFL owners — with encouragement from Trump — in keeping him from finding work since he opted out of his contract with the 49ers at the end of the 2017 season. Meanwhile, less accomplished quarterbacks were hired. Kaepernick led the 49ers to Super XLVIII, only to lose to the Baltimore Ravens. □



WHY COLIN KAEPRNICK IS RIGHT

Articles from Workers World/
Mundo Obrero Newspaper
Find it at: www.workers.org/books

Faculty Forward fights at the U. of Iowa

By Mike Kühlenbeck
Iowa City, Iowa

June 3 — Some 210 members of Faculty Forward Iowa are fighting for better working conditions for nontenure track faculty and graduate student workers at the University of Iowa.

Faculty Forward is a campaign by the Service Employees Union, a national effort to ensure “everyone has access to education and that all educators receive fair pay and stable work.” Over 54,000 faculty and graduate students on 60 campuses have joined this campaign to organize unions. This is an important struggle considering the sad state of affairs in higher education. (seiufacultyforward.org)

As noted by Faculty Forward: “Desperate to keep the doors open, universities hired high-priced executive administrators who turned college into big business. They hiked tuition, cut tenure track positions and decreased faculty pay, all while pocketing handsome paychecks. The result is a rigged system where only a select

few get access to a quality education and too many educators live in poverty.”

The Faculty Forward campaign started organizing UI employees last fall and publicly announced the Faculty Forward Iowa campaign earlier this year. FFI members rallied Feb. 26 at the Pentacrest (the Old Capitol and surrounding buildings) as part of a national day of action coinciding with the Supreme Court hearing on the Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 31 case. The “We Rise Rally for Workers’ Rights” gave a platform to FFI which expressed its solidarity with other workers.

Despite the image of academic workers promoted by the corporate media, many professors and graduate students are not “overpaid” with “cushy jobs.” Many are struggling to get by. The grueling workload, hectic scheduling and other burdensome conditions are not compensated with pay and benefits comparable to those granted to tenured professors and administrators.

UI Visiting Professor of Linguistics Brooke Larson joined the FFI campaign during the early stage of the organizing effort. Larson earned her Ph.D. at the University of Maryland in 2013 and has taught at other colleges. Larson told Workers World how she and many of her colleagues are being “worked to the bone without job security.”

“I have taught five courses in a single semester,” Larson said, which is “shocking compared to other schools.”

UI Associate Professor of Rhetoric Megan Knight, an FFI member, told The Daily Iowan, “I’m involved because I’ve worked for Iowa for 20 years, I’ve been in the Rhetoric Department since 1998, but my salary has remained flat since then.” (Feb. 27)

Between 50 and 60 FFI members and supporters gathered at the Pentacrest again on April 18. The gathering then marched to the office of UI President Bruce Harreld to deliver a petition with close to 200 signatures and a letter listing their demands.

The letter stated, “By joining together,

across the University of Iowa, we can win a voice on our campus, and advocate for better working conditions that in turn will improve our students’ learning conditions.”

FFI’s demands include: UI’s support for the right to unionize, a seat at the table with equal representation, more stable and equitable contracts, transparency on hiring and renewal, a standardized appeal process, standard yearly pay raises, clear expectations for merit raises, health insurance coverage, retirement benefits, parental leave, consistent and predictable travel funding, professional development opportunities, and standardized credit hours and course loads.

A dozen FFI members staged a sit-in outside Harreld’s office at 10 a.m. on May 9. They were told he was “too busy” to meet with them. At 6 p.m., Harreld’s senior advisors Peter Matthes and Laura McLeran finally met with FFI members. “Matthes and McLeran agreed in writing to schedule a meeting between representatives of Faculty Forward Iowa and

‘Marx’s view of the working class includes all struggles’

Part 1 of a May 6 talk by Larry Holmes, first secretary of Workers World Party, at the meeting “Marx@200: Class Struggle in the Age of Trump” in New York.

by Larry Holmes

Arguably, socialism has never been more popular. I’m not saying it’s not debatable, but that’s what some people think. And capitalism has never been more unpopular. This is good news for all of us who dream about and work toward socialist revolution.

But in order to realize the potential of this, we must confront some ideological problems. They’re not problems you can blame on this or that leader or party, or even this or that event. They’re more general than that.

Karl Marx didn’t call for reform — he called for revolution. He believed capitalism could not be reformed. He believed capitalism was not only inherently oppressive, based on the exploitation of labor, that it pauperized the workers and even more the oppressed, but that the system was inherently unstable. It might go through periods when it seemed to be stable, especially for ordinary workers. Sooner or later that would come to an end, and instability would come back with a vengeance.

So what happened? I think we ought to sharpen our view of the development of revolutionary Marxism over the last three-quarters of a century, not only in this country but around the world. It’s been problematic. It’s reached some barriers, some walls, which it has not been able to overcome yet. But that’s temporary. With our help, and that of millions of other revolutionaries, we’ll get over those barriers.

After U.S. imperialism gained world dominance when it came out victorious in the second imperialist world war, it ran all sorts of global networks, institutions, projects and ways of thinking that are under attack now because of the crisis of capitalism. In the working-class movement, in a general way, there was a reassessment of the situation.

The general thinking of the working-class movement was that now U.S. imperialism is so dominant that capitalism is probably going to be around indefi-

nitely. And probably we’d be dealing with a system that appeared to be stable. And so what we were fighting for would be affected by that.

It’s not that everybody came together and decided this. It was more abstract and uneven than that. But it’s nonetheless true, with some exceptions.

What happened was that the struggle for revolution abated, and the struggle for reforms became an end in itself. From a revolutionary point of view, the struggle for reforms is just a strategy toward the struggle for revolution. We’re not against the struggle for reforms, for immediate demands — we’re all for that. But that became predominant.

Then eventually, as we could have told anybody, it became clear that capitalism had sunk into a deeper crisis. Globalization, technology, austerity — some call it neoliberalism. That’s actually just another word for saying a violent stage of unstable capitalism. And all the attacks that came with it: union busting, more racism, more sexism, more oppression.

When that happened, because of the orientation of a large section of the working class, including forces that considered themselves socialist and communist, they didn’t know what to do. Their work and their perspective was based to a large degree on the stability of capitalism. But all of a sudden they didn’t have that anymore.

We have to talk about this a lot more, but not just talk about it as if we’re polemicizing with somebody. We have to try to do something to change this perspective.

Our struggle — and it’s been our struggle for a long time — is to try to reset the working-class movement. However long it takes, and whatever needs to be done to accomplish this, we have to work hard as revolutionaries to reset what the main objective is.

Fighting for immediate demands is great. All of the tremendous struggles that have taken place — you can’t take any-

thing away from them. They’ve been valiant; they’ve been brave. But we’ve got to put revolution back into the equation, because that’s what is necessary.

Our program cannot be limited to immediate economic demands. It has to be more revolutionary. It has to address political demands, like stopping imperialist war. Like supporting the struggle of the oppressed. Like supporting Black Lives Matter — that’s a working-class issue.

That’s not some marginal issue. Supporting the struggle for women’s liberation, the struggle for the liberation of LGBTQ people, the struggle of immigrants. These are not marginal struggles on the side. They are at the center of the working class.

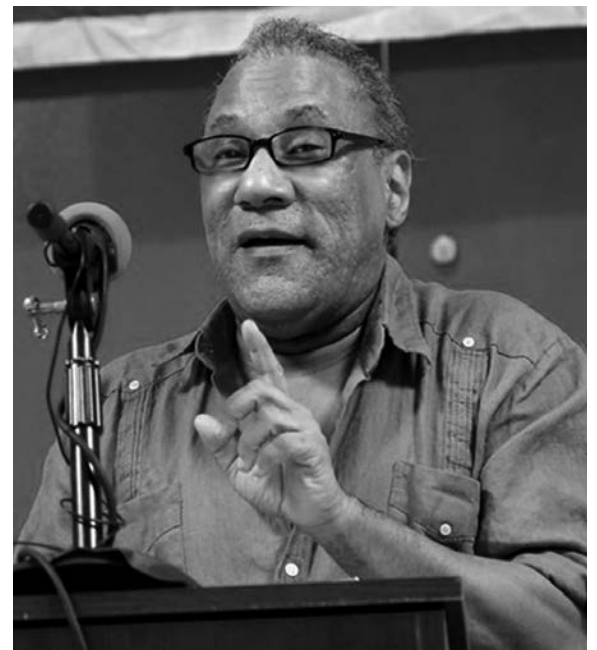
There are some in our movement who say that these issues are diversions, that they’re not really working-class issues. And even worse. Some say that that they’re the reason Trump got elected. We must argue with them. We cannot tolerate this kind of thinking, because it’s wrong and it’s disuniting. These are working-class struggles.

Who is the working class?

Marx’s view of the working class was for everyone to come in — all the issues, all the struggles. Not for some to be pushed to the side: This one is important, that one’s not. That’s not a revolutionary view, and it’s not a Marxist view.

Marx’s view was that the working class got bigger, not smaller. Not only because of the legions of oppressed people who joined it. You cannot say that Marxism is Eurocentric — today the working class is mostly the oppressed of the world, not only in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, but right here and in other imperialist centers, if you look at the demographics. Why do you think so many racists and the bourgeoisie are flipping out? Because the oppressed are taking over.

Capitalist crisis forces other social elements into the working class, not the



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Larry Holmes at Marx anniversary meeting.

other way around. People who thought they were going to be petty bourgeois or even bourgeois are forced into the working class.

A lot of the educated young people whom we run into, not only in our daily lives but in the political movement, might have had some big ideas about what they were going to do with their education. Now they can’t pay their loans, and they’re forced to work in the gig economy, to take all sorts of precarious jobs with no security, jobs that don’t last. That’s why people have to constantly be leaving and getting new apartments. And these are people with degrees — some of them with two or three degrees.

These are our comrades, or at least potentially our comrades, and very much a part of the working class. And we need to make something clear. Because I hear it anytime some of the young people who fit this description get together and they’re becoming radicalized. They look at each other sometimes and they say, “We’ve got to get to the workers.”

Yes, you need to get to other sectors of the working class who are more oppressed because they are in need of your solidarity. But you are workers. You are not some middle-class abstraction that no one has defined. So stop looking at each other and wondering what you are. You’re the working class, and you know what? The revolution needs you. It needs what you know. And it’s a big plus on the side of the working class that we have you. □

Homeless camp residents battle evictions

By Princess Harmony
Philadelphia

The city of Philadelphia acted on its threat to evict the Kensington Avenue and Tulip Street tent cities, as Workers World newspaper reported on May 24. (tinyurl.com/y6ug447w) However, this removal didn’t occur without a fight. For the first time, encampment residents fought back against the anti-poor, pro-gentrification program.

On the night of May 29, former and current members of the camp told their stories of addiction, recovery and being rebuffed by the city’s Crisis Response Centers after seeking help. Dozens of supporters came forward to provide food, water and care packages to the city’s most marginalized people.

The next day, dozens more residents publicly made demands on the city for respect when people reach out for help and transparency from Community Behavioral Health, Pennsylvania’s behavioral health managed care provider. They called for more access to methadone and buprenorphine programs and for additional treatment beds and better shelters.

Philadelphia



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Workers World Party-Philadelphia was at the scene and stood alongside those struggling against this oppressive, anti-poor system.

Vanessa Baker, organizer of the protest, promised encampment residents that the protesters wouldn’t leave them. This remained true: On May 30, they returned to march down the streets, making their

demands and anger known to the city’s gentrifiers, whose arrival prompted the evictions.

WWP-Philadelphia will stay true to Baker’s promise and pledge to support the rights of former encampment members to adequate treatment, health care and housing, and of current residents at the remaining homeless camps in the city. □

university officials who can address the group’s demands.” (littlevillagemag.com, May 8)

FFI representatives met with Harreld and six other administrators on May 16 to “discuss the concrete steps we’re demanding they take to improve our working lives,” according to an FFI public statement on Facebook.

The UI administration altered the terms of the meeting by limiting FFI to no more than nine faculty members at the meeting. As noted by FFI, “The exclusion of faculty members from the negotiating process runs counter to the core values of our movement, but ultimately we agreed not to pass up this hard-won chance to press for concrete improvements.”

Larson said FFI members will be meeting with Harreld and other administrators in the coming weeks. “We’re trying to get the voice of all our members heard behind these closed-door meetings.”

This series of meetings will determine if UI will accept FFI demands, or if this fight for justice will continue. □



Pozzallo, Sicily. Some Italians welcome refugees.

Italy

Racist government unstable

By G. Dunkel

After nearly three months of political maneuvering, two political parties in Italy formed a government on June 1. Both the League and the Five Star Movement (M5S) oppose the eurozone, which they call a tool for sucking out Italy’s wealth to increase German prosperity. The two parties formed an alliance that decries so-called “illegal” immigration and virulently opposes the establishment parties, especially the Democratic Party, which had controlled the government.

The ultraright, racist League started out its existence as the Northern League, agitating for the independence of north-

ern Italy, Italy’s most prosperous and developed region. Its propaganda scorned southern Italians. Party leaders changed its name to the League when they decided to drop separatist goals in order to compete for office across all of Italy.

Matteo Salvini, the League’s leader, focused his party’s campaign on hostility to “illegal” migration, pushing for the immediate expulsion of some 700,000 refugees in Italy. Salvini, who will remain the party’s leader, is currently minister of the interior and one of two vice premiers in the government.

Luigi Di Maio is the political leader of the Five Star Movement, which proclaims it is “neither left nor right” and is generally called “populist.” The M5S’s main base of support is in southern Italy, which is relatively less developed. In some areas there, unemployment is as high as 50 percent. Di Maio’s main campaign plank called for major income tax cuts for workers, with corresponding tax hikes for the wealthy, along with a guaranteed monthly income of \$912 for the unemployed.

Italy is facing major financial difficulties. The ratio of its public debt to its gross domestic product is 130 percent, and it owes about \$2.77 trillion to bondholders. (nationaldebtclocks.org, June 4)

‘Salvini! Go home!’

Salvini’s anti-immigrant rhetoric has been contested. When he made a campaign-style tour on June 3 of southern Sicilian ports, all of which have seen large landings of refugees from Libya, left-wing and other opponents protested his presence.

Some residents of Sicily denounced him during his stop in Pozzallo, where many ships carrying migrants rescued from the Mediterranean Sea dock and many refugees begin the asylum-seeking process. Demonstrators held a banner reading, “Refugees welcome!” and shouted, “Salvini! Go home!” and “Salvini! Shame on you!” (Associated Press, June 3)

On the same day that Salvini traveled to Sicily, 50 migrants died in the Mediterranean Sea off the Tunisian coast. The next day, the government of Tunisia criticized Salvini’s crass attacks on migrants from their country. □

Greece

General strike hits austerity, demands benefits

By G. Dunkel

The 49th general strike called in Greece since its financial crisis hit in 2008 shut down the country for a day on May 30. Although some local buses and trains were running, most other government services, like the ferries to the Greek islands were not. Schools were closed. Flights were delayed or canceled and railways were shut down.

The General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and its ally Civil Servants’ Confederation (ADEDY) initiated the call for the general strike to protest “austerity, unemployment and overtaxation.” The other major Greek labor confederation, the All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), issued a separate call for a general strike on the same day to demand



March of PAME workers in Athens.

PHOTO: CPG/KKE

“increases in wages, pensions, and social benefits” and raising the monthly minimum wage to \$878. It’s currently \$800 a month, and it hasn’t been raised in a year to reflect inflation.

Thousands of workers participated in each of the separate demonstrations organized by GSEE and PAME in Athens during the strike. PAME held a big demonstration in Thessaloníki, Greece’s second largest city, and organized strike gatherings in a total of 67 Greek cities.

The PAME demonstration in Athens was militant. The main slogan was “Your growth is crashing our lives! Struggle, organization and counterattack is our

choice!” In all the PAME demonstrations, speakers condemned the participation of the Greek government in imperialist interventions and wars.

The Syriza government, despite the major protest on May 30, still intends to cut pensions again in January 2019 and to raise taxes to new levels in 2020. While the bailouts facilitated by the “troika” — the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund — are scheduled to end this year, financial controls will continue for the foreseeable future. The attacks on Greek workers will continue. But so will their protests. □

Rightist Bannon urges Italian ‘sovereignty’ from EU, not U.S.

By Manlio Dinucci

Bannon — the former strategist of Donald Trump, theorist of national populism — expressed his enthusiastic support for the alliance of the League with the 5 Star Movement for “the government of change.” In an interview he stated: “The fundamental question, in Italy in March, was the question of sovereignty. The result of the elections was to put in office those Italians who want to regain sovereignty and control over their country. Put an end to these rules coming from Brussels.” (Sky TG24, May 26)

However, it does not say, “Put an end to the rules coming from Washington.”

It is not only the European Union that is exerting pressure on Italy to guide its political choices, dominated by powerful economic and financial circles, especially in Germany and France, which fear a break in the “rules” that serve their interests.

Strong pressure is exerted on Italy, in

a less evident but no less intrusive way, by the United States, which fears a break in the “rules” that subordinate Italy to its economic and strategic interests.

This is part of the policies Washington has adopted toward Europe, through different administrations and with different methods, but pursuing the same objective: to keep Europe under U.S. influence.

NATO is a key instrument in this strategy. The Treaty of Maastricht establishes in Article 42 that the EU “shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defense realized in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).” And Protocol 10 on cooperation states that NATO “shall remain the foundation of defense” of the European Union.

Today, 21 of the 27 countries in the EU, with about 90 percent of the population of the Union, are part of NATO, whose “rules” have allowed the United States to maintain, since 1949, the position of Su-

This article was published in the author’s Art of War column in the May 29 issue of Il Manifesto, published in Rome and translated by WW managing editor John Catalinotto. Rightist ideologue Steve Bannon has been supporting cronies in the European ultraright with phony nationalist demagogy in the interest of U.S. imperialism.

preme Allied Commander in Europe and all other key commands. They allow the United States to determine the political and strategic choices of the Alliance, with agreements made under the table especially with Germany, France and Great Britain, and then have them approved by the North Atlantic Council, where according to the “rules” of NATO there is no voting or majority decision, but decisions are always taken unanimously.

The entry into NATO of the countries of Eastern Europe — once members of the Warsaw Pact, of the Yugoslav Federation and also of the USSR — has allowed the United States to bind these countries, to which Ukraine and Georgia are added and in fact are already in NATO, more to Washington than to Brussels.

Washington has thus been able to push Europe into a new Cold War, making it the first line of an increasingly dangerous confrontation with Russia. This strategy

functions in the political, economic and strategic interests of the United States.

Emblematic is the fact that, just in the week in which Europe was bitterly debating the “Italian question,” the 1st Armored Brigade of the 1st U.S. Cavalry Division, coming from Fort Hood in Texas, landed in Antwerp, Belgium, without provoking any significant reaction. Some 3,000 soldiers landed, with 87 Abrams M-1 tanks, 125 Bradley combat vehicles, 18 self-propelled Paladin cannons, 976 military vehicles and other equipment, which will be deployed to five bases in Poland and sent from there close to Russian territory.

This continues to “improve the readiness and lethality of U.S. forces in Europe,” to which \$16.5 billion was added since 2015.

Just as the tanks sent by Washington landed in Europe, Steve Bannon encouraged Italians and Europeans to “recover their sovereignty” from Brussels. □

Protests greet Washington's attack on Venezuela

By Workers World staff

Protests in the U.S. confronted U.S. imperialism's constant attack on the Bolivarian Revolutionary government in Venezuela. The Trump administration's most recent assault began at the May 31 Organization of American States meeting in Washington, D.C. Using Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as attack dogs, the U.S. is trying to line up members of the OAS against the government of President Nicolás Maduro.

Secretary General Luis Almagro is head of a U.S.-backed bloc in the OAS, the Lima Group. This bloc, consisting of the more reactionary and pro-imperialist governments, promotes U.S. interventionism. That bloc failed last June to get a resolution passed condemning the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly.

The organization of Caribbean states, CARICOM, backed by pro-Venezuela allies, including Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador and El Salvador, put forward a resolution against interventionist actions. Though that resolution also failed to pass, this coalition of countries was a powerful voice on behalf of nonintervention in Venezuela.

Pompeo openly demanded on June 4 that Venezuela be expelled from the OAS and that sanctions be imposed on the country by the OAS.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza issued a strong response that the U.S. was attempting to lead a coup d'etat against Venezuela's democratically elected government. (tinyurl.com/y7dep33z)

"No government has the moral authority to recognize or not our government," said Arreaza. (New York Times, June 4)



Supporters of Bolivarian Venezuela outside the Organization of American States building in Washington, D.C., June 4.

Washington, D.C.: 'Chávez presente, Maduro presidente'

In D.C., supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution occupied the plaza in front of the OAS building and held a rally there on June 4.

After the rally, supporters marched with signs and banners nearly two miles to the Bolivarian Hall of the Embassy of Venezuela. There a panel of Venezuelan speakers discussed the effect of U.S. sanctions, the achievements of the Bolivarian Revolution, and the work of their country's social programs, including initiatives for gender equality and housing.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Arreaza, who had come from a day of rebutting attacks on his country at the OAS, expressed appreciation for solidarity from people in the U.S. and also linked Venezuela's struggles against oppression to those of people in the U.S.

Endorsers of the protest included: All African People's Revolutionary Party; Answer Coalition; Black Alliance for Peace; Code Pink; D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba; Friends of Venezuela; International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity; International

Action Center; Pan-African Community Action; Peoples Power Assembly; Party for Socialism & Liberation; Trabajador Unidos de Washington D.C.; Workers World Party DC & Baltimore; Youth Against War & Racism. WWP members from Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Durham, N.C., attended.

Boston says, 'Hands off Venezuela!'

Supporters gathered at Park Street in downtown Boston to speak out in support of Venezuela on June 2. The rally's main goal was to affirm the right of self-determination of the Venezuelan people.

Alberto Barreto from the International Action Center demanded that the U.S. stop its neo-colonial and imperialist threats against President Maduro's government and denounced the hypocrisy of the U.S. failing to recognize the election.

Speakers from the Committee on Peace and Human Rights emphasized the key role that Venezuelan discounted oil has played in keeping the heat on during cold winters for thousands of poor Massachusetts

residents. A project growing in Boston, between the working classes of this continent and Venezuela, is the Seeds of Solidarity program. Through this, Boston locals raise money for organic, agriculturally relevant seeds to help Venezuelans develop their country's capability to resist the international blockade.

Samuel Ordóñez, from the International Action Center and the Boston Venezuela Solidarity Committee, called attention to the history of the millions of deportations by the U.S. government in recent years under both Obama and Trump. This is in contrast to the history of Venezuela's revolutionary government of building millions of units of new housing for poor and working people under both Chávez and Maduro.

Organizations present included the International Action Center, Workers World Party, the Boston Venezuelan Solidarity Committee, the Committee for Peace and Human Rights, and others. □



A speaker holding a Guatemalan flag describes the parallels between historical U.S. intervention in that country and the imperialist threats against Venezuela.

Puerto Rican deaths exposed Anger spurs resistance

Continued from page 1

publish the death statistics.

Since February, local organizations have been trying to get information about the hurricane casualties. The Puerto Rican Center for Investigative Journalism filed a suit charging the PR government's Bureau of Vital Statistics and the Health Department with concealing the statistics. So far, there has been no response. These government agencies also refused to give any data to the Harvard study.

This neglect of a people by both San Juan and Washington is not accidental. We now know that Hurricane Maria was even more deadly than Hurricane Katrina. Yet these deaths are not officially counted, showing not only insensitivity but also deliberate plans to negate the existence of the Puerto Rican nation. This clearly exposes the genocidal intent behind the restructuring plans for the colony, a territory that "belongs to, but is not part of" the United States, said a 2016 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Sanchez Valle case.

Even more than the real number of casualties, this event begins to pull back the curtain of lies and deception imposed on the people of PR, with fake reasons given for the privatization of essential services, the closing of schools and the elimination of workers' rights. The planned pauperization and enslavement of the people proceeds as both a creole and a foreign elite enrich themselves, their armies of law firms and consultants sucking up multimillion-dollar salaries. The imperi-

alist capitalists and their allies on the island scheme to extract even more wealth from a supposed \$74 billion public debt they created, even as they refuse to allow an independent audit.

One of these deceptive moves came in February with the governor signing a contract with George Washington University. After several U.S. media reported that the hurricane had caused more than 1,000 deaths, Roselló was forced to deal with the number of casualties. Instead of hiring experts from local Puerto Rican universities, both public and private, well versed on the issue, he paid \$305,000 of public money — which could increase to \$1 million — to the Milken Institute of Public Health at George Washington University to determine the death toll.

Why this university? Roselló's father, Pedro Roselló, who was governor from 1993 through 2000, was an associate professor at GWU in 2002-03. Even more relevant is Julia Keleher, who was chosen by Roselló to be PR's secretary of education, but who is called "the mercenary of education" in PR. Keleher is a Philadelphia native completely ignorant of Puerto Rican history, culture and the traditions of the children under her mandate. Yet she is designing a new education model for Puerto Rican children, while closing schools and privatizing public education. Keleher is an adjunct faculty member at GWU's School of Business and a technical trainer there for Management Concepts, specializing in project management.

The GWU study, scheduled for release

in May, has yet to come out.

Crimes against workers

While the death count captures headlines, another crime against Puerto Rico's workers is unfolding. Much is being said about the so-called "power struggle" between the governor and the Fiscal Control Board imposed by the U.S. Congress. But whatever minute differences may exist between them, there is no possibility this struggle can benefit the PR population. Both have the same goal: the sacrifice of the Puerto Rican working class on the altar of capitalist profits.

Since its inception, the FCB has tried to impose enormous austerity measures through a fiscal plan that includes "labor flexibility," "employment at will," huge increases in tuition at the public University of Puerto Rico, the closing of several campuses and schools, eliminating many workers' benefits — including holidays, sick days and Christmas bonuses — and reducing pensions, plus other measures that deal a severe blow to the working class, still suffering from the devastating effects of the 2006 PR recession.

However, the FCB has no power to enact the laws required to change current workers' guarantees. So the governor, who has been submissive to the junta's demands, has readily sent legal initiatives to the legislature where they are approved.

At the end of May, the elimination of Law 80 was one such blow. This law had protected private sector workers from unjustified firing. After much posturing

by the governor, who said he would never allow such an attack on Puerto Rican workers, Roselló finally gave in when the FCB offered to increase the budget for Fortaleza, the governor's residence, from \$15 million to \$43 million!

What is happening to workers in Puerto Rico is just the latest chapter in the capitalist system's criminal attack. Having reached a dead end, capitalism tries to eliminate any barriers to its quest for ever higher profits. Because PR is a colony of the U.S., the capitalists think they can abolish workers' rights there.

But history has not ended. The communities in PR are organizing, now certain that they cannot count on the government to defend them. This awareness is happening while many organizations and unions file suits against the PROMESA law that restructured Puerto Rico's debt in violation of the U.S. and Puerto Rican constitutions. Several of these suits challenge PR's colonial status which, since the 2016 ruling in the Sanchez Valle case, is being questioned as never before.

Karl Marx said that it is not the consciousness of people that determines their being but their social being that determines their consciousness. In Puerto Rico, the social conditions are bringing this more and more to mind. The real possibility of a jump in consciousness is being felt in many ways.

The struggle, both in the streets and in the courts, promises that this summer will be a very hot one in the archipelago.

Victory to the Puerto Rican workers! Free Puerto Rico! □

Imperialist liberalism and Korea

It appears, as of this writing, that the summit meeting between Kim Jong Un of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Donald Trump will finally happen on June 12 in Singapore.

Support by the Korean people for such a meeting is very high, in both the DPRK and South Korea. President Moon Jae-in's popularity in the South has risen to 85 percent in the polls because of his role in pushing for an end to the cruel division of the Korean nation.

What about in the U.S.? One might expect that those on the right would be very opposed to such a meeting, since Korea-bashing and anti-communism are their standard fare. But Trump resonates with the Republican right, and criticism from his supporters is muted so far.

In fact, some of the strongest attacks on the planned Kim-Trump talks are coming from the anti-Trump analysts of the Washington Post and the New York Times, who pose as liberals. Their opinion pieces on the subject have been almost identical.

In a June 2 editorial headlined "Trump softens on North Korea," the Washington Post calls the DPRK "one of the world's most brutal, aggressive and unpredictable regimes" and worries that Trump might eventually be "willing to sign a peace treaty with the North formally ending the Korean War." Heavens — a peace treaty!

It also complains that the "diplomatic thaw" initiated by Moon and Kim and endorsed by Trump "has already weakened the sanctions regime [Trump] spent more than a year marshaling. South Korea, China and Russia all seem poised to use the new era to resume trade and economic aid to North Korea."

On the same day, an opinion piece in the New York Times by two of its senior analysts, David Sanger and Mark Landler, called the DPRK "a broken country" and moaned that Trump had set aside threats to "keep the younger Mr. Kim's feet to the fire with sanctions until he complies" with demands to denuclearize immediately.

When Israel last month shot and killed scores of Palestinians demonstrating in Gaza against the prison camp conditions imposed on them in that small strip of land, did either of these bastions of imperialist liberalism call it "brutal" or demand sanctions on that settler colonial state?

When the Trump administration violates international law by launching missile attacks on Syria or drone strikes on Afghanistan and Libya, do these same analysts — or the newspapers they work for — demand sanctions on the U.S. as a "rogue country" or call it a "brutal, aggressive and unpredictable regime"?

Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to threaten the DPRK every day, as the Pentagon has done since the 1953 end of the Korean War, with nuclear weapons and a global delivery system, aircraft carriers, strategic bombers, nuclear submarines and 37 (at least) military installations in South Korea. The last includes the megabase Camp Humphreys, the largest U.S. overseas military base in the world, located close to the border with the North.

There are plenty of things Trump has done that merit much stronger language than these opinion pieces on Korea. What about the murderous treatment of migrants and building that obscene border wall? What about his appointment of nu-

clear warmonger John Bolton to his cabinet after Bolton wrote in the Wall Street Journal that the U.S. should launch a "preemptive" strike against the DPRK? What about his condoning of fascist violence in Charlottesville, Va.?

But these two newspapers of big business are much more focused on maintaining the "sanctions regime" that attempts to strangle the DPRK's economy and starve the people into submission. That won't happen. The people of the DPRK have shown the greatest ingenuity in developing their country despite everything the U.S. has done.

The lesson of this is that it is folly to expect the imperialist liberals to oppose Trump on any progressive basis. They don't like him, but not for the right reasons. They're afraid his egoism and unpredictability will undermine the political architecture created over the years to assure that the U.S. ruling class can dictate to the world.

So where does this leave the progressive, anti-war and workers' movements here? We must be independent of imperialist liberalism and work much harder to support the right of the Korean people to determine their own destiny, free of U.S. threats. □

RAZAN AL-NAJJAR

Israeli sniper murders medic in Gaza

By Christian Noakes

An Israeli soldier murdered Razan al-Najjar on June 1. The sniper shot her in the chest while she was selflessly tending to victims of ongoing Zionist violence in Gaza. The 21-year-old volunteer medic was trying to rescue an elderly injured protester 100 meters from Gaza's boundary fence, which Israel claims to be defending as a justification for its violent repression of the Great March of Return demonstrations.

Al-Najjar approached the victim with her hands up to show members of the Israeli Defense Forces that she was not a threat. Wearing a uniform, she was clearly identified as a rescue worker.

The following day, thousands attended al-Najjar's funeral. Her body was wrapped in a Palestinian flag and the bloodstained uniform she was wearing when she was killed. Mourners carried her body along the funeral procession, which stretched for blocks. Hundreds of medical workers and the victim's father, Ashraf al-Najjar, were among those in the procession.

Al-Najjar is the second medical worker killed by the IDF in Gaza since the start of the demonstrations in late March. During that period, these soldiers injured 223 paramedics and, on May 15, fatally shot medic Moussa Abu Hassanein.

Razan al-Najjar's appeal

Al-Najjar was among many who had called attention to the IDF's blatant targeting of medics and journalists. In an interview posted on social media, her urgent message read: "I call on the world to look and see why the Israeli forces are targeting us. We are not doing anything. We are just rescuing injured people and

Nurses: Speak out for Razan al-Najjar

by Susan Abulhawa

The last photo taken of 21-year-old Palestinian nurse Razan al-Najjar showed her with other medics in white coats and latex gloves, their hands high in the air as they approached to evacuate a protester who had been shot and was bleeding on the ground.

Moments after that photo was taken, Razan's colleagues would be evacuating her to the hospital where she died.

Following unusual international publicity over her death, the New York Times ran a headline, "A Woman Dedicated to Saving Lives Loses Hers in Gaza Confrontation." But she didn't lose her life. It didn't fall out of her pocket or get misplaced somewhere in a junkyard. An Israeli sniper, a man or woman her age — surely a foreigner to that land as nearly all Jewish Israelis are — put her in a rifle scope.

The soldier focused, took a concentrated breath — Razan's beautiful face inside the target circle — and made a small pull with an index finger on the trigger that sent a bullet through Razan's back, where it tumbled through her slight body, pulverized her organs and exited through her chest.

Prior to her murder, Razan had given interviews to the press, most notably one to the New York Times,



where she talked about breaking gender barriers, the struggle for freedom and our people's unbroken will to return to our homes. Those interviews made her known to Israelis, like the other medics and journalists Israel had already killed. As the Israel Defense Forces spokesperson tweeted (and later removed the tweet), Israelis "know where every bullet landed," and nothing they do is "carried out uncontrolled" — leaving no doubt that Razan's murder, like the 120 other murders and injuries to over 15,000 Palestinians, was calculated, deliberate slaughter.

There is an endearing photo of Razan with children in the background. She is smiling, her hands together in the shape of a heart, a gesture common among young people around the world. Her hijab is always tidy, with a perfect point in the center where one can see it is held in place with a small pin. She took time in the mirror daily for that small dignity, and my heart breaks everytime I imagine it.

We want nurses and other medical unions everywhere to take a stand for Razan and all her colleagues who risk their lives day in and out under unimaginable conditions to give whatever relief they can to our people, devastated, dismembered and destroyed as they are by the impossible cruelty and codified racism of Israel. □

healing their wounds." (The Middle East Eye, June 2)

There is no more blatant proof of Israel's ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing than the intentional murder of clearly identified medics. This is a ruthless tactic meant to maximize the death toll of Palestinians, as is the use of expanding bullets. By targeting journalists, Israel is attempting to cover up the brutality and malicious intent of its military forces. However, Israel has not been successful in covering up its war crimes, and its army's continued assault has sparked international outrage.

Kuwait introduced a draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council that would have condemned Israel's murderous acts and provided protection for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Ten out of 15 member nations voted in favor on June 1, while four abstained. The U.S. was the only country to veto the resolution, which effectively blocked its passage.

In justifying the blatantly undemocratic action against international resolve, Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., claimed the measure was "morally bankrupt." Rather than hold Israel accountable for its actions, she blamed Hamas for the deteriorating conditions in Gaza. Given its central role in enabling and funding Israeli war crimes, Washington is also culpable for the deaths of al-Najjar and hundreds of other Palestinians whose demands for justice have been met with violence and brutality.

The U.S. is impeding international intervention. The IDF, perpetrators of the violence, absurdly state that they will investigate their own actions. In response to the growing world outcry against Israel's

military, the IDF issued a statement claiming that it tries to reduce casualties in the Gaza Strip — and then blamed Hamas for civilian casualties. Like their U.S. counterparts, these Zionist war criminals accuse Hamas of fatally shooting al-Najjar.

The Palestinian people remain resolute, as their struggle for existence requires — despite the U.S.-backed Israeli commitment to ethnic cleansing. After al-Najjar's funeral, demonstrators returned to confront the IDF at Gaza's boundary fence. There, many threw stones in defiance of Zionist terror. □

HONOR ALL WORKERS

- We marched on May 1, International Workers' Day, to:
- Honor workers all over the globe
 - Invite all workers to come out of the shadows
 - Celebrate workers' myriad contributions to our lives
 - Unite in the struggle for our rights
 - Claim our right to freedom from oppression and exploitation
 - Say that capitalist greed, austerity and misery must be banished forever, along with the racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry that the bosses use to divide us
 - Affirm the need for a revolutionary socialist future
- If this is your vision, then join Workers World newspaper in creating that future. Join us as we continue to build a strong, independent voice that speaks loud and clear for the workers and oppressed around

France

‘Act your age and shut up!’

By Rémy Herrera
Paris, France

After government employees, joined by railway workers and students, demonstrated here on May 22, police arrested nearly 100 young people, including minors as young as 14. The protesting youths were occupying the Arago High School (lycée) in Paris.

Before being taken into custody, some 60 of them were packed like cattle in a police van for more than four hours. They were not allowed to notify their relatives, drink or use the toilet. These arrests, which lasted for two days, were traumatic for the adolescents and distressing for their families.

After that ordeal, several of these young people, handcuffed as if they were dire threats to society, went before a judge.

What crime had these young rebels committed? They had decided — and had the courage — to oppose the neoliberal “reform” of the education sector that French President Emmanuel Macron wants to impose. They had done no damage other than break one window.

One of them said: “I was shocked by the brutality of the police and the conditions of detention. They wanted to make us an example to stop young people from mobilizing, but I will continue to organize even more.”

For months, left-wing student unions have been asserting their refusal to see education turned into a commodity. While the French educational system has been predominantly public and higher education courses have been almost free of charge until recently, tuition fees have been increasing. Until a recent change in the law, university admission was guaranteed to everyone who passed the baccalaureate [a test given at the end of high school].

The students say no to the fact that more and more young people from poor families are barred by lack of money from studying and are condemned to unemployment. Many teachers are also mobilizing. All are calling for more resources for education, which the government-imposed austerity is suffocating.

Whatever you think of President Ma-

cron, whatever adjective you apply to a government that acts like this, a regime that attacks its youth by acting so badly is obviously losing control of itself as well as of the situation. Not a day goes by in France without the government’s repression of social anger.

Should we get used to seeing the CRS [specialized police units for suppressing crowds] invade university campuses, which are boiling with indignation, and bludgeon resisting students? Must we passively sit by as an authoritarian hierarchy at the ministerial level overturns the decisions of teacher assemblies and administrative personnel in struggle? If we do that, we might as well give up the little democratic space that capitalist society concedes!

Again and again, the only thing tolerated is the comedy of bourgeois democracy — with its own limitations however. In the Odeon Theater in Paris (famous for

having been occupied by students during the May 1968 general strike), a show took place on May 7 to commemorate the events of 50 years ago.

Everything went according to plan ... until the true (today’s!) students suddenly burst into the auditorium and took the initiative to speak up and explain to the audience the reasons for their ongoing protests. The theater management panicked and called the police, who, in an unpopular move, used force to make the young “troublemakers” leave the theater.

Something is going wrong in the kingdom of Macron. Perhaps that something is a people that refuses the fate he plans for them. A people who are slowly becoming aware that the dismantling of public utilities is not progress, that the “reforms” promoted by the media on behalf of big finance are entirely destructive. A people who are painfully learning how to get back on their feet to walk again.

British imperialism laid ground for Israeli apartheid

By Christian Noakes

British imperialism laid the groundwork and set the precedent for Israeli settler colonialism long before the official establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. British forces, acting in the name of the Zionist cause, early on created the conditions of apartheid and ethnic cleansing that persist today, even as U.S. imperialism has become the major supporter of Israel.

Britain gained a mandate over Palestine as one of the spoils of World War I. London’s support for the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine was made official policy in the 1917 Balfour Declaration. British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour spoke on behalf of the empire in a letter to the aristocrat and Zionist Walter Rothschild: “His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object.”

Balfour then went on to proclaim support for the rights of Palestinians. However, unlike the stated commitment to Zionists, these claims of neutrality and fairness proved hollow.

While the British gave Zionists political and military support, the Palestinians faced dispossession and terror at the hands of British forces. In fact, prior to the formal establishment of the state of Israel, Britain was in many ways the primary force behind Zionist colonization.

While anti-Zionists and even people with modest criticisms of Israel are often accused of being anti-Semitic, the reality is that the British Empire’s initial interest in sponsoring and overseeing Zionist appropriation of Palestine was far from altruistic and often outright anti-Semitic.

While the imperialists often equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, many of Zionism’s earliest and most dogged supporters, including Balfour, were in fact anti-Semitic. However, they saw Zionist colonization as a foothold to assert the interests of the British Empire in the Middle East.

Using the most notoriously violent forc-

es, which had been deployed to terrorize the people of Ireland, the British Empire subjected Palestinians to a similarly ruthless campaign of terror and dispossession. This was absolutely essential in Israeli colonization and ethnic cleansing. British forces, many of whom saw Arabs as subhuman, ruthlessly suppressed rebellions; killed thousands of Palestinian men, women and children; and intentionally cleared land for colonization.

During the 1936-39 Arab rebellion against British rule, many Palestinians were subjected to detention without charge or trial in the Sarafand concentration camp and other labor camps. The gross sense of injustice drove many detainees to go on hunger strike.

Between the two world wars, Zionist forces, continuing the practice of ethnic cleansing, received material support from the British; many worked for British police forces. Zionist employers and trade unions also contributed to the inhumane treatment of Palestinians via discrimination in employment and gross disparities in wages.

Contrary to the claim by one of Britain’s high commissioners for Palestine that rebellions were an irrational or intolerant reaction to “different manners and customs” of the colonizers, Palestinian revolt was and is based in the oppressive conditions of settler colonialism imposed by the British and Zionists.

On April 9, 1948, news of a massacre of men, women and children in the village of Deir Yassin by Zionist paramilitary forces spread quickly, causing thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes as Zionist troops advanced elsewhere. This grisly event became known as the Nakba (Catastrophe).

But even before the Nakba and the establishment of the state of Israel, the Palestinians had already become acquainted with settler colonialism and saw the rate of expulsion rise dramatically.

Contrary to the ahistorical imperialist narrative that blames the ongoing conflict on supposedly anti-Semitic Palestinians, the Nakba and the resulting establishment of the Israeli state marked an intensification of oppression, disenfran-

All this will take time. But it is clear that many of us will no longer go along with his plans.

Minister of the Interior Gérard Colombe has no doubt understood this. He announced on May 27: “If we want to keep the right to demonstrate tomorrow, which is a fundamental right, people who wish to express their opinion must also oppose the ‘breakers.’ They cannot by their passivity allow themselves to become accomplices to what is happening [the resulting harm].”

He must consider it a beautiful social project to make the right to demonstrate in France conditional on transforming all the “ordinary demonstrators,” as he calls them, into police officers!

Herrera is a Marxist economist, a researcher at the Centre National Recherche Scientifique, who works at the Centre d’Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. WW staff translated this article.

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Estrella Sánchez

Indignación boricua, camino a la resistencia

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

La explanada del Capitolio en San Juan sirvió como la exposición de la cuenta más verdadera de las muertes ocurridas después del huracán María. Familiares y amistades de boricuas que murieron como consecuencia de la tormenta, trajeron el par de zapatos de su ser querido para ser testigos de su fallecimiento. En tres días, cerca de 3.000 zapatos con los nombres y las historias conmovedoras de sus dueñas/os reclamaron su lugar en la historia. Esta vez serán contados. Ya las autoridades puertorriqueñas y estadounidenses no podrán ignorar la muerte de tantas personas, ya no podrán insistir en que apenas fueron 64 muertes.

El Proyecto 4645 surgió casi inmediatamente después del lanzamiento del ahora famoso “Estudio de Harvard: Mortalidad en Puerto Rico después del huracán María” publicado el 29 de mayo en el ‘New England Journal of Medicine’. En base a más de 3000 encuestas de hogares en todo el archipiélago, concluyó que al menos 4645 personas murieron víctimas de los efectos del huracán directa o indirectamente, debido incluso a la demora o interrupción de la atención médica, del 20 de septiembre al 31 de diciembre de 2017.

El número podría duplicarse fácilmente, ya que han seguido muriendo personas por varias razones debido a María: por falta de electricidad para mantener sus máquinas que sostienen la vida en lugares donde la luz aún no ha regresado, por suicidios y por la falta de servicios de atención médica adecuados, entre otros.

El Proyecto 4645, organizado por activistas puertorriqueñas/os, hizo un llamado a las personas a través de las redes sociales para que trajeran los zapatos de aquellos que sabían que habían muerto a causa de María, para validar los números en el estudio. Esto se hizo en una refutación a la negativa del gobierno de Ricky Roselló a publicar las estadísticas de muertes. Incluso desde febrero, organizaciones locales han realizado esfuerzos para obtener información sobre las víctimas de los huracanes. El Centro Puertorriqueño de Periodismo Investigativo había entablado una demanda en febrero pasado contra el Registro Demográfico del gobierno y el Departamento de Salud por ocultar las estadísticas, sin embargo, hasta el momento no se ha dado respuesta. Estas agencias gubernamentales también negaron datos al estudio de Harvard.

Esta negligencia hacia un pueblo por parte de ambos gobiernos no es accidental. El hecho de que hubo más muertes por parte de María que por el huracán Katrina, y sin embargo sus muertes no sean contadas, muestra no solo insensibilidad, sino también los planes deliberados de negar la mera existencia de la nación puertorriqueña. Expone claramente la intención genocida detrás de los planes de reestructuración para la colonia, el territorio que “pertenece a, pero no es parte de” los Estados Unidos, como lo recordó claramente en 2016 la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos en el caso Sánchez Valle.



WW/MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

Pero aún más que el número concreto de víctimas, este evento comienza a descubrir las cortinas de mentiras, el verdadero engaño que se ha impuesto al pueblo boricua: las falsas razones dadas para la privatización de servicios esenciales, el cierre de escuelas, la eliminación de los derechos de las/os trabajadoras. La pauperización planeada y la esclavización de un pueblo, mientras que una élite criolla y extranjera se enriquecen y chupan salarios multimillonarios con sus ejércitos de firmas de abogados y consultores. Un esquema de los capitalistas imperialistas y sus aliados en la isla para extraer más riqueza so pretexto de una colección de una deuda “pública” de \$74 mil millones que ellos mismos crearon, pero que se niegan a permitir una auditoría independiente.

Una de estas maniobras engañosas fue el contrato que el gobernador otorgó a la Universidad George Washington en febrero pasado. Después de que varios medios estadounidenses informaron que María había ocasionado más de 1000 muertes, el gobernador se vio obligado a lidiar con el número de víctimas. En lugar de utilizar expertos bien versados en el tema de las universidades locales puertorriqueñas, tanto públicas como privadas, prefirió pagar \$305.000 de dinero público (que podría llegar hasta \$1 millón) al Instituto Milken de Salud Pública de la GWU.

¿Por qué esta universidad? Debemos recordar que el padre del actual gobernador Ricky Roselló, Pedro Roselló padre, quien fue gobernador desde 1993 hasta 2000, se convirtió en profesor asociado en GWU del 2002-2003. Y más relevante ahora es que Julia Keleher, secretaria de educación impuesta por Ricky Roselló, llamada en PR “la mercenaria de la educación”, una nativa de Filadelfia que ignora por completo la historia, la cultura y las tradiciones puertorriqueñas de las/os niños bajo su mandato, y quien si embargo está diseñando un nuevo modelo de educación para las/os niños boricuas

mientras cierra escuelas y privatiza la educación pública, es profesora adjunta en la Escuela de Negocios de la Universidad George Washington. También es entrenadora técnica para ‘Management Concepts’, especializada en manejos de proyectos.

El estudio del GWU estaba programado para mayo, pero hasta el día de hoy no hay ningún informe.

Crímenes contra los trabajadores

Mientras que las muertes están en los titulares, otro crimen contra las/os trabajadoras puertorriqueñas se está desarrollando. Mucho se está diciendo sobre la llamada “lucha de poder” entre el gobernador y la Junta de Control Fiscal impuesta por el Congreso de Estados Unidos. Pero es importante resaltar que las pequeñas diferencias que puedan existir no están relacionadas con la posibilidad de ningún beneficio para la población boricua. Ambos tienen el mismo objetivo, el sacrificio de la clase obrera puertorriqueña en el altar de las ganancias de los capitalistas.

Desde sus inicios, la JCF ha intentado imponer criminales medidas de austeridad mediante un Plan Fiscal que incluye “flexibilidad laboral”, “empleo a voluntad”, grandes aumentos al pago de matrícula de la universidad pública de PR y el cierre de varios de sus recintos, cierres de escuelas, eliminación de muchos beneficios de las/os trabajadoras, incluyendo vacaciones y días de enfermedad, bonificación de Navidad, reducción de pensiones, y varias otras medidas que serán un golpe mortal para la clase trabajadora que ya ha estado sufriendo los efectos devastadores de la recesión en PR desde 2006.

Sin embargo, dado que la JCF no tiene el poder de promulgar leyes, y éstas son necesarias para cambiar las garantías actuales de las/os trabajadoras, el gobernador, que ha actuado sumisamente a las demandas de la Junta, ha presentando rápidamente proyectos de ley a la Legislatura donde finalmente serán aprobados.

La semana pasada, la aprobación de la eliminación de la Ley 80 en una de las cámaras legislativas, fue uno de esos golpes. Esta ley protege a las/os trabajadoras del sector privado en caso de un despido injustificado. Después de muchas posturas del gobernador quien dijo que nunca permitiría tal ataque contra las/os trabajadoras puertorriqueñas, finalmente se dio por vencido cuando la JCF ofreció aumentar el presupuesto de la Fortaleza (la residencia de los gobernadores) de \$15 a \$43 millones.

Las/os trabajadoras en Puerto Rico son el último capítulo en el ataque criminal del capitalismo en un callejón sin salida, que persigue la eliminación de cualquier barrera que pueda limitar su búsqueda de ganancias. En PR, debido a la condición de ser una colonia, piensan que pueden ganar la eliminación de cualquier derecho adquirido de las/os trabajadoras.

Pero la historia no ha terminado. Las comunidades en PR se están organizando, ahora con la certeza de que no pueden contar con su gobierno para defenderlas. Esta toma de conciencia está ocurriendo mientras muchas organizaciones y sindicatos presentan demandas contra la inconstitucionalidad de la Ley PROMESA, tanto en virtud de la Constitución de los Estados Unidos como de la puertorriqueña. Las raíces de varias de estas demandas desafían el estado colonial, que después de la sentencia de 2016 del caso Sánchez Valle, se está discutiendo en escenarios donde el estatus nunca fue cuestionado.

Marx dijo “No es la conciencia de los hombres lo que determina su ser, sino, por el contrario, su ser social lo que determina su conciencia”. En PR, las condiciones sociales hacen que cada vez tengamos más en cuenta esta cita. La posibilidad real de un salto en la conciencia se siente de muchas maneras.

La lucha, tanto en las calles como en los tribunales, promete que este verano será uno muy caliente en el archipiélago.

¡Victoria a las y los trabajadoras puertorriqueñas! ¡Viva Puerto Rico libre! □