By Martha Grevatt

It’s war.

Patriarchal diehards in state legislatures across the country are bound and determined to criminalize what should be a private decision between a woman, a girl or a gender-oppressed individual and their doctor. The target of their new legislation is to kill the now-still-legal right to terminate a pregnancy.

Brazen misogynists, pining for the days when a woman was a man’s legal property, want to roll the clock back and not only deny access to legal abortion but to contraception. In their fantasy world, Roe v. Wade, the hard-fought 1973 Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion, is already shredded.

On April 10 Ohio became the sixth state to pass a so-called “fetal heartbeat” bill. When the bill goes into effect in July it will be illegal to obtain an abortion after the sixth week of pregnancy — often before pregnancy is even detected. Doctors who perform the procedures could face felony charges, with up to a year in prison and $20,000 in fines. There is no exception for rape or incest.

Gov. Mike DeWine wasted no time in signing the bill as soon as it landed on his desk April 11, despite the fact that state and federal courts have deemed these laws unconstitutional in Arkansas, Iowa, Kentucky and North Dakota. Similar bills are in various stages of the legislative process in five other states; Georgia passed one on March 29, which the governor could sign any day. (WW, April 4)

The law is misnamed. According to the Cleveland Clinic, it is only “after the eighth week [that] your baby is called a fetus instead of an embryo.” At that stage the embryo is smaller than a pea, and the brain and nervous system are undeveloped. The fact that a heartbeat can be detected via ultrasound is being used to equate abortion

Stop & Shop strike 3
Trump, capitalism and migrants 4
Atlanta cop kills activist 4

Assange, Manning and U.S. war crimes 5
Interview with Palestinian author 6
Editorial
A much abused word 10
'Modern-day heroes' 11

Continued on page 5
Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

By Betsy Piette

Philadelphia

Prisoners in Pennsylvania under the banner “Enough is enough” are circulating a petition challenging a number of arbitrary and punitive measures adopted by the state’s Department of Corrections.

The DOC began implementing these changes August 2018 following fraudulent claims by a handful of guards that they became “sick from drugs illegally entering the prisons.” While this fabricated “health crisis” eventually collapsed under public scrutiny, the DOC continued the draconian measures and threatened to implement more in July.

Prisoners say they will stand for formal count on June 9, but before that rally, a new wave of protests is expected to hit the city on Monday.

The sweeping crackdown included measures that severely restricted prisoners’ access to mail. Letters, as well as legal correspondence, are being routed through the third-party, Florida-based Smart Communications. The company is paid $4 million to open and photocopy the contents, including photographs, before sending the photocopies to prisoners. Pennsylvania is the 19th state to hire Smart Communications, which stores the original contents of prisoners’ mail on its private servers.

Prisoners in some Pennsylvania facilities had previously organized a boycott of the subcontracted mail service. Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union successfully challenged the DOC for interfering with legal mail sent through the system. In addition to tampering with mail, the PA DOC tried to further isolate prisoners from their families by shortening visitation hours and removing food and drink vending machines from visiting areas for 90 days. In some prisons, visitors are arbitrarily denied entry for scheduled visits. Altogether, PA DOC policies cost the state an estimated $15 million to put in place.

The DOC says it will stop the sale of tobacco June 1 and make it illegal on July 1. It is threatening to rip cells apart to take tobacco. The prison will make money by selling more expensive vapor cigarettes, which require purchasing batteries to use.

Other threatened measures include charging prisoners $0.35 per picture that comes via their email. Access to TV channels has been downgraded. Food portions have been cut, while commissary prices have increased. Though the petition contests attempts to profit off inmates by raising commissary prices, the slave-labor employment “pay” has not been raised in almost 30 years. When prisoners write up their grievances, the authorities almost always find in favor of the guards. That was the case on the basis of the 1971 uprising in New York state’s Attica prison.

The petition ends, “Our lives matter too!” and it’s signed, “Unidos somos fuerte” — “Together we are strong”.

By Carlos Vargas

Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, healthcare, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1939, 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.

© 2019 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN 1070-4205) is published weekly except the last week of December by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscription: One year: $35; institutions: $85. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted with credit to Workers World.

Workers World is on Facebook: Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 996, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 64, No. 16 • April 18, 2019
Closing date: April 17, 2019
Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Leili Dowell, Martha Grevatt, Monica Moorehead, Mimike Bruce Pratt
Web Editors: Ben Carroll, John Steffin
Production & Design Editors: Gery Armys, Sasha Mazumder, Svetlana Trifunov
Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, Sue Davis, S. Hedgecock
Contributing Editors: G. Dunkel, D. Kurkin, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Betsy Piette, Gloria Rubac
Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Workers World this week

In the U.S.
States attack reproductive rights ................. 1
Penn. prisoners say, “Enough is enough!” ....... 2
‘Stop, don’t shop!’ — grocery workers on strike ... 3
On the picket line .................................... 3
Trump threatens more repression ................. 4
Say his name: Oscar Cain Jr. ....................... 4
Manning, Assange, and U.S. war crimes ..... 5
Susan Abulhawa: ‘Imperialism by the inch’ ..... 6

Around the world
Sudan on brink of revolution ........................ 7
Negotiations to tour Russia ........................ 7
Hurricane of colonialism ravages Puerto Rico ... 8
Venezuelan right wing runs out of cards to play ... 8
Popular forces challenge Guatemalan regime .... 9
Seminar XXIII: Repel the imperialist offensive .... 9
Yellow Vests: We must abandon capitalism! .... 10
‘Modern-day heroes’ Filipino workers ............. 11
Irish socialists mark revolutionary republic ...... 11

Editorial
A much abused word ................................. 10

Noticias en Español
Guerra criminal contra inmigrantes ............... 12
Fuerza popular se enfrenta al régimen guatemalteco ... 12

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenderal 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 breeds war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means lackluster profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination • Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery • Black Youth Repression & Resistance • The Struggle for Socialism Is Key • Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights • Black & Brown Unity • Harriet Tubman, United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights

Capitalism, imperialism and colonialism are on the rise. In the Philippines, the state has escalated its attacks on the workers and poor. The Marcos years saw a wave of repression, economic exploitation and a wide range of anti-worker policies. Today, the state has made clear its intention to continue these policies.

The 1971 uprising in New York state’s Attica prison. In favor of the guards. That was one of the issues behind the uprisings.

Categories • Are Conditions Ripe Again Today?

The 1971 uprising in New York state’s Attica prison. In favor of the guards. That was one of the issues behind the uprisings.

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Stop, don’t shop! — Northeast grocery workers on strike

By Workers World Boston bureau

Approximately 100 Stop & Shop workers and supporters rallied at the Somerville, Mass., store April 11 to demand a fair contract for members of Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1445 on strike since April 11. On the busy highway out front, hundreds of cars honked, and drivers yelled, waved and raised fists in support of the strike.

UFCW Local 1445, a union representing 5,000 workers who are fighting against the company’s attempt to completely dismantle what was previously considered the best food retailer contract in the region.

A number of union members were present at the rally, including UFCW Local 791, Teamsters Local 122 and Local 25, Ironworkers Local 7, Service Employees (SEIU) Local 888 and Local 308, Massachusetts Nurses Association and UNITE HERE Local 26. The rally was also attended by political organizations, including Workers World Party, Boston Democratic Socialists, the Jewish Labor Committee and Our Revolution Somerville.

Although police had forced striking workers away from the store entrance, strikers set up picket lines at parking lot entrances, which merged into one long picket line during the rally. Many local workers had worked in a food store in the past and other locations forced Stop & Shop back to the negotiating table as of Saturday, April 13.

Health care, pension, wages all at stake

After all five UFCW locals representing Stop & Shop workers voted with wide margins to authorize a strike last month, workers across the Northeast walked out at 10 p.m. on April 11. This was due to a breakdown in negotiations after Stop & Shop presented its disgraceful “final offer.”

Workers World interviewed several workers at the picket line in Somerville, who highlighted what they considered to be the strike’s main issues. Most noted that they were not even fighting for any increases, but just to keep the contract they already had.

Reina, who works in the produce section, told WW that her husband was deported to El Salvador in 2006. “I only have one income, and I am raising my three daughters on my own. The company wants to cut pensions, cut our vacation down to two weeks from four, refuse to pay us time-and-a-half on Sunday. My back hurts, but I will be out here as much as I can. We need to fight!”

Workers also mentioned that the company wants to kick spouses off their insurance plans, which would hike health care costs for the workers. On top of that, proposed increases in health care premiums would cut workers’ take-home pay and make increased expenses harder to meet. Stop & Shop is also trying to replace time-and-a-half pay on holidays and Sundays, the busiest day for food retailers, with bonuses that won’t increase with the cost of living. Several of the workers interviewed mentioned that their parents, children or other relatives also worked for Stop & Shop, multiplying the devastating effect of the proposed concessions.

Workers also raised the increasing use of self-checkout lines to eliminate cashier jobs and the introduction of self-checkout machines. Another issue was an attempt to introduce a two-tier system by denoting new hires any union benefits — an increasingly common union-busting tactic.

Many speakers also noted that the Stop & Shop strike comes in the wake of the successful Marriott Hotel workers’ strike and the multi-weeks-long National Grid lockout that took place in New Hampshire, where the Stop & Shop’s Boston area owners are headquartered. The Stop & Shop workers were determined to win their contract and mark another victory for the labor movement in the Northeast.

Build Workers World! Defend the environment and workers’ rights

April 22 is Earth Day, initiated in 1970 to make people aware of the link between health and the environment. After that push, laws were passed to prevent clean water and air, enact safety regulations, and pass measures that promote better health. But until 1990, climate change raised. Now, with a far-right climate-denier in the White House, while floods and tornadoes surge in the U.S. and shorelines rise around the globe, we await the now-canceled March for Science. But fossil fuels and dethrone the billionaires who sell them.

Ten days after Earth Day we celebrate May Day. Established to honor the historic 1886 struggle of Chicago workers for the 8-hour day, May 1 now marks the international day of the world’s workers. There’s a lot of good news this year: Education workers all over the U.S., from K-12 schools to universities, have started a strike wave. Workers are organizing for higher wages and better working conditions. Well-paid Amazon and Google workers are joining low-wage McDonald’s workers in walkouts. While Trump and the global ruling class are waging war on the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, his administration is also making war on Central American immigrants and refugees seeking entry into the U.S.

Workers are threatened with deportation after escaping horrific conditions caused by U.S. intervention in their home countries. Neo-fascist U.S. policies separate infants and children from their parents at the border and jail undocumented migrants crossing the border alone.

The perpetrators of global environmental destruction and workers’ oppression are one and the same. If you want to fight against capitalist reaction and for socialist change, we invite you to join the WW Supporter Program. The program was founded in 1977. Ever since, our subscribers and friends have helped build the only revolutionary socialist weekly in the U.S. that’s in print as well as online.

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

University of California workers on the move

The enormous University of California system, with 10 campuses and five medical centers, has been seething with labor struggles in 2018. In December 2017, State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299, representing 8,900 custodians, food workers, gardeners and other campus service employees reached a tentative agreement in late February, ending the most tense labor situation in recent years. The State of California, led by AFSCME Local 3299, AFSCME Local 2116 and AFSCME Local 26, announced Wabtec was reckless! And really greedy!

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

Wabtec work stoppage rightly ruled a lockout

Decision-makers agree that the workers at the Wabtec Plant in Erie, Pa., who walked the picket line from Feb. 26 to March 6 — had been locked out. (WW, March 6 and 13) UC workers had been fighting to stop Wabtec from outsourcing. A lockout was the case. “We offered to work under existing terms and conditions, and the company said no,” Local 606 President Scott Slawson told the April 3 Erie Times. “It’s a joint labor-management agreement between Wabtec and the workers. We view [Wabtec] as a clear successor.” But once the merger happened, the company wouldn’t honor the old contract. That’s called union bashing.

The Harrisburg ruling in favor of justice workers means that the workers who tried to file claims were paid for at least part of the time they were picketing, and unem- ployment compensation that the workers filed for has been approved. Even the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry’s Office of Unemployment Comp realized Wabtec was reckless! And really greedy!
Migrants and refugees held by U.S. Border Patrol in area under El Paso freeway bridge.

Where is Trump heading? The Nielsen firing must set off alarm bells to the progressive and working-class movements. Trump could easily unleash xenophobia and atrocity acts against migrants and refugees. Trump and his white supremacist cohorts want to rip every human and civil right from migrants and refugees. They aim to recalibrate all oppressed people in the U.S. For migrants allowed to remain, this would be to control and dominate their labor, both in and out of prisons. These acts could conceivably amount to war crimes.

The current attacks on migrants and refugees are in the same genocidal current as centuries of U.S. crimes against Indigenous peoples; as the continuing crime of mass incarceration against Black and Brown people; as the occupying crime of police terror in primarily Black neighborhoods.

It is not inconceivable that just as Native children were torn from their parents’ arms and placed in white homes, so too Central American and other refugees could have their children taken and placed in foster homes — if Trump and company have their way.

Immigration experts of all kinds are beginning to speak out in an unprecedented fashion. Not known as revolutionaries, as progressives or even as anti-system, many are terrified by the turn of events, as immigration judges are being removed or disempowered, and as more racist anti-immigration laws are in place.

According to international and U.S. immigration law, Central American refugees currently fleeing U.S.-created violence have a right to asylum. Trump aims to overturn this one way or the other, threatening to change asylum law through presidential administrative action to circumvent Congress.

More repressive measures underway
Trump, Stephen Miller, a chief immigration advisor, and Kevin McAleenan — who became acting head of the Department of Homeland Security on Nielsen’s departure — are floating a policy idea that some journalists have called “Sophie’s Choice.” Also called “binary choice,” this policy would allow parents to “choose” either to be separated from their child or to be in detention with their children. If the parent chooses that their child not be detained, the child (or children) could apply for asylum — alone.

In response to former Attorney General Jeff Sessions’ “zero tolerance policy,” a federal court ruled in 2018 that DHS could not separate families.

The binary choice is about to become law — another reason why Trump wants new judges.

Doro Meissner, former head of the then-new Immigration and Naturalization System under the Clinton administration, told the New Yorker April 9 that Trump is “among the other extreme elements of government,” such as the courts and Congress.

Under Meissner’s watch, the border was militarized, and undocumented workers were also arrested, especially Mexican workers. But Meissner is one of those pro-system liberals who feel Trump is “going too far.”

Meissner pointed out that having so many “acting” officials in the Trump administration is worrisome to her. These appointees are accountable to no one and are not gone through a congressional vetting process.

Revisions in the Trump administration would undo that revisionism. The struggle for asylum will depend on the political will in the courts and Congress.

His son was often at his side and in his streets.

Oscar Cain's funeral was attended by hundreds of family members, childhood friends, neighbors, members of the many organizations he had worked with, and those who had been in the streets with him to declare Black Lives Matter.

Although Cain had been instrumental in the campaign to equip APD members with body cameras, the officer who killed him had not turned his on.

There is no video to let us know if this was a cop who had threatened Cain in the past and who was aware of his political activities. There is no picture of Cain with a gun in his hand, running in a dark, wooded area. There is no audio of the exchanges between Cain and the officer who shot him.

Oscar Cain Jr., 32 years old, was the 26th person killed by police in Atlanta in 2019 — in less than a third of a year. The record was just last year, when 48 people died from police deadly force.

A campaign to call Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and Atlanta Police Chief Erica Shields to demand the firing of any officer who fails to activate their body cameras when engaging with the public has been initiated by Cain’s friends and family.

Oscar Cain Jr., present! ⚠️
States attack reproductive rights: Women say 'Fight back!'

By Taryn Fivek

No person who watched “Collateral Damage” could deny the brutality of U.S. imperialism. Smuggled out of Iraq by Chelsea Manning and published by WikiLeaks, videos depict the murder of more than a dozen people by occupying U.S. soldiers from Apache helicopters.

The video itself is shot from a helicopter, with the radio transmissions hopped in so that viewers can hear the way the soldiers laugh, joke and cheer as they blow thousands of 50-caliber bullets into a crowd of unarmed journalists, civilians and children.

This was not an isolated incident. People across the world were disgusted and outraged by the photos of torture from Abu Ghraib, the stories that emerged from Darfur and Muttawani massacres—all reminiscent of U.S. war crimes in Vietnam and elsewhere.

Due to the Pentagon policy of targeting journalists who were not embedded with the murderous soldiers, a lot of the horror never reached the U.S. public. By the time the first deformed children were born after their parents were poisoned by depleted uranium ammunition, most media had moved on from covering Iraq. But there was no possibility of ignoring the brutality exposed by WikiLeaks.

No one said it would be easy. Taryn Fivek

Together, Julian Assange of WikiLeaks and Manning published incontrovertible proof of imperialist crimes committed across the world, mainly by the U.S. from Asia to Africa to Latin America. The case against empire piled up. The ruling class, seeing the information were dismissed. But this continued from page 1

with a taking a life.

Ohio Senate Bill 23, now wrongly titled “Human Rights Protection Act,” is just the latest in a large number of anti-choice bills being passed across the country. Over 20 such bills have passed in Ohio alone since 2011. These bills have deterred women from seeking abortions, causing the number of women who are in clinics which provide the procedure to drop from 16 to nine in eight years. They are all located within six metropolitan areas.

Many women have to travel to have an abortion. A mandatory 24-hour wait period means having to pay for an overnight stay where the clinic is located, plus transportation, meals, child care and other expenses. These costs, on top of the cost of the abortion itself, are an imposition on poor women, especially women of color, low-wage workers, immigrants, young people and those in rural areas, disabled women and domestic violence survivors.

Angry reproductive rights activists held militant protests inside and outside the Ohio Statehouse when legislators were voting on the law. The Ohio chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, representing reproductive rights advocates, has sued to have SB23 overturned.

Christian right’s overall strategy

The organized Christian right is pushing these bills, knowing full well they cannot survive a legal challenge while Roe v. Wade remains law. Their strategy is to carry their legal fight to the U.S. Supreme Court, with the goal of getting Roe overturned. Their optimism was bolstered with the appointment of right-wing women-haters Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh to the high court.

As Ohio State Rep. Ron Hood stated, “Will there be a lawsuit? Yeah, we are counting on it. We’re excited about it.”

These anti-choice bills are part of a broad political agenda that includes “religious freedom” exemptions to allow anti-LGBTIQ+ discrimination and laws giving their version of Christianity privileged status. Emboldened by the presidential election in 2016, Christian nationalists launched a legislative campaign called “Operation Blitz.” Since then, states have passed a multitude of legislative assaults on LGBTIQ+ communities, religious minorities, women and gender-oppressed people.

Religious bigotry, especially Islamophobia, is stoked by laws exposed in the 148-page manual of Operation Blitz. Five states now require the display of the motto “In God We Trust” in public buildings, including schools. Others allow or require the teaching of “Biblical literacy.”

Operation Blitz has organized “Prayer Caucuses” in about three dozen state legislatures. The manual’s newest section is titled “Talking Points to Counter Anti-Religious Freedom Legislation.” In his expose “Blitzing to Dominion,” Frederick Carlson explains, “This section insists that there cannot be inherent civil rights regarding ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’ because the terms are said to be too vague and there is too much disagreement over their meaning.”

After an oppressive bill is passed, one even more ominous is presented. Just days before Ohio’s abortion ban became law, Texas saw the introduction of a far more extreme bill that would allow the death penalty for women who have abortions and doctors who perform them.

Cristina Vega, with South Texans for Reproductive Justice, who volunteers at Whole Women’s Health in McAllen, Texas, told Workers World: “I think it’s ridiculous how people value the ‘lives’ of fetuses— they call them children but they don’t have feelings, they don’t even know that they’re alive—over women who are alive, who do have feelings, who know that they are alive, who are just trying to make the best decision for themselves and for their families. They would be put to death by supposed ‘pro-lifers.’”

Vega added that this is “extremely hypocritical,” given that Texas has the highest rate of execution in the country—with 560 people put to death by the state since 1982.

Democratic ‘allies’ inconsistent

The anti-reproductive rights bills are largely passed and signed by Republican-majority legislatures and Republican governors. To secure their passage, bill supporters have mounted an ideological assault that shames both women who seek abortions and their physicians. They wrongly refer to embryos and fetuses as “babies,” deliberately conflating legal abortion with infanticide or even genocide.

The goal is to make such unscientific and stigmatizing language part of the culture. Democratic legislators, seen as allies of the pro-choice movement, have occasionally capitulated to this mindset. In 2015, Ohio Democrats all voted for a bill that prohibited state funding for abortions, under the guise of providing first-time state funding to rape crisis centers. However, these centers cannot use those funds to offer abortion referrals to rape victims.

This year, Democrats, who unapologetically opposed the heartbeat bill, had nevertheless voted minutes earlier for a state Senate resolution “to urge the Congress of the United States, as expeditiously as possible, to enact a Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act.”

This largely symbolic act was intended to shame anyone who has an abortion and to falsely equate late abortions with murder.

Clearly, it’s not enough to vote for “pro-choice” politicians. It took a movement in the streets to force the passage of Roe v. Wade in 1973, and it will take a mass movement allied with all oppressed groups being targeted by hate-legislation and rhetoric—to keep it from being overturned.

Manning, Assange, WikiLeaks and U.S. war crimes

Chelsea Manning (left) at New York City Pride in June 2017, after release from her first imprisonment for exposing U.S. war crimes.

workers.org   April 18, 2019   Page 5
Interview with author Susan Abulhawa: ‘Imperialism by the inch’

"Just because it doesn’t look like the exterminations we’ve accustomed to seeing doesn’t mean they aren’t happening." The novelist and activist Susan Abulhawa, the bestselling author of “Mornings in Jenin” and “The Blue Between Sky and Water," spoke with Ted Kelly of Workers World on the eve of the Israeli elections and the re-election of hardline, racist, incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Abulhawa spoke with Kelly of Workers World on the eve of the Israeli elections and the re-election of hardline, racist, incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. She was arrested by Israeli authorities last November when she returned to her homeland for the culmination of the Palestinian Literature Festival. She was deported back to the United States where she currently resides.

Workers World: March 30 marked the 1-year anniversary of a new phase in the Great March of Return protests in Gaza. In a single year, 20,000 Palestinian assailants have been shot and maimed by Israeli snipers. Nearly 300 have been killed, including infants, journalists, nurses and doctors. This certainly must be seen as still misunderstood as a “border conflict.”

Susan Abulhawa: News media often talk about “nonviolent protests” as if there’s actually an official border. After the 1948 assault on Palestine, Gaza remained unconquered and became a protectorate of Egypt. There was a demilitarized zone of about 3 miles around Gaza. Israel decided the innermost line of that zone is the “border.” Israel has perfected an “imperialism by the inch” tactic. It never was ever a border. Palestine is whole. The people have been whole. All these lines that are drawn are imperial lines.

WW: What this means is that when people see images of protests at the purification fence, that fence is within even Israel’s recognized boundaries for Gaza?

SA: Exactly. Israel created a new demilitarized zone that Gazans have been forced to live within. It’s a death camp. We see how Israeli patrols and enforces the siege on Gaza through force of tremendous death technology. Snipers, Drones. From the sea they have patrol boats that are constantly shooting at fishermen. Gazan fishermen are not allowed to venture beyond 3 nautical miles, but even within those 3 nautical miles, Israel still shoots and drowns a lot of those boats. It’s a complete siege.

There are 2 million people in Gaza who are utterly besieged. They cannot leave by land, water or air. Israel has routinely bombed homes, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure, including electric plants, flour mills, mosques, sewage treatment and water treatment plants. Israeli politicians have said they’re going to send Gaza back to the Dark Ages. They said that and they’re doing that.

WW: They are also using experimental tear gas, white phosphorous and other “death technology,” as you have accurately analyzed.

SA: Gaza serves a purpose for Israel as a human laboratory, as a testing ground for Israeli weapons exports. What a lot of people don’t know is that Israeli weapons are being exported by Israel as capita in the world. That means the export of death is their main business. One out of every five Israeli weapons is that they are marketed as “field-tested” or “battle-tested.”

In 2014, when Israel killed over 2,000 people in Gaza, a huge portion of them children, they were testing the Hermes 900 drone – they used it extensively on people in Gaza. After the assault there, Israel held a huge drone trade show in which they highlighted the “performance” of the Hermes 900. It sold for a lot of money, and the makers of that drone dropped the price of that money. That’s economics for Israel.

Israel has a new series of drones called Cyclone that have been used on protesters in the Great March, dropping all kinds of aerosols and new gases. Plenty of photos and other evidence show this kind of gas as red in a color nobody’s seen before. Gaza is a testing ground. It’s a laboratory.

WW: Israel is often thought of as a recipient of arms deals from the U.S., but you’ve found that they are in fact the preeminent global exporter per capita of weaponry.

SA: Israel has been notorious for arming rogue regimes long after even countries like the United States couldn’t bear the human rights abuses. Case in point: the genocide in Myanmar. Israel has been arming the Myanmar forces as they are committing atrocities against the Rohingya minority, a Muslim minority.

WW: Rwandan President Paul Kagame last week reaffirmed his support of Israel and the administration of Benjamin Netanyahu.

SA: Israel has many quid pro quo agreements with Paul Kagame. One is Israel’s support for a United Nations effort to basically rewrite the narrative of the Rwandan genocide. In exchange, Rwanda has agreed to accept African asylum seekers deported from Israel, which is deporting them to where they will be killed.

WW: This seems to mark a change from Israel as a settler-colonial state to now an imperialist state in its own right.

SA: Israel has actually been up to this from the very beginning. They supported apartheid South Africa as far back as the 1930s. They armed all sides of the Angolan civil war for over 40 years. They armed despots in Guatemala and El Salvador. They provided almost exclusively the arms to the Somoza government in Nicaragua, and later they helped fight the Sandinistas by arming the Contras.

They’ve had their hand in some form, most notably in South Africa.

Israel had a very special relationship with [white supremacist] South Africa. After the whole world couldn’t stomach apartheid South Africa anymore, Israel stood with them until the end. [During the June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising in 1976], when South African white police mowed down children, those guns and that ammunition were provided by Israel.

[Israeli General] Rafael Eitan said that Black South Africans “want to gain control over the white minority just like the Arabs here want to gain control over us. And we, like the white minority in South Africa, must act to prevent them from taking over.”

WW: This gives the lie to the liberal rhetoric of the sort we hear from 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden, who just affirmed himself as a proud Zionist.

SA: I think the Democratic Party really doesn’t want to think about this. It’s an imperialist with unconditional support for this right-wing, fascist, settler-colonial, apartheid state. Rep. Ilhan Omar has split things wide open. She deserves credit because she had the courage to say what needs to be said, and she’s paying a really heavy price for it – personally, professionally, politically, down to her physical safety. The FBI just arrested somebody who was threatening to blow her up. Ten years ago we couldn’t have seen an Ilhan Omar.

WW: But much like in the U.S., where there are no truly anti-imperialist candidates in Israel, there is no anti-apartheid party.

SA: As bad as things are in the U.S., I don’t think you can compare it to Israel, whose politicians are in a league of their own. The things they say publicly and unashamedly are stunning. Politicians in the U.S. use dog whistle [language] and code their rhetoric. As racist as this country is, there are some things you can’t say out loud.

In Israel, it wins you elections when you say things like, “We need to carpet bomb all of Gaza” or “We need to chop all of Gaza.”

Or as Madonna said, “This is a country only for Jews.” These are quotes. Every candidate has said things that are so fascist and racist that it’s stunning.

Israeli society is in the same stage that Europe was at in the 1930s, where things were said about Jews and gay people, out loud and in the newspapers, that should never be said about other human beings.

That’s where Israel is right now in terms of rhetoric and public discourse.

WW: Justice Minister Ayatollah Shaked put out a video this year parodying a commercial, advertising a fragrance called “Fascism.” She’s getting away with this by claiming she was being ironic.

SA: But she’s said explicitly before that she’s proud to be a fascist.

WW: In Europe in the ’30s there were liberal observers who said Hitler was only deploying racist rhetoric to appeal to a hardline base for the election, but he didn’t really mean it. This same mindset seems to be at play at Netanyahy’s threat to annex the West Bank when he wins the election.

Or it wasn’t a threat. I think it was a promise. Netanyahy is flying high on his ability to convince the United States and Donald Trump to affirm the annexation of the Golan Heights and to move the embassy to Jerusalem. He’s been campaigning on annexing the rest of Palestine. Netanyahy has said this repeated-edly. Palestinians have been telling the world that [Israel] has no intention of allowing a Palestinian state to emerge. But U.S. media choose to ignore that and instead play up this impossible two-state narrative that is utterly discredited.

SA: I think the genocide in Myanmar is with us. It’s a strange thing. Why is Israel racist—for a lot of reasons. It was a way to consolidate power over the whole of Palestine and allow for the emergence of a Palestinian state.

WW: Regarding the West Bank, another member of the Tamimi family has been arrested.

SA: The West Bank is also under siege but not at quite the same intensity as Gaza is. The Tamimi family has been a particular case study of how Israeli apartheid has captured imaginations throughout the West. The slap from Ahed Tamimi [of white supremacist] South Africa. Netanyahu has said this repeatedly with Paul Kagame. One is Israel’s friendly with [white supremacist] South Africa. And the other, I am Indigenous to Palestine.

And I can prove it – my parents, my grandparents, my great-grandparents, going back hundreds of years—I can prove this is where I’m from. But they can’t. They can’t point to a single ancestor before 1948 who was there. That’s the irony of it all.

WW: It’s been a year since you were one of the key organizers here of the Don’torchestrate Apartheid protests against the Philadelphia Orchestra for their decision to tour Israel. I’m wondering if you have any thoughts on Madonna’s recent decision to cross the BDS picket line and perform in Israel.

SA: History will not judge Madonna well. She’s a friend of the Netanyahus. She’s been a supporter of Zionism for a long time. I don’t care about the lives of Palestinians. I don’t care that they’re being brutalized and ethnically cleansed. I don’t care that Gazans are living in squalor. I don’t care if they are mowed down with millions of dollars, and I’m happy to lend my name to that parade.

That’s what Madonna is saying.

A Jewish-Canadian billionaire was quoted as saying Madonna’s presence in Israel will go a long way in terms of “positive branding” of Israel. So there you have it, Madonna is branding apartheid. That’s “art-washing.”
Sudan on brink of revolution  What will U.S. do?

By Joanna Straughn

April 15 — Months of widespread protests by thousands, some say millions, in the northeast African country of Sudan culminated in six days and nights of a massive sit-in rally in the capital, Khartoum. Though the demonstrations coincided with celebrations April 11 upon hearing that Sudan’s president of the past 30 years, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, had been deposed.

The joyous mood quickly changed when military leaders announced that Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf would be the new president, following a two-month period leading to an election. Protesters refused to accept Ibn Auf, a military figure with close associations with Bashir. As of April 14 — the day the military council requested that political parties “select an independent prime minister,” (The New Arab) The Alliance for Freedom and Change met with the military council on April 13 to discuss the establishment of a civilian government, as well as the need to end repressive practices of the security services.

During the demonstrations, security forces and militias defending those in power periodically attacked huge popular sit-ins. According to the Central Committee for Sudanese Doctors, 35 people were killed by security forces or militias during the protests.

Soldiers fraternize with demonstrators

In a dramatic move, dozens of low-rank­­ering soldiers in the regular army refused to obey orders and intervened to protect protesters from the security forces. Some soldiers fired on protesters and of­­ficers have defected to the protesters’ side. Videos show friendly cooperation between demonstra­tors and troops — indicating the possible collapse of the old state power.

It is less likely that top officers in the mil­­itary council will ultimately support new leaders who introduce social and economic change in Sudan. To whom will the soldiers give allegiance? To the military command or the revolutionary movement?

Nicknamed the National Islamic Front, a militant group with distinct languages, reli­­gions and cultures. The Arabic language and Islam predominated in the north, while English and multiple Indigenous languages prevail in the south, along with Christianity and traditional practices.

Bashir came to power in 1989 through a military coup led by the National Islamic Front. In 1994, a Foreign Ministry delegation from Iran reported seeing the Construction Jihad of Iran active in agri­­culture, hospital building and road build­­ing in Sudan. In 1993 Bashir signed an agreement with China about mining, oil, and other major oil development proj­­ects to reach Sudan’s oil reserves. The expansion of the government-directed oil infrastructure was mostly dominated by the northern culture, while entering into areas of the southern region. Rebel forces also vied with government forces for control of oil-related resources.

Large oil reserves has been detected in 1978 in what came to be the separate state of South Sudan in 2011. Washington supported rebels in South Sudan in a bid to guarantee U.S. oil interests access to that region.

Some explain the conflict between northern and southern regions of Sudan by its colonial-era borders, which encom­­pass groups with distinct languages, reli­­gions and cultures.

While Bashir fell, milk@workers.org    April 18, 2019    Page 7

Agneta Norberg, another delegation member, said, “The U.S. has 1,000 mil­i­tary bases around the world and a dozen nuclear-armed Trident submarines patrolling. We are trapped in a very dan­­gerous situation, and none of the pres­i­dents seem to understand the danger.”

Hostility to Russia and its people is widespread, not just in the West but also in Asian-Pacific NATO partner countries like Japan and Australia.

Gagnon said that the U.S. is “twisting the arms” of countries such as Sweden and Finland to join “an ever-expanding NATO and allow war games and bases aimed at Russia onto our lands.”

Gagnon repels the myth of NATO being a defensive alliance. “The U.S. used NATO to attack Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now Iran. It is one of the hopes of the tour is to “make friends with the Russian people, who are not our enemies.”

Tensions rose as rebel forces from the South made attempts to take over oil resources and infrastructure, leading to government retaliation. In March, the central Sudan government announced it was building factories to produce tanks and missiles, “to defend ourselves against counter-revolutionaries.” It also suggested it should use earnings from oil exports to finance these projects. (sudanupdate.org)

African southern rebels (SPLA) captured an airbase, destroying planes and freeing prisoners. The Sudan govern­­ment, which has since built up its military capabilities, retaliated the following month in the region of Darfur in 2004 with helicop­­ter gunships. Concurrent raids were led by Janjaweed mounted militia forces against the SPLA.

Bashir denied any connection between himself and the Janjaweed. This didn’t stop U.S. President Colin Powell from charging Bashir with a massacre and even genocide before the International Criminal Court. At the time Washington considered Bashir a threat to U.S. oil interests in Sudan.

When Sudan was isolated in 2011, Sudan lost a quarter of its area and pop­­ulation, including access to nearly half of its former oil reserves, which had formed the economic basis for securing invest­­ment and also the ability to pay back debt. In addition, the U.S. had imposed sanctions since 1997 and listed Sudan as a state sponsoring terrorism. Sudan still has the third-largest land area in Africa and 40 million people, but the price of bread tripled.

How will the U.S. and other imperialist countries react should a popular revolu­tion­ary government replace the current military rule and attempt to rebuild Sudan on its own terms? Will the impe­­rialists attempt military intervention to gain control over future lectures that pass through and connect Sudan and South Sudan?

Peace delegation to tour Russia on ‘bridge-building mission’

By Mike Kuhlenbeck

The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (GN) is organizing a delegation to Russia to help “build a peace bridge between people of their nations” from April 25 to May 10.

Twenty-four peace activists from Canada, England, Nepal, Sweden and the U.S. will participate in a “bridge-building mission.” Most of the group will be mem­­bers of GN and Veterans For Peace.

GN Coordinator Bruce K. Gagnon said, “Our goal is to break the constant dem­­onization of Russia, which is being used to justify U.S.-NATO military actions.”

Members of the delegation are sched­­uled to arrive in Moscow April 25. They will fly to Crimea on April 30 and then to St. Petersburg and other cities. They will meet with experts to discuss such topics as cul­­tural, economics, foreign policy, military policy, and nuclear threats.

Chair Dave Webb of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (U.K.) said in a statement, “We want to see and hear for ourselves what Russia is really like.

“We want to meet with Russian cit­­izens, teachers, students, political leaders, journalists and others in order to listen to their concerns, so we get unfiltered information.”

GN was founded in 1992 to “stop the militarization of space” and has around 300 affiliated organizations. The idea for the tour originated last spring in Oxford, England, at the GN annual meeting, which was available to the public in the near future.

Continuing down the dangerous path of his predecessors, the admin­­istration of Donald Trump has further endangered the world by pulling out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Iran Nuclear Deal.

Swedish Peace Council vice chair Agneta Norberg, another delegation member, said, “The U.S. has 1,000 mili­­tary bases around the world and a dozen nuclear-armed Trident submarines patrolling. We are trapped in a very dan­­gerous situation, and none of the pres­i­dents seem to understand the danger.”

Hostility to Russia and its people is widespread, not just in the West but also in Asian-Pacific NATO partner countries like Japan and Australia.

Gagnon said that the U.S. is “twisting the arms” of countries such as Sweden and Finland to join “an ever-expanding NATO and allow war games and bases aimed at Russia onto our lands.”

Gagnon repels the myth of NATO being a defensive alliance. “The U.S. used NATO to attack Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now Iran. It is one of the hopes of the tour is to “make friends with the Russian people, who are not our enemies.”
Hurricane of colonialism ravages Puerto Rico

By Makasi Motema

When a hurricane smashes into an island, it destroys everything in its path and carries the remains out to sea. But hurricane damage is trivial compared to the devastation caused by colonialism.

In early April, the white supremacist commander-in-chief sought to deny Venezuela the recognition of the United Nations and the Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), which he had been given Puerto Rico more than its fair share. The reality is that from sugar monopolies in 1868 to bond market inflation schemes in 2006, the U.S. has done nothing but take. Hurricane Maria was nothing more than a hammer with which the Yankee empire could further shatter its Caribbean piggy bank.

Puerto Rico has been a target of wealth extraction and a vehicle for military expansion ever since the U.S. took control of the island from Spain in 1898. On Wall Street wasted no time commandeering the economy of Puerto Rico to enrich U.S. agribusinesses. And Puerto Rico became an important staging point for invasions and coups that the U.S. launched against other Latin American nations.

More recently, U.S. banks descended on the island while taking advantage of lax regulations, which had been imposed by the U.S. Congress. Banks like UBS have pushed the Puerto Rican government into borrowing billions of dollars to cover basic expenses. The big banks know that, unlike other U.S. jurisdictions, federal laws do not require them to cover their debt before covering any other obligations. Further, neither the island nor its public corporation can file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. (Chapter 9 involves the restructing of municipal debt, such as Detroit filed in 2013.)

U.S. rule puts banks before people

With borrowing and lending driven out of control, collapse was inevitable. But without the ability to declare bankruptcy, Puerto Rico has been strong-armed into deporting its citizens in order to repay the banks. Like any imperial power, the U.S. left this work to un-elected vee-roy—a seven-member board appointed under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PREBFA).

Puerto Rican citizens have absolutely no say over who sits on this board, and a single sister seat must be filled by some-one who actually lives on the island. In spite of this incredi-ably undemocratic process, PREBFA board members have been empowered to lower Puerto Rico’s minimum wages close to nearly 200 public schools and slash funding for its public university. PREBFA is nothing more than a tool for colonial wealth extraction.

In this light, it’s clear that Hurricane Maria only adds to the tragedy. More than 3,000 people died due to the hurricane and the subsequent damage to infrastructure, but the reaction from Puerto Rico’s imperial masters was heartless. A recent study asserted that in the first nine days after hurricanes Harvey in Texas and Irma in Florida, Texas resi-dents received $1.3 billion and Florida residents received $100 million. How much aid money did Puerto Rico receive after the disaster? A paltry $6 million. Aid was, and still is, slow in com-ing to the island. For people of color living in Puerto Rico, the reconstruction, like clean water, is in short supply.

White nationalism in open under Trump

And there is no reason to expect com-passion from the current occupant of the White House. President Donald Trump is an open white nationalist who despises people of color. Even though Puerto Ricans have received aid much more slowly than other disaster victims, Trump told Republican lawmakers in March that Puerto Rico had received too much aid.

This is unsurprising from a man who would tear Latinx children from the arms of their mothers and fathers and cage them beneath a filthy overpass. No amount of pain and suffering is enough when the vic-tims are people of color and the perme-tors are white nationalists. As is the case with so much of U.S. policy in the last two years, Trump reveals the white suprema-cist heart beating beneath the chest of U.S. imperialism. What’s happening to Puerto Rico now is but an extension of what has been done for the last 300 years.

Racists like Trump have always por-trayed Puerto Rico as a welfare state that squanders its resources and survives off the generous largesse of the U.S. government. This is, and has always been, imperialist and paternalistic nonsense. "The white man’s burden" is a total lie. In reality, Wall Street has extracted billions of dol-lars from Puerto Rico through predatory lending; the fruits of Puerto Rican agriculture have enriched U.S. corporations; and every year, Puerto Ricans pump millions of dollars into the U.S. economy because they are forced by law to import nearly all their goods from the states—at a 20 percent markup, no less.

In truth, it is the U.S., like any empire, which parasitically feeds off its colonial victims. The money that Puerto Rico requires to rebuild its infrastructure—is an estimated $100 billion—pales in com-parison to the wealth that the U.S. has drained from the labor and resources of the Puerto Rican people. But resistance among Puerto Rican activists to these colonial and neoliberal policies is on the rise, and the strength of the U.S. empire is on the decline.

As the power of the people grows and the strength of their oppressors begins to fade, Puerto Rico may be the ones who cut off the money tap. (1)

Venezuelan right wing runs out of cards to play

By Marco Turrogi

Caracas, Venezuela

This article was published on April 12 on Workers.org.ar. Translation by Michael Otto.

For the third time since January, the United States has convened a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to address the issue of Venezuela. The goal this time is to get Juan Guaidó recognized as the country’s interim presi-dent. Vice President Mike Pence, re-presenting the first government to take the floor, paid tribute to the “resilience” of the time has come for the United Nations to rec-ognize Interim President Juan Guaidó as the legitimate president of Venezuela and seat his representative in this body.” (tinyurl.com/yxjirstp)

The absurd rationale Pence used to form a United Nations Security Coun-cil resolution of the National Assembly as the only legitimate Venezuelan government in-stitution, and of Guaidó as president until new elections are called. Pence outlined the narrative which Washington is promoting to justify its new attacks: "Venezuela is a failed state, and as history teaches, failed states have no boundaries. Drug traf-fickers, criminal gangs, even terrorists like Hezbollah are exploiting the chaos in Venezuela to gain a foothold." Both argu-ments have been heard before. As could be expected, this and other positions were presented by the U.S. in previous resolutions.

Through its ambassador to the Council, Vasily Nebenzi, the Russian Federation opposed the "interference of the United States in other states." He denounced the attacks on Venezuela and the vari-ous types of robbery that are being per-petrated against the country. He also assailed U.S. ciness, "because on the one hand they have got [Venezuela] by the throat with sanctions, but simul-taneously they are providing international assistance... The political situation can only be resolved through a national dia-logue, but Guaidó is not willing to open a dialogue," Pence stated. "he has not been given orders to do so.

The government of the People’s Republic of China also adviced a dia-logue between the parties. Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu said: "China opposes military intervention in Venezuela and it opposes the use of economic and financial means for political purposes. Unilateral sanctions will only worsen people’s daily lives, and will not bring peace to the country."

Several countries, such as France, Germany and Britain, shared a common stance, which reaffirmed their recognition of Guaidó as Venezuela’s official presi-dent, and declared that “as interim presi-dent in full respect of the Constitution, he could organize free and transparent elec-tions and dissolve the National Assembly,” (PROMESA).

Venezuela denounced U.S. attack

Venezuelan Ambassador to the U.N. Samuel Moncada denounced the U.S.- planned attack. He said it was applied to commit "deliberate economic destruc-tion, aggression using financial instru-ments and by abusively increasing the position in the markets to create unju-stified pressures." Moncada asserted that the solution, "should not be interventionism or con-tractions from criminals or conferences of patrons who conceal the looting they have committed. They should return the [stolen] funds, end the blockade, halt the sabotage of our infrastructure and stop threatening military intervention.”

As in the two previous meetings, the final result was predictable. Agreement was impossible, as blocs were aligned around the same hardened positions. The meeting convened by the U.S. appears to have been intended to keep the issue of Venezuela on the international agenda and to deepen the discourse around the humanitarian crisis and the "failed state.”

[In the U.N.,] it was impossible [for Washington] to achieve the result obtained in the Council of the Organization of American States, where Guaidó’s envoy was recognized in place of the Venezuelan representative with the support of 18 votes [a simple majority of the 34 members]. Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Lomónaco described that result as a “Pyrrhic” vic-tory that undermined the OAS as an institution.

While the U.N. Security Council was in session, the Venezuelan right wing was calling for the second day of its so-called "Operation Freedom,” with protests located in different parts of Caracas, the capital, and the country. The protest’s results reconfirmed the downward trend in the opposition’s capacity to mobilize around Guaidó, and its inability to build up expectations that will excite people within the opposition. Its propaganda has stumbled into a crisis zone, particularly because of the gap between the promises [of regime change] and the conversion of those promises into concrete reality.

The next steps in Washington’s agenda are highlighted by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s visits to Chile, Paraguay, Continued on page 9
Popular forces challenge Guatemalan regime

by Sam Ordoñez

Six gunshots killed Hemil Leonel Nájera Trigueros on April 8 in the municipi- ality of La Libertad, in the Petén depart- ment of Guatemala. Nájera Trigueros was a land defender and a campaign staffer for the Movement for the Liberation of the Peoples (MLP). MLP registered as a political party in late 2018 as the electoral vehicle for the peasant organization Codeca. It is cam- paigning on issues raised by the peasantry and by Indigenous communities.

This popular force is only one of the forces currently challenging the Guatemalan government. On one side, the People’s Democratic Popular front and its military front, something they thought they had permanently defeated after the 1960-96 civil war. On the other side, they are dealing with an urban middle class that refuses to allow them to keep plun- dering government funds.

Hemil Leonel Nájera Trigueros is the ninth member of the MLP to be found dead or to have disappeared since the electoral campaign began. Three of the victims were congressional candidates, and the others were founding members of the party. (tinyurl.com/xvnxgjk, in Spanish)

The MLP is proposing, among other things, the nationalization of resources and utilities, lowering government salaries and initiating a Popular and Plurinational Constituent Assembly. As a part of the movement to create autonomous regions for the various Indigenous peoples in the country.

Guatemala is no stranger to the killing of social movement leaders, and neither is Central America as a region. There have been countless killings of peasant and Indigenous leaders who resist mining projects and other incursions by trans- nationals that steal land and destroy the environment.

Popular forces and middle class

The corruption of the governing right- wing alliance has caused a political crisis ever since a series of large mobilizations in the capital forced the resignation of then president Otto Pérez Molina in 2015. These demonstrations were based in the urban middle class, but were sup- ported by popular forces because of their struggle against deep-seated corruption. This middle class, who care about dealing with corruption more than any other pri- vate political debate, have mostly rallied behind the Movement Semilla and its candidate, Thelma Aldana.

As a former Attorney General, Aldana worked with the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG, in Spanish) to initi- ate a series of corruption investigations into the highest levels of government. The most important of these was the investiga- tion against Pérez Molina that sparked the mass demonstrations.

In this sense Aldana poses a threat to the so-called “Pact of the Corrupt,” the alliance of a group of right-wing parties, military officers and businessmen who run the country. Another opponent is the National Union of Hope party, which, despite its own corruption scandals, has the funds and organization to challenge the ruling coalition.

Right wing returns
to dictatorship tactics

How is the Guatemalan oligarchy try- ing to resolve the country’s political cri- sis? It is throwing its support behind the candidacy of Zury Ríos — a grim version of its aims. Ríos is the daughter of Efrain Ríos Montt, the dictator from the 1980s who was convicted of genocide for his policies against the Ixil Maya people.

In the years it has held power, the Pact of the Corrupt has managed to take control of almost every institution in the country, with the important excep- tion of the Constitutional Court. Using its control of the other courts, the Pact has blocked Thelma Aldana’s candidacy and even issued a warrant for her arrest.

Not only manipulating the legal system to prevent Aldana from running, but killing social leaders outright, it appears that even the minimum notions of democ- racy are at stake in Guatemala. Despite its disagreements with the Guatemalan right wing, U.S. imperialism appears willing to allow this return to the previous centu- ry’s dictatorships. The popular movement will have to mobilize the new democracy that has ruled the country for the last three decades.

Venezuelan right wing runs out of cards to play

Continued from page 8

Peru and Colombia, including the bor- der city of Cúcuta, on Sunday [April 14]. Pompeo, who repeated [Obama’s lie] on April 11, that “the Maduro regime is a real threat to the United States of America,” will seek agreements on the imposition of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. The possible use of military intervention has been ruled out of the proposed options by all U.S.allies.

For example, Elliot Abrams, U.S. Special Envoy for Venezuela, met on Wednesday [April 10] with representa- tives of Spain’s administration, includ- ing José Manuel Albaré, diplomatic advisor to the government, and Jean Pablo de Laiglesia, Secretary of State for International Cooperation. Spain’s repre- sentatives expressed “the need for a democ- ratic solution to the very serious crisis the country is suffering” and stressed that “the current situation in the Caribbean country requires a political, peaceful and democratic solution that categorically excludes the use of force.”

Coup strategy stalls

While the coup strategy isn’t advance- ing, the Venezuelan government publicly consolidated its efforts for coopera- tion with the International Committee of the Red Cross. The organi- zation’s president, Peter Maurer, expressed his willingness to work jointly with Venezuela on developing an aid plan that is apolitical and neutral — without defining the needs of the country as a “humanitarian crisis.” The priority areas for aid will be Caracas, the border with Colombia and the state of Bolívar, bor- dering Brazil.

The joint work between the Venezuelan government and the Red Cross is important in two crucial ways — first, by creating responses to existing difficulties within the country. The Chinese government has been doing this in cooperation with Venezuela, as shown by China’s delivery of 65 tons of medicines on March 29.

Second, it removes support for the right-wing’s narrative, which claims that the government will block any kind of social relief. Now the problem for the right wing that no longer recognizes Nicolás Maduro as president is that it has no more cards to play. Three months after the beginning of his new term, it seems to have run out of tricks. That’s why Pompeo, Abrams and Pence have once again publicly taken the lead.
A much abused word

By Rémy Herrera

Herrera, a Marxist economist and researcher at France’s Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), who worked with the Tiers-Temps de la Sorbonne, Paris, wrote this article on April 11. Workers World staff translated it.

“Act 21” of the Yellow Vests took place on Saturday, April 6, as their demonstrations have every week for almost five months. This “cultural offensive” was launched from April 5 to 7 in the evening in Saint-Nazaire, in Loire-Atlantique, which will certainly influence the course of future struggles in the country. The Assembly of representatives of the lower assemblies of the Yellow Vests is the central focus of the movement.

The First Assembly, which attracted 70 delegates, took place in the Meuse, in Commercy, at the end of January. This time, nearly 270 delegations arrived in Saint-Nazaire, which means about 800 delegates were present. (There were two representatives and two observers per delegation.) The meeting included volunteers, journalists, and the curious.

These delegations were elected by about 10,000 activists, about 8% of the overall number of 120,000. Many of these delegates were organizers, or the “bottom up”, raised at a meeting started from a call from their daily newspapers, the Yellow Vests reads, “The emancipation of the International Workers’ Association starts on one’s own capability. We have very little money. One can also rely on the generosity of others, but they may also have very little money. One can also rely on one’s own capability.”

In 1864, the first preamble to the International Workers’ Association stated: “The working class must be the work of the workers themselves.” Being a Yellow Vest worker is not afraid of mud, rain or empty pockets.

There were three days of serious discussions at this assembly. They were often difficult, stormy and chaotic. It was about the mobilization itself, which was launched in mid-November, they revealed the determination of the Yellow Vests and their resistance to “torture and manipulation” to the society with inequalities and injustices, symbolized by President Emmanuel Macron.

Delegates unanimously condemned the police repression and violence of which they are victims. And they held to their resolve, their desire to be heard, and at the heart of the movement — to think and reinvent authentic forms of it from the bottom up, without a self-proclaimed “spokesperson,” who only seeks to terrify us to prevent action. Judicial repression followed to stifle the movement. What we are experiencing has been the daily life of working-class suburbs for decades.

The final text also rejected the “trickery” of the “Great-White-Hat” scenario, which is wanted and is manipulated by President Macron. It also states the Yellow Vests’ refusal to participate in the elections.”

The text then said that “in order to protect the environment, we must change a system that is harmful to the planet and destroy human beings and life on Earth. Never-ending capitalist exploitation that is so important to know what we need to do. We must change the social system. The group that has its liberal defenders. One of them recently wrote an op-ed column for the New York Times warning about “America’s Coming Ulygarchy.” (Coming isn’t here yet.) Michael Tomasky points out that the rich are getting richer. This is a threat to our great democracy, he writes. And who does he cite? The billionaire realtor Tomasso, who works at the Centre d’Économie de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), who was depressed that his work is not of much interest to the boss, as long as there are other workers available to be hired and exploited. Chastel slavery was replaced by a system that still relies on the exploitation of people and does not help them to change the system that replaced it: wage slavery.

Under chattel slavery, a bonded worker’s death was a material loss for the slave owner. Under wage slavery, the worker lives or dies in this “democracy” to buy politicians and votes.

What does this text say? It made a point to assert, that public services must be provided for a vote by the various local assemblies of Yellow Vests. It says that public services must be free and pay special attention to the 9 million people living below the poverty line. It says that public services must be reconsidered for all. This is fundamental.

(Text: tinyurl.com/y5c9s54z)

This text says “no” to the violence imposed by a privileged minority against an entire people. It says “yes” to canceling the sentences imposed on prisoners and convicts from the Yellow Vest movement, and it stresses: “Police violence is an act of political intimidation. It seeks to terrify us to prevent action. Judicial repression followed to stifle the movement. What we are experiencing has been the daily life of working-class suburbs for decades.”

The final text also rejected the “trickery” of the “Great-White-Hat” scenario, which is wanted and is manipulated by President Macron. It also states the Yellow Vests’ refusal to participate in the elections.”

In order to protect the environment, we must change a system that is harmful to the planet and destroy human beings and life on Earth. Never-ending capitalist exploitation that is so important to know what we need to do. We must change the social system. The group that has its liberal defenders. One of them recently wrote an op-ed column for the New York Times warning about “America’s Coming Ulygarchy.” (Coming isn’t here yet.) Michael Tomasky points out that the rich are getting richer. This is a threat to our great democracy, he writes. And who does he cite? The billionaire realtor Tomasso, who works at the Centre d’Économie de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), who was depressed that his work is not of much interest to the boss, as long as there are other workers available to be hired and exploited. Chastel slavery was replaced by a system that still relies on the exploitation of people and does not help them to change the system that replaced it: wage slavery.

Under chattel slavery, a bonded worker’s death was a material loss for the slave owner. Under wage slavery, the worker lives or dies in the “democracy” to buy politicians and votes.
Workers World conducted the follow- ing interview in Philadelphia with Mong Palatino, Chair of BAYAN Metro Manila, and Ed Cubelo, Vice Chair of KMU, in the presence of Mayo Uno (May First Movement). They are currently on a U.S. speaking tour about the 100th anniversary of the 1916 rising.

Workers World: What are the main objectives of the speaking tour?

Ed Cubelo: We want to inform as many people about the revolutionary and martyred vision of those who fought and died for cultural independence for Ireland and the 32-county socialist republic. We also want to discuss the current human rights situation in the Philippines and hope to build unity among Filipinos in the U.S. to fight Duterte’s repressive government.

WW: What are the current conditions for workers in the Philippines?

EC: Due to the imposition of new taxes like the TRAIN [Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion] law, prices of basic commodities are soaring. Salaries for the Filipino workers remain very low. In the capital city of Metro Manila, workers are only U.S.$10.30 a day and much lower in other regions.

Contractual workers, 70 percent of the workforce, are not allowed to join or form a union, have no benefits, are vulnerable to termination and prone to precarious work- ing conditions. Their salaries are mostly much lower than minimum wage, with long hours of work and no overtime pay.

Duterte’s government is not creating jobs. Instead, 1.3 million Filipino workers lost their jobs in 2017 and 387,000 lost their jobs in 2019. This was not reported by the Duterte administration. Thousands of Filipino workers are leaving the country hoping to find work abroad.

When workers fight back, Duterte’s regime brands their organization — especially the KMU [Kilusang Mayo Uno] — as a terrorist organization “front.” There are massive illegal arrests and red baiting of organizers and workers, with the regime using its drug war campaign to cover up arrests. A combination of police force and military force is used to suppress workers.

Many workers and organizers have been sent to prison.

MP: Due to the poor conditions for workers and the repressive political cli- mate in the country, many are forced to leave to seek better opportunities abroad. Our migrant workers experience tremendous hardships, but they endure for their families struggling to survive back home. These workers are modern day heroes because they keep the economy afloat.

Yet this does not address how successive government administrations have not cre- ated enough jobs to keep families together. Further, the government has systematically promoted labor export policies that push Filipinos, including skilled workers, to leave the country.

WW: What is the U.S. role in the Philippines?

EC: The U.S. acts as a domineering neoconservative master over the Philippines. Economic policies are crafted for its impe- rial and neoliberal interests. As the Philippine economy is “opened up” for neoliberal profit, it also remains agrarian and nonindustrial. Flooded with foreign consumer products, the economy is a source of raw materials, minerals and rare earth ores for the U.S. and its allies. Workers are a cheap labor force for extractive industries, assembly line pro- ductions and business outsourcing like call center service employees.

These infrastructures and facilities for these economic and trade activities are financed through loans from institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Our economy is debt ridden. Half the government’s annual national budget is allocated for debt servicing alone.

These international institutions design the local economic system and heavily influence and dictate legislation and execu- tion actions. Government officials, political parties, and local technocrats act at their bidding, as agents of neoliberal eco- nomic concepts.

In the political field, the U.S. has a stronghold over the Philippine govern- ment, while the Philippine military is the main machine of U.S. dominance.

WW: Can you describe some of the major struggles of Filipino people in response to these conditions?

EC: The mainstream people’s movement in the Philippines is basically an agrarian and anti-feudal movement. The KMU, as a member of the International League of People’s Struggles (ILPS), conducts anti-imperialist struggles-broad, including exposing and opposing U.S. wars of aggression.

MP: Land reform struggles are contin- uously asserted. Labor protests are rising. Student organizing has amplified the call for free education and also the campaign for justice in relation to Duterte’s drug war.

WW: How can people in the U.S. show solidarity?

EC: Circulate the real situation of Filipino workers in the Philippines. Support the establishment of a workers’ school with a donation to the Paalarang Crispin Beltzan (Crispin Beltzan Workers’ School). Organize to send a delegation to KMU’s yearly International Solidarity Affair. (tinyurl.com/KMUSASA09)

You can also join the progressive organizations of migrant workers in the U.S., for instance, Migrante USA or American-USA.

MP: And you can demand the U.S. gov- ernment stop sending police and military aid to the Philippines!

Irish socialist to commemorate revolutionary republic

“‘If you remove the English army tomor- row and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organiza- tion of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her cap- italists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institu- tions which are ground deeper and deeper into poverty and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs.” — Irish revolu- tionary and martyr, James Connolly, Jan 1917.

The following statement from the Irish Republican Socialist Committees of North America was written for an upcoming commemoration in Ireland of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic. For the Irish Republicans all of stripes the Easter Rising marks a turning point in resistance to British imperialism and a world historical event that gave birth to modern Irish republicanism. The vision laid out by Connolly and others for martyr and self-determination was one of a nation organized by the principles of common ownership and freedom for the Irish people.

The Republic declared in the 1916 Rising was officially established 100 years ago on Dec. 26, 1916 — the Revolutionary Government of the Republic. True to the democratic and egal- itarian vision of those who fought and died for Ireland three years prior, the first flag called for social, political, economic and cultural independence for Ireland and the equal rights of all its citizens.

This year marks the 100th anni- versary of a n o t h e r l a n d m a r k in the struggle for self-determination, buried even deeper under bourgeois revisionism — the establishment of the Limerick Soviet. In response to intensified British repression, workers in the Cleeves fac- tory went on strike. This grew to a general strike which the workers, with the government and then deposed Gombeen [capitalists] cynically appeal to a revisionist history that robs the rev- olutionary and social character from the foundations of Republicanism. As their class has done for generations, they invoke a sterilized nationalism that serves to divide the political opposition and the working people.

On both sides of the border, the people are ground deeper and deeper into poverty by policies of austerity. And on both sides of the border, working people are driven from their homes for the sake of profit.

In the 32-county socialist republic declared in 1916 and established in 1919 is long overdue to be realized by Ireland’s sons and daughters. To do so requires the reawakening of both British imperialism and Irish capitalism. It is up to current generation to push forward toward national liberation and socialism. Forward in the name of Connolly and Costello.

Up the workers’ republic! — photographed in April 1919, in the Breadway and Bakeries strike, taken by the Belfast photographer Thomas Costello.

Workers protest government terrorist-tagging campaign against “red” unions, March 10.

Fuerza popular se enfrenta al régimen guatemalteco

Continúa de la página 12

La derecha busca el regreso a la dictadura ¿Cómo busca la oligarquía salir de la crisis política del país? La respuesta se evidencia con el apoyo que ha recibido la candidatura de Zary Ríos, hija del dictador de los años 80 Efraín Ríos Montt que fue convicto de genocidio.

En los años que lleva en el poder, el Pacto de Corruptos ha logrado conquis- tar casi todos los cuerpos del estado, con la importante excepción de la Corte Constitucional. Mediante el control que ejercen, han logrado bloquear la candida- tura de Thelma Aldana con un decreto del Tribunal Supremo Electoral, y se ha emi- tido orden de detención en su contra.

Entre las manipulaciones del sistema de justicia para bloquear a Aldana y el simple pero eficaz enfoque de los líderes sociales, parece que la misma democracia está en juego en Guatemala. A pesar de algunas diferen- cias con respecto a otros países, nos da la misma lección: que el imperialismo norteamericano va a tolerar este regreso a las dictaduras del siglo pasado. Será necesario el movi- miento popular para defender y defender la democracia que ha tenido el país durante las últimas décadas. —

La Casa Blanca intensifica guerra criminal contra inmigrantes

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

En la actualidad, la Casa Blanca se com­por­ta como un Estado de excepción y la violencia contra la migración no autorizada no se detiene.

De acuerdo con el sitio web del Departamento de Estado, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos gastó más de $2,6 mil millones en ayuda para el Triángulo del Norte durante los años fiscales 2015-2018. Entonces, el mero recorte de $450 mil­lo­nes parece ser una insignificante cantidad de dinero.

Lo que ayudaría sería si el dinero realmente fuera a la gente y no a las olarias. Lo que ayudaría sería si el impe­mente no pagara regularmente el Tratado de Am­érica Central por siglos de robo. Es la intervención de los Estados Unidos la que ha institucionalizado la violencia que Trump am para ayudar a otros países.

En la década de 1980, por ejemplo, Washington organizó una guerra san­ti­güe­no contra los pueblos indígenas de Guatemala, que se estaban organizando audazmente e incluso se entregaban en una organización guerrillera. El Pentágono, a través de sus lacayas, llevó a cabo una guerra conocida contra la población maja y indígena. Al menos 6,000 aldeanos fueron asesinados, más de 200,000 personas murieron, miles desaparecieron y millones fueron desplaza­dos.

El sitio web de Combate Genocida dice: “Se han documentado si­en­tes masacres por el ejercito guatemal­teco”.

El 19 de julio de 1982, el presidente Ríos Montt fue citado en el New York Times diciendo al público: “Si estamos con nosotros, te alimentaremos; si no, te matamos.”

Y en Honduras, el Departamento de Estado, supervisado por la Secretaria de Estado Demócrata Hillary Clinton, orga­nizó un golpe de estado en 2009 contra el presidente progresista Mel Zelaya, anun­ciando un gobierno de derecha por impe­rial­ista. Periodistas, mujeres, sindicalistas y cualquier persona que lucha por la justi­cia son amenazadas o asesinadas. Héroes populares como Berta Cáceres, una líder indígena de Lenca que luchaba contra la destrucción de la Tierra, y Margarita Murillo, una líder campesina que organi­zaba a los trabajadores, fueron asesinadas por el estado hondureño.

Lo que ayudaría sería si el imperialismo, lamentablemente, tiene la ventaja por ahora.

La Casa Blanca intensifica guerra criminal contra inmigrantes

Por Sam Ordóñez

El 8 de abril fue asesinado por seis tiros de bala Hemí Leonel Nájera Trigueros, defensor de los derechos hu­ma­nos e integrante del grupo de campaña polí­ti­ca del Movimiento para la Liberación de los Pueblos (MLP) en el municipio de la Libertad, departamento de Petén, Guatemala.

Ese es mucho dinero para una pequeña nación empobrecida.

Hemí Leonel Nájera Trigueros, uno de los muchos líderes de los campesinos asesinados en Guatemala recientemente. Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG) para iniciar varias investigaciones de corrup­ción en los niveles más altos del gobierno, siendo más importante que la que abrió contra Pérez Molina.

En este sentido Aldana representa una amenaza al llamado “Partido de Corruptos” la alianza entre un grupo de partidos de derecha, militares, y empresarios que continúa en la página 11