

Across U.S.

Solidarity drowns out anti-Muslim bigots

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

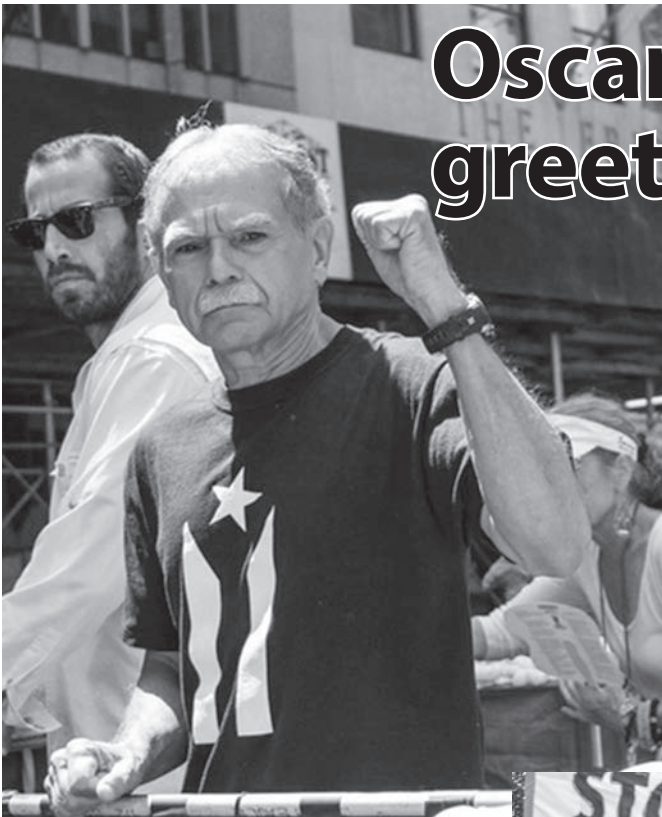
Anti-Muslim demonstrations were held on June 10 in more than 20 U.S. cities, sponsored by “ACT for America,” an organization characterized by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group that advances anti-Muslim legislation while “flooding the American public with wild hate speech demonizing Muslims.” (tinyurl.com/j6nhd45)

But at counterprotests from upstate New York and New York City, to Lansing, Mich., to Oregon and Washington state, opponents far outnumbered the bigots and affirmed support for both their Muslim neighbors and the basic right to religious freedom.

ACT for America cloaked its bigotry in a call for “human rights,” defending attacks on Muslims with the distorted claim that Islam, which they called “Sharia,” is anti-woman and anti-gay. Sharia is not “Islamic law,” but a Koran-based tradition directing Muslims in how to live an Islamic life.

National Public Radio ran interviews with right-wing participants who alleged they were anti-Islam because they were for “women’s rights.” This phony far-right argument was an eerie echo of U.S. imperialist propa-

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Oscar López Rivera

greeted as hero

Freed political prisoner marches in Puerto Rican parade in New York City.

Comey’s testimony and the Big Lie: Elections, democracy and the FBI

By Fred Goldstein

June 12 — Marxism can shed light on the June 8 testimony by ex-FBI Director James Comey to the Senate Intelligence Committee about his meetings with Don-

ald Trump. The best way to unravel what took place last week is to begin with the concept of the antagonisms within the ruling class, the meaning of “democracy” and the role of the state.

The so-called “Russia investigation” is

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WW PHOTO: RACHEL DUELL

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In 1972

WWP leader took on anti-gay oppression

The following is part of a document called “From a Tendency to a Party” written in 1972 (45 years ago!) by Sam Marcy, the founder and theoretical leader of Workers World Party. This section was entitled “Gay oppression.” The term “gay people” reflects the language of the movement in those early days, before its evolution into a struggle explicitly against the oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, trans and gender-nonconforming people.

The oppression of national minorities is not the only oppression meted out by a divisive ruling class. There is also the extra oppression of women, of youth and of gay people.

The degeneration of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism carries to an extreme all the forms of oppression which the capitalist system, in the previous epoch, had engendered and developed.

As the crisis of the social system becomes more and more apparent, the need of the ruling class to unload its burden on the most oppressed sections of the society becomes more evident.

Only by dividing, fragmenting and continually pitting different elements of the oppressed masses against each other can the capitalist establishment maintain its sway over all society and hope to survive.

It is, however, the same sharpening of the persecution and oppression, the same divisiveness and fragmentation of the specially oppressed in society, that have awakened them to struggle and brought about a genuinely progressive militancy and resurgence of Black and Brown people, women, youth and gay people.

There is a striking difference in the character of the support which has been given by the progressive movement generally to the oppressed nationalities, women and youth, as contrasted with the limited support to gay people. A great deal of this can be explained by the fact that the prejudice may be even more deep seated and profound than in the other cases. Much of it emanated from the religious bigotry of the Middle Ages, and little has been done to combat it. On the contrary, it has been reinforced by the entire course of capitalist development.

Some explain the limited measure of support and sympathy to gay people by saying they constitute a numerically small segment of the population. This, however, is highly disputed by such an authoritative figure as Kinsey [Alfred Kinsey, an author of the Kinsey Reports].

It is particularly significant that the public change in attitude — such as it is — comes on the heels of a very formidable wave of struggle by gay people, a veritable “coming out” in a most demonstrative way. Gay Pride took a cue from Black Pride.

Without the launching of the women's struggle, Freud's

reactionary theory concerning the inferiority of women might still be the prevailing conception. Without the momentous liberation struggles launched in the 1960s, the racist ideology of Oswald Spengler [German author of “The Decline of the West”] and his [U.S.] American disciples would still be taught openly, unabashedly and unashamedly. Without the struggle launched by gay people, the prejudices which have been ground into the consciousness of the masses by indoctrination would not even have been challenged, let alone shaken to their foundations.

An important influence in the progressive movement, insofar as the gay struggle is concerned, dates back to the victory of the [1917] October Revolution in Russia. The Soviet government annulled all laws that restricted the rights of homosexuals. It also annulled all the reactionary laws pertaining to divorce as well as the feudal family relations.

For the first time in history, a workers' government established equality in law, and to a measurable degree also in fact, between men and women, for heterosexuals and homosexuals. Unfortunately, this period of very progressive development was short lived, and was succeeded by a period of reaction with the rise of Stalin to power.

Our Party, which bases itself on Marxism-Leninism, looks to the early model of the Soviet Union as the embodiment of what our own political position should be in relation to the struggle of gay people.

Our first, most elementary and fundamental duty on this question is to completely eliminate and abolish all forms of persecution and oppression of gay people. We must also fight against all ideological, political and social manifestations of gay oppression that may be reflected in our own ranks.

Ending oppression is really an elementary democratic demand that a bourgeois democracy should be able to grant, along with all other democratic demands. But imperialist democracy tends to restrict the elementary rights of all people — not only gays, women, youth, Brown and Black. It is only the struggle that can wrest concessions.

In the long run, only the abolition of the capitalist system can produce a lasting free and equal treatment of all peoples. □



Join us in the fight for socialism!

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

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

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

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Socialists demand ‘Liberation, not assimilation!’

Detroit Pride

By Jamie Smedley
Detroit

Motor City Pride was held at Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit on Saturday and Sunday, June 10-11. Some of the event’s activities included live performances, an underground dance hall, vendor booths, food trucks and the Pride parade, which started off the day on Sunday.

Workers World Party’s Queer Liberation Contingent included activists from WWP, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, the Michigan Peoples Defense Network and the Detroit Active and Retired Employees Association.

As we marched in the parade behind Bank of America workers, our signage and chants reflected an anti-capitalist stance. One popular banner read “Queer Liberation, Not Assimilation! No Rainbow Capitalism.” Chants like “Queers

can’t live on fast food wages!” and “Detroit, we’re queer, immigrants are welcome here!” were met enthusiastically by people gathered on the sidewalk, who often clapped and joined in the chorus.

Pride-goers were very receptive to the WWP booth and took interest in our June 17 forum on “Queer Liberation and Socialism.” In fact, the majority of people who approached the table expressed an interest in socialism. People filled at least six or seven pages signing up for the WWP email list.

Additionally, we sold a variety of LGBTQ literature, such as “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression” by Bob McCubbin and various works by Leslie Feinberg, the WWP leader who helped trailblaze the political understanding of the origins of transgender oppression and how to fight back. Books like “The Communist Manifesto” were also sold.



WW PHOTO: JAMIE SMEDLEY

Motor City Pride parade, June 11.

As the only Marxist organization present, Workers World Party brought revolutionary ideas to an event that otherwise would not have had this important political commentary.

Anti-racist, anti-capitalist: Boston Pride in protest

By WW Boston Bureau

Mesha Caldwell, 41 years old. Jamie Lee Wounded Arrow, 28. JoJo Striker, 23. Keke Collier, 24. Chyna Gibson, 31. Ciara McElveen, 21. Jaquarius Holland, 18. Alphonza Watson, 38. Chay Reed, 29. Mx. Bostick, 59. Sherrell Faulkner, 46. Kenne McFadden, 27. Presente!

Bigger-than-life photos of the 12 trans people of color reported murdered so far in the U.S. in 2017 were hoisted as their names were shouted out to a crowd of thousands during a coordinated disruption of the Boston Pride Parade on June 10.

“Marsha P. Johnson has a big puppet here honoring her,” legal observer Jasmine Gomez reported over social media as she filmed the disruption. “She was the first Black trans woman ever asked to lead a Pride parade, and she is taking over now and just got in front of [Boston Mayor] Marty Walsh!”

The disruption was planned by groups that included the Network/La Red, Stonewall Warriors, Workers World Party, National Lawyers Guild and others.

Activists at the front of the march risked arrest to confront spectators with reminders of the staggering rate of violence that trans women of color face. Stonewall Warriors and WWP organizers also created space, under the umbrella of a “QTPoC Liberation/Anti-Capitalist Contingent,” for broad multinational, multigenerational participation in the Boston Pride Parade.

The outspoken revolutionary youth who joined Stonewall Warriors to help organize the contingent drafted a call for an anti-racist, anti-capitalist protest at the 2017 Boston Pride Parade. Their leaflet identified four demands designed to honor “the riot that made the parade” —

the historic Stonewall Rebellion of June 1969 in New York City.

‘The riot that made the parade’

The Stonewall Rebellion was a fight-back against daily police repression of drag queens and trans and queer people, mostly people of color. The Stonewall Rebellion is the single event most widely seen as having ushered in a mass struggle movement across the U.S. and around the world for “gay liberation.”

Out of that uprising, trans leaders Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson (whose pictures were carried along with those murdered in 2017) created living connections to other historic liberation movements of the time: the Black Power struggle, the Puerto Rican anti-colonial movement, the Native peoples’ uprising, the women’s movement and the upsurge against the Vietnam War.

In the spirit of the example set by Rivera and Johnson, Stonewall Warriors’ four demands called for official 2017 Pride events to stop sidelining radical and revolutionary Black community participation; for Pride to officially speak out against the rash of recent trans murders; for an end to Pride’s lucrative sponsorships from companies that profit off prisons, colonial debt and desecration of Native land; and for a ban on all police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at Pride events.

Hundreds of people of trans, queer, enby, intersex, two-spirit, pansexual, disabled, ace, bisexual and other identities answered that call and turned out ready to take to the streets on June 10.

Pride in protest

Everywhere along the sidewalks as they assembled, the group encountered an older generation of parade-goers who welcomed them with the same sentiment: “It’s about time that Pride was a protest again!”

Diva T. Williams, one of the group’s key organizers, emceed a spirited and combative march that delivered on the promise of a genuine alternative to the increasingly corporate annual Pride event.

Recognizing the union locals of health care workers and teachers marching directly in front of the group, the contingent stepped off with union solidarity, chanting “Who’s got the power? Workers

got the power!” and “Donald Trump, we say No! Union bustings got to go!”

Armed with militant determination to return Pride to its roots as a political force for advancing struggles of the most marginalized, Williams and others led the crowd in chants calling for an end to solitary confinement for incarcerated trans people, housing for LGBTQ youth and an end to both the deportations of immigrant Black and Brown people and the murders of trans women of color.

As the train of protest wound its way through Boston streets, the marchers encouraged spectators to consider that the logo-branded trinkets handed out by the banks and corporations represented oil money, violations of Native sovereignty and prisons for profit — not Pride.

“Put it in the trash!” marchers urged spectators. Cheers erupted when a parade-watcher threw her Bank of America plastic fan in a garbage can.



PHOTO: RACHEL DUELL



WW PHOTO: GERY ARMSBY

Making its final turn onto Government Plaza, the loud, proud contingent boomed a hearty, sustained chorus of “The people, united, will never be defeated!” and “Long live the spirit of the Stonewall Rebellion!”

Come out for Pride! Come out for Workers World!

June is Pride month, with rallies and marches all over the world commemorating the 48th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion. Workers World has a proud history of reporting on and participating in the living struggle for LGBTQ justice and equality. In the forefront these days is fighting for trans and gender nonconforming people, like making sure youth and adults can use the public bathrooms of their choice and ending the increased violent attacks on and murders of transwomen of color.

Workers World made an early and vital theoretical contribution to the LGBTQ struggle with publication of WW contributor and staff member Bob McCubbin’s 1976 book, “Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View” (World View Forum, third ed., 1993). Drawing on Frederick Engels and Dorothy Ballan to provide a dialectical materialist explanation of LGBTQ oppression, McCubbin shows how early communal societies accepted all forms of human interrelations.

But after the development of surpluses and then male supremacy, rigid rules governing gender and sexuality became the norm. That’s what we’re fighting to end today.

That analysis drives Workers World’s view that the LGBTQ struggle is a vital component in the overall struggle to end capitalist oppression. So if you want to fight for the liberation of LGBTQ people, it’s time to join the struggle against capitalist exploitation and help build Workers World newspaper.

We invite you to join the WW Supporter Program, set up 40 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-LGBTQ, working-class truth, and to build the many campaigns needed to crush capitalism and usher in socialism. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. We are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Immigrant kale pickers win in N.C.

When bosses at Teachey Produce in Rose Hill, N.C., started abusing the immigrant pickers in the kale fields, the mostly Mexican workers fought back. In early 2016, the bosses started cruelly withholding ice from water the workers need to stay hydrated in the hot sun. Then they stopped supplying the water. That brought the workers to the point of exhaustion, and sent one worker to the hospital with heat stroke. With no insurance, he was stuck with an \$8,000 bill, the equivalent of earnings during one picking season. The bosses refused to help.

Then the Teacheys began withholding \$25 per barrel from the workers’ paychecks. Why? The workers were told they weren’t picking the kale properly! That’s when they began attending monthly community meetings of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, a Latinx, immigrant-run organization defending farm workers in the South since 1967. Not only has FLOC won a union contract with the North Carolina Growers Association, it now represents more than 10,000 H-2A guest workers in the state.

When FLOC approached Teachey with the workers’ grievances, the bosses ignored them. When FLOC hired a lawyer, the workers filed a class-action lawsuit alleging violations of wage and hour protections, safety laws and retaliation for speaking out. In mid-May, the workers won \$60,000 in payback for their medical expenses, stolen wages, retaliation claims and safety issues. (paydayreport.com, May 25) That proves, even during the Trump era, when Mexican farm workers organize, they can beat back the bosses!

Support immigrant farm workers’ rights!

The Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2017, introduced in Congress in May by California lawmakers, is supported by the United Farm Workers. A study by the University of California, Davis, shows that about 70 percent of all U.S. farm workers are undocumented. If they are deported, based on Trump’s directives to Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, that would totally disrupt agricultural production in the U.S., causing shortages and price hikes to the public. The stated goal of the AWPA is to protect farm workers from deportation, put them on a pathway to legalization and citizenship, and help ensure a stable, legal agricultural workforce to benefit farm workers, employers and the public. (ufw.org, May 25)

While aspects of the bill are deeply flawed, it exposes how integral undocumented immigrant workers are to the U.S. economy and life-style. These workers should be respected and protected, not scape-goated. Sign UFW petition supporting bill at tinyurl.com/ybxnvyl8/.

Telecom workers secure contracts from coast to coast

Members of the Communication Workers won decent contracts in the West and the East in early June. Their three-day strike in 36 states in mid-May definitely helped! In CWA’s District 9, DIRECTV West workers won their first-ever contract! Those 2,200 workers and 17,000 AT&T West workers won a four-year settlement, now up for ratification by members, which includes pay raises and improvements in job security, retirement benefits, affordable health care and more.

The CWA District 1 bargaining team also scored a four-year agreement with AT&T East covering 200 workers in Connecticut Local 1298. The union’s bargaining committee noted that AT&T, like all bosses, demanded concessions in health care and benefits at the workers’ expense. (cwa-union.org, June 8) We say not only should good health care and benefits be the norm for unionized workers, but they should be the right of every worker!

NYC retail workers win demands

While retail workers are facing layoffs all across the country (Workers World, April 25), 2,000 members of Local 3 of the Department Store Union (RWDSU-UFCW), who sell high-priced merchandise at Bloomingdale’s flagship store in New York City, won a landmark contract on May 1. It was immediately ratified by 88 percent of the voting membership.

The four-year contract recognized that most sales workers paid solely based on in-store sales commissions have been struggling financially since 2012 (wages cut by 20 percent to 30 percent) when they were required to do nonsales online tasks with no extra pay. Now workers will no longer be required to handle order fulfillments or other nonsales duties or to leave their departments when there is a potential sales opportunity. The workers also won general wage hikes and bonus payments, increased company funding for medical and sick day benefits, and protections for immigrant and worker safety and security. (rwdsu.org, May 1) □

How two scoundrels got rich

By Stephen Millies

I like reading newspaper obituaries. They occasionally offer some class truth, even if the editors don’t realize it.

Here are two examples from the May 29 New York Times.

Hollywood mogul Jerry Perenchio has gone to that great, big drive-in in the sky. Among his business triumphs was the March 8, 1971, “Fight of the Century” between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at Madison Square Garden.

According to the Times, Perenchio “raised the \$5 million purse from Jack Kent Cooke, then the owner of the Los Angeles Lakers.

“It was a rousing business success for Mr. Perenchio and Mr. Cooke, who split an estimated \$10 million in profits from the fight’s closed-circuit telecast — a precursor to the mega-size, pay-per-view, boxing cards that would come later.”

Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier got \$2.5 million each for pummeling each other. That’s a total of \$5 million. But Cooke and Perenchio, who never got their faces scratched, got \$10 million — or twice as much.

Karl Marx would have called that a 200 percent rate of surplus value. The value produced by workers, including boxers, that’s not paid in wages by capitalists, is surplus value.

Profit, interest and the obscene pay of CEOs are all derived from surplus value stolen from the multinational working class and poor. The actual rate of surplus value may have been less in this case because there were other expenses and other exploited workers, like the arena’s ushers and cleaners.

It was still a fantastic pile of unearned loot for Perenchio and Cooke.

Racketeers ripping off boxers is old news. That was the theme of Humphrey Bogart’s last movie, “The Harder They Fall.”

That doesn’t happen in socialist Cuba, which has some of the world’s best boxers, but forbids capitalist prizefights. The late Teófilo Stevenson, who won three Olympic gold medals in boxing, was an electrical engineer in Cuba, who turned down \$5 million to fight Muhammad Ali in the U.S.

Stevenson stated in 1978, “I would rather have the love of eight million Cubans than all the money in the world.” (remezcla.com)

The world’s greatest athlete — Muhammad Ali — suffered for years from Parkinson’s disease, probably from being hit in the head thousands of times. Smokin’ Joe Frazier ended up penniless in his hometown of Philadelphia, asking people to buy him breakfast.

Meanwhile, the Times reported, “Mr. Perenchio lived in the Bel Air mansion that was known, from its exterior, as the home of the Clampett family on the long-running sitcom ‘The Beverly Hillbillies.’ There he built an art collection, much of which he agreed three years ago to donate to the Los Angeles County Mu-

seum of Art at his death. The works, including some by Picasso, Cézanne, Monet, Magritte and Degas, were valued at \$500 million.”

These paintings represent the wealth stolen from thousands of Joe Fraziers.

Taking workers to the cleaners

In the same issue of the Times, there was an obituary for Ronald D. Croatti, whose family owns UniFirst, a chain of laundries. According to the Times, “He turned it into the second-largest supplier and cleaner of uniforms and garments in the United States, with about \$1.5 billion in annual revenues.”

Not really. Just as Jerry Perenchio didn’t climb into the ring to fight Muhammad Ali, Ronald Croatti didn’t spend his life in a very hot, very humid, low-paying commercial laundry.

An army of laundry workers produced every nickel of Croatti’s fortune.

A few months ago this writer walked around the far northern Bronx, at the end of New York City’s No. 2 train. Stapled on utility poles in this Black neighborhood were job notices for a laundry a few blocks away in Mount Vernon.

The plant is owned by Unitex, which is a small rival of UniFirst. But Unitex still operates nine laundries in the Northeast.

A four-day workweek of 10-hour days at \$9 per hour was the deal. Forget about the eight-hour day. The labor movement needs to demand that overtime pay starts after eight hours a day, not after forty hours in a week.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator, a wage of \$11.44 per hour is needed to match the miserable 1968 federal minimum wage of \$1.60. So every week, wage theft of \$97.60 is stolen from these workers.

I doubt that workers at any of Croatti’s 240 UniFirst laundries earn more than that. Croatti made sure he wasn’t taken to the cleaners. Last year his estimated “pay package” was \$17.69 million.

That’s almost a thousand times what these laundry workers in Mount Vernon are making.

Yet there were probably several seekers for each one of these jobs. At least some people could walk to work. With NYC subway and bus fares climbing to \$2.75 — they were a nickel before 1948 — that’s something.

Back in 1845, Karl Marx’s co-worker and friend Frederick Engels called his first book, “The Condition of the Working Class in England.” These laundry workers in Mount Vernon show the condition of the working class in the U.S. today.

UNITE HERE tried to launch an organizing drive at Cintas, the industry’s leader, but the industry is a tough nut to crack. The Laundry Workers Center, which is now leading a heroic struggle at New York’s B&H photo store, has also tried to organize this industry.

Despite all difficulties, the upcoming, inevitable, working-class upsurge will sweep through these laundries — if it doesn’t originate in them. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

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

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

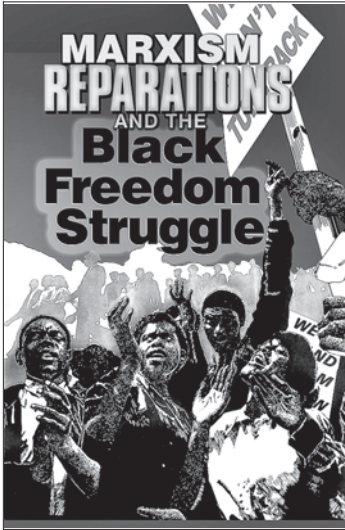
Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation Consuela Lee

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

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Comey’s testimony and the Big Lie Elections, democracy and the FBI

Continued from page 1

a diversion from the fundamental issues that concern the mass of the people. They care about jobs, wages, health care, social security and so on. This Russia debate is a way to sideline all these vital issues.

The Comey testimony, and all the publicity surrounding it, can best be understood in terms of the antagonisms within the ruling class. The majority of the bosses and bankers were opposed to Trump — until he won the election.

Big business quickly shifted gears. They backed this racist, sexist real estate mogul who is an authoritarian bigot. The ruling class was anxiously awaiting his tax cuts for the rich, his deregulation of industry and banking, and other giveaways to the millionaires and billionaires. But soon his policies began to unfold.

Muslim travel ban hurt U.S. business

His Muslim travel ban provoked national and international protest. In addition, it has made tens of thousands of people from the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America decide not to come to the U.S. Tourism has declined, and applications for U.S. colleges and universities have dropped, with many foreign students going to Canada. Corporations are having trouble getting talent from overseas.

In short, Trump’s travel ban hurt U.S. big business.

Trump then struck a blow at the long-standing NATO alliance, between U.S. imperialism and European imperialism, by going to Brussels and calling the European countries deadbeats who don’t pay their “fair share” of military spending.

Trump pulled out of the Paris Climate Accords, defying Europe, China and the entire world. By doing so, he tried to put an end to these completely insufficient and nonbinding accords. This removed the cover under which U.S. big business had expected to bask in the light of seeming “environmentally correct” while being free to continue getting rich off oil and natural gas. Trump also put the U.S. ruling class at a disadvantage in the growing global race for markets in renewable technology, such as solar panels and wind power.

Trump lashed out at Seoul during Korean crisis

Along the way, in the midst of a military-political crisis caused by U.S. aggression against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Trump told the south Korean government, Washington’s major ally in the struggle against the DPRK, that Seoul would have to pay a billion dollars for the Pentagon’s THAAD anti-missile system, which Washington had earlier agreed to pay for.

Trump’s latest policy disaster, from the imperialist point of view, has been to attack Qatar during its struggle against Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Trump had gone to Riyadh to cement a Gulf State, anti-Iranian alliance, headed by Saudi Arabia. The Saudis and Egypt broke with Qatar, mainly because of its support for the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring.

Once part of the Gulf State alliance, Qatar is home to a large U.S. military base in the Middle East, with 11,000 U.S. troops. The Pentagon flies numerous missions from Qatar to carry out aggression in the region. Rex Tillerson, the secretary of state from ExxonMobil, was trying to calm the dispute when Trump

Assuming that the FBI is ‘nonpolitical’ with respect to the capitalist political parties, all its neutrality goes out the window when it comes to the masses.

openly contradicted him.

Trump and the Republicans have prepared a health care bill that would strike at broad sections of the masses, leaving 23 million now covered without health-care coverage as it guts Medicaid and threatens nursing homes, drug clinics and rural hospitals, among other vital medical institutions. This comes at a time when health care is the single most important issue among the population, including Trump supporters.

In short, the Comey testimony must be seen in light of growing concern in large sections of the capitalist political establishment, as well as the military and sections of big business, that Trump is doing damage to U.S. imperialist interests at home and around the world.

Time to strike at the roots of capitalism

The differences within the ruling class over Trump are important. Trump, with the backing of his Republican flunkies, is dangerous. But the Democratic Party leaders, including both the Clinton wing and the Sanders wing, are fighting to revive the Democratic Party as a capitalist party that defends exploitation, a party that is supported by big business. Nevertheless, they want to regain office by promising to ease the hardships of the masses.

Marxists are for easing the hardships of the masses, but in a substantial way, first and foremost by struggle, by pushing the bosses and their political machine back. The way forward is in the streets, the factories, the offices, on the campuses and in the fields to threaten the profits and hence power of the rich. Marxists need to take advantage of the current contradictions among the bosses, when the establishment is becoming more and more discredited, to strike at the roots of capitalism and ultimately dispossess the rich of their property.

FBI not neutral when it comes to the people

The state, according to Marxism, is an instrument of compulsion, of force, created by the ruling class to keep the oppressed classes down. Comey was head of the FBI, which is an essential part of that oppressive state apparatus.

The premise of the hearings on Comey’s conversations with Trump is that the FBI director is supposed to be non-political and neutral, to carry out investigations and let the facts lead where they may. Furthermore, the FBI director is not supposed to be partisan to any political party, Republicans or Democrats.

Comey was praised by the media as a man of honor who would not lie and who had remained neutral. He attacked Hillary Clinton just as much as he attacked Trump.

Assuming that the FBI really is “non-political” with respect to the capitalist political parties, all the neutrality goes out the window when it comes to the masses. The FBI has a long and inglorious history of racism, persecution of communists, liberation fighters and

radicals of any sort. (See May 18 Workers World, “The FBI is a racist sewer,” at workers.org.)

The FBI was behind the Palmer Raids and deportation of thousands of radicals during the 1920s. It was key to the 1927 execution of anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti, despite worldwide protests. The FBI hounded and harassed communists and anyone suspected of any connections with the Communist Party during the Cold War. FBI persecution resulted in the imprisonment of the top leaders of the CP and the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

The FBI infiltrated progressive trade unions, the teachers’ unions, Hollywood, all progressive cultural organizations, the television industry, and in general blanketed the country with a layer of fear and intimidation in an attempt to wipe out all progressive thought and activity during the 1950s and early 1960s.

With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Liberation Struggle, FBI head J. Edgar Hoover turned his attention to defaming and hounding Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whom Hoover regarded as the “most dangerous” Black leader in the U.S.

The FBI initiated COINTELPRO, the murderous operation designed to break up the Black Panther Party. The FBI’s tactics included the outright murder of Fred Hampton and other Panther leaders. The FBI sent fake letters to different parts of the organization designed to create splits and antagonisms. It spied on the anti-war movement, the revolutionary youth movement and the Native movement, particularly the American Indian Movement, and was behind the frame-up of Indigenous leader Leonard Peltier.

There should be little doubt that FBI spying includes the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Black Lives Matter movement and the immigrant rights movement. That is their stock in trade. They are a vital part of the enforcement arm of the capitalist state.

Together with the cops, the courts, the prison-industrial complex, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and its parent Department of Homeland Security, and other institutions, the FBI is a key part of the instruments of compulsion that work for the ruling class at all times, in every venue where the masses organize resistance to capitalist oppression and exploitation.

They are anything but the “essence of honesty and integrity,” as Comey is being widely described.

For months now, and especially during the Comey testimony, senator after senator talked about the Russians allegedly “interfering with our democracy” or “interfering with our elections.”

‘Our democracy’ equals democracy of big business

Lenin, in “State and Revolution,” quoted Karl Marx, who really gave the last word on capitalist elections: “The op-

pressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!”

This of course does not mean that the working class should not use capitalist elections as a platform to promote their own interests, as long as they see electoral intervention as a stepping stone to overthrowing capitalism.

Democracy is a political form; it has a class content. The Greeks, who initiated the term “democracy,” held democratic assemblies of Greek citizens to debate policy. But the Greek citizens who participated in these assemblies were slave holders. Ancient Greece was a slave society.

In the same way, capitalist democracy is a society dominated by exploiters, a society of bankers and corporate millionaires and billionaires who live as parasites off the labor of the masses. These bankers and bosses dominate the capitalist political parties. They call the shots behind the scenes.

Lenin on capitalist democracy

V.I. Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution, in 1918 wrote a polemic against Karl Kautsky, a leader of the German Social Democratic Party, entitled “The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.” Kautsky had denounced the Bolshevik Revolution, making the axis of his polemic the failure of the Bolsheviks to establish “pure democracy.” Lenin gave the Marxist position on democracy:

“Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor. It is this truth, which forms a most essential part of Marx’s teaching. ...”

“Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or ‘equality of all citizens before the law,’ and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a ‘violation of public order,’ and actually in case the exploited class ‘violates’ its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner.”

Just as in the days of Lenin and Kautsky, “democracy” in the abstract is a deception. It must have a class characterization. In the U.S. it is the democracy of monopoly capitalists. In Cuba, on the other hand, it is workers’ democracy.

So when the mouthpieces of Goldman Sachs, Citibank, ExxonMobil, GE, GM, Aetna, Johnson & Johnson, etc., start moaning about interference in “our democracy,” the “our” stands for their corporate paymasters. That is whose democracy it is, the democracy of the rich, who pull the political strings and get their legislation passed, while the masses are supposed to stand on the sidelines and let these corporate masters run the show.

It is high time to get off the sidelines and confront the billionaires in the class struggle. □



This article, originally published in 2007 in Workers World’s “Lavender & Red series, exposes an Islamophobic argument hidden under the cloak of “human rights” and “women’s rights” as propaganda used by imperialists to justify military aggression. The same false argument was recently deployed by neo-Nazi, white supremacist organizers of June 10 anti-Muslim rallies in the U.S. See Feinberg’s entire historic series on the deep interconnections between socialism and LGBTQ liberation at workers.org/lavender-red/.

U.S. and Afghanistan: The cynical abuse of ‘women’s rights’

By Leslie Feinberg

The U.S. did not unleash war on Afghanistan in 2001 to “liberate” women. But pro-war spin doctors — embedded with the corporate media — went into overdrive to create that impression after 9/11. Public relations campaigns “sold” as liberation a high-tech imperialist war against an impoverished country with no air force.

This was designed to obscure the fact that imperialism had no right to violate Afghanistan’s self-determination and sovereignty.

The New York Times offered a more candid geopolitical view as early as Jan. 18, 1996, in an article entitled “The New Great Game in Asia” — referring to the 19th-century struggle among capitalist powers to control the Eurasian landmass and the warm-water ports of the Persian Gulf.

The Times explained, “While few have noticed, Central Asia has again emerged as a murky battleground among big powers engaged in an old and rough geopolitical game. Western experts believe that the largely untapped oil and natural gas riches of the Caspian Sea countries could make that region the Persian Gulf of the next century. The object of the revived game is to befriend leaders of the former Soviet republics controlling the oil, while neutralizing Russian suspicions and devising secure alternative pipeline routes to world markets.”

After overturning the bloc of workers’ states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, U.S. finance capital schemed to secure ownership of trillions of dollars worth of buried oil and gas treasure in the Caspian Sea region, which had for decades been collectively owned by the workers and peoples of the region.

Transnational energy giants like Unocal and Enron saw Afghanistan as the best path to pipe oil and gas from Central Asia to the world market.

The Bush neo-cons, Pentagon brass and the military-industrial complex worked overtime to frame this as a campaign for women’s rights.

Laura Bush delivered the presidential radio address on Nov. 16, 2001 — a month after the Pentagon assault began. Her speech focused on women’s rights in Afghanistan: “The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women.” It was a total lie.

Afghan Revolution advanced women’s rights

An article in Workers World on Oct. 10, 1996, by Deirdre Griswold showed how a progressive revolution in Afghanistan in 1978 had taken measures to liberate women and challenge centuries of landlordism. In response, the U.S. pulled together an army of pro-feudal elements to crush that revolutionary government, forcing it to call on the USSR for support.

The WW article quoted from a 1986 Department of Defense publication titled “Afghanistan — a Country Study.” Even this Pentagon book had to admit that the 1978 revolution brought many gains to



Leslie Feinberg in Boston 2005.

PHOTO: MARILYN HUMPHRIES

Afghan women and girls.

Women were organized in the Democratic Women’s Organization of Afghanistan. The national group had been founded in 1965 by Dr. Anahita Ratebzada. Her companion Babrak Karmal, who founded the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan the same year, later became the country’s president.

One of the first actions of the revolution was to end “bride-price” and allow women to make marriage choices. Punishment of women who had sex outside of marriage was prohibited. Women could choose to wear or not to wear the veil, travel in public, get an education and work at a job. Women of all classes — not just the well-to-do — were trained as doctors, teachers and lawyers.

Brigades of women and other young Afghans brought medical care to rural peasants.

The revolution impacted the life of one-third of the rural population — landless peasants, sharecroppers and tenants held in virtual bondage to landlords and moneylenders.

Before the revolution, 5 percent of the landlords claimed ownership of more than 45 percent of the country’s arable land. “When the PDPA took power,” the Pentagon report noted, “it quickly moved to remove both landownership inequalities and usury.” One of the revolutionary land reforms was the cancellation of mortgage debt for agricultural laborers, tenants and small landowners.

On the eve of the revolution, 96.3 percent of the women of Afghanistan were illiterate; rural illiteracy for all the sexes was 90.5 percent. The progressive government created massive literacy programs and printed textbooks in Dari, Pashtu, Uzbek, Turkic and Baluchi.

The 1986 Pentagon report stated, “The government trained many more teachers, built additional schools and kindergartens, and instituted nurseries for orphans.”

The Washington Post admitted that Afghan women were the strongest supporters of the 1978 revolution.

But this revolution was crushed by a well-funded, well-armed counterrevolution in which U.S. imperialism made common cause with feudal patriarchs. Women were then bought and sold as property once again.

National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and former CIA Director Robert M. Gates later publicly bragged that, beginning in early 1979, the CIA had funneled money and arms to counterrevolutionary

groups, many of them members of militias loyal to local landowners.

Democrats and Republicans had approved at least \$8 billion for this counterrevolutionary effort that hired, armed and trained the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and other forces.

CIA historian John Ranelagh recalls that then President Jimmy Carter OK’d “more secret operations than Reagan later did.” Carter later admitted in his memoirs that his administration actually considered the use of tactical nuclear weapons against the progressive developments in Afghanistan.

U.S. set women’s rights back centuries

By 1992 the Soviet Union was overturned and the progressive government in Afghanistan was defeated by imperialism. After four years of internecine struggle among different Afghan factions, the Taliban came to power.

Michael Meacher, a senior Labor Party member of Parliament who had been a member of British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s cabinet, observed in a Sept. 6, 2003, article in the Guardian of London: “Until July 2001 the U.S. government saw the Taliban regime as a source of stability in Central Asia that would enable the construction of hydrocarbon pipelines from the oil and gas fields in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, to the Indian Ocean.

“But confronted with the Taliban’s refusal to accept U.S. conditions, the U.S. representatives told them ‘either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs.’”

Washington took advantage of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, to launch an invasion of Afghanistan.

U.S. occupiers appointed former Unocal advisors to be both the titular president of Afghanistan and the U.S. ambassador to the country.

The continuing imperialist blitzkrieg has destroyed the infrastructure — including potable water, sewage and electricity — worsening hunger and disease. Soviet-built public urban housing complexes and schools lie in ruins.

These conditions create suffering for all sexes, genders and sexualities in Afghanistan, particularly for women. In 2004, some provinces reported 593 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births.

Pentagon Special Forces commandos can kick in the door of a home at any hour of the day or night, body search Afghan women and their loved ones, and drag them all off in hoods to torture chambers.

That’s imperialist-style “liberation.” Research by Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to the original article.

The late Leslie Feinberg was a managing editor of Workers World newspaper and the first theorist to advance a Marxist concept of “trans liberation” in the groundbreaking “Transgender Warriors: Making History” (Beacon Press, 1996). Feinberg also authored the now-classic novel, “Stone Butch Blues” (1993), available as free digital download at www.lesliefeinberg.net

Solidarity dro

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ganda justifying the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan on the grounds of “defending women” against the Taliban, when the CIA had been funding the rise of the Taliban and other reactionary forces.

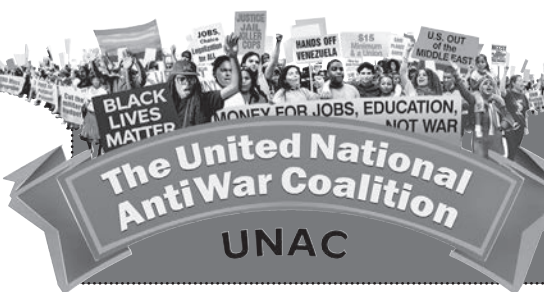
A New York Times article dated March 7, 2011, by Laurie Goodstein, described ACT for America as drawing on three “religious and partisan streams in American politics: evangelical Christian conservatives, hard-line defenders of Israel (both Jews and Christians) and Tea Party Republicans.”

Ultra-right militias and other organizations, at times coordinating with local police, were vocally and visibly present at the anti-Muslim rallies, emphasizing their extreme-right character. Racist, neo-Nazi, anti-woman and anti-LGBTQ groups represented at the ACT for America rallies included Blue Lives Matter, Identity Europa, the Oath Keepers, the Three Percent Security Force, Stormfront/Shieldwall Network and several state branches of the Light Foot Militia, a re-arming of 1980s’ right-wing militias.

Reports of the neofascist rallies and anti-racist counterprotests were published June 10 on the Southern Poverty Law Center website. (tinyurl.com/ybsenfoc) Below are highlights of some of the many protests against Islamophobia that day.

In **Syracuse, N.Y.**, almost 150 opponents far outnumbered the 30-person ACT for America crowd and drowned the bigots out with shouts of “No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA!” and “Muslims are welcome here.” The crowd, including members of the New York Antifa Alliance, an anti-fascist group, also thundered, “Shame, shame, shame!”

As the racists in ACT for America were



By John Steffin
New York

As the United States bombs Syria and funds organizing for a right-wing coup in Venezuela, the racist police and white supremacist forces are consolidating power and mobilizing violence against Black and Brown people in this country. How can anti-war and other progressive forces fight this intensifying war at home and link it to wars abroad? That question will be discussed on the weekend of June 16-18 in Richmond, Va., when members of over 100 organizations from across the U.S. gather to discuss, debate and build solidarity at the annual United National Antiwar Coalition conference.

This will be the first year the conference is held in the South. Attending will be the

Drowns out anti-Muslim bigots across U.S.

trying to pull people into hate marches against Muslims in many cities, the **Buffalo** AntiRacism Coalition in New York state called activists together at a busy shopping area to say “NO! to racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, hate and fear — the many weapons used to divide us, while the 1% exploits us all!” Several new activists joined the demonstration. Participating groups included Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

‘Muslims welcome, racists out!’

In **New York City**, Islamophobic forces, rallying at Foley Square in Manhattan on June 10, were met by a massive counterprotest, easily three times the size of their rally. The anti-fascist action was attended by a wide range of left forces, including the People’s Power Assembly, Workers World Party, the Metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council, NYC Shut It Down, Hoods 4 Justice, Refuse Fascism, the Internationalist Group, the International Socialist Organization, the Spartacist League, the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement and others.

In their role as agents of the state, the police dutifully protected the fascists and attacked the assembled left forces, arresting two people under an archaic New York state law prohibiting people with covered faces from congregating in public. Courageous and coordinated resistance against the police prevented the arrest of additional protesters.

In broiling weather, WWP and other



Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE



New York City

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

left forces provided water to those at the counterprotest. Meanwhile, a leader of the right-wing Oath Keepers militia, Frank Morganthaler, suffered a heart attack in the 90-degree heat.

At the rally’s conclusion, the progressive forces marched to City Hall Park. Fascists attempted to attack the dispersing protesters, but were quickly run out of the park. Police used the skirmishes as a pretext to arrest two more leftist protesters.

As anti-racist protesters banged pots and blew air horns, organizer Tony Murphy of the People’s Power Assembly emphasized: “The theme of today is drowning out racism. The more racists get a platform, the more people get attacked.” New York City sent a strong message that right-wing, Islamophobic hate groups don’t belong there: “Muslims welcome, racists out!”

People’s power ruled the day

While the ultra-rightists called a racist demonstration on June 10 in **Lansing, Mich.**, the state capital, they were only able to muster about 30 demonstrators. These reactionaries ranged from out-

right Nazis and armed Michigan Militia types, to fairly common, confused and racist middle-aged white folks. The last appeared more driven by ignorance and fear of the unknown than the racist hatred driving the first two. However, one individual’s sign used a slogan popular on online fascist forums, which was viciously anti-Jewish as well as anti-Muslim and racist.

The Michigan People’s Defense Network, along with other anti-fascist groups and individuals, organized a counterdemonstration of about 140 people. They entirely overwhelmed the few attending the racist rally.

As the anti-fascists militantly approached the reactionaries, chanting loudly, there was little-to-no police presence, which is an oddity for situations like that. Riding bicycles, a few police officers finally arrived after the two crowds were at arm’s length from each other. The cops erected a minor barrier of police tape between them.

Before that, however, perhaps due to the greater numbers of one side over the other, coupled with the disunity of the far-right rally, anti-fascists were able to cross the line with little threat of violence directed at them. The united power of the people in the face of racism and hatred, ignorance and white supremacy, ruled the day.

On the West Coast, the June 10 anti-Muslim demonstration in Portland, Ore., was moved to Seattle by the ultra-right organizers. This came after Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler asked the federal government to revoke permits for two “alt-right,” pro-Trump rallies following the May 27 fatal stab-

bing of two men by a neo-Nazi white supremacist. The slain men had defended two teenage women, one wearing a hijab, from threats by the fascist who threatened the young women and spewed racist slurs at them.

Federal officials denied Wheeler’s request to stop the neo-Nazi rallies because they asserted the right-wingers’ permits were “lawfully obtained.”

Nevertheless, the June 4 white supremacist rally was held in Portland, but was resisted 15 to 1 by a stalwart mobilization of progressive community and anti-fascist groups. (See June 8 Workers World.)

Meanwhile, on June 10 in **Portland**, the victory against bigotry was celebrated in a March Against White Supremacy. On Facebook, organizers wrote: “This is a huge victory for us. These neo-Nazis and nationalists are starting to realize that Portland won’t accept their racist terrorism and bigotry and especially not while the whole country is in mourning. We will show up to stand in solidarity with the women who were victimized and to honor the men that stood up against terrorism and bigotry.”

As for the neo-Nazis moving their hate to **Seattle** in search of a welcome, they were outnumbered by hundreds of counterprotesters who marched there on June 10. They confronted the few dozen bigots who claimed Islam is “incompatible with Western freedoms.”

Holding a sign proclaiming, “Seattle stands with our Muslim neighbors,” demonstrators chanted, “No hate, no fear, Muslims are welcome here!” on their way to City Hall. Police used tear gas on protesters and made several arrests. (Guardian, June 10)

Contributing to this report were *Ellie Dorritie, Tom Michalak, Tony Murphy, Lyn Neeley and Nathaniel Peters.*



Lansing, Mich.

PHOTO: MARK RUPERT

PHOTO: COLETTE WEDDING

UNAC conference aims to build movement TO FIGHT WARS AT HOME AND ABROAD

largest number of African-American militants in UNAC’s history. It is especially important that UNAC, one of the largest progressive coalitions in the U.S., gathers its forces in the South this year. This is not only because the South is a hotbed of racist violence — historically and today — but also because anti-racist forces in the South have been waging successful campaigns against bigotry and white supremacy in the enemy’s stronghold. Workers World Party delegates look forward to greeting them and celebrating their victories.

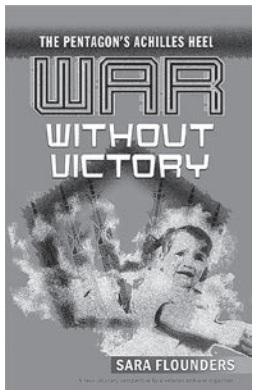
Workers World Party is organizing two workshops to contribute to the discussion. The first is titled “Even Bernie wants to bomb Syria: Challenges to anti-imperialist and anti-war organizing today.” It will examine the theoretical basis of what imperialism actually is,

which countries are imperialist, and how anti-imperialists can shape the anti-war movement and take their politics to the streets. Also discussed will be the economic forces behind the big business media and why critical coverage of U.S. wars is increasingly disappearing.

The second workshop is called “Skills and strategies for being in the streets: Tactics and organizing defense and security against Trump forces.” This discussion will look at the changing conditions for organizing protests under Trump’s administration. It will take up how activ-

ists can defend themselves and the multinational working class against state repression and paramilitary violence, while mounting an effective fightback against racism, xenophobia, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry and war.

Onward to Richmond!



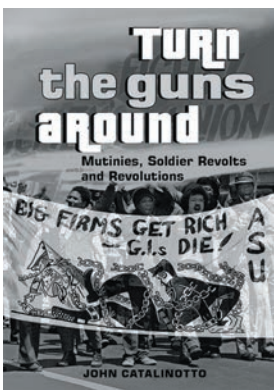
WAR Without Victory

by Sara Flounders

‘By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.’

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

PentagonAchillesHeel.com



NEW

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by John Catalinotto

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Rallies demand U.S. hands off Venezuela

By Kris Balderas Hamel

Emergency events in solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela and against U.S. interference and intervention took place in a number of cities around the United States in early June. Called by the International Action Center, demonstrations were organized to show support for and solidarity with the besieged Venezuelan government and the revolutionary process that U.S. imperialism is trying to sabotage and destroy. Here are reports from several of these actions.

A small but determined crowd picketed on June 2 at the Ron Dellums Federal Building in **Oakland, Calif.**, to demand “U.S. hands off Venezuela!” Activists held signs in defense of the Bolivarian Revolution and against threats by the U.S. and the Organization of American States to force regime change in the South American country. The picketers faced jeering chants from a small but vocal group of right-wing Venezuelans. The forces supporting Bolivarian leader and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro chanted “Not U.S. land, not U.S. oil, hands off Venezuelan soil!” and “USA makes endless war, Venezuela feeds the poor!” among other slogans.

The Bay Area demonstration was initiated by the International Action Center; the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity; and the Haiti Action Committee. Endorsing organizations included the Answer Coalition; Arab Resource and Organizing Center; Bay Area CISPES; Bay Area Latin America Solidarity Coalition; International League of People’s Struggle-U.S.; Marcha Patriótica de Colombia/California Chapter; Socialist Action; San Francisco County, Santa



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Cruz County & Sonoma County Peace and Freedom Party; Task Force on the Americas; United National Anti-war Coalition; and Workers World Party.

A small but visible “U.S. Hands off Venezuela” demonstration was held in **Portland, Ore.**, on June 5. The IAC protest received honks, cheers and thumbs-up from four lanes of after-work commuter traffic.

Despite a steady rain on June 6, a small crowd of determined supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution converged on CNN Headquarters in **Atlanta**. They exposed the role of U.S. corporations, government agencies and the big-business-owned media in promoting regime change in Venezuela. Initiated by the IAC and supported by the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition, the message of the signs and banner brought numerous approving honks and waves from drivers in the busy downtown intersection. The protest followed the broadcast of “What Every Worker Should Know about the Venezuelan Revolution” on The Labor Forum program on WRFG 89.3 FM a day earlier.



WW PHOTO: ANDY KATZ

Workers World Party’s **Durham, N.C.**, branch hosted a film screening of “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” in solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela on June 4 at the Durham Solidarity Center.

The day before in **New York City**, a large audience, including a delegation of Venezuelans, attended a viewing of the same movie sponsored by the IAC and WWP. A protest in solidarity with the Venezuelan Revolution was held in Times Square on June 6.

‘Up with Maduro! Down with Trump!’

Organizers in the **Philadelphia** branch of WWP joined cities across the country to support the Venezuelan people and their government on June 9. U.S. mainstream media outlets have falsely painted the Venezuelan struggle as a people’s revolution against an oppressive government. It is just the opposite.

WWP members held their midtown demonstration at the corner of 6th and Market Street in solidarity with the Venezuelan people and to counter the misinformation of the corporate-owned media. A group of right-wing Venezuelans soon ar-

rived and began harassing the demonstrators. They were prepared to attack, armed with large wooden poles and small Venezuelan flags taped on the side. At one point the reactionary group surrounded a woman comrade in the street, creating a pushing-and-shoving confrontation. The police intervened and then contained the two demonstrations to either side of the street. The counterrevolutionaries angrily chanted, “USA, we need your help!”

That made it very clear they wanted the U.S. to stage a so-called “humanitarian intervention.” Such intervention by the U.S. and NATO in Syria, Libya and other countries across the globe has soon led to bombs dropped on the people, along with financial and other destabilization.

After about an hour, WWP activists began marching toward City Hall, handing out leaflets along the way. The counter-demonstrators scrambled to follow, their favorite chant still on their lips. At City Hall the chanting of both sides echoed together until street musicians began to play behind chants of “Up with Maduro! Down with Trump!” That silenced the right-wing Venezuelans and providing a beautifully melodious exit for our comrades.

In **Detroit** on June 7, rush-hour motorists and passersby in downtown’s Campus Martius area were met by a solidarity demonstration called by WWP and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice.

Chicago activists from Workers World Party, Chicago ALBA Solidarity, March 19th Anti-War Coalition and Partido Socialista Ecuatoriano demonstrated on June 11 in solidarity with Venezuela, demanding an end to U.S. interference.

Other actions were planned or held in **Boston; Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y.; Huntington, W. Va.; Houston; Salt Lake City; and Los Angeles.**

Philip Gregory, Terri Kay, Dianne Mathiowetz and Lyn Neeley contributed to this article.

Stop deportation of Mosa Hamadeese!



PHOTO: WW DURHAM BUREAU

By Workers World Durham, N.C., Bureau

Mosa Hamadeesa is a stateless worker, originally from Palestine’s West Bank. He was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on June 1 while at his home in Raleigh, N.C. He has resided there for 10 years without incident. Now Hamadeesa is being held in federal detention.

Currently, Hamadeesa has an asylum case pending. This father of four children is the sole income earner for his family. His 9-year-old daughter, Nadine, has a rare form of cancer and is being treated at Duke University Hospital. Hamadeesa is an auto mechanic and serves the community through his hard work.

ICE has filled out paperwork and plans to deport Hamadeesa back to Israel, where he has no authority to live or trav-

el, and could likely be arrested or even killed. He has not committed any crimes inside the U.S. This case represents the Trump regime’s further escalation of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, racist attacks and increasing deportation orders.

Hamadeesa’s family, friends and allies held a press conference and rally on June 7 in front of the Wake County Justice Center in downtown Raleigh. There, they demanded that ICE release him. The rally was organized by Muslims for Social Justice. Also participating were members of the Triangle People’s Assembly, the Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia, the Southeast Immigrant Rights Network, the Muslim America Public Affairs Committee, the Muslim American Society-Raleigh, Workers World Party and other organizations.

Struggle in Morocco’s Rif shakes U.S. ally

By G. Dunkel

Ever since Mouhcine Fikri, a 31-year-old fish seller, was killed by police — brutally crushed to death in a garbage truck last October — people in the Rif area of northeast Morocco have been protesting. Fikri was killed in Al-Hoceima, a coastal city where many jobs rely on the fishing industry.

The protests flow from deep feelings of injustice. Even though the Moroccan state has recognized that the Rif area needs hospitals, universities and jobs, especially after a devastating earthquake in 2004, it has not followed through on its promises for restoration.

The majority living in the Rif are Amazigh people, often pejoratively called Berbers. The area was historically the center of struggle against France and Spain, the former colonial occupiers of Morocco, as well as against Hassan II and Mohammed VI, Morocco’s feudal rulers who took over after direct colonialism ended. The Amazighen, the name the people use for their nationality, make up about 40 percent of the Moroccan people.

But it is not just concrete, practical demands that moved thousands of people to join HIRAK, the group that has been leading the protests in Hoceima province and the Rif. It is also “la hogra” — the arbi-

trary, brutal disdain of the state authorities for the people of Morocco, which can be seen in the death inflicted on Mouhcine Fikri. HIRAK became very active in May, with large nightly demonstrations that flew the flag of the Rif Republic and drew men, women and whole families out into the streets.

The Rif Republic was an attempt by Abdelkrim Al-Khattabi and the forces he led to establish an independent, internationally recognized state in the Rif from 1921 to 1927. The uprising directly confronted the Spanish colonialists, who at that time controlled northern Morocco. This was one of the first anti-colonial struggles in Africa in the 20th century.

Protests followed by repression

Two weeks of protests began after If-tar, the breaking of the Ramadan fast, and kept growing larger and more militant. Then, on May 29, the Moroccan state arrested Nasser Zefzafi, the leader of HIRAK, and about 70 of his associates, taking Zefzafi and some others to Casablanca, Morocco’s largest city.

The attack on its leadership didn’t stop the movement. It grew and its tone became sharper as thousands of people gathered every night in the city of Al-Hoceima and surrounding communities.

Continued on the next page

Saudi attack on Qatar; U.S. threat to Iran

By Sara Flounders

Two weeks after the grand pomp of President Trump's visit, Saudi Arabia announced the complete blockade of small neighboring state Qatar on June 5. The blockade is an act of war. Emboldened by Trump's visit, Saudi Arabia quickly gathered eight other countries to participate in the blockade. The action includes cutting all food shipment and all land, sea and air travel; severing all diplomatic relations; freezing Qatari bank accounts; and expelling all Qatari citizens, within 48 hours, from nine countries in the region.

These are devastating acts, as the Doha International Airport in Qatar is a transit point for 37 million people a year. Qatar imports almost all its food and basic supplies, with 600 to 800 trucks a day rolling into Qatar from Saudi Arabia.

Source of terror: U.S. wars

Hardly any political commentator from left to right, or any media from major corporate to alternative, believes Saudi Arabia's official reason for the blockade of Qatar.

The pretext is that Saudi Arabia is carrying out President Trump's demand to end the funding of terrorists in the region. Trump has projected the notion of a grand Arab-NATO military alliance supposedly to fight the Islamic State group and Iran. Trump immediately took credit, in a tweet, for the Saudi action against Qatar.

Of course, U.S. imperialism's wars in the region are the greatest act of terror there. Millions of people have been dislocated as refugees. Whole countries lie in ruins due to U.S. bombs. Sectarian militias and mercenary armies, along with

tens of thousands of U.S. troops, have wreaked havoc.

Saudi Arabia has assisted these U.S. wars by funding, arming and training fanatical religious groups since the 1980s war in Afghanistan.

Qatar is also guilty of funding groups and sending troops to aid in the destruction of Libya and continually funding forces in the war against Syria. At the time of the Saudi decision, Qatar was aiding Saudi Arabia's war against a popular people's movement in Yemen, the poorest country in the Gulf region.

Both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar are repressive absolute monarchies. Almost all the vast oil and gas wealth in each country is owned by one family or extended clan, the House of Saud and the Al Thani family in Qatar. Unions and political parties are banned in both countries.

Almost 90 percent of the 2.5 million population in Qatar and over one-third of the Saudi population of 31 million are migrant workers barred from citizenship. They have no rights to education, health care and all social services.

These conditions are true for each of the six oil-rich Sunni Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf bound together in the Gulf Coordinating Council.

Is the Saudi-Qatar conflict just a falling out among thieves and reactionary forces? Or is there a wider significance?

Ordered to cut ties with Iran

Besides announcing the blockade of Qatar on June 5, Saudi Arabia issued a list of 10 demands that Qatar must immediately meet. These included cutting off all links with Iran; expelling resident members of the Palestinian militant group Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood; closing the Al-Jazeera news chan-



nel; and ending "interference" in the affairs of foreign countries.

These add up to an attempt to put a brake on Iran's growing political and economic influence in the region. This is what is motivating both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to attack Qatar.

Since the massive upheaval of the 1979 Iranian revolution broke with financial domination of U.S. banks and oil corporations, Iran's very existence, despite decades of sanctions, remains a threat to the corrupt Gulf monarchies where all power and privilege is inherited.

When suicide bombers attacked the Iranian parliament and Ayatollah Khomeini's mausoleum in Tehran on June 7, when at least 13 people died, Iran's Revolutionary Guards blamed Saudi Arabia. The terror attack was also tied to Trump's Saudi visit.

While threats against Iran seem to be the primary motivation behind the joint U.S.-Saudi attack on Qatar, there are other immediate financial motivations for this move.

Gas, oil and currency competition

Qatar has become, in 25 years, the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas. The country now has 30 LNG terminals, with six more under construction.

Qatar has diplomatic relations with Iran, not because the Qatari monarchy is forward thinking, but because Qatar shares with Iran the gas field that has made the Al Thani family fabulously wealthy. The South Pars/North Dome Field is offshore from Qatar and Iran in the Persian Gulf, so the two countries share exploration rights.

It is impossible for Qatar to cut off all relations with Iran and survive. The Saudis understand this all too well.

Qatar has attempted with its new wealth to chart a more independent foreign policy. It is often a go-between and negotiator in the region. It is a host to Arab forces connected to Hamas in Palestine and to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Qatar is also the first country in the region to open a clearinghouse that allows gas and oil to be traded in yuan, the Chinese currency. This financial hub immediately undercuts the position of the dollar and puts banks in Doha, the capital of Qatar, ahead of other Gulf financial centers.

Meanwhile, the Saudis are desperately concerned with chronically low oil prices. They are spending billions in a losing war in neighboring Yemen, a war that seeps back into Saudi Arabia.

The second largest exporter of LNG gas is the U.S., so U.S. companies would benefit from a blockade of Qatar.

So the immediate economic beneficiaries of a shutdown in Qatar are U.S. and Saudi Arabian oil and financial interests.

Trump, the big corporations and the absolute monarchs of the oil-rich Gulf States are products of capitalism in its most vicious, competitive, cutthroat

form. They are predators, always on the search for hostile takeovers and mergers. Seizures of assets are the order of the day. Glut and overproduction as well as loss of profit are their greatest fears. War is always on the table.

Dislocation across region, in NATO

The Trump-Saudi scheme to force Qatar to capitulate to their demands or face an internal coup may not succeed so easily. It is instead fracturing alliances in a highly unstable and volatile region, where no U.S. war has succeeded as yet and U.S. domination is already waning.

So far the Saudi action has not only split the six-nation Gulf Coordinating Council. Given German and Turkish opposition to the Saudi move, it also seems to have split NATO, the U.S.-dominated military alliance.

From the GCC, Saudi Arabia has pulled in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates behind its anti-Qatar moves. Other countries dependent on Saudi Arabia dutifully signed on to the blockade, including Mauritius, Mauritania, the Maldives, the Saudi-backed government of Yemen and Libya's eastern-based government. But Kuwait and Oman have resisted participation.

Of NATO members, Germany's Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel blasted the Trump-Saudi policy as "completely wrong, and it is certainly not Germany's policy." He warned it could "lead to war." (Reuters, June 7) The Turkish Parliament has approved a plan to deploy troops to Qatar and to provide immediate food and water.

Iran immediately sent aircraft and ships with hundreds of tons of food to Qatar. Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Turkey opened their airspace to Qatari flights now blocked from flying over Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The U.S. is well situated militarily to enforce demands on Qatar, as the country hosts the biggest concentration of U.S. military personnel in the Middle East at the Al Udeid Air Base. With 11,000 U.S. troops stationed there, the base is the center of U.S. command and control of air power over Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and 17 other countries.

But contradictions in this situation were on full display in two June 9 press briefings in Washington. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil, knows better than Trump what's at stake in the long term. He urged de-escalation and negotiation. Ninety minutes later, Trump took the opposite view, again applauding Saudi Arabia.

President Trump's visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia two weeks before the blockade resulted in a \$110 billion sale of weapons to ramp up military threats against Iran, although this monstrous weapons sale is facing fierce congressional opposition.

It is when old alliances fracture — and glut and overproduction prevail — that the danger of war moves to red alert. □



Nawal Ben Elissa speaking at rally in Rabat, Morocco.

Continued from page 8

(Le Monde, June 6)

Nawal Ben Alissa, a 36-year-old mother of four and spouse of a taxi driver, took over the spokesperson role for Hirak. She had been drawn to the organization by her work with cancer victims who couldn't pay for basic screenings, which costs about \$10.

Wearing a T-shirt with an image of Abdelkrim Al-Khattabi, she spoke at a rally in Al-Hoceima. Le Monde on June 8 described her speech: "With her hair undone, holding the microphone, she vehemently addressed the crowd of sev-

eral thousand people gathered for the fifth consecutive night in the Sidi Abed neighborhood in Al Hoceima. 'I call on all Moroccans: The Rif bleeds! The State oppresses us. All the rights of the Rifians are violated.' After applause, she continued: 'But we will not stop the fight against this injustice. They can arrest as many activists, young people and women as they want. We will not give up.'"

June 11 saw a solidarity march of 12,000 to 15,000 people in Rabat, Morocco's capital, in support of the Rif struggle and demanding freedom for its arrested leaders. The parents of Nasser Zefzafi led the march. (telquel.ma)

WORKERS WORLD editorial

It's still there End the blockade!

Last fall, as they have done every year since 1992, the member countries in the U.N. General Assembly voted for a resolution calling on the U.S. government to end its economic, financial and commercial blockade of Cuba. The vote was 191 to 0. The U.S. and its sidekick Israel for the first time abstained, instead of voting against the resolution.

Did this mean Washington was ready to lift the cruel blockade? No.

Last year the Obama administration finally relaxed U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba, leading to a 118 percent rise in U.S. visitors to the island this year, compared to the number in 2016.

Does this mean we are now free to travel to Cuba? No.

Cuba, just 90 miles from Florida, remains the only destination on the planet to which travel is restricted by U.S. law. A law enacted by Congress in 2000 made it a crime for U.S. citizens to vacation in Cuba. It still stands.

Since August 2016, regularly scheduled direct flights from many U.S. airports to various Cuban destinations have created the illusion of normal relations. The travel restrictions don't seem too onerous: a check-off box, a signature or even just a question from the ticket agent handing over the boarding pass. But travelers who read the fine print see they're required to collect and keep records of their full

schedule for what must be nonvacation activities in Cuba.

The capitalist ruling establishment of the U.S. has had to acknowledge that its many decades of economic warfare against Cuba failed to destroy the revolution. The "opening" to Cuba by the Obama administration was seen as a new approach with the same goal — this time to undermine the solidarity of the Cuban people with capitalist consumerism that could undo its socialist construction.

Despite the establishment of diplomatic relations, the blockade would go on.

The U.S. Treasury Department announced on June 8 that the Honda Finance Corp., headquartered in California, had agreed to remit \$87,255 to settle some 13 apparent violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulation. What was this about? Between 2011 and 2014, Honda Finance's wholly owned Canadian subsidiary had "approved and financed 13 lease agreements ... in connection with the [Canadian] Cuban Embassy's leasing of several Honda vehicles."

Yes, the blockade is in full force and effect, right down to barring minor transactions in third countries, like the Cuban Embassy in Canada leasing vehicles from a subsidiary of a California company.

What about Trump's Cuba policy? Can it get much worse?

It was supposed to be rolled out on

May 20, the date chosen because that was the infamous day in 1901 when the U.S. imposed the Platt Amendment on Cuba. After winning their hard-fought war for independence from Spain, the Cubans were forced by the Platt Amendment to accept continued U.S. military occupation of the naval base at Guantanamo Bay. The White House made no Cuba announcement on May 20, but the word now is that it will announce new restrictions on trade and travel to Cuba soon.

But that's not the end of the story. People in the U.S. are pushing back. City council resolutions against the blockade are piling up. Sacramento has joined the California cities of Richmond, Berkeley and Oakland plus Brookline, Mass. and Hartford, Conn. Similar resolutions in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose, Calif., Pittsburgh, Detroit, Newark and Helena, Mont., are in the works.

The administration has to deal with the fact that airlines and other businesses with commercial stakes in Cuba don't want the total blockade renewed.

While this autocratic government slanders Cuba with ridiculous charges of violating "human rights," it can't hide the fact that people in Cuba are healthier than those in the U.S. because they have universal health care.

Cuban medical professionals are world renowned. When people were dying in

New Orleans because of Hurricane Katrina, nearly 2,000 Cuban medical professionals were mobilized, ready to help them. But they were denied U.S. clearance. Cubans then fought cholera in Haiti and were on the front lines against Ebola. For that, they were just awarded the 2017 Public Health award by the World Health Organization.

It is long past time to end the blockade and regime-change programs funded with U.S. tax dollars. It is long past time to end the illegal occupation of Guantanamo by the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and its despicable torture prison.

In Cuba this year on May Day, the largest foreign contingent came from the U.S. People are already signing up for the "Paths of Che" brigade, which will visit Cuba Oct. 1-15 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the legendary guerrilla fighter's assassination.

In July the two oldest and most consistent Cuba solidarity organizations will be traveling there without self-licensing. The Venceremos Brigade will go from July 21 to Aug. 4, and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace will travel from July 11 to 27.

They will exercise their absolute right to travel and associate with the people of the world, including those in Cuba. □

Tories trashed in British elections What does it mean for class struggle?

By Taren Fivek

Faced with the double barrels of belt-tightening brought by Britain's exiting the European Union and the Conservative Party's attack on social programs, the voters in Britain decided to upset the political landscape. They cost the Conservatives their majority in Parliament, increased Labour's position and strengthened Momentum, a pro-socialist formation within the Labour Party comprised mainly of young people, as led by Jeremy Corbyn.

Turnout was the highest it had been in 25 years, resulting in 13 seats lost for the Conservatives (Tories) and a stunning 30 additional seats won by Labour. In terms of voter share, it was a gain for Labour not seen since 1945. The Tories still have the most seats of any party in Parliament, but will need to form a coalition government. The opposition to Tory racism, war and austerity has grown stronger, as was reflected on June 8.

In an arrogant and ill-fated move, Prime Minister Theresa May had decided this spring to call snap elections to build towards a majority in Britain's parliamentary government. Had the Tories succeeded, this would have cleared the path for the mass seizure of public benefits via brutal austerity measures domestically, while the military would be free to pursue its arms deals and wars overseas.

To say that the June 8 elections "backfired" on May would be a grave understatement. As Corbyn himself said to Bloomberg News, "The arguments the Conservative party put forward in this election have lost." (bloomberg.com, June 9)

Despite this, Theresa May has stat-

ed that she has no intention to resign as prime minister, and that she will serve out her five-year term. The Tories are expected to form a coalition government with the hyper-racist, sexist and anti-LGBTQ Democratic Unionist Party, based in the British-occupied counties in the north of Ireland.

On June 9, hundreds of people arrived at Downing Street to protest May's insistence to stay and the possibility of making an alliance with a party that mobilized to support South African apartheid. They held signs that said: "Defy Tory Rule," "Stand Up to Racism" and "Corbyn In, Tories Out."

Indeed, the most critical result of this most recent election is that the electorate, and especially the youth, seems to be becoming more politically active in defense of working-class programs. Labour's message promoting free education and continued free health care, nationalization of industries, greater control on the job, universal housing and an end to austerity resonated deeply with the population. What resulted was a gain for Labour not seen since the 1990s.

The Momentum organization stated that Corbyn's Labour Party would mean "decent homes for all in both the public and private sector" and "a society free from all types of discrimination," as well as nationalizing critical sectors and a class-based redistribution of wealth.

Reform vs. open class struggle

However, social democracy has its limitations built in, as the history of the Labour Party has proved. This party supported all the imperialist claims of Britain to its former colonial empire following World War II, and its Tony Blair

PHOTO: REVOLUTION NEWS
Students celebrate
May 2017 Labour Party
demand to abolish
university tuition fees
by fall 2018.



wing joined U.S. aggression against Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Even the leftist Jeremy Corbyn, in the same speech that said British aggression was to blame for the attack in Manchester in May, also blamed police cutbacks and looked to the imperialist state apparatus to solve the problem. He said that under a Labour government, there would be thousands more police added to the streets. This is the same state apparatus — police and military — that keeps the British bankers and capitalists in power.

This approach is the opposite of a real working-class solution. It ignores the fact that Black, Brown, migrant and poor people are the ones who suffer from police brutality.

Historically, reformism based on social democracy was able to secure more rights for the working class and oppressed. This happened in a time of capitalist expansion post World War II. In the last 30-40 years most of those victories have been whittled away. By failing to address the underlying demon in society — capitalism and imperialism — reform at best is simply beating back the inevitable.

A Labour government now, even with a leftist prime minister, would face the entirety of the global imperialist class, which is dead set against the social democratic program that Labour presented to the population. As other social democracies have discovered, the entire weight of

the ruling class can and will be brought to bear to ensure that a bourgeois democracy does not — somehow — magically transform into a working-class democracy or reflect the will of the working class over the bourgeoisie.

A famous miniseries that aired across Britain in 1988 was called "A Very British Coup." In it, a character based on 1980's left-wing politician Tony Benn becomes prime minister after Labour achieves a landslide victory. The government sets out to do exactly what it said it would in terms of social programs, as well as attempting to evict the United States and NATO.

As a result, the U.S. government schemes with the British capitalist and landed elite to overthrow the government via manipulating labor leaders into reactionary work stoppages, currency speculation and shortages, all of which culminate in a military coup.

It was a story that reflected a reality. Britain's parliamentary system exists as part of a world imperialist system. Britain is a member of NATO. The media mogul who enjoys the largest share of private media — Rupert Murdoch — is a U.S. citizen. Its banking interests are international in scope.

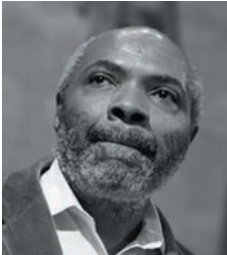
Besides the imperialist EU, its second biggest trading partner is the United States. The working class and oppressed living in the United Kingdom will not

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Mutual interests and solidarity

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

This slightly edited paper by Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire, was prepared for and presented in part at a panel during the Left Forum during the weekend of June 2-4 at John Jay College of the City University of New York. The session, sponsored by Workers World newspaper, included presentations by Taryn Fivek, of the International Action Center; Andrew Mayton, of the Baltimore Antifascist Community Defense; and John Steffin, of the New York Branch of Workers World Party.



Abayomi Azikiwe

A series of conferences involving African Union member-states and the People's Republic of China has highlighted the dynamic, evolving political and economic character of relations between the two geopolitical regions.

Known as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the organization was formed in 2000 in Beijing. Over the last 17 years the volume of trade and investment taking place has accelerated.

Both the PRC and AU member-states have forged stronger links since the beginning of the 21st century due to the needs of both areas. China requires energy resources, agricultural commodities and

outlets for its products. The African continent must find states and other entities to provide investments for infrastructural, technological, scientific, health care, educational and services development.

Today China is the second-largest economy in the world. Since the revolution of 1949, the country has been transformed from a semi-colonial, underdeveloped state to a power to be reckoned with by the imperialist powers of the United States, European Union and Japan.

Africa has far more land mass than China and fewer people. Nonetheless, the continent is rich in mineral and natural resources, which, if properly harnessed and utilized for development purposes, could place AU member-states as a leading force in economic growth and consequently world politics.

The recently constructed AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was built by Chinese architects and workers. This is a state-of-the-art facility that positions Africa for achieving unprecedented heights in the present period.

Chinese government investment and assistance to AU member-states is based upon respect and refrains from interference in the internal affairs of all governments. This represents a sharp departure from the legacy of Western domination through the periods of the Atlantic Slave Trade to colonialism and neocolonialism.

Struggle against slavery and colonialism

Slavery and colonialism sought to divide African people for the sole purpose of exploitation and national oppression. The false notions of benevolent intent aimed at bringing Christianity, European values and trade have long been debunked as a result of the research of progressive African historians and social scientists.

At the beginning of the contact between Western Europe and Africa in the 15th century, there was no significant gap in development. In fact, prior to the 15th century, the center of the world economic system was not in Europe. The key areas

of trade and nation building were located in the Indian Ocean basin, extending west and north in Africa, and across the areas now considered the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific regions.

China was also subjected to attempts at colonial domination and enslavement. Both Britain and Japan sought to utilize China for their own benefit. Characteristic of imperialism, wars of conquest were waged against China in the 19th and 20th centuries.

China and Africa fought national liberation struggles against imperialism. Beginning in the years after the conclusion of World War II, the potential for socialist transformation through national liberation movements emerged. These phenomena were manifested in Vietnam after the August Revolution of 1945 led by Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party. In Korea, the Communist Party led by Kim Il Sung spearheaded tremendous victories in the anti-Japanese liberation war, in alliance with the Communist Party of China headed by Mao Tse-tung as well as the Soviet Union under Joseph V. Stalin.

The historic development of slavery and colonialism in Africa had fragmented the continent. Although China, Korea and Vietnam were divided, the emergence of strong communist-led movements was essential in fostering their social trajectories. African liberation movements in some areas of the continent also produced socialist-oriented independence fronts and states. However, the magnitude of the African land mass divided by imperialism posed monumental challenges in constructing socialism. Consequently, AU member-states can learn from the history of China over the last century.

FOCAC meeting in South Africa in 2015

A second full summit of FOCAC was held in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, on Dec. 8-9, 2015. At this important gathering, commitments were made to initiate joint projects in 10 sectors of economic activity. PRC President Xi Jinping announced \$60 billion (U.S.) in financial projects on the African continent.

The disbursements of these funds include \$5 billion of direct, interest-free loans. Another \$35 billion is allocated for what are described as preferential loans and export credit on favorable terms. An additional \$5 billion in capital is slated to replenish the China-Africa development fund. Some \$5 billion more in initial capital will go for special loans to a number of small and medium-sized enterprises each. Finally, \$10 billion was allocated to enhance the China-Africa production capacity cooperation fund. (AU.int, Aug. 2, 2016)

To ensure the implementation of these projects, a coordinators' meeting was held July 28-29, 2016, in Beijing. The meeting was co-chaired by South Africa and the PRC.

The AU Commission was represented by H.E. Fatima Haram Acyl, who is the commissioner of Trade and Industry. Chadian Foreign Minister Moussa Faki Mahamat represented the AU, since the Central African state was the chair of the regional body at the time. Over 300 ministerial and senior-level officials participated in the deliberations in Beijing.

South African Minister of International Cooperation Maite Nkoana Mashabane stated: "In a matter of months since the summit in Johannesburg we are busy with implementation, unlike past partnerships whose implementation would take a long time. By 2018 we shall have

completed the first phase of action and ordinary Africans will be feeling the difference made by the partnerships."

Minister Mahamat drew the link from FOCAC's Johannesburg summit, the coordinators' meeting and the ambitious Africa 2063 plan adopted at the Jubilee gathering of the AU in 2013. This event commemorated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the OAU. Although the events of May 24-25, 1963, constituted a compromise in the political context of postcolonial interstate African relations, the OAU at least provided a rudimentary framework for enhanced cooperation.

The establishment of the OAU Liberation Committee provided a mechanism for channeling aid from African states and other collegial governments into national liberation movement organizations for the procurement of political training and the establishment of armed revolutionary structures, which effectively fought the existing colonial and settler-colonial regimes.

Historical background and future prospects

In the 1960s, China under Chairman Mao and Premier Chou En-lai expressed maximum solidarity with the African Revolution. A 1963 gathering of African freedom movement representatives in China served as the backdrop for issuing the PRC's first comprehensive declarations of support for the African-American struggle against racism, national oppression and repression.

Mao's statement, which was published in the Peking Review on Aug. 12, 1963, read in part: "The speedy development of the struggle of American Negroes [African Americans] is a manifestation of sharpening class struggle and sharpening national struggle within the United States; it has been causing increasing anxiety among U.S. ruling circles. The Kennedy administration is using dual tactics. On the one hand, it continues to connive and take part in discrimination against Negroes and their persecution and even send troops to suppress them.

"On the other hand, in the attempt to numb the fighting will of the Negro people and deceive the masses of the country, the Kennedy administration is parading as an advocate of 'the defense of human rights' and 'the protection of the civil rights of Negroes,' calling upon the Negro people to exercise 'restraint' and proposing the civil rights legislation to Congress. The fascist atrocities of the U.S. imperialists against the Negro people have exposed the true nature of so-called American democracy and freedom and revealed the inner link between the reactionary policies pursued by the U.S. government at home and its policies of aggression abroad."

Mao then makes a significant appeal to the international community, writing, "I call on the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, enlightened persons of all colors in the world, whether white, black, yellow, or brown, to unite to oppose the racial discrimination practiced by U.S. imperialism and support the American Negroes in their struggle. In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle."

No such statement was ever made by imperialism, both inside and outside the U.S. Therefore, the Chinese Revolution has made a profound contribution to the quest for liberation and social justice for the African people on a global scale. □

British elections

Continued from page 10

find liberation simply by voting Labour.

Karl Marx himself could be elected U.S. president or British prime minister, but it wouldn't change the fundamental oppressive nature of society, because the state as it stands serves the rich and powerful at the expense of the world's oppressed majority. Only a revolution that starts in the workplaces and streets, not in the halls of power, will achieve actually existing socialism.

It is only by organizing the working class and oppressed independently of the Labour party that real, lasting socialism can be built.

A positive development

The June 8 election, however, signaled a positive development within the workers' political consciousness. It opens a space for the working-class movement to organize, to learn how to operate, to gather itself together and reach out to more workers.

Real power comes from the streets. It is doubtful that Labour would have seen these gains without the militant student protest movement in 2011, after the British government decided to triple the cost of tuition across the university system. As a result, a great majority of Britain's youth turned against the Tory government and got politically active. The movement for housing rights and against police murders of Black and Brown people has also pushed the mainstream political discourse to the left.

Something like a million people under 25 years old registered to vote, and the percentage of youth actually voting grew from about 43 percent to close to 70 percent. The great majority of their votes went to Labour.

As the limitations of Labour's leverage within the electoral system become more and more apparent in the coming weeks, the best result will be further mass organization outside the Labour Party electoral structure for struggle in the offices, factories, schools and the streets. □



Afganistán

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afectado no sólo al pueblo afgano, sino también a las personas que simplemente caminan por las calles de las ciudades occidentales, que son obligadas a pagar por los crímenes de la clase dominante. Esta guerra ha afectado a los jóvenes soldados que no se les dice nada sobre la historia de Afganistán y que, si sobreviven al despliegue en esa zona de guerra, tendrán que luchar por atención médica en EUA.

Esta guerra no está en los titulares, incluso cuando se sienten sus repercusiones. Continuará para siempre — a menos de que la gente la detenga. ¡EUA, Fuera de Afganistán! □



Zbigniew Brzezinski, mirando hacia Afganistán.

Zbigniew Brzezinski y las mentiras sobre Afganistán

Por Deirdre Griswold

La reciente película titulada “War Machine” (Máquina de guerra), producida por Brad Pitt y lanzada por Netflix, se centra alrededor de un general ególatra que comandaba las fuerzas estadounidenses en Afganistán. Su mensaje se reduce a esta verdad: si invades al país de alguien, ese alguien te va a disparar y a decirte que te vayas.

Toda una generación ha crecido desde que la CIA estadounidense comenzó a entrenar y armar a una fuerza de oposición encubierta en Afganistán en 1979. Las primeras fuerzas armadas regulares estadounidenses fueron enviadas allá en el 2001. Desde entonces, cientos de miles de soldados estadounidenses han sido enviados a Afganistán, presuntamente para “ayudar” a una sucesión de gobiernos afganos que fueron instalados por los ocupantes.

Esta guerra comenzó bajo Jimmy Carter, un demócrata, y ha continuado a lo largo de los términos de Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush y Barack Obama. Ahora Donald Trump está considerando un aumento en el número de tropas estadounidenses en Afganistán de 8.400 a 50.000. (Bloomberg.com, 17 de mayo)

Es la guerra estadounidense más larga de la historia. ¿Por qué?

Hoy se supone que es una guerra contra los talibanes, ISIS y Al Qaeda. Pero estos grupos son descendientes de los “militares” que la CIA convirtió por primera vez en unidades de combate contra un gobierno liderado por el Partido Democrático Progresista de Afganistán, que había tomado el poder en 1978.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, quien murió el mes pasado a la madura edad de 89 años, fue el principal arquitecto de esa guerra viciada como asesor de seguridad nacional de Carter. Una vez que se supo que la CIA había creado un ejército encubierto en Afganistán, la historia dada por el gobierno de Estados Unidos fue que estaba ayudando al pueblo afgano a resistir una invasión soviética. Esto se convirtió en la razón de una guerra cada vez más sangrienta y costosa que eventualmente derrocó al gobierno progresista de Afganistán.

Pero el propio Brzezinski se jactó después de que la operación de la CIA había comenzado seis meses antes de que la Unión Soviética enviara tropas a Afganistán. De hecho, la intervención soviética no fue una “invasión”. El gobierno afgano le había pedido que lo defendiera contra la guerra encubierta de la CIA.

Brzezinski se jactó de la verdad

Brzezinski reveló esa verdad al periódico francés Le Nouvel Observateur en 1998: “Según la versión oficial de la historia, la ayuda de la CIA a los Muyahidín comenzó en 1980, es decir, después de que el ejército soviético invadiera Afganistán el 24 de diciembre de 1979. Pero la realidad, guardada secretamente hasta ahora, es completamente diferente. De hecho, fue el 3 de julio de 1979, que el presidente Carter firmó la primera directiva de ayuda secreta a los opositores al régimen pro-soviético en Kabul. Y ese mismo día, le escribí una nota al presidente en la que le expliqué que en mi

opinión esta ayuda iba a provocar una intervención militar soviética”.

Preguntado por el entrevistador si ahora se arrepentía de algo, Brzezinski respondió: “¿arrepentirme de qué? Esa operación secreta fue una idea excelente. Tuvo el efecto de atraer a los rusos a la trampa afgana y quieres que me arrepienta? “(Le Nouvel Observateur, 15-21 de enero de 1998)

El director de la CIA Robert M. Gates ya había revelado el momento de la operación encubierta de la CIA en su libro “From the Shadows” (Desde las sombras), publicado por Simon & Schuster en 1996. Gates escribió: “La administración Carter comenzó a estudiar la posibilidad de una ayuda encubierta a los insurgentes que se oponían al gobierno marxista pro-soviético del presidente Taraki a principios de 1979. El 5 de marzo de 1979, la CIA envió varias opciones de acción encubierta relacionadas con Afganistán, al SCC [Comité de Coordinación Especial por las siglas en inglés]. Una reunión del SCC se celebró finalmente el 3 de julio de 1979, y casi seis meses antes de que los soviéticos invadieran Afganistán, Jimmy Carter firmó el primer documento para ayudar encubiertamente a los Muyahidín”.

Sin embargo, a pesar de estas admisiones de altos funcionarios del gobierno, la narrativa en los medios estadounidenses sigue siendo que EUA instaló, armó y entrenó a los “Muyahidín” para contrarrestar una “invasión” soviética. ¿Cuáles fueron las verdaderas razones para que EUA gastara miles de millones de dólares y destruyera la mitad del país en un esfuerzo por derrocar al gobierno de Afganistán?

Para responder a esa pregunta, ayuda a conocer un poco sobre la historia de Afganistán y cómo se había mantenido independiente durante más de un siglo, incluso cuando las potencias imperialistas europeas y estadounidenses se apoderaron de gran parte de Asia, África y América Latina como colonias o neocolonias.

1839-1919: Tres invasiones británicas no logran conquistar Afganistán

Bretaña, que controlaba la India vecina, invadió Afganistán tres veces - en 1839, 1879 y 1919 - pero no pudo mantener en el poder a un régimen colonial títere. Cada vez, levantamientos populares expulsaron a las tropas británicas. Sin embargo, Londres obligó al gobierno afgano a aceptar la influencia británica sobre su política exterior, y en 1893 los británicos redactaron la línea Durand. Esta división supuestamente temporal se convirtió en la frontera entre Afganistán y la India británica - la parte que hoy es Pakistán.

La última invasión, en 1919, provocó un levantamiento que derrocó al gobierno de Habibollah, que había capitulado ante los británicos. Inspirado por el éxito de la Revolución Rusa, el nuevo régimen de Amanollah firmó entonces un tratado de amistad con el gobierno bolchevique, siendo uno de los primeros países en hacerlo. Desde entonces hasta los años 70, Afganistán no se uniría a ninguna alianza militar contra la URSS.

1965: PDPA para finalizar feudalismo, ganar derechos de la mujer

El Partido Democrático Progresista

de Afganistán se formó en 1965. Su programa era anti feudal e incluyó la reforma agraria, cancelando las deudas de los campesinos, reconociendo los derechos democráticos de la mujer, incluyendo el fin de la dote y el establecimiento de educación y salud abierta para todas las mujeres y los hombres.

En la década de 1970, el gobierno afgano de Mohammad Daoud se movía hacia la derecha en su política interna y hacia la OTAN en su política exterior. El vasto y montañoso campo estaba bajo el férreo control de terratenientes feudales. Sin embargo, en Kabul y algunas otras ciudades, el PDPA había desarrollado mucho apoyo entre las/os estudiantes, especialmente las mujeres jóvenes, así como entre funcionarios y soldados mal pagados.

El 26 de abril de 1978, mientras el ultra imperialista y multimillonario Nelson Rockefeller se dirigía a Kabul para visitar a Daoud, el gobierno lanzó una agresión contra el PDPA, deteniendo a casi todo su liderazgo. Esto sucedió justo después de un funeral masivo para miembros del PDPA que habían sido asesinados por la policía de Daoud. Evidentemente, Daoud quería asegurar a EUA que su régimen podía reprimir cualquier oposición que pudiera surgir a su pivote hacia el imperialismo.

En un día, sin embargo, las unidades del ejército se habían amotinado y liberado a los líderes del PDPA. En un caso, los soldados usaron un tanque para derribar las paredes de la cárcel donde estaba detenido el líder del PDPA, Nur Mohammad Taraki. Taraki se convirtió en jefe de lo que se conoció como la Revolución de Saur.

1978: Revolución comienza reforma agraria, termina dotes de novia

El Departamento de Defensa de EUA ha publicado libros de “Estudios de País” sobre países de todo el mundo. Contienen información útil para los funcionarios de EUA enviados al exterior y pueden ser más veraces que la propaganda de otros organismos gubernamentales, porque las personas que usan estos libros necesitan saber las verdaderas condiciones de los países a los que van.

La versión de “Afganistán – un estudio” publicada en 1986, contiene admisiones sorprendentes que van en contra de la narrativa establecida por el gobierno sobre Afganistán. Por ejemplo, dice que “cuando el PDPA tomó el poder, rápidamente se movió para eliminar las desigualdades de propiedad de la tierra y la usura”. Agregó que el PDPA también canceló las deudas hipotecarias de los trabajadores agrícolas, los inquilinos y los pequeños granjeros. Estableció amplios programas de alfabetización, especialmente para mujeres, y libros impresos en muchas lenguas habladas en diferentes partes de Afganistán.

Dijo el libro del Pentágono: “El gobierno entrenó a muchos maestros, construyó escuelas y jardines de infancia, y estableció guarderías para huérfanos”. Entre los primeros decretos de la revolución se prohibió el dote de la novia y se otorgó a las mujeres la libertad de elección en el matrimonio.

Esto se debe recordar hoy, cuando la máquina de propaganda intenta embellecer esta larga guerra imperialista en Afganistán como una en donde las prin-

cipales prioridades de Washington es la defensa de los derechos de las mujeres.

Pero en 1978, cuando Brzezinski y el régimen de Carter lanzaron la guerra contra la revolución afgana, sabían que era un régimen progresista que intentaba sacar a este muy subdesarrollado país, de la opresión feudal. Eso no les impidió armar y financiar una contrarrevolución.

Al cabo de unos años, los contras armados, entrenados y financiados por la CIA estaban asesinando a maestros jóvenes idealistas, mujeres y hombres, que habían ido al campo a alfabetizar al pueblo.

Uno de estos contras era Osama bin Laden. Bajo la excusa de que defendía la “libertad de religión”, EUA socavó el gobierno secular del PDPA creando un ejército que se opuso a las reformas progresistas del PDPA en nombre de la lucha por un estado islámico.

Al mismo tiempo, sin embargo, el imperialismo estadounidense estaba tratando de socavar la república islámica en Irán, que tomó el poder en 1979 después de una gran revolución allí contra el Shah, un títere que había sido puesto en poder por las compañías petroleras estadounidenses y británicas. Esa revolución también abarcó a muchos luchadores progresistas y seculares, pero los líderes islámicos tenían la organización más fuerte entre las masas y demostraron ser capaces de expulsar al Shah y su agrupación.

Religión no es la verdadera cuestión

Claramente, la cuestión de la religión no es lo que motiva a los imperialistas. Tampoco se preocupan por los derechos de las mujeres. Ellos usarán cualquier excusa y harán alianzas temporales mientras tratan de reafirmar su dominio económico en la región. Lo que los motiva es su necesidad de saquear el mundo, especialmente las áreas ricas en petróleo, para el beneficio de la clase multimillonaria dominante estadounidense.

Pero cuando invades un país, la gente te disparará y te dirá que salgas.

Eso es lo que ha sucedido en Afganistán. Una vez que las fuerzas progresistas fueron destruidas, hubo un vacío de liderazgo para resistir a los imperialistas, que todavía ocupan el país y escogen a los funcionarios de gobierno. La resistencia armada, por ahora, se ha reunido alrededor de fuerzas organizadas sobre una base religiosa, algunas de las cuales adoptan una agenda extremadamente reaccionaria. Sin embargo, han ganado muchos reclutas que incluso están dispuestos a sacrificar sus propias vidas para sacar a EUA.

Ninguna cantidad de escalada de la supuesta “guerra contra el terror” puede borrar esta terrible situación. A lo contrario. Cada bomba que cae sobre aldeas en Afganistán sólo intensifica el odio al imperialismo, sin importar la forma que adopte. Cualquier ataque político contra musulmanes por parte de Trump o sus homólogos en Europa sólo profundiza la ira de las/os oprimidos.

En cualquier tipo de guerra, es la gente común, ya sea soldados o civiles, quienes sufren. Son los ricos quienes tienen los medios para protegerse a sí mismos mientras se benefician de una victoria.

La “guerra contra el terrorismo” ha

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