

As Senate millionaires vote to go ahead

Wide protests challenge plan to gut health care

By Kathy Durkin

July 25 — Protesters hit the streets across the U.S. from July 17-25 to stop the Republican right’s vicious plans to dismantle the Affordable Care Act and remove at least 22 million people from health insurance coverage. Hundreds were arrested in Washington, D.C., many at the Capitol building, where the millionaire-filled Senate scheduled a procedural vote to begin debate on repeal of Obamacare.

Despite the massive popular opposition to their scheme, the Senate voted today to open debate. The reactionaries needed Vice President Mike Pence’s tie-breaking vote to win by 51-50. Judging by the protests up to this time, this narrow vote sets the stage for what can be an epic struggle.

Among the earlier dramatic actions in Washington was the July 24 Emergency Die-in vs. Trumpcare. Millions rely on the ACA to access medical care primarily through Medicaid expansion and federal subsidies to purchase insurance. The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) scheduled a March and Rally for Disability Rights on Capitol Hill on July 25, which its nearly 900 conference attendees planned to join.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates that the Senate’s latest bill would cause at least 22 million people to lose health insurance by 2026: 15 million would be cut from Medicaid, 5 million would lose private insurance and 2 million would be dropped from employer-sponsored coverage. If the ACA is simply repealed and nothing is passed to replace it, 32 million people would lose health insurance they now have, says the Congressional Budget Office.

Activists with Americans Disabled for Attendant Programs Today, who were in the second day of a campout outside the Russell Senate Office Building, joined the die-in and spoke at it. Of particular concern to ADAPT and other people with disabilities, including parents of children with disabilities, is the threat that the inhumane bill poses to Medicaid recipients. They call this a life-and-death struggle.

Massive cutbacks in the program would eliminate caregivers and essential, life-saving services and equipment. One banner said it all: “Medicaid = life and liberty for disabled people.”

‘Kill the bill! Don’t kill us!’

Mass actions of all kinds have taken place for months across the country, as well as in Washington, and have stopped two attempts to “repeal and replace.” Chants of “Kill the bill! Don’t kill us!” and “No cuts to Medicaid!” have echoed throughout the U.S. capital for several

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Columbus, Ohio
July 7

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Denver,
July 19

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Big real estate threatens to silence ‘people’s radio station’

By Dolores Cox
New York City

A press conference was held on the steps of New York City Hall on July 13 to bring attention to the current plight of Pacifica Radio’s New York station WBAI (99.5 FM). Among the more than 100 supporters were local and state officials calling for preservation of the free-speech radio station — and for the real estate company suing Pacifica for millions of dollars to reach a fair settlement.

WBAI-FM is a listener-sponsored, non-commercial radio station, which has broadcast for over 50 years in New York City, and is heard throughout the tri-state area. It is part of the Pacifica Foundation, a California nonprofit corporation, which has five major market radio stations in its network.

WBAI’s antenna and transmitter currently sit atop the 102 floors of the Empire State Building. After the destruction of the World Trade Twin Towers in 2001, broadcasting stations in the New York City area have had few options for antenna space rental. The Empire State Realty Trust, owner of the Empire State Building, then took advantage of its position in that market.

In 2005, the ESRT negotiated a highly questionable tower lease with Pacifica. The company has refused to release Pacifica from this contract, which is scheduled to continue until 2020.

WBAI is under threat of being silenced by ERST’s lawsuit. The corporation is demanding over \$2 million for unpaid tower fees. ESRT is “holding the network hostage”

with a contract that increases tower rent annually by about 9 percent. The greedy transnational corporation held \$554.4 million in cash and cash equivalents, as of last December, and owns billions of dollars worth of real estate.

WBAI is legendary in New York’s cultural and political life. The station is a strong, essential voice which advocates for economic, environmental and racial justice. It airs news, ideas, analysis and information from a progressive perspective and presents regular programming by and for diverse communities.

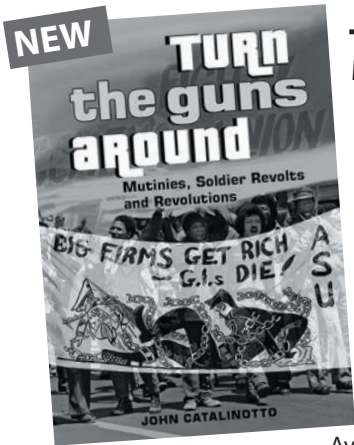
The station is the “Voice of the People,” unhampered by corporate or government funding. It is an important resource that keeps communities and movements connected and allows organizers and activists to spread their messages.

Of the current crisis, Pacifica’s interim Executive Director Bill Crosier asserts in a July 11 press release: “The amount being charged is over four times the market rate in New York, and threatens the future of independent radio. Market rate for FM transmitter tower leases in New York City is now about \$12,000 monthly.

“WBAI’s bill for the month of May 2017, in contrast, came to over \$53,000. We have always been willing to pay what’s fair and reasonable, but these exorbitant annual increases are killing us,” stated Crosier. “The ESRT must settle and release us from the rest of this onerous contract.”

Pacifica is calling for a fair settlement, relief from excessive annual fee increases and release from the current contract. See wbai.org for updates.

Cox is a voting member of WBAI’s local station board.



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

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

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

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

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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.

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

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Disability Pride rocks NYC for health care, access

By Mary P. Kaessinger and Edward Yudelovich

More than 7,500 people with disabilities, along with their families, caregivers, friends and allies, marched, rolled, rode and scooted in a glorious New York City Disability Pride Parade on July 9.

They were celebrating the anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990. They were also proudly and firmly opposing threatened government denial of support for access and health care. The looming budget cuts proposed in the U.S. Congress would decimate Medicaid — often a lifeline for elderly and disabled people. Loss of funding for needed services would mean a death sentence for untold numbers.

More than 140 organizations participated in this Pride, including disability rights and service/provider organizations. Grand marshals of the parade included 12-year-old Mary LeDonne, the disabled child of parade founder Mike LeDonne and Micah Fowler, a U.S. actor with cerebral palsy. The disability rights movement has long protested Hollywood's practice of using able-bodied actors to portray characters with disabilities, much as the film industry persisted for many decades in the racist practice of using Caucasian actors to portray African-American, Asian and Native-American characters.

No cuts to Medicaid, don't mess with the ADA!

A beautiful new T-shirt was launched at the parade proclaiming: "Disabili-

ty Pride, Don't Hide the Pride!" Marchers made that pride abundantly clear. One woman's hand-lettered sign attached to her wheelchair read, "Cuts to healthcare mean cuts to my INDEPENDENCE." Other signs included "Inclusion is within everyone's ability," "NEVERTHELESS WE PERSIST," "CELEBRATING DISABILITIES" (with the "dis" crossed out), "DISABLED & PROUD," "Disability does NOT DEFINE us," and "Equal Rights for EVERYONE."

Renée Imperato, a Vietnam veteran with several disabilities, including post-traumatic stress disorder, told Workers World that friends from a group of transgender and disabled people called "Sick and Sexy" travelled to New York from Philadelphia to join the parade. Sick and Sexy works to smash the bigoted stereotype that alleges people with disabilities can't be sexy and sensual like everyone else.

Historic disability rights struggle

Workers World Party, People's Power Assemblies and Parents to Improve School Transportation composed a joint contingent in their third consecutive participation in Disability Pride since its revival in 2015. WWP, PPA and PIST collaborated in leading chants such as "No cuts to Medicaid! Disabled lives matter!" alternating with "Don't mess with ADA!



Wheelchair users leading WWP, PPA and PIST contingent at Disability Pride.

Disabled Black lives matter!"

PIST carried signs and a banner defending the rights of students with disabilities to a good education and accessible safe transportation to and from school, and also supporting the workers who transport them.

PPA members handed out a leaflet that demanded access, denounced the proposed cuts and championed the long history of disability rights struggles with the headline: "People with Disabilities Fight Back Then and Now!" This referenced the historic 1990 protest when "the Capitol Crawler" wheelchair users abandoned their chairs and labored up the 83 stone steps of the U.S. Capitol to help get the ADA passed.

The militant disability rights protests continue today as ADAPT (Americans Disabled for Attendant Programs Today) wheelchair-user warriors have recently occupied the offices of U.S. senators. Their protests helped temporarily stop the horrific health care bills from passing. ADAPT is a grass-roots community that organizes disability rights activists to engage in nonviolent direct action, including civil disobedience.



WW PHOTOS: BRENDA RYAN

The PPA leaflet also called for the ending of the warehousing and mass incarceration of people with disabilities. It pointed out other inequities: People with disabilities make up over 25 percent of people living in poverty, and 27 percent of disabled people are not getting any medical care, which is twice the rate for nondisabled people.

Featuring a photograph of wheelchair-user, African-American Jeremy McDole, killed by Delaware police in September 2015, the leaflet documented that disabled people are more than 50 percent of the people killed by police annually.

Chinatown's ADA birthday party

One week after the parade, on July 16, both of these reporters also attended the third annual Chinatown ADA birthday party. Like the Disability Pride Parade, it featured many entertainers, performers and speakers with disabilities.

One speaker cited the special link between Chinese Americans fighting bigotry and the disability rights movement through the landmark 1974 U.S. Supreme Court civil rights decision of *Lau v. Nich-*

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Here's the buzz: 40 years of support for WW

By Deirdre Griswold

In this electronic age, maintaining a print as well as an online weekly newspaper is a rarity on the left. How does Workers World do it?

For one thing, everyone involved in its production is a volunteer — from the writers and editors to the copy editors, proofreaders, layout and design artists, and those who keep up the subscription lists, label the papers for mailing and deliver them to the post office. The paper is put out weekly thanks to a hive of volunteer workers who can be depended on because they believe in what they're doing.

But there are other things that must be paid for with cold cash, like the printing and postage. Workers World/Mundo

Obrero doesn't take advertising. It keeps subscription rates very low so those on limited incomes can afford it. And it's free to prisoners — those locked away for much of their lives, mainly for being unable to afford lawyers. They treasure the paper and pass it from hand to hand. Progressive unions and community groups get bundles. All this takes funds.

This is where the Workers World Supporter Program comes in.

By giving the paper's readers a way to contribute financially, the Supporter Program expands the hive of volunteers and narrows the gap between the paper's costs and its income.

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the Supporter Program. WW spoke to Sue Davis, who has been running the

program since its inception.

Davis explained, "Over the years many hundreds of people have regularly contributed to the paper through the Supporter Program. It really shows a dedication to the paper and what Workers World stands for.

"We've had supporters from nearly every state in the U.S. and from other countries as well. The reach of the program has been phenomenal, encouraging, exciting.

"The important thing is not just the major donors," Davis stresses. "Our readers are not wealthy people; they are people dedicated to our politics. Many give just \$5 or \$6 a month, but over time that really adds up. It shows their confidence and their willingness to invest in the paper."

Besides these modest but consistent

contributions, there are the occasional windfalls. "People in the Supporter Program have put us in their wills. And some have contributed large sums when they had the money — for example, from the sale of a house."

Davis sends out a monthly newsletter to supporters with the buzz on current political issues. "In recent years we've focused on cases like the Cuban Five, the struggle to get health care for Mumia Abu-Jamal and freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera." When people contribute to Workers World/Mundo Obrero, they're helping publicize these struggles for justice and dignity.

"We want to thank our supporters for their generosity and continuity, their steadfast dedication," added Davis. □

On July 26, 1953, Cuban revolutionaries stormed the Moncada Barracks in Santiago, Cuba. Less than six years later, Fidel and his guerrillas ousted the U.S.-backed dictatorship, marching into Havana in early January 1959.

That same year, Workers World newspaper began to publish. After more than a decade of anti-communist reaction in the U.S., the Cuban Revolution helped revive interest in revolutionary socialism. The more outrageous the anti-Cuba propaganda in the corporate press, the harder Workers World has worked to tell the truth about this great victory over U.S. imperialism.

In 1961, when the U.S. announced that it was breaking diplomatic relations with

WW Supporter Program at 40 *Continue defense of Cuban Revolution*

Cuba, WW's first editor, Vince Copeland, led a protest inside the United Nations, his booming voice proclaiming the U.S. "speaks for the bankers, not the people."

In the early 1990s, Cuba endured great economic hardships after the Soviet Union fell and the U.S. tightened its blockade. Workers World helped build the Peace for Cuba International Appeal to end the blockade, the travel ban and all intervention against Cuba.

Despite the choking blockade, the Cuban Revolution only grows stronger and more

respected as it sends life-saving medical teams all over the world. As the Trump administration increases its hostility to the socialist country, Workers World remains dedicated to defending revolutionary Cuba. Donations from WW supporters have helped get our pro-Cuba writings in print, distributed and posted at workers.org.

We invite you to join the 40-year-old WW Supporter Program to help us continue to publish articles in solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples worldwide and in opposition to U.S. wars. The

newspaper is a source of anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-LGBTQ news and working-class truth, while it supports immigrants, opposes Islamophobia and helps build pro-socialist campaigns.

To join, write checks to WW Publishers and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate at workers.org/donate/. Supporters who contribute \$75 a year receive a year's subscription, a monthly letter and five free subscriptions. Sponsors who contribute \$100 also get a book published by World View Forum. Sustainers who contribute \$300 or more receive five books. Thanks for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □

North Carolina

Farmworkers protest attack on their right to organize



July 18 protest in Raleigh, N.C., outside Capitol.

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

By Dante Strobino
Raleigh, N.C.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee and other labor and community allies rallied July 18 at the state Capitol in Raleigh, N.C. Their immediate goal was to deliver a letter of protest to Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper, who had, days before, signed Farm Bill SB 615, attacking the right of farmworkers to organize.

At the rally, the groups announced they were filing a lawsuit to challenge SB 615 for violations of the right to freedom of assembly and the constitutional rights of farmworkers, especially for being singled out for elimination of union payroll deduction.

“This type of abandonment of immigrant workers is nothing new from the Democratic or Republican parties. We’ve been excluded from every labor law reform since the racist exclusion of farmworkers from the Nation-

al Labor Relations Act in 1935,” said FLOC President Baldemar Velásquez. “We plan to challenge this bill in the courts, as a violation of farmworkers’ rights to freedom of assembly and speech and to continue our fight for better wages for immigrant families in the state.” (PayDay Report, July 13)

Earlier in the legislative session, a bill passed in the state Senate, SB 375, would have eliminated payroll deduction for all unions in public and private sectors in North Carolina.

But when anti-union SB 375 went to the N.C. House, pushback from unions made it impossible for sponsors to secure the necessary votes for passage. Concerted opposition came from the N.C. Association of Educators; N.C. AFL-CIO; and United Electrical Workers Local 150, the N.C. Public Service Workers Union.

So Rep. David Lewis, who chairs the House Rules Commit-

tee and is a farm owner in Dunn, N.C., pivoted to attack farmworkers by slipping anti-union language into SB 615. Besides nixing union payroll deductions, the Farm Bill SB 615 also eliminates the right of workers to collectively bargain directly with farmers.

SB 615 is a vicious attack on the progress made by FLOC in recent months, particularly with its important victories for kale and sweet potato pickers, all Latinx migrant workers. FLOC is also in the midst of a powerful international campaign to organize R.J. Reynolds, whose primary U.S. source for tobacco is North Carolina fields.

The attack on farmworkers through SB 615 comes after a major wage theft settlement this January between FLOC and state Sen. Brent Jackson (R-Sampson), the powerful co-chairman of the N.C. Senate Appropriations Committee, who is president of the Jackson Farming Company. □

Letter to the editor:

Fight racist oppression in Wisconsin

From Samuel Olson

Scott Walker’s attack on public sector unions in 2011 made national headlines and spurred a spontaneous, working-class uprising in Madison, Wisc. Workers occupied the Capitol building there for weeks in an attempt to use mass demonstrations to fight against capitalist encroachment on working-class rights. While these demonstrations ultimately failed and disheartened many progressive forces throughout Wisconsin, an overlooked problem remains.

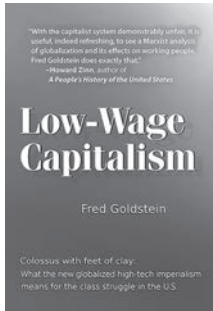
Milwaukee is the third most segregated city in the United States. The 53206 zip code, located on Milwaukee’s North Side, is the zip code with the most imprisoned population in the United States. Sherman Park, a Milwaukee city park in a predominantly African-American community, is routinely occupied by mounted police.

Combine these atrocities with the fact that over half of all African-American neighborhoods in Wisconsin are jails. There is no denying the basic fact that Wisconsin is a prison for oppressed nations. It is clear that those involved in the struggle for workers’ rights in Wisconsin can only even start to win if and when they start fighting for the liberation of oppressed nationalities in the state.

Walker’s attack on public sector unions directly undercut the social and economic protections

of people of color and women in the state, because many of the workers and leaders in public sector unions across Wisconsin are women and people of color. When we defend public sector unions we defend women and oppressed nationalities.

The role of institutionalized racism in Wisconsin cannot be glossed over or brushed aside. Only by directly fighting racist repression in Wisconsin will there be working-class victories in union halls, in workplaces and in the streets. □



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

Available at all major online booksellers.

On the picket line

By Sue Davis

N.Y. state farmworkers sue for right to organize

The New York Civil Liberties Union argued before the state Supreme Court on July 20 in favor of labor rights for hundreds of mostly Latinx migrant farmworkers in New York state who milk cows, till fields and thresh wheat. The lawsuit seeks to strike down an 80-year-old state law forbidding agricultural workers from organizing collectively, because that law violates the state constitution, which permits all workers to organize. The 1937 state law is based on the federal National Labor Relations Act, enacted in 1935, when Southern politicians refused for racist reasons to vote for the act unless it exempted agricultural and domestic workers. A majority of those workers in the South were African-American.

The suit, initiated in May 2016, was brought on behalf of dairy worker Crispin Hernandez, the Workers’ Center of Central New York and the Workers Justice Center of New York. The state has refused to defend the case, though the New York Farm Bureau, an agricultural industry lobby, opposes it.

A report issued in June by the WCCNY and WJCNV titled “Milked” documents abuses like wage theft and dangerous working conditions for area farmworkers. Not only have dairy workers been trampled and gored, but they are forced to live in substandard housing supplied by the bosses. If they dare speak up, they face firing. Donna Lieberman, NYCLU executive director, told the New York Times, “There is no way we ... can abide continuing this grave, grave, grave injustice.” (July 20)

S.F. Labor Council shows solidarity with FLOC

The San Francisco Labor Council unanimously adopted a resolution on July 10 denouncing legislative attacks on the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and immigrant farmworkers’ rights in North Carolina. After delineating the many ways farmworkers are discriminated against in federal and state laws, the resolution quoted FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez: “Politicians that are also growers shouldn’t pass self-serving laws simply because they don’t want their workers to unionize. With the continuation of Jim Crow-era laws that aim to stop a now almost entirely Latino workforce from organizing, this is an affront to freedom of association and smacks of racism.”

Calling for widespread labor and community solidarity in this struggle, the resolution quoted Saladin Muhammad, of Black Workers for Justice and the Southern Workers Assembly: “This must become a national battlefield for all workers, organized, unorganized and unemployed in our communities.” The council called on N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper to veto the bill “as part of supporting labor’s ‘national battlefield’ to organize the South and regain the power of labor everywhere in this country.” (See related article on protest Gov. Cooper’s bill signing.)

Fighting for back pay in N.J.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie called a government shutdown on July 2, using an austerity maneuver when the state budget wasn’t passed by July 1. With between 30,000 and 35,000 members of the Communications Workers affected by the lockout, CWA swung into action. After a press conference denouncing the shutdown, CWA called picket lines outside legislators’ offices on July 5 and 6 demanding pay for days they weren’t allowed to work. But before the lines went up, Christie caved. He had been photographed sunning himself at empty Island Beach State Park, shut down under his order, and then exposed as lying about it. After filing a grievance, CWA held a loud rally on July 13 outside the statehouse demanding back pay. The state Senate promptly passed the bill, the state Assembly agreed to pass a similar bill, and Christie even promised to sign it. (Labor Notes, July 20) Nothing like exercising union muscle when state power runs amok!

D.C. airport workers ready to strike

Nearly 200 Reagan National Airport cleaners authorized a strike July 12 against their employer, MBS, a Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority contractor, to protest lack of affordable health care and income below MWAA’s living wage guidelines. The vote came as American Airlines and the workers’ union, Service Employees 32BJ, entered discussions that led to strike suspensions the same day at Newark, LaGuardia, JFK and Philadelphia International airports. Though suspended, the strike, involving thousands of airport workers employed by American Airlines’ contractors, is still on the table. Airport workers are ready to strike should talks fall apart.

“Working families are enduring enough financial pain as a result of the dysfunction in Washington,” said 32BJ SEIU Vice President Jaime Contreras. “MWAA contractors should be functioning at a higher level than Congress by being part of the solution, not the problem.” (seiu32bj.org, July 12) □

A MARXIST VIEW

How patents made Facebook superrich

By Jeff Sorel

In 2004, Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook from his dormitory room. Facebook went public in early 2012. Zuckerberg was already a billionaire at the age of 23. Today, this social medium has a market capitalization of over \$463 billion. Zuckerberg's current net worth is over \$63 billion, ranking him as the fifth richest person in the world, according to Forbes.

How could so much wealth and capital be so quickly accumulated in one person's hands?

The short answer is monopoly. With more than 2 billion monthly active users, Facebook has a virtual monopoly of social media, messaging and networking traffic. It achieved that monopoly in large part thanks to a vital tool of capitalist accumulation: patents.

Patents provide monopoly profits

Patent law provides the patent holder, in return for public disclosure of the invention, with the exclusive right to make, use and sell the invention for a limited period (20 years for most patents). In other words, patents confer a government-authorized "intellectual property" right to exclude competition and monopolize.

With patent rights in hand, capitalists can use and even sell information without fear that disclosure will render it worthless. Patents thereby transform ideas and information into profitable private property.

Facebook's superprofits derive from ownership of patents relating to digital content display and communications. Those patents allow Facebook (including subsidiaries like WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram) to control much of the internet's social media and messaging traffic.

That control in turn enables Facebook to charge monopoly prices for displaying content that it does not make itself, thereby garnering immense revenues without incurring the costs of production.

There are no inherent barriers that prevent the free flow of information over the internet. But free flow is not conducive to private profit, the lifeblood of capitalism. To allow a few monopolists to profit at the expense of the many, capitalism created artificial barriers to free flow by developing intellectual property law.

The initial reasons given for designing patent laws were to encourage and protect individual inventors. But as capital-

ism developed, large corporate interests replaced individual creators as the beneficiaries of patent law. Today, most companies require their employees to sign over their innovative ideas to the companies themselves. In this way the companies secure most of the resulting profits.

Facebook too maintains its monopoly status by free riding on inventions that others create. Although Facebook applies for hundreds of patents each month (tinyurl.com/mjn42n5), it has purchased most of its patents and patent applications, including those covering its "news feed" and "like" button, from the actual inventors or other companies.

Like other tech giants, Facebook spends vast sums to acquire huge patent portfolios, allowing it to expropriate others' innovations and multiply profits. It then wields its patent rights against potential competitors by suing or fighting lawsuits. (tinyurl.com/y9levzao)

Facebook's only significant assets are the personal data it has collected on users and the patents it owns to ensure its sole control over gathering and use of that data. That control allows Facebook to reap the benefits of highly targeted advertising as well as to finance other ventures.

Zuckerberg might object that no one is forced to join Facebook. But no one forced people to buy TVs in the mid-twentieth century either, yet in practice few believed they could do without them. It is likewise becoming increasingly difficult to function in today's world without Facebook and other social media. This means big bucks for Zuckerberg and his cronies.

Data control provides revenue bonanza

It is hard to overstate the reach of Facebook's data accumulation. Rapidly developing technology allows Facebook to know (or infer) who you are and what you are like, where you are and where you will be, what you are doing and why you are doing it — and even what you will do next.

Access to this intimate customer data enables content providers to immediately tailor retail prices to individual need and ability to pay, as well as ascertain minimum acceptable quality and service. This data-driven opportunity to increase sales and prices represents an enormous commercial jackpot.

Facebook's data dominance largely precludes competitors. As a result, it has reaped monopoly profits by rapidly raising advertising and content placement rates.

Facebook amounts to a three-sided network composed of users, content pro-

viders and advertisers. Its profits derive from the "network effects" of connecting these three elements. Facebook acts as intermediary on virtually every transaction, getting paid big time for simply matching buyers with sellers. When you click a link on a Facebook page and buy a product or service, Facebook gets its behind-the-scenes cut.

Advertisers and companies pay Facebook for access to the data and users it controls. Those who make the payments haven't bought the ownership of Facebook's data or intellectual property; rather, they lease access to the information much like a landowner leases land and access to water.

But unlike with land, which can be leased to only a single lessee at a time, information can be leased to an enormous number of lessees. That enables Facebook to generate vast inflows of revenues from its patent-based monopoly.

At bottom, companies that sell products and services effectively pay "information rent" to Facebook for the right to use information over which Facebook maintains a monopoly due to its patents.

As a Facebook user, you might say: "So what? I don't pay anything to use Facebook." But, in fact, you pay plenty. Facebook's monopoly of vital consumer information enables it to charge inflated prices to advertisers and commercial purchasers of that information, who then pass on those inflated prices to the ultimate consumers of their products and services.

In other words, those billions piling up in Mark Zuckerberg's coffers are being squeezed out of all of us.

Facebook's monopoly may eventually collapse due to expiration of its patents or for other reasons (technological, legal), but only after many years of extracting monopoly rents, inflating consumer prices and stifling innovation.

Facebook's role in the capitalist economy

From a Marxist economic perspective, what role does Facebook play?

Marx explained that capitalism enables industrialists to obtain more value from their workers' production than the value of the wages paid to those workers. That difference he called "surplus value." The industrialist obtains "absolute" surplus value by lengthening the working day, and "relative" surplus value by increasing labor productivity.

Broadly speaking, Facebook's enclosure of valuable information both facilitates creation of relative surplus value

and dictates distribution of total surplus value among capitalists.

First, data centralization and display likely enhance labor productivity throughout the economy by reducing data-gathering time and thereby extracting more value per worker, increasing relative surplus value.

Second, and more significantly, Facebook and other data giants obtain an increasing portion of total surplus value by their consolidating, packaging and selling of valuable information. In the past decade, some \$50 billion per year has been reallocated from content creators to owners of monopoly platforms like Facebook.

According to the former editor of The Guardian, a British newspaper, Facebook "sucked up \$27 million" of the paper's projected 2015 digital advertising revenue by locking readers onto Facebook rather than linking them to the Guardian site. "If you control the menu," he noted, "you control the choices." (tinyurl.com/yd3a52cz)

The upshot is that intellectual property rights facilitate the transfer of much of the total surplus value produced by the global working class into the hands of information monopolists. Whether these "information monopolies" are bringing about a great enough change to represent a new phase of monopoly capitalism is a question that invites serious analysis.

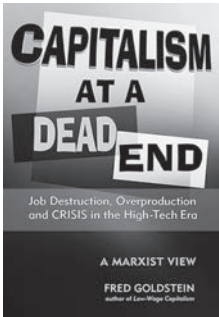
In any event, the ability to generate and provide access to vast troves of information is clearly a major productive force in contemporary capitalism. The contradiction between continued growth of this force of production and the prevailing relations of production (private information monopolies) appears unsustainable.

Fear that their vast wealth may tumble like a house of cards motivates occasional forays into philanthropy by Zuckerberg and other information technology tycoons like Bill Gates of Microsoft and Jeff Bezos of Amazon to assuage suffering from the inequalities they helped create. But philanthropy cannot resolve the explosive contradiction at the heart of the information economy.

Capitalism, with its private ownership of the means of production, must be overthrown to unleash the full potential of the information age. Replacing capitalism with socialism will remove the monopolistic fetters of private intellectual property and establish a planned economy to ensure that useful ideas and information serve everyone and are no longer hijacked to create instant billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg. □

Workers World Party holds Marxist classes in Philadelphia

Over the July 22-23 weekend, young activists and revolutionaries from Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Boston and Durham, N.C., attended an educational weekend on Marxist-Leninist theory and practice hosted by the Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party.
— Story and photo by Joe Piette



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

Available at all major online booksellers.



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

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida



O.J. Simpson and the injustice system

By Monica Moorehead

Orenthal James Simpson, aka O.J. Simpson, is set to be paroled from a Nevada prison in early October, after serving nine years of a 33-year prison sentence for armed robbery. His parole hearing was viewed live on July 20 by millions on ESPN, the world's largest sports channel, and via other major media outlets.

Simpson first came to national prominence when he won the Heisman Trophy, which is awarded annually to the best college football player, in 1968. He then became one of the greatest running backs in the history of the National Football League until his retirement in 1979. Simpson also was the main face in TV ads for the Hertz car rental company and acted in films and TV shows.

Many think that Simpson's sentence had less to do with his being found guilty in 2008, for allegedly attempting to confiscate his sold football memorabilia in a Las Vegas hotel room, and more to do with his being found not guilty of the 1994 double murders of his second spouse, Nicole Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, in Los Angeles.

The 1994 courtroom drama involving Simpson was dubbed the "trial of the century." Simpson's "dream team" of high-profile lawyers included Johnnie Cochran, F. Lee Bailey, Robert Shapiro and Robert Kardashian. Members of the Los Angeles Police Department were accused of tampering with evidence, including the notorious Mark Fuhrman, a white cop caught on tape using the N-word. For more than a year the live televised trial captured the daily attention of millions in the U.S. and worldwide, even before social media via the internet was born.

Documentary puts verdict in political context

This year's Oscar-winning documentary, "O.J.: Made in America," took more than seven hours to present the historical and political context of Simpson's rise to prominence, the killings, the trial, the verdict and the reaction to the verdict. The director, Ezra Edelman, who is African American, showed that Simpson became a major symbol of the racist injustices that Black people as a whole face on a daily basis, especially if, unlike Simpson, they can't afford the best lawyers money can buy. Many of those incarcerated today have not gone to trial due to being indigent, either unable to make bail or forced to accept plea deals.

Edelman also showed that Simpson lacked social consciousness compared to activist athletes like Colin Kaepernick. Simpson put his career ahead of support

for the aspirations of Black people facing police brutality, lack of jobs, decent housing and more in Los Angeles. This was not a subjective commentary on Simpson, but a factual presentation.

The fact that so many Black people cheered and applauded when Simpson was acquitted on Oct. 3, 1995, was due to the acquittal being viewed as a symbolic victory — a Black man beating a bigoted system — rather than his guilt or innocence in the killings.

Edelman stated his film's goal: "It's a deeper portrait of a country. It's the people who have experience being Black in America and the indignities that come with that. To see the most famous and entitled person be on trial and to have so many people vested in his acquittal when he's so not representative of the people, that is the tragedy." (independent.co.uk, March 6)

Edelman did a powerful job of raising examples of just how racist the system — courts, laws, police and more — is toward Black people in Los Angeles. Take the tragic murder of Latasha Harlins, a 15-year-old African American, by a Korean grocer in South Central Los Angeles in 1991. The grocer was fined \$500 and did no prison time, yet another example of how the courts dehumanize Black life. Many cite this particular killing, along with the acquittal of four white cops who savagely beat Black motorist Rodney King, as a major spark for the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992.

The documentary also raises the 1979 Los Angeles police killing of 39-year-old Eula Mae Love, who was shot eight times on her lawn for the "crime" of owing money on her gas bill. The documentary also shows the Cointelpro police repression against the Black Panther Party and other Black political activists.

Even though Simpson was acquitted in 1995 and committed no violations while imprisoned, he will continue to be labeled as a murderer, especially by the corporate media.

Once Simpson, who is now 70 years old, is released from prison, he will be tied to parole obligations until Sept. 29, 2022, if there are no violations. He will have to make monthly reports to the Nevada Board of Parole Commissioners.

Simpson will be one of 7 million U.S. adults — one in 31 of the population — who are on either parole or probation. This includes 9.2 percent of all Black adults, which is more than four times that of white adults at 2.2 percent. (pewtrusts.org)

Monica Moorehead was the 2016 presidential candidate of Workers World Party.

Ferguson activist Ashley Yates, Assata Shakur and

Ashley Yates is co-founder of the Ferguson-based grass-roots organization, Millennial Activists United (MAU). Originally from Florissant, Mo., Yates was one of the early on-the-ground organizers following the unjust police killing of Mike Brown on Aug. 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Mo. In 2015, she was a Black Lives Matter representative at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

As one of the more vocal activists at the forefront of the Ferguson Rebellion, Yates' many contributions have helped provide key leadership to a new generation of young freedom fighters and Black abolitionists. Affectionately described by CNN as a "disruptor of the status quo," Yates' thoughts and critiques on racism and state violence have been featured on NPR, Democracy Now! the Huffington Post and MSNBC. Read along as we discuss Assata Shakur, Black woman leadership and recent housing developments in Oakland, Calif.

Lamont Lilly: Ashley, thank you so much for your time and willingness to talk with me. Though you're still connected to the ground in Ferguson and St. Louis, you're actually living in Oakland, Calif., now. When did you move to Oakland?

Ashley Yates: I moved out here in mid-December 2014, shortly after Darren Wilson's non-indictment. [While a police officer, Wilson fatally shot Mike Brown.]

LL: What brought you out to Oakland?

AY: There were a few different factors that went into that. A few personal things that happened made it clear that my life had drastically changed after I decided to take a stand for Mike Brown and Black lives, especially in a place like Ferguson and the St. Louis area. I realized my life was different, and it was not going to go back to the way it was. I also knew I needed some space to heal and grow.

I also came to Oakland to connect with the history here, more specifically the Black Panther Party. I wasn't a scholar on the Black Panthers or anything, but I did know that this was the founding place. I also didn't know much about the city, or who was doing what. It just seemed like a place where I could learn and grow, and to soak up some of the organizing history.

I've taken a different path than what I expected, but it's been a huge blessing. Ideally, I wanted to just jump right in and be like, "Yo, take me to every spot the Black Panthers were at." But it doesn't work like that. That's just being idealistic. It's taken me a few years to build relationships with people, but the city has given me a lot.

LL: In addition to police terror and state violence, there is another major struggle in Oakland — gentrification and affordable housing. What are the housing conditions like in Oakland, particularly within the Black community? What are you seeing there?

AY: In Oakland, there are entire tent cities and it's concentrated. I can think of at least six tent cities off the top of my head — congregations and communities of folks without housing! And I barely know the city like that. It's almost indescribable. When you add the developers to the multimillion-dollar corporations, along with the backdoor deals of the courts and city officials, it becomes a multilayered struggle just to keep people in their homes — or to stop an eviction. The rate at which it's happening is just mind-blowing.

What's happening in Oakland is a direct effect of Silicon Valley and the tech industry. These people could not be more

directly responsible than if they walked in and literally "punched" people out of their homes. For me not to name that would be an injustice to Oakland.

These industries and corporations are violently displacing people, yet they're wiping their hands clean. On top of that, some of these corporations aren't paying any local taxes. They're making more money, yet poor people are being pushed out of their homes. If you allow it to, it will make your head hurt. The average rent in the Bay Area now is \$3,000.

LL: I just want to make sure I'm hearing you correctly. Did you say the average rent in the Bay Area is \$3,000 per month?

AY: I'm sorry. Let me not be hyperbolic. The number that we pulled from Forbes last year was actually \$2,975. I just rounded that up to \$3,000. That's absurd!

Last year here in Oakland, I was looking at two-bedroom apartments, ranging from 900 to 1,100 square feet. Those were \$2,400 a month. I saw one apartment I thought about briefly, but it was \$1,800 a month. People are paying \$2,000 plus for a studio apartment in Oakland now. I just can't afford that. Also, there are not many Black communities left in Oakland. Gentrification is wiping them out. East Oakland is pretty much what's left here.

LL: You were recently abroad in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. What was your purpose in going? What were some of the things you learned?

AY: Funny story about Brazil. I'm still not quite sure how that happened. Out of the blue, I received an email invite to this conference in Brazil. When I contacted the sender, there were some language barriers, but I eventually found out that I was being invited by the Brazilian government to attend their first state conference on racism and anti-Blackness.

The conference was a week long. Everyone wanted to hear about the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. People wanted to hear about Ferguson and Baltimore, and some of our strategies of resistance and grass-roots organizing. The events were so powerful and political, but also very cultural and full of art and music. I was the only representative there from the United States.

We also got a chance to visit and build with folks in the favelas, the equivalent of "the hood" in the U.S., the shanty towns. These were the communities that were forced into the most undesirable parts of the city and country — the hillsides and highlands — where the poor were forced to create their own infrastructure. We're talking strongholds of



Simpson supporters denounce LAPD, 1995.

Ashley Yates talks Oakland, Black woman leadership

By Lamont Lilly

Afro-Brazilian communities that are direct descendants of African captives, who have thrived in the highlands for quite some time.

This was right after the World Cup. There were units of SWAT teams still present in the favelas. They were charged with “cleaning up the streets” for these huge international events, to make it look a certain way.

This process of “cleaning things up” had been taking place for several months. Developers were coming into the favelas and kicking people out of their homes. These same communities were once undesirable. But now that people have been there for decades, now that plumbing and piping and foundations have been set up, not to mention the gorgeous view — these favelas have become points of interest for luxury housing. Now, there are thousands of Afro-Brazilians being violently removed from their homes to make way for the rich and their new condominiums.

Being able to witness this for myself was so powerful. It really put a lot of things into perspective for me. It was a reminder of why it’s so important to create these relationships, to learn from each other.

One of the things I found out while I was down there is that, in addition to Israel, Brazil has been a training site for U.S. law enforcement. We’re talking about the Los Angeles Police Department, the FBI and the Chicago Police Department, who flew down to share tactics and information with Brazilian authorities and state police. We certainly cannot ignore these international partnerships that perpetuate our oppression, both locally and globally. If our oppressors are organizing globally, we should be organizing globally just as hard for our liberation.

LL: I wanted to ask you about the infamous “Assata Taught Me” T-shirt, which can also be purchased as a hoodie. It has become a staple of movement apparel. Where did the idea of such a simple, but powerful statement come from? What does the phrase “Assata Taught Me” mean to you?

AY: Right after the murder of Mike Brown, we formed a small unit on West Florissant Street. I hate to say this or perpetuate such an analogy, but when you’re in a war, you have to form a unit of survival. These were groups of people that you would show up with or connect with throughout the day. You checked in on each other, made sure folks ate or got home safely.

At one of those first meetings of our unit, after some conversation, we knew that we would need a name. We decided on MAU, for Millennial Activists United. We eventually got T-shirts made up, and other people really began to support them, and we were very down with that. But my concern was that a bunch of people, many of whom we didn’t even know, were going to wear our name — but be involved in different types of activities, doing whatever they wanted to do. When you consider the history of the state and their treatment of Black Liberation organizations, I didn’t think that would be a good idea. We were already being demonized by the national media.



Ashley Yates

On the back of the MAU T-shirt was the Assata Shakur chant. We started to close out our nights with it and bring it to the streets. We originally picked it up from a Black Lives Matter session with a brilliant sister activist, Sister Malkia [Cyril], from the Center for Media Justice. She was the one who pulled this out and made it a mantra on the West Coast.

One night, I was at MoKaBe’s Coffee House and Jamilah Lemieux (from Ebony magazine) was sitting right across from me. I was talking to her about the Assata chant and about the fact that we needed shirts with a popular movement message, but without MAU on them. Somehow in the conversation “Assata Taught Me” just came to me. It’s not an original phrase, by any means, but it was something that I felt would really resonate with people. Who else better as a symbol of resistance — from the New Jersey Turnpike, to being broken out of prison, to living in exile in Cuba? It’s the real-life story line of a Black woman legend.

The design of the shirt was created right in MoKaBe’s. Jamilah helped me pick out the font because I’m picky as hell about everything. I was just going for something strong, simple and straightforward. After Jamilah helped me through my self-doubt, we said, “Yeah, that looks good.” We put it on Teespring and went from there.

I just hope people feel empowered by it

and feel a sense of community when they wear it. I hope they feel the resistance, the ancestors and unapologetically Black. You’re not only wearing Assata Shakur. You’re also wearing the Black Liberation Army. They were the ones who rescued Assata. I’m just glad people like the shirt. The feedback has been incredible.

LL: Speaking of women warriors, when we talk about Black Lives Matter, we must also talk about the critical role of Black woman leadership. What does it mean to you to be a Black woman on the frontlines? And in your case, a queer Black woman on the frontlines?

AY: It’s quite sensitive, to say the least, for so many reasons. I say that because of all the attention and the kind of misunderstanding around intersectionality, specifically, and identity politics, more largely. A lot of people don’t know this, but after Mike Brown was murdered in Ferguson, it was actually MAU who were the first to mention anything in reference to “queer” and “movement” in the same breath. We were definitely the first advocates of this specific intersection coming out of Ferguson.

We hear a lot about the Black Lives Matter Network being queer and women now — but the first body to really raise this question was MAU. You can date back what I’m saying now to the interview we did with Darnell Moore and The Feminist Wire. We specifically did

this interview to uplift the narrative of our lived experiences. (See tinyurl.com/y9e2824o/.)

At the time, a lot of the mainstream media was only focused around the narratives of our two brothers, Tef Poe and Tory Russell, who are certainly honorable, but two men nonetheless. Just to be clear, that wasn’t their fault. We absolutely love Tef and Tory! It’s not a reflection of them; it’s an acknowledgement of how mainstream media works in this country.

We live in a very patriarchal society, you know. But MAU was also very active on the ground, and people were following us, as Black women. It was so important for this narrative to be uplifted as well. And although the media didn’t understand, Tef and Tory were actually a major part of uplifting our narrative. At the time, at least half of our organization was queer women. We just didn’t want that to be left out.

I think that Feminist Wire interview helped to set a new precedent about what it looks like to do this work in a way that honors our ancestors, but also honors the mistakes that were made, the erasure that happened. There was a time when folks like Bayard Rustin and Marsha P. Johnson couldn’t fight like we fight today because of the times and the politics

of those times. As a Black queer woman, it was part of my duty to pick up this mantle and to build on it.

How can we talk about resistance without mentioning the Stonewall Rebellion? How can we talk about the Black Liberation Movement without mentioning James Baldwin? We can’t! I can’t imagine a movement without Black queer people, whether we’re talking 1965 or 2014.

In reference to Black women in general, we’ve been pushing back against that narrative since Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells. It’s a shame that Black women still have to be invited to a table that we helped create. As Solange [Knowles] would say, we’ve earned our seat at the table. We’ve earned several seats! Without Black women, there wouldn’t be no damn seats, no table, no nothing!

LL: Thank you so much for talking with me, Ashley, and sharing your experiences. You really are an amazing freedom fighter. Salute to you, Sis!

AY: Thank you, Lamont. Let’s stay in touch and keep building.

A North Carolina-based activist, Lamont Lilly was the 2016 Workers World Party vice presidential candidate. In 2015, he was a U.S. delegate at the International Forum for Justice in Palestine in Beirut, Lebanon. He is also an organizer and journalist in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Film review

‘Ukraine on Fire’ exposes fascism

By Mike Kühlenbeck

Director Igor Lopatonok’s powerful documentary, “Ukraine on Fire,” exposes the history of Western imperialist intervention in Ukraine and the 2014 coup that allowed the far-right to ascend to power.

“Ukraine on Fire” was written by Vanessa Dean and executive-produced by filmmaker Oliver Stone (“The Putin Interviews,” 2017). It contains much footage of the street violence that brought down the Ukrainian government in 2014. The film also features conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and Minister of Internal Affairs Vitaliy Zakharchenko, as well as with award-winning investigative journalist Robert Parry, the founder of Consortium News.

The film investigates the series of events that allowed for “Euromaidan” and set the stage for the coup in Ukraine.

The film’s narrator describes Ukraine as a land of beauty, heroism and sacrifice. Rich in arable land and resources, it has served as a pathway for Western powers trying to subvert and conquer the East, particularly the former Soviet Union, and now Russia.

But the Ukrainian people have “paid the highest price for these games of power.” The U.S. and other world powers have attempted to control Ukraine and use it for their own purposes.

Fascism in Ukraine

For decades Ukraine has been plagued with fascist elements, like the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), formed in 1929. OUN members openly conspired with the Nazi invaders during World War II, and some even joined the Waffen S.S. As noted in “Fraud, Famine and Fascism” (1987) by Douglas Tottle, “The relationship between German Nazism and Ukrainian Nationalism” was “no brief honeymoon.”

By the end of 1941 — the same year the Nazis broke their treaty and invaded the Soviet Union in “Operation Barbarossa”

— the OUN militia had murdered between 150,000 to 200,000 Jews in German-occupied Ukraine. They also targeted other groups the Nazis labeled as “*untermenschen*” or “subhuman.”

After Germany surrendered to Allied forces on May 7, 1945, Ukraine remained a part of the USSR. While Nazi leaders were tried for crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg Trials, the Ukrainian nationalists were spared.

Declassified documents from the U.S. government reveal strong ties between the CIA and the Ukrainian nationalists. The agency was well aware of their crimes and used them as tools in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. In a fanatical crusade against socialism and communism, the U.S. and its NATO partners allied themselves with countless reactionaries in bloody conflicts around the globe.

In 1989, the Narodny Rukh (Peoples Movement) emerged, advocating Ukrainian independence. It became an “incubator” for Ukrainian neo-Nazism. Two years later, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became independent. Since then, the far-right has made a resurgence with groups like the Svoboda party, which champions the cruel fascist ideology earlier carried out by OUN leader Stepan Bandera. Later, other reactionary groups and parties were formed, such as Trident and the Right Sector party.

After the USSR ceased to exist, Ukraine fell into privatization and corruption, which enriched the elite at the expense of the Ukrainian people. In November 2013, Yanukovich sought to ease the country’s economic woes by turning to the European Union, but he says the negotiations failed “due to the usual draconian demands made by the International Monetary Fund.” So he turned to President Putin of Russia. Protests against Yanukovich’s government then erupted in the streets of central Kiev, the nation’s capital.

The U.S. blamed the violence on the government even as Washington played a big part in Yanukovich’s overthrow.

In one section of the film, we hear a tape recording of the notorious conversation between Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt discussing who should replace Yanukovich as president.

U.S. partnership with fascist groups

The film shows that the street violence and anti-government rhetoric being spouted were committed by the ideological disciples of the Nazi collaborators propped up by the CIA following World War II. The protests and the media coverage of “Euromaidan” were largely orchestrated by fascists (mostly from western Ukraine), with help from the U.S. government and its partners. Ukrainian television news outlets Spilno, Espresso and Hromadske slanted their coverage of the situation and demanded Yanukovich’s ouster. It has been revealed that these networks, like many of the protesters, were partially funded by the U.S. Embassy.

The film sheds light on the role of internationally financed nongovernmental organizations in helping topple governments, including those with democratic elections. Such NGOs, supported by the CIA, have included the likes of the National Endowment for Democracy, which has supported violent regime change since the mid-1980s, including the invasion of Iraq in 2003. This is best explained by interview subject Parry, who helped break early stories on the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s.

According to director Lopatonok: “In the 1980s, most of these ‘regime changes’ were orchestrated by the CIA. In Ukraine, we uncovered the fingerprints of new stage helpers influencing our elections.”

In Washington, D.C., the effort was applauded by Sens. John McCain and



Chris Murphy. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright supported arming the Ukraine government with weapons — for “defensive” purposes, of course. Stone, who also conducted some of the interviews in the film, posted a statement on social media in 2015 revealing how he and those he interviewed believed “these foreign elements were introduced by pro-Western factions — with CIA fingerprints on it.”

Instead of falling prey to the fascist-backed oligarchs now in power, the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk split from Ukraine to form their own republics. The U.S. continues to arm and fund Kiev in an effort to crush the resistance. As the fighting rages on, so does Washington’s effort to demonize and threaten Russia and its allies.

Film banned but available

“Ukraine on Fire” was banned in Ukraine. Efforts have also been made to prevent the film from being shown in the U.S. ever since it appeared on the film festival circuit last year. Fortunately, the 95-minute documentary is being distributed by Cinema Libre Studio, which has courageously partnered with Stone in releasing two other important political documentary features: “South of the Border” (2010) and “Looking for Fidel” (2006).

“Ukraine on Fire” was made available for online streaming (Amazon Video and Vimeo on Demand) in the U.S. and Canada on June 27 and will be made available on DVD and Blu-ray on July 18. □

Commentary

Class-war criminals and San Antonio

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Most of us are familiar with the concept of “war criminals.” Maybe the phrase calls to mind the Nazis sentenced at Nuremberg after World War II.

The U.S. certainly has its share of war criminals. In 2010, the BRussells Tribunal, under the umbrella of the International Initiative to Prosecute U.S. Genocide in Iraq, charged four U.S. presidents — the two Bushes, Clinton and Obama — with “crimes against humanity and genocide” for their responsibility in 1.5 million Iraqi deaths over 19 years of sanctions, attacks and two full-scale wars.

Make no mistake. These are class-war criminals also — those in power in the capitalist economy and political establishment who create the desperate conditions in which workers and oppressed people die, year in and year out, fighting for their lives.

With the terrible news of migrant human beings dying in San Antonio, we have to ask again: “Who are the real criminals?” Some 200 migrants were found dangerously sickened by intense heat in an oven of a truck. At least 10 were dying. The workers were traveling to the

U.S. from economically perilous lives in Mexico, Guatemala and other Central American countries.

So far the only criminal charge levied has been against another worker who was driving the truck. There will be no charge against powerful Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, who shamefully blamed the tragedy on “sanctuary cities” that don’t cooperate with immigration agencies and that he charges “promote illegal immigration.” Those cities are now banned in Texas.

Politicians like Patrick hobnob with the Texas Business Roundtable — government contractors, petrochemical companies, insurance companies, retailers and restaurateurs — and promote the interests of capitalists who depend on exploiting workers, including the undocumented, to boost their profits.

Amy Fischer of the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services in San Antonio speaks the truth. She indicted those setting the criminal and death-dealing immigration policies, saying “They, in fact, have blood on their hands....” (LA Times, July 23)

Meanwhile, resistance to the racist

Continued on page 9

Meeting for Portland’s ‘Hands Off Syria Coalition’



John Parker, Workers World Party National Committee member and 2004 U.S. presidential candidate, spoke to a responsive crowd in Portland, Ore., on July 22 about his trip to the Middle East in 2013 as part of a International Action Center delegation that investigated U.S. war crimes against the people of Syria, Sudan, Iraq and Palestine.

Sharing his experiences in Syria, Parker helped expose the lies and propaganda the U.S. is using to justify “regime change” and wage an aggressive war on the Syrian people. He stressed the importance of building community-based, anti-imperialist coalitions, not only to protest U.S. war crimes at home and abroad,

but to inspire liberation movements in countries under the crosshairs of the U.S. and NATO allies.

The event inaugurated Portland’s newly formed “Hands Off Syria Coalition PDX” initiated by Workers World and GABRIELA. (PDX is the abbreviation for Portland International Airport.) The rapidly growing group plans to help build support in Portland for other countries, such as Venezuela, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Iran, which are also threatened by U.S. wars of aggression.

— Story and photo by Lyn Neeley

NYC demonstration: ‘Maduro, the people are with you’

By Brenda Ryan
New York

An emergency action was held in New York City on July 22 to stop U.S. intervention in Venezuela and to protest the New York Times’ collaboration with the U.S. State Department. Protesters marched from Times Square to the New York Times building chanting “Maduro, amigo — el pueblo están contigo” (Maduro, friend — the people are with you) and “Donald Trump out of Venezuela!”

The U.S. president has threatened “strong and swift” economic actions against Venezuela if President Nicolás Maduro proceeds with the scheduled July 30 election of members to Venezuela’s Constitutional Assembly.

“This is a call to war from Donald Trump,” Teresa Gutierrez, of Workers World Party, said at a rally in front of the New York Times. “We must do everything we can to stop U.S. intervention in Venezuela.”

William Camacaro, of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, said the Times has not reported about the 20 people set on fire and many others killed by the right wing in Venezuela.

Estela Vazquez, executive vice president of 1199 SEIU, the health care workers union, noted that while Venezuela empowers its people and provides health care for all, the government here wants to take everything from the workers, including their right to health care and to organize. She denounced the media for its support of the CIA’s involvement in Latin America and particularly in the civil wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Brazil.

Lucy Pagoda, of Honduras-USA Resistance, called on the New York Times to come to Honduras to observe the elections there. She said the U.S. supported the 2009 coup in Honduras, which is now the most violent country in the world. “That’s what the New York Times should focus on,” she said. □



Teresa Gutierrez (front) of Workers World Party: ‘We must stop U.S. intervention.’

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

VENEZUELA ANALYSIS: The gains of the Bolivarian Revolution

By John Steffin

The people of Venezuela are currently taking steps to deepen the Bolivarian Revolution, and the U.S. ruling class is now scrambling to prevent this.

Democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro has called for a National Constituent Assembly in order to defend the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution against an increasingly violent opposition group led by oil scions like Leopoldo López (goo.gl/fmC8fk) and bankers, such as the two from Citibank who recently attacked the Venezuelan ambassador during his recent trip to New York City (goo.gl/pF9SA3). In response, the U.S. State Department, the White House and Marco Rubio have condemned the National Constituent Assembly as illegal and called for more “democracy.”

These claims are preposterous, given that the current Venezuelan Constitution provides for such an assembly in Article

347, and given that Venezuela’s electoral process has been deemed the best in the world by none other than former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, who runs an electoral process monitoring center. It’s also deeply hypocritical for any politician in the U.S. to call for more democracy abroad, when the U.S. ruling class practices voter suppression at home and participates in the assassination of democratically elected leaders around the globe.

Meanwhile, the U.S. media, particularly the New York Times, but also even so-called pro-socialist magazines, have continued a shameful legacy of supporting imperialist war efforts by giving exclusive voice to the right-wing opposition in Venezuela. As it did with Iraq before the 2003 invasion, the New York Times has published numerous articles calling for U.S. intervention in Venezuela, and as with Iraq, its reasons for doing so are built on lies.

National Assembly could enshrine grass-roots institutions

There is much to defend in the Bolivarian Revolution. The misinformation campaigns run by U.S. media, however, have been successful in hiding what the Venezuelan masses have gained. The Bolivarian Missions and the Commune Movement are inspiring examples of endeavors to build socialism, and they are under threat.

While riots stemming from the wealthiest neighborhoods of Caracas rage in narrow areas, Afro-Venezuelans, Indigenous communities and other members of the most oppressed in Venezuela look forward to the National Constituent Assembly. There they hope to have the opportunity to enshrine the Bolivarian Revolution’s pro-people, pro-poor endeavors in the Constitution.

The Missions were first implemented under President Chávez and are managed by workers and citizens. They provide anti-poverty services, free medical clinics for the poor, food and housing subsidies, and support for educational campaigns and Indigenous rights.

The Communes, which were first formed in self-defense against the assault of neoliberalism in the late 1980s, are a network of neighborhood councils,

self-defense groups and other grass-roots bodies of self-governance and self-determination that were connected and institutionalized at the national level under President Chávez. The communes allow communities and people to decide what their needs are and how they are met.

Enshrining these institutions in the constitution would strengthen them against attacks from a right-wing-dominated National Assembly.

Role of the U.S. left and Venezuela

The sharpening of contradictions in the U.S. have eroded the political center here and propelled some people toward new alternatives further to the left. Unfortunately, this explosive movement toward social democratic groups has not yet removed all the chauvinist, pro-U.S. indoctrination of the past.

When organizations spread or accept without question the misinformation spread by the U.S. media, they weaken the growing resistance to U.S. imperialism. This is compounded if they set up some sort of litmus test that any revolution abroad or any government under imperialist attack is almost guaranteed to fail. It is the primary role of the U.S. left to stop U.S. imperialism from intervening against other countries and movements, which must organize under difficult, often brutal conditions propagated by im-

perialist violence and economic sabotage.

Back in 2002, mere months after the Chávez government took the first steps toward socialism by redistributing land to peasants and the urban poor, and started using oil revenue to fund social services, democratically elected President Chávez was captured by a narrow, pro-imperialist sector of the top military as the U.S. media cheered.

Only through a heroic mass struggle and with support of other sectors of the Venezuelan armed forces were the Venezuelan people able to reverse the U.S.-backed coup — the first successful struggle to do so in Latin American history. Chavistas have not forgotten this lesson, and it is crucial that the U.S. left not forget it either.

Today, amid violence and threat of sanctions and knowing well the risks, the Venezuelan people are taking brave steps toward deepening the gains of the revolution. Only recently, during the dry run for the election of representatives to the National Constituent Assembly, armed biker gangs terrorized a polling station in a pro-government neighborhood, killing one person and injuring three others.

In the words of Assata Shakur, “It is our duty to love and support one another.” We support the Venezuelan people in their heroic struggle for socialism. □

Class war criminals

Continued from page 8

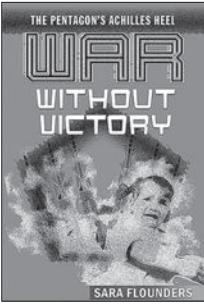
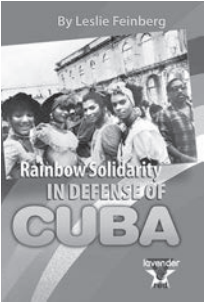
class war targeting migrant workers and refuge seekers is building within the U.S.

Communities are creating defense networks to protect neighbors and immigrants against ICE, the Border Patrol and local police agencies. Unions representing transit workers, nurses, communication workers, postal workers, electrical workers and others have strongly defended migrant workers.

A Puerto Rican congregation in New Haven, Conn., has now taken into sanctuary Nury Chavarria, a Guatemalan housekeeper who has worked 24 years in the U.S. In Syracuse, N.Y., where the Border Patrol harasses, detains and drags people off buses and trains, the Workers’ Center of Central New York and the CNY Solidarity Rapid Response Team have activated picket lines and resistance at the Regional Transportation Center.

The battle against racism and for immigrant rights is a key struggle in the class war against the crime of capitalism.

Now is the time to join your local self-defense networks in the fight! □



Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of ‘Stone Butch Blues’
Feinberg’s book documents revolutionary Cuba’s inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.

A compilation of articles from the Workers World series entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at workers.org.
The book is available at major online booksellers

WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders PentagonAchillesHeel.com
“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.”
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Available at online booksellers.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Killer cops, racism and class rule

The disparity in how the media are handling the fatal shooting of a white woman in Minneapolis by a cop born in Somalia, emphasizing her innocence, contrasts sharply with how they react when white cops shoot Black and Brown people. Black and Brown youth are especially racially slurred constantly with terms such as “menacing” and “criminal” by the corporate media and police as justification for their executions.

What the media won't say is that no police killings are justified. The police exist to terrorize the most oppressed. Therefore, such murder is treated as a “mistake” when someone who doesn't fit into that description is victimized.

Why are the police so trigger happy in the first place? Why are they increasingly being armed with military-style weapons?

What happened to Justine Damond is a tragedy. But so were the police killings of 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland; of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.; of Amadou Diallo, Shantel Davis and Eric Garner in New York; of Philando Castile in Minnesota; Rekia Boyd and LaQuan McDonald in Chicago; and of so many other Black and Brown women, men, trans people and people with disabilities across the country. But they were more than a tragedy.

They were the routine targets of what is called the “justice system.” The police, courts and prisons exist to defend the indefensible: the horrendous exploitation and oppression that go on every day and are taken for granted under capitalism. Billions of dollars are stolen from the working class by the super-rich.

In the United States especially, this expropriation of the masses goes hand-in-hand with violent racism and national oppression.

Racism in this country was generated by the rich as a tool to divide the workers, ever since the land itself was stolen from its Indigenous inhabitants.

Much of this stolen land was given by the British crown to wealthy settlers, often titled aristocrats, who then kidnapped and enslaved African families, making them work the land without pay so the plantation owners could become fabulously wealthy. The so-called “Founding Fathers” were packed with these slaveowners.

There were no police when this land was inhabited by Indigenous nations. The first police forces in this country were the so-called “slave patrols” and “night watches.” The former were created to hunt down Black people who had escaped from the hellish conditions on Southern plantations. The latter were to keep Native people locked up on the barren “reservations” into which they had been herded by the Army.

The basis of the racism that persists

today is class oppression. Racism facilitates the super-exploitation of sections of the working class, while allowing those not so targeted to feel “privileged” by comparison.

That is made clear by the demographics of the U.S.

Looking at the richest 1% by their assets, only 1.4 percent are Black, including those who have achieved success through their outstanding talents as performers or athletes.

Even more stark is the finding that “the median white family has a net worth of \$116,000. ... In comparison, nearly 40 percent or 5.6 million African-American homes in the U.S. have zero or negative net worth. In addition, when you deduct the family car as an asset, the median black family in America only has a net worth of \$1,700. (“America's Financial Divide,” Huffington Post, updated Jan. 28, 2016)

While the median net worth for all white families is \$116,000, based mainly on home ownership, the median net worth of the top 1% is \$8.4 million — 72 times as much.

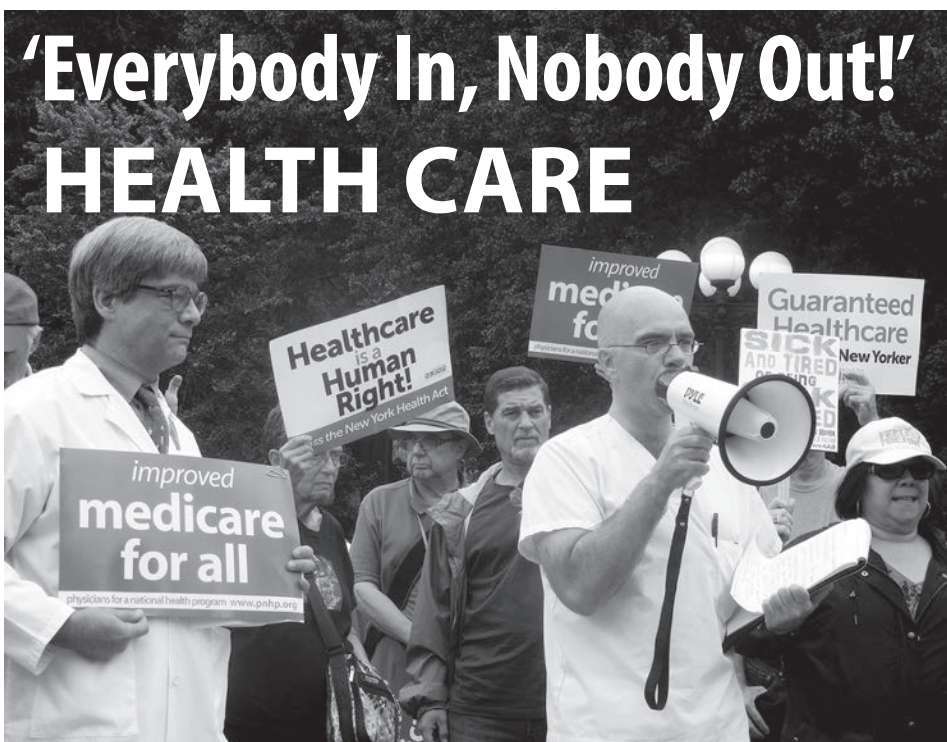
This huge class divide is why the U.S. has the highest rate of police brutality and mass incarceration in the world today. When police guns are fired in oppressed Black and Brown communities, it is to defend a racist system that has served the rich so well. When there are no decent jobs, it is a wake-up call that young workers of color are expendable.

Racism does not defend the interests of white workers. On the contrary. Whites make up the majority of those shot and killed by U.S. cops each year, and they are not rich whites. But people of color suffer police brutality and murder far out of proportion to their numbers.

The U.S. county with the highest proportion of police killings in 2015 was Kern County, Calif., where 52 percent of the people are Latinx, 5 percent Black, 5 percent Asian and only 35 percent white. Its courts also handed out the largest number of death sentences. (Death Penalty Information Center)

As workers struggle to make ends meet, the biggest challenges we face are defeating racism, Islamophobia and targeting of immigrants. Billionaires like Trump understand this very well and do everything they can to instigate hatred and divide our class. Building class solidarity against all police killings, especially targeting the most oppressed, is paramount.

We say abolish the police, courts, jails and all the instruments of class and national oppression. The multinational working class, who make everything, can create a society of abundance for all, where these oppressive institutions will have no place. □



Physicians for National Health Care rallied July 24 in New York City's Union Square, advocating for a national health care system with the slogan “Everybody in, nobody out!” Full coverage or “Medicare for all!” was promoted by doctors, nurses, patients and community representatives who spoke to hundreds in the crowd. Exposing the Republicans in power who promote health care legislation rooted in insurance companies’

profits, speakers pointed out the U.S. is the only major capitalist country without health care for everyone. The PNHC not only urged affordable health care for all, but also guaranteed wages at \$15 an hour, equality in voting rights, affordable housing and saving the environment. One physician summed up their program: “Get the big money out of health care.”

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden

As Senate billionaires vote to go ahead Protests challenge plan to gut healthcare

Continued from page 1

weeks, reaching a peak ahead of the Senate vote.

People chanted, “Stand up! Fight back!” at the People's Filibuster to Stop Trumpcare on July 17, held in Upper Senate Park near the Capitol building. Groups such as Planned Parenthood, the Service Employees Union, Families USA, People's Action, UltraViolet, an action-oriented women's organization, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, among others, joined the protest.

On the same day, cops arrested 33 people protesting the terrible anti-health care bill at six other actions in Washington. At the Hart Senate Office Building, chants rang out of “We're ready to fight! Health care is a human right!”

Some 155 demonstrators were arrested at Senate office buildings on July 19, as hundreds of people held sit-in protests at 45 locations targeting Republican senators. National Nurses United, Housing Works, Rise and Resist and members of many other organizations joined actions that day.

‘Medicare for all!’

Calls for single-payer “Medicare for all!” have resounded across Washington. Rev. Charles King of Housing Works, an organizer of the July 19 civil disobedience protests, said: “We are going to be here every day, as often as we need. We will go to jail as often as we need to go to jail to preserve Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act and to fight for single-payer health insurance for all.” (Huffington Post, July 19)

ADAPT members made headlines all summer as they occupied Sen. Mitch McConnell's office in Washington and senators' offices in many states. They participated in days-long sit-ins, lie-ins and die-ins. Some senators then called in police to arrest ADAPT members, notably several women, including wheelchair users.

DESERT ADAPT held a 16-day protest under the hot sun in El Paso, Texas, ending on July 20 when police threatened arrest.

Mary P. Kaessinger, Workers World correspondent, who traveled to Washington for the NCIL conference and attended the July 24 die-in, told WW she was impressed by “the courage and determination of ADAPT's women activists.”

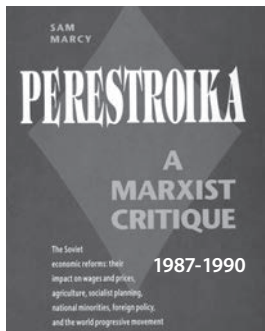
The role of women in opposing health care cuts has been outstanding. This is not surprising, given that the current Senate bill — and its reactionary predecessors — would defund Planned Parenthood for a year and reduce or completely eliminate essential women's health services and programs.

All reactionary proposals to repeal and replace the ACA would deprive millions of people of medical care, increase suffering and cause needless deaths. Besides people with disabilities, poor people and the elderly would be injured, with disproportionate suffering in African American, Latinx and other oppressed communities.

Senate Majority Leader McConnell and his right-wing cronies are pressuring wavering senators to overturn the ACA, slash Medicaid funding and push through some inhumane bill despite its unpopularity with their voters. From outside Congress, the billionaire energy magnates, the Koch brothers, threaten to stop funding Republicans unless they end the ACA and slash Medicaid. And the president leads the charge to sabotage health care for millions of people.

This travesty is happening in the wealthiest country in the world where tax cuts for the super-rich and fueling the Pentagon war machine are the priorities — and people's needs come last.

That's why these protests are so important. Only a vigilant, persistent people's movement can push back the aggressive right wing and fight for health care for all. □



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—Elombe Brath, Patrice Lumumba Coalition

www.workers.org/marcy/cd/sampere/index.htm

Fracking Colorado, Part III:

Impact on environment and people

By Viviana Weinstein
Denver

The scientific evidence is mounting about the deleterious effects of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) on people’s health. Popular resistance is increasing to the expansion of fracking across Colorado,

In several localities, people testified at Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission meetings in May to express their fears and concerns. Many of them asked why regulations don’t protect the people who feel ignored. A retired couple living far from an urban center said they could not sleep as 80 trucks a day rumble up and down the road nearby, carrying water, sand and chemicals, while drilling vibrates throughout their house all night. During the day, dust and noise are so bad they cannot sit on their porch.

Shortly after buying a house, a family and their neighbors learned that fracking activity would begin in their neighborhood. Most people had seen old wells that existed individually on their property.

However, under current methods, each well location (“pad”) may have between 15 to 45 wells. These sites are massive industrial developments with constant truck activity.

These are only some of the recent problems, which are increasing because there are not adequate regulations and inspections as companies rush in to set up drilling operations and make money.

Colorado lawmakers created the COGCC in 1951 to regulate oil and gas development in the state and give communities a voice. State officials ordered the agency to foster the “responsible development of Colorado’s oil and gas natural resources in a manner consistent with the protection of public health, safety and welfare, including the environment and wildlife resources.” (cogcc.state.co.us/#/home)

However, the COGCC said in 2014 that this statement contradicted the purpose of oil and gas development and was beyond their authority.

Towns fight back

Boulder, Broomfield and Fort Collins passed five-year fracking suspensions in 2013. Lafayette and Longmont enacted indefinite bans. Longmont passed a char-

ter amendment to ban fracking.

The oil companies then sued the towns that tried to ban fracking. After multiple lawsuits were filed by the energy industry, the Colorado Supreme Court struck down the bans in 2016, claiming that towns’ interests can no longer supersede the state’s interest in promoting oil and gas drilling and its support of the industry.

The capitalist state is protecting corporate interests over the will of residents who object to the serious, deleterious impacts of drilling on their lives. These rulings in which the state, with huge industry support, can overrule the opposition of local protesters, are a new type of legal maneuver. It is occurring in other states, too, and is clearly meant to suppress opposition — and to provide a legal basis for preventing protesters from slowing down oil and gas operations and curtailing industry profits.

Youth lead the way

Xiutezcatl Martinez, a young hip-hop artist, and other youth asked the COGCC in 2013 to deny any new permits for oil and gas drilling “unless the best available science demonstrates, and an independent third party organization confirms, that drilling can occur in a manner that does not cumulatively, with other actions, impair Colorado’s atmosphere, water, wildlife, and land resources, does not adversely impact human health and does not contribute to climate change.” (Denver Post, March 23)

When the COGCC repeatedly denied their request, the young people, supported by other advocacy groups, appealed. The Colorado Court of Appeals sided with them in March, ruling that protection of public health and the environment is a “condition that must be fulfilled” by the state before oil and gas drilling can occur.

The COGCC has ignored and tried to overturn the Martinez decision, granting up to 500 drilling permits in one day in May. But the people of Colorado keep fighting back. A vast petition and call-in campaign since April forced Colorado Gov. Hickenlooper to publicly ask the COGCC not to try to overturn the decision and to support the health and safety of the people of the state.

A gas explosion killed two people in

Firestone on April 17 due to a severed gas line a few feet from their basement. The well was 172 feet from the house, violating the 200-foot setback rule.

In response to this tragedy, community and environmental groups called for a shutdown of all wells until independent investigators assessed they were safe and complied with regulations. Anadarko, the company involved, shut 3,000 wells and, responding to community demands, said it would check all flowlines within 1,000 feet of all structures.

The COGCC gave all oil and gas operators until the end of June to comply. The July 1 Denver Post said that by that date, companies reported they had capped over 6,000 lines from active and inactive wells. But there are hundreds of thousands of flowlines underneath Colorado’s land.

Angry residents are demanding to know the locations of all flowlines. They say mandatory regulations and inspections are needed, not just voluntary responses by the industry after a tragedy occurs.

Fight far from over

The people of Colorado are challenging a wealthy, powerful industry with enormous influence on state laws. Energy companies have repeatedly opposed local efforts to place anti-fracking measures on the ballot.

With their limitless funds, the industry’s advertising is based on lies, and it confuses people. Energy officials placed a measure on the ballot in 2016 that made it financially impossible for environmental groups to get the required petition signatures to place anti-fracking propositions on the ballot. This expensive process requires the collection of signatures

of a minimum of 2 percent of registered voters in each of 35 state senatorial districts. Moreover, the measure must get at least 55 percent of the total votes to win.

The energy industry also vigorously opposed two resident-led ballot propositions in 2016. These measures would have increased the minimum setback (distance) between active drilling operations and houses, schools and other structures. Additionally, it would have made the setback distance mandatory, providing greater safety for residents.

Horizontal drilling for miles means that although residents can’t see the wells, the gas lines can be dangerously close to schools and homes. There are some minimum setback rules in Colorado, but the companies get waivers all the time from the COGCC.

The numerous gas lines to and from active and inactive wells present dangers to existing structures and people. Development east of the Rocky Mountains is growing rapidly. Without effective regulations, builders and homeowners do not know what is underneath the ground on which structures are built. People want to know this before they build homes.

Residents are demanding a voice in the planning of projects and the right to object to them. Increasingly, they are challenging the COGCC as nothing but a front for the oil and gas corporations.

The energy industry portrays townspeople who complain, protest or call for regulations near schools and homes as “paid, out-of-state agitators.” But that tactic is backfiring. It is inspiring people who have never been activists to organize, form committees and demand regulations and inspections. □



Denver protesters say:

No cuts in health care or housing!

Over 100 residents of Kavod, a senior residence in Denver, protested congressional efforts to cut health care programs under the Affordable Care Act, including Medicaid, and the threats to Medicare. Organized by the Tenant Council Political Action Committee, this demonstration on July 19 also opposed attacks on federal assistance for housing.

Kavod Senior Living is a residence for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, which is supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Most of its 400 residents receive rental assistance and are on Medicaid and/or Medicare programs. These individuals are able to be independent because of the many services provided to them, such as dinners, housekeeping, safety measures and more. Everyone is assigned a social worker. There are activities, including outings, organized by a trip director, and on-site health services.

The threatened cuts to medical care programs and HUD will drastically affect Kavod residents. Services will be cut and rents raised. This is alarming those who live in this housing, and that is why they came out to protest.

— Photo and story by Viviana Weinstein
Denver

Disability Pride rocks NYC for health care, access

Continued from page 3

ols. In this ruling, Chinese-American students in San Francisco won the right to access education in their own language. This broke new legal ground and helped lay the basis for access and reasonable accommodation rights granted to people with disabilities.

Another speaker related the story of one of the most famous freedom fighters in human history who was also a person with disabilities. Nearly 200 years ago, a 13-year-old girl of African descent enslaved in Maryland threw herself between a fellow slave and a plantation overseer about to whip him for entering a store without permission. The overseer struck her with a two-pound weight, fracturing her skull, nearly killing her and giving her the lifelong disability of epilepsy.

Her name was Harriet Tubman. She later liberated herself from slavery and went on to become a “general” of the Underground Railroad, personally risking recapture or execution to lead hundreds of people out of enslavement to freedom. She dedicated the rest of her life to civil

rights and women’s suffrage.

Last year it was announced that this person with a disability will be the new face of the \$20 bill, becoming known to millions in this way. She will knock out of daily circulation the racist who enslaved African-American people and the mass murderer of Native Americans: U.S. President Andrew Jackson. He happens to be a hero of anti-disabled bigot, President Donald Trump.

Wide support for Disability Pride

The wide sweep of the current disability rights struggle was inspiringly clear in a list of organizations in this year’s Disability Pride: Access-VR, Achilles International, ADAPT Community Network, Adaptive Climbing Group, AHRC, Art Beyond Sight, Brain Injury Association of NYS, Center for Independence of the Disabled (CIDNY), Community Access NYC, Contemporary Guidance Services, Disability Action for America, Disability Pride NYC, Disability Visibility Project, Disabled in Action and Diversability.

Also, Doors Wide Open, EPIC Players Inclusion Company, GallopNYC, Harlem Independent Living Center, Hearing Loss Association of America, INCLUDEnyc, Independence Care System (ICS), Initiative for Women with Disabilities, InTandem, Museum Access Consortium, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, National Organization on Disability, National Federation of the Blind, Parents to Improve School Transportation, Project Access for All, ReelAbilities.

Also, Roll Call Wheelchair Dance and United Spinal Association. Participating unions included Actors’ Equity Association, Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1180, New York State Nurses Association, Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32BJ.

Both Kaessinger, a wheelchair user, and Yudelovich, a person with emotional and hearing disabilities, were contributing organizers of NYC’s 2017 Disability Pride Parade.



Filadelfia

WW/MO FOTO: JOE PIETTE

CRISIS DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA: Enfermeras de Tufts en huelga por pensiones y seguridad de pacientes

Por Colectivo WW-MO de Boston

Cientos de enfermeras llegaron vito-reando al vestíbulo del Centro Médico Tufts de Boston a las 7 de la mañana del 17 de julio, mostrando en sus uniformes botones que decían “Seguridad de Pacientes Salvan Vidas” y llevando letreros “Enfermeras Tufts: protegiendo el cuidado de pacientes”. Se reportaban a trabajar después de haber sido ilegalmente bloqueadas/os en un cierre patronal durante cuatro días, luego de una valiente huelga de 24 horas.

Esta histórica huelga por miembros de un sindicato comenzó en la mañana del 12 de julio, cuando por la noche, las enfermeras del tercer turno en Tufts salieron por las puertas del hospital para unirse a sus compañeras/os de trabajo en las líneas de protestas. Fue la primera huelga de enfermeras/os en Boston desde 1986.

En represalia, la gerencia de Tufts enlistó a 350 enfermeras/os rompehuelgas y desactivó las placas de 1.200 empleadas/os de Tufts representados por la Asociación de Enfermeras de Massachusetts (MNA por las siglas en inglés). Las acciones de Tufts violaban las normas laborales federales.

Noventa y cinco por ciento de las/os miembros de la MNA habían votado por la huelga. Organizaron líneas de piquete en respuesta a la negativa de Tufts de abordar las prácticas inseguras de distribución del personal del hospital y mejorar su oferta de pago y beneficios durante más de 30 sesiones de negociación de contratos. Las enfermeras/os de Tufts habían trabajado 14 meses sin contrato.

Los medios corporativos de Boston trataron de pintar a las/os enfermeras de la MNA como “codiciosas” por defender la calidad del cuidado de las/os pacientes y los beneficios de sus pensiones. En vano, trataron de fomentar el sentimien-

to público antisindical y fabricar una base para la represión policial, culpando y sensacionalizando los intentos creativos de mantener lejos a las/os rompehuelgas.

Solidaridad de la clase obrera

Pero la clase trabajadora multinacional, multigénero, e intergeneracional de Boston no estaba comprando la campaña de difamación contra las/os trabajadores. En su lugar, los gremios respondieron al llamado de la MNA a unirse a sus líneas de protestas.

Equipo de Solidaridad - United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers; UNITE HERE Local 26, Hoteleros y Trabajadores del Servicio de Alimentos; Hermandad Internacional de Trabajadores Eléctricos Local 2222, trabajadores de telecomunicaciones; y otras locales sindicales - emitieron declaraciones de apoyo y asistieron en masa durante los cinco días de piquetes. Las/os trabajadores de la salud de otros hospitales y clínicas de la zona se unieron también.

Delegaciones del Partido Workers World/Mundo Obrero de Boston, y militantes sindicales y juveniles tomaron turnos en las líneas de piquete. Además, familiares de las/os huelguistas, vecinos, ex pacientes y muchos otras personas apoyaron la huelga. El paso subterráneo de la calle Washington que atraviesa el centro médico del centro de la ciudad retumbaba día y noche con bocinazos y consignas solidarias.

Este apoyo creció diariamente hasta que el alcalde de Boston Marty Walsh tuvo que retractar sus acusaciones al inicio de la huelga de que las enfermeras habían contribuido a una situación donde “los pacientes perderán el cuidado”.

Las/os enfermeras y sus aliados transformaron el cierre patronal en un mitin de cuatro días sobre la solidaridad de la

clase obrera en la era de recortes en el cuidado de la salud.

“Cada huelga en esta ciudad en los últimos años ha sido sobre el cuidado de la salud”, dijo Ed Childs, del Partido WW-MO y del Local 26 de UNITE HERE. “Es el asunto número uno para las/os trabajadores”.

‘El sistema está roto’

“El mismo sistema de ganancias que está tratando de quitar los beneficios de salud de la gente también está tratando de obligar a las/os trabajadores de la salud a manejar un mayor volumen de pacientes insuficientemente aseguradas/os”, dijo Gery Armsby, trabajador de apoyo administrativo y miembro del PWW-MO durante una reunión con las enfermeras de Tufts. “Es un sistema profundamente roto que está tratando de arreglarse aplastando a los trabajadores y a los pobres”.

Las/os pacientes de Tufts, cuyas vidas fueron salvadas por las enfermeras de Tufts, hablaron sobre la necesidad de luchar por la atención médica de calidad: “Gritan que ‘el hospital no tiene suficiente dinero’, mientras se lo dan todo a unas pocas personas en el tope”, dijo el enojado cónyuge de una paciente de Tufts.

El presidente de Tufts, Michael Wagner, lleva a casa un salario anual de más de \$1 millón, sin contar los bonos. Pero el pago de las enfermeras en Tufts es el más bajo de la ciudad. Devengan sólo el 87 por ciento de lo que las/os enfermeras cobran en otros lugares de Boston. Esta explotación se suma a la gran desproporción entre paciente y personal que se encuentra entre las más altas de Boston.

En la mesa de negociaciones, la gerencia de Tufts ha argumentado que el hospital necesita “funcionar magramente” en cara a la incertidumbre por el ataque de la administración de Trump a la Ley de Cuidado de Salud Asequible de Obama. En una ciudad conocida por sus hospital-

es de investigación de primera categoría, Tufts recibe una tasa de reembolso relativamente baja de las aseguradoras.

Pero en lugar de luchar contra Washington y la industria de seguros para garantizar el acceso a una atención de calidad para todos, Tufts está tratando de pasar esta carga a las enfermeras con un paquete de austeridad.

Tufts desperdició más de \$6 millones en tácticas anti-huelgas: un bloqueo ilegal, junto con una costosa de mano de obra rompehuelgas. Mientras que vertió el dinero en los rompehuelgas de otros estados y en la policía, Tufts entonces utilizó estos gastos como una justificación falsa para bloquear a las enfermeras.

Pero, como explicaron los folletos de la MNA, la contratación de rompehuelgas no sólo es costosa e innecesaria, sino que es una amenaza para la vida de las/os pacientes. Múltiples casos de problemas de seguridad del paciente fueron reportados durante el cierre patronal. Tufts eliminó al menos un rompehuelga por incompetencia.

Al traer a 350 rompehuelgas para hacer el trabajo de 1.200 enfermeras capacitadas, dedicadas y de tiempo completo, la gerencia de Tufts usó la vida de los pacientes como una moneda de cambio. Claramente, a los jefes no les importa quién se lastima, siempre y cuando puedan tratar de forzar concesiones de las/os trabajadores.

Las enfermeras dicen que esperan que las negociaciones se reanuden pronto, pero a la hora de escribir este artículo no se ha publicado ningún calendario. Se desconoce si se alcanzará o no un acuerdo que satisfaga las demandas de las enfermeras. Pero la amplia solidaridad de la clase obrera multinacional que fue palpable en Boston durante la última semana será importante a medida que vayan desarrollándose batallas más grandes por la atención médica. □

¡Defendamos Venezuela Bolivariana!

Editorial WW-MO, 22 de julio

El gobierno venezolano del presidente Nicolás Maduro está siendo culpado por la escasez de alimentos y otras necesidades que aquejan a ese país sudamericano rico en petróleo. Pero para la mayoría de las/os venezolanos, la escasez no es nada nuevo. Lo que es nuevo es que no sólo las/os pobres están afectados.

En febrero de 1989, las/os ricos de Venezuela disfrutaban bajo el gobierno del presidente Carlos Andrés Pérez. Pero las/os pobres estaban golpeados cuando éste inició un programa de austeridad que reducía el gasto público y elevaba los precios de la gasolina. El hambre se convirtió en hambre para muchas/os, y el resultado fue el “Caracazo”. Miles de personas entraron en supermercados y otras tiendas en Caracas y en las ciu-

dades adyacentes para conseguir comida para sus vacíos estómagos. Según algunas estimaciones, la cantidad de muertes por la policía y el ejército fue de 2.000 en la represión que siguió.

Fue esa violencia del Estado la que afectó profundamente a un joven oficial llamado Hugo Chávez, quien dijo más tarde que para él y sus compañeros “habíamos pasado el punto de no volver y tuvimos que tomar las armas. No podíamos seguir defendiendo un régimen asesino”. Chávez fue a la cárcel por intentar un golpe, pero se convirtió en un héroe para el pueblo venezolano, especialmente para las/os más pobres.

Detrás de la enorme disparidad de clases en Venezuela estaba su larga historia de ser utilizada como una alcancía por las compañías Standard Oil de Rockefeller. Por un tiempo - el segundo productor may-

or de petróleo del mundo - Venezuela fue ordeñada de decenas de miles de millones de dólares por los explotadores yanquis, aun cuando la inmensa mayoría de su población vivía en una profunda pobreza.

Pasemos al hoy. Standard Oil se transformó en Esso (es SO), luego en Exxon, y después de que se fusionó con otro gigante, Mobil, se convirtió en ExxonMobil. Durante casi un siglo, los Rockefeller han escogido a las/os secretarios de Estado que fabrican la política exterior de los Estados Unidos. ¿Y quién podría ser el Secretario de Estado de hoy? ¡Pues claro, nada menos que Rex Tillerson, ex jefe de ExxonMobil! El mundo es tan pequeño.

Las compañías petroleras estadounidenses y sus bancos siguen intentando recuperar a Venezuela. Pero, mientras tanto, la Revolución Bolivariana, iniciada con la elección de Chávez como

presidente en 1999 y que continúa hoy bajo la presidencia de Maduro, ha traído atención de salud, viviendas decentes y escuelas a personas que nunca antes las habían tenido.

El petróleo venezolano fue nacionalizado en 1976, pero la mayor parte de la economía está todavía en manos de la clase capitalista, que está haciendo todo lo posible por sabotear cualquier intento de transformación social. Y la burguesía venezolana tiene a los Estados Unidos detrás de ella, apretando el país mientras construye la contrarrevolución.

Trump ahora está amenazando a Venezuela con sanciones. Sabemos cómo es una contrarrevolución. Chile en 1973 es un ejemplo horrendo que llevó a la masacre de miles.

¡Defendamos a Venezuela Bolivariana!
¡NO al imperialismo estadounidense! □