

Tell Greyhound:

ICE off our buses!



The call to action below can be shared and signed at bit.ly/ICEoffBuses. Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere is a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization based in the U.S., seeking to bring together all sectors of society to concentrate on abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement, immediately putting an end to all deportations and closing all migrant detention centers. The International Workers' Solidarity Network is building an international network of working-class organizations and activists who understand that every struggle is a workers' struggle and recognize the urgency of developing global working-class solidarity.

Build solidarity and worker power to end Greyhound collaboration with ICE!

Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE) and the International Workers' Solidarity Network (IWSN) call for the immediate end of Greyhound's collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Every day across the U.S., ICE, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents freely board buses with Greyhound's permission and attempt to identify and detain migrants.

Greyhound is not required to allow immigration agents onto its buses, but rather does so voluntarily, conceding to the racist climate created by Trump to demonize migrant workers and divide working-class people.

It is imperative that all workers unite in solidarity to challenge this egregious collaboration with white supremacy by Greyhound.

The union that represents Greyhound drivers, mechanics and terminal workers — Amalgamated

Transit Union Local 1700 — has courageously spoken out to condemn the company's complicity in the racist war against migrants being carried out by the Trump administration.

In a statement, President Karen Miller said: "I've seen this happen before. I used to drive a Memphis-Dallas Greyhound bus, and law enforcement would sometimes stop my bus, search it with dogs and ask for IDs, mostly from people of color. I hated it then, but now it is happening more often, and the consequences are devastating for our passengers and their families.

"At a time when our government has implemented inhumane and cruel immigration policies — such as separating children from their parents, holding families in indefinite detention and deporting people who have been in the country for decades — we cannot allow this to happen."

In recent months, Trump and his allies have dramatically escalated the brutal and long-standing U.S. war on migrant workers, carrying out clandestine raids in communities across the country, separating children from their families and establishing a network

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WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

Activists hold picket signs on Aug. 19 at Port Authority in New York City to bring attention to the Aug. 23 'Get ICE Off Greyhound Buses' protest. Despite the PA police's attempt to remove them, the activists refused to back down and won their legal right to distribute the flyers.

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Racist rally routed in Portland

By Jim McMahan
Portland, Ore.

In August a fascist murdered 22 people in El Paso, Texas, and there were two other fascistic massacres in Dayton, Ohio, and Gilroy, Calif. Trump and his racist supporters continue to sink the U.S. into a mire of bigotry, which threatens more bloody massacres of working people. Now Trump has accused the anti-racist movement of violent aggression, instead of the murderous racists whom Trump himself has put into motion. An Aug. 17 tweet by Trump actually branded Portland, Ore., anti-racist Antifa (anti-fascists) an “organization of terror.”

Portland anti-racists, including Antifa, gathered Aug. 17 to counter a national mobilization there of white supremacist and neo-Nazi hate groups called for that day.

These organizations, such as the Proud Boys, came to Portland from around the U.S., together with local hate groups already in the area. The Proud Boys, named a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center for spreading the poison of white supremacy, misogyny and Islamophobia, was part of the 2017 Charlottesville, Va., Unite the Right rally, where a neo-Nazi killed anti-racist Heather Heyer.

A white man who was influenced by these groups stabbed and killed two men and wounded a third on a Portland light-rail train in 2017. The fascist was terrorizing two young women — one wearing a hijab, the other a Black woman. The three men were attacked after they defended these women.

Anti-racists fight back

The Aug. 17 pushback began at a downtown waterfront park with the progressive community holding a rally. Some carried signs reading, “Heather Heyer Presente,” honoring the martyr of the anti-racist counterprotesters in Charlottesville. Others carried signs which read, “White supremacy is terrorism.” Portland NAACP President Rev. E. D. Mondainé led the crowd in singing a marching song of the Black Freedom Movement, “Ain’t gonna let nobody turn us around!”

When the fascist Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer and others appeared at the south end of the park, a crowd of at least a thousand militant anti-racists headed for them. The



Members of the Portland, Ore., Antifa contingent against racism on Aug. 17.

anti-racists were led by groups like Rose City Antifa. But their march forward was stalled by barricades and a line of cops protecting the fascists. Over 700 cops were deployed from two dozen police agencies, including the FBI.

After a face-off of about an hour, the several hundred fascists were “evacuated” by police. A well-publicized photo in the big business media that seemingly showed the fascists parading on Hawthorne Street Bridge was actually a picture of fascists in retreat. Sgt. Brandon White of the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office said of the police protection, “It wasn’t orchestrated. We had a request that they would like to leave the area, and we facilitated.” (tinyurl.com/y4gg6yqk)

In fact, as usual, the cops bailed the fascists out. After the hate groups retreated, anti-racists continued to occupy the area for the rest of the day. They marched through downtown Portland, blocked traffic and took some arrests from the heavy police occupation. Later on, anti-racists repelled some individual attacks from frustrated bigots who came back over the bridge.

The fascistic demonstrators tend to show up at demonstrations with guns and other weapons, but the Portland anti-fascist movement has dealt with that before. The resilient, multinational, mostly young crowd was courageous, putting their bodies on the line in the great struggle against racism and bigotry.

When racism is finally defeated, the pillars of capitalism will begin to crumble and fall, because the workers will be united. And the workers united will never be defeated. □



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Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

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

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Im/migrant rights activists fight ‘transportation checks’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Since the first year of the Trump administration, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has questioned and detained bus and train travelers with increasing frequency.

Mercedes Phelan was profiled by the CBP while riding a Greyhound bus in Pennsylvania in April 2018 and again ten months later on an Amtrak train in Syracuse, N.Y. In a June 5 NBC interview, Phelan, who is Black and Puerto Rican, said: “I was super angry because [they were] obviously profiling. They literally skipped over every single white person,” stopping only at people of color to ask: “Are you from here? Do you have papers?” (tinyurl.com/yxjsb3xs)

These searches are conducted all over the U.S. and happen as often as three times a day at some Northern bus stations. In the past few weeks, CBP agents have been at Greyhound bus stations across Miami-Dade and Broward counties in Florida, asking riders for “proof of legal status.” On July 12, immigrant activists posted an alert that Immigration and Customs Enforcement was checking identification at the 1, 2, 3 subway lines at

72nd Street in New York City.

The CBP interprets its authority to stop, question and search “within a reasonable distance from any external boundary of the United States” as permissible within 100 miles of any land or water U.S. border, north or south. This is a massive area that contains more than half the U.S. population and includes all of New England and Florida and most of New York state.

So-called “transportation checks” aren’t new. Immigrant rights groups have struggled against them for years, with the American Civil Liberties Union and activists describing the checks as unlawful racial profiling as far back as 2011.

Movement grows to keep CBP/ICE off buses

Immigrant rights activists are fighting back against CBP harassment and arrests on planes, trains and buses. The Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network and the Rochester Rapid Response Network regularly post up-to-the-minute Facebook warnings for travelers.

Recent alerts include: “Video taken by our member [RRRN], April 16, at the Amtrak Depew Station. nearest to Buffalo, N.Y. Border Patrol boarded the train and

harassed and racially profiled passengers. They detained one passenger. Member ensured passengers knew their rights and told the person being detained they didn’t have to answer questions.” “July 18, Border Patrol present at the Rochester Airport. CBP is checking ID with TSA agents.” “July 31, CBP agents standing at turnstile of Rochester Amtrak station.”

The struggle for access to transportation gained a victory in June when the New York state legislature granted undocumented workers the right to a driver’s license. The Workers’ Center of Central New York in Syracuse was central to this “Green Light NY Driving Together/Luz Verde NY Manejando Juntos” campaign. Routine traffic stops regularly lead to arrests and deportations of Black and Brown immigrant workers.

Bus company behemoth Greyhound says it is “forced to comply” and allow CBP and ICE to board, interrogate and arrest passengers. But the ACLU notes that Greyhound actually has “a Constitutional Fourth Amendment right



PHOTO: ROCHESTER RAPID RESPONSE NETWORK

Activists in Rochester, N.Y., have organized to stop Customs and Border Patrol interrogation and arrest of immigrants at transportation centers.

to deny CBP permission to board and search its buses without probable cause or a warrant.” (tinyurl.com/y2xq8aml)

Now, as state attacks on im/migrants accelerate at a brutal rate, the struggle is ramping up to get Greyhound to stop cooperating with ICE and CBP. New national groups like FIRE (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) and the International Workers’ Solidarity Network (IWSN) have joined the fight, saying this racist, anti-immigrant profiling must stop. (See separate article.)

Tell Greyhound: ICE and CBP, off the buses! Sign petition at bit.ly/ICEoffBuses. □

Labor responds to migrant raid, mass shootings

By Sue Davis

After 680 workers were arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on Aug. 7 in the largest immigration raid in U.S. history, targeting seven chicken processing plants in Mississippi, representatives of the labor movement immediately expressed solidarity with the workers and their union, Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) Local 1529. The AFL-CIO, Teamsters and National Employment Law Project noted that these workers prepare food under the most dangerous conditions for employers who knowingly violate labor standards.

Local 1529 is raising money to support the families

“We must stand with the families in Mississippi and our UFCW family to demand and end to family separation, enough is enough. Trump’s administration blatantly continues to dehumanize our communities and belittle the labor of immigrants. In these times we can either idly stand by or do what the Labor Movement does best — organize. We must organize to mobilize, educate, and empower our members, and their families, and their communities,” said Rigoberto Valdez Jr., president of the

United Latinos of the UFCW. (Aug. 8)

Teamsters President James Hoffa’s Aug. 8 statement read in part: “The assault on workers must stop now. We want UFCW members and all our brothers and sisters in the labor movement to know that we support you. Our strength is in our unity, and we are calling for an end to policies that hurt workers and tear families apart.”

Labor statements denounce racism

Texas AFL-CIO President Rick Levy and Secretary-Treasurer Montserrat Garibay issued the following statement Aug. 5: “We are devastated and angry over the deaths of 20 people and injuries of dozens more in the mass shooting in El Paso. ... The related scourges of bigotry, hatred and ultra-powerful guns in the wrong hands must be addressed. ... [I]f all of us would speak out against hatred, against racism, against anti-Semitism, against anti-Muslim attacks, against bigotry wherever we see it, we would make future tragedies less likely. ... We need to take the next step and fight for a consensus to stop the epidemic of hatred and violence.”

The Stand reported Aug. 5 that union delegates from across Washington state “have identified institutional racism as a labor issue and recommitted to fighting it — both inside and outside the labor

movement.” At the 2019 convention of the Washington State Labor Council of the AFL-CIO held July 25-27 in SeaTac, delegates unanimously approved Resolution #30 — entitled “Resolution on Race and the Labor Movement 3.0.” This is “the latest in a series of directives from grassroots rank-and-file union members to advance the WSLC’s ground-breaking efforts to educate union members about the origins and consequences of racism. It notes that unions, which lift wages and working conditions of all workers regardless of color or background, are uniquely positioned to advocate for racial justice and have a responsibility to do so on behalf of not only their members, but also the entire working class.”

National Nurses United, representing 150,000 registered nurses, issued a statement Aug. 4 about the mass shootings in Gilroy, Calif.; El Paso, Texas; and Dayton, Ohio: “The current political climate has fanned the flames of hatred and division, creating fertile ground for white supremacists, racism, and violence,” said NNU President Jean Ross, RN. “We must denounce not only these violent acts, but the rhetoric and policies that denigrate our fundamental belief that all people are entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual

orientation, gender identification, or immigration status.

“As registered nurses, we honor the dignity of each human life and focus on the commonalities that bind us all. Nurses take a sacred oath to care for anyone who needs help, and inherently reject intolerance, racism, hate, and bigotry. ... NNU would like to offer thanks and praise to the first responders who jumped into action as these tragedies unfolded in their communities. We are heartened by the response of those in the communities who have offered their support, their blood, and their energy to aid their neighbors in this time of need.”

All these statements are powerful. They are a real contribution to the need to raise anti-racist consciousness among the membership.

However, what is still needed is action to put some muscle behind strong words. Unions and allies from around the country marched on Canton, Miss., to denounce union busting and racist abuse of workers by Nissan in 2017. Why don’t they come back to Canton, one of the towns raided by ICE, and rally in solidarity with the immigrant union members who were so viciously attacked?

Martha Grevatt contributed to this article.

Tell Greyhound: ICE off our buses!

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of concentration camps along the border — an extension of the system of mass incarceration that imprisons upwards of 2 million workers in the United States, many of whom are Black and people of color. At the same time, a number of U.S. corporations are getting rich off their collaboration and participation in the attacks against migrant workers.

In an effort to divide workers from uniting to fight our true enemies, the small group of Wall Street bankers and the owners of big business, Trump has emboldened the most reactionary elements of

society to come forward and act as foot soldiers in this war. White supremacists have recently carried out nothing short of terrorist massacres targeting Black and Latinx workers in Gilroy, Calif.; El Paso, Texas; and elsewhere. Trump, with his hate-filled rhetoric, is responsible for the horrific mass shootings in California, Texas and Ohio.

The Democratic Party is complicit in this war on migrants, themselves building and operating the massive machinery to carry out mass deportations and raids, and currently offering little to no challenge to the white supremacist forces being mobilized by Trump, or to Trump

himself.

We urge the labor movement to follow the example set by ATU 1700 and other unions which have spoken out and mobilized their memberships in solidarity with migrant workers, reviving in struggle the slogan: “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

Nothing short of a mass mobilization or a general strike of workers is needed to fight against the atrocities being carried out against migrant workers in this period.

We call on all working-class forces to join this campaign to end Greyhound’s collaboration with ICE and to take

any and all opportunity to mobilize in solidarity with migrant workers.

Actions you can take:

1. Sign your name in support: bit.ly/ICEoffBuses.
2. Call Greyhound (214-849-8966) and tell them: ICE, DHS and CBP off our buses! Buses are for transportation, not deportation!
3. Organize or join an action near you. For a list of actions, go to: workersolidarity.net and fightformigrants.org. □

Police department escalates war on Philadelphia

By Ted Kelly
Philadelphia

Kidnappings, robberies, racist and sexist terror, aerial bombings, murder—there is no crime that the Philadelphia Police Department has not committed against the people of this city. It'd been half a century since Frank Rizzo became police commissioner and later realized his goal, as mayor, of creating a white supremacist, anti-communist army. To this day the PPD is one of the most powerful forces in Philadelphia politics. Now, as the capitalist system hurtles toward another devastating crisis, the cops are taking their war on workers to the next level.

On Aug. 14, while purportedly attempting to serve a warrant, police instigated a standoff with North Philadelphia resident Maurice Hill that led to SWAT teams and hundreds of cops occupying the area around Broad Street and Erie Avenue. Cops claim that Hill shot at the police when they entered his property. After negotiations, Hill surrendered to police.

Hill was not the target of the warrant and wasn't even in the house that the police were supposed to search. Although police claim Hill shot at them using a high-powered rifle, all six of the officers who were allegedly hit were released from the hospital after less than an hour.

The situation was reminiscent of the 1978 police siege of the MOVE Organization's house in Powelton Village, when Philly police locked down an entire neighborhood and fired tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition into the residential home. One officer, James Ramp, was hit by friendly fire, and under that pretext the PPD arrested nine MOVE members and framed them for Ramp's murder. Police then demolished the house and rioted throughout West Philadelphia, arresting and terrorizing the Black community.

Residents of North Philadelphia expressed concern that a similar retaliation by police will be forthcoming in the aftermath of Hill's arrest.

The Philadelphia police have a known history of instigating gunfights that often end in death when they serve search warrants. Just last year, police broke into the home of Ricardo Giddings while executing a warrant. Giddings assumed that the police, who did not knock on the door or announce themselves, were invaders and shot at them. They returned fire and killed Giddings. The police commissioner called the incident an "all-out tragedy." No officers were reprimanded or fired. (billypenn.com, Aug. 16)

Just a few days before the unprovoked attack on Hill, cops broke up a block party at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia, a predominantly Black community. Despite organizers' displaying their permit to hold the event, which they paid \$140 to secure, at least 100 cops arrived en masse at 8:30 p.m. with their batons at the ready, ramming community members with their bikes to clear everyone from the park a full hour and a half before it closes. (philadelphia.cbslocal.com, Aug. 11)

It is impossible to deny that these are organized, racist attacks on the Black and Brown residents of Philadelphia, especially after the revelation earlier this summer of thousands of racist, misogynist, Islamophobic social media posts made by current Philly police. As Workers World

reported at the time, "More than 300 Philadelphia police have been exposed as strident racists, based on social media posts revealed by Plain View Project. ... Across the U.S., the project identified problematic postings by about 2,900 current and 600 retired officers." (June 11)

After the expose, the PPD announced its intention to fire 13 officers, though it is not clear whether they have since been let go. Even if they were fired, they make up less than 4 percent of these 328 avowedly racist cops. Also still employed by the police, despite public backlash, is Ian Hans Lichterman, an officer who proudly displays a Nazi tattoo on his forearm.

No officers were charged or even reprimanded for the killing of Brandon Tate Brown, a 26-year-old Black man who was pulled over in 2014 in Northeast Philly, despite video evidence that directly contradicted the police claim that Brown "struggled" with police. This murder by police was also, according to then District Attorney Seth Williams, another "tragedy."

Last month, police attempted to arrest a 25-year-old Black man named Bryant "BJ" Henry at the Broad and Olney subway station in North Philly, just four stops away from where the standoff with Hill took place. Witnesses say that the arresting officers used their Taser on Henry, causing him to fall onto the tracks and hit the electrified third rail, killing him instantly.

As bystanders began to confront the police, a witness who recorded the incident had her phone snatched by police. "There was a girl who was taking video. They went over to her and took her phone, and they trashed it," a witness told the Aug. 1 Philadelphia Inquirer.

Now the PPD is denying everything. They claim that no Taser was deployed and that officers never confiscated or destroyed a witness's phone. They say Henry fell while trying to flee the police and that body camera footage corroborates their narrative. Unsurprisingly, they refuse to release that footage.

Rampant racism by 'progressive' officials

Just one week after the police lynching of Henry, Rutgers University released a study that found getting shot by police to be one of the leading causes of death for Black men in the United States. One of every 1,000 Black men and boys will die at the hands of a police officer in this country. The study also found that police kill Native and Latinx men at a much higher rate than they do white men. Since

2015, 95 people have been killed by police in Pennsylvania alone.

There have also been more than 80 mass shootings in Pennsylvania since 2014, the year Gov. Tom Wolf was elected. But it wasn't until last week, when Hill, a Black man, defended himself from an attack by police, that Wolf was suddenly inspired to launch a statewide "gun control" initiative. This comes as no surprise to those who know the history of gun control advocacy in the U.S., which is largely a response to the arming and self-defense of oppressed communities by groups like the Black Panthers and Brown Berets.

But law-and-order Democrats like District Attorney Larry Krasner, Wolf and Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney consistently defend the white supremacist militia of Frank Rizzo, all the while posing as "progressives."

Kenney campaigned for mayor on the promise of ending stop-and-frisk. He lied. The unconstitutional, aggressive police tactic that overwhelmingly targets youth of color is still in place.

Kenney promised that the statue of Rizzo, in front of the Municipal Services building across from City Hall, will be taken down. But the statue is still standing. It's the equivalent of Birmingham, Ala., boasting of a statue to Bull Connor. Rizzo was endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan in 1978 when he ran his third campaign for mayor under the slogan "Vote White."

Kenney is fond of referring to Philadelphia as a "sanctuary city" that is welcoming to immigrants. But Philadelphia's Immigration and Customs Enforcement office is the most notorious in the entire country, kidnapping and arresting more migrants than any other in the U.S. The Philly ICE office proudly coordinates raids with the PPD.

Krasner, likewise, campaigned as a progressive reformer who would restore the reputation of the corrupt DA's office. (His predecessor, R. Seth Williams, is currently in prison after being indicted for bribery, corruption and fraud.) Yet Krasner alienated his entire progressive base after blocking new appeal rights for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a journalist and former Black Panther who was framed for the murder of a cop in 1981.

Krasner initially withheld evidence from both the courts and Mumia's defense attorneys, then released boxes and boxes of previously concealed evidence after, he claims, stumbling across them when looking for office furniture. Only after a

massive outcry and organized pressure from Mumia's supporters did Krasner drop his attempt to block Mumia's newly granted appellate rights.

Krasner also refuses to turn over video footage of the killing of Khalil Lawal, a 31-year-old man from Arlington, Va., who was shot to death by an off-duty police officer in South Philadelphia in 2018. Lawal's family say surveillance footage clearly shows that he was accosted by white Detective James Powell, who then shot him 15 times at point-blank range. They want the video released to the public.

When confronted by advocates for the family at the Netroots Nation conference in July, Krasner compared Black Lives Matter activists to U.S. President Donald Trump, claiming their supposed lies reminded him of the "misinformation" coming out of the White House.

Krasner even showed up at the Hill standoff to negotiate personally with Hill and his lawyer. He then bragged to the media that he had offered Hill a "phony" plea bargain to get him to surrender. That means that Krasner — Philadelphia's top cop and chief prosecutor — will argue a case in which he is personally a witness against a defendant whom he personally gave fraudulent legal advice to.

How then are we able to confront this racist police force when self-styled "progressives" have proven their eagerness to cooperate with the cops? We must look to the victories we have won, always in spite of politicians. Five of the surviving MOVE 9 members are free because of a decades-long pressure campaign against the parole board and the courts. Mumia Abu-Jamal is no longer on death row because tens of thousands of people marched in the streets to stop his execution. When the people of Durham, N.C., wanted to get rid of a racist statue, they didn't wait for politicians — they tore it down themselves.

The police are servants of capital who catch poor people and lock them in cages. They use their weapons to protect the right of alt-right neo-Nazis to march across town. Cops are at the service of gentrifiers who push Black and Brown people out of their own homes and of elite students in luxury condos who want to feel "safe" as cops trash our streets and harass our family members.

Every day cops walk in and out of Wawa convenience stores to get free coffee and food, while sneering at the homeless people who hold the doors for them and ask for change. Cops humiliate and terrify workers, searching and questioning them on their way home from work or while enjoying a night out. Children don't know if their parents will be kidnapped by Immigration and Customs Enforcement while they're at school, and parents stay awake afraid that their kids might get pulled over.

Our goal must be the total abolition of ICE, prisons and the police. The only road to abolition is through socialism — through the reorganization of society based on worker control of production. To protect ourselves from the attack dogs, we must target the people holding their leashes. That means targeting the capitalists.

But likewise, socialism cannot be achieved without a keen awareness that capitalists can only maintain their control through white supremacy, by sowing division among workers along racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual lines. That's what cops are really paid to do. □



Philadelphia REAL Justice leads demonstrations calling for the abolition of the police and the removal of a statue of racist mayor and police chief Frank Rizzo in August 2017.

WW PHOTO: SCOTT WILLIAMS

No matter the generation

Progressive athletes won't be silenced

By Monica Moorehead

At the height of the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S., in the late 1960s and early 1970s, African-American athletes not only performed on an elite level in their individual sports, they were also politically outspoken on important social issues. The great heavyweight boxer, Muhammad Ali, and amazing sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos helped to pave the way during this electrifying period.

Ali refused to be drafted into the U.S. Army, as he was a conscientious objector. He virtually became an anti-war activist by opposing an imperialist war against the Vietnamese people due to his religious beliefs as an avowed Muslim. He publicly stated, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong" and "No Vietcong ever called me ni--er." Ali also declared, "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam after so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?" (New York Times, June 27, 2017) His words resonated around the world.

Refusing to comply with the draft carried a 5-year prison term and a \$10,000 fine. The prison term was suspended for Ali, but this did not stop the New York State Athletic Commission and the World Boxing Association from stripping his world heavyweight title in 1967 and, therefore, stopping his right to box.

Ali, the most well-known and popular athlete in the world, sacrificed the most productive years of his boxing career to take a principled position against war and racism. For almost four years until the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction, Ali became the most popular outspoken anti-war speaker on college campuses and universities. He was soon regarded as a hero by millions of people.

From Tommie Smith and John Carlos to Colin Kaepernick

During the same time frame, Black athletes were discussing whether to form a coalition to boycott the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City to protest racist repression at home. When the boycott failed to materialize, U.S. sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos carried out a protest of their own at the Olympics. It followed their first- and third-place finishes in the 200-meter-yard dash. While the U.S. national anthem played, they both raised black-gloved fists in the air, the Black Power salute, while standing barefoot on the podium.

The U.S. Olympics Committee then stripped Smith and Carlos of their



Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X

credentials, forcing them to abruptly leave Mexico City to return to the U.S. Even though it was difficult for them to find jobs for years, they refused to apologize or back down from their principled, heroic actions.

A 22-foot-high statue of Smith and Carlos' Olympic protest was erected in 2005 at their alma mater, San Jose State University in San Jose, Calif. Fifty-one years later, their silent but powerful protest inspires new generations of activists because the same issue of white supremacy still dominates all sectors of U.S. capitalist society.

One athlete inspired by Smith and Carlos was Colin Kaepernick, the Black quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers. He decided to take a knee during the playing of the national anthem preceding every National Football League game during the 2016-17 season. In fact, this August marks the third year anniversary of his protest that began during the pre-season.

His motivation for taking this stance was to protest the racist police killings of two Black men, Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, in Minnesota and Louisiana, respectively, within one day of the other in early July 2016. Both brutal murders were captured on videotape. None of the killer cops have been brought to justice.

Kaepernick's protest caught fire among the majority of NFL teams, as multiple players took a knee before each game. Their actions helped to bring new energy to the dynamic Black Lives Matter movement. Soon athletes in other sports — of all genders, gender expressions and ages — followed suit, much to the dismay of the majority-white billionaire NFL owners. Like many rich, capitalist owners in any industry, they had hoped the workers would not make any political demands that challenged the status quo.

Just like Ali had sacrificed his career to raise consciousness for social justice, so had Kaepernick. He not only earned the ire of the deplorable then presidential candidate, Trump, but has been "blackballed" from playing in the NFL since the end of the 2016-17 season. Recently, Jay-Z, the billionaire hip-hop artist, has come under fire for his new partnership with the NFL hierarchy, that represents the interests of the football owners, to promote "social justice" causes that exclude any guarantee that Kaepernick be signed to a team.

What's noteworthy is that Kaepernick put his career on the line during a period that ushered in the extremely reactionary Trump presidential era. So many voters, especially oppressed people, were not excited about voting for Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Since Trump took office, the number of NFL players taking a knee may have declined, but one player in particular has continued the crusade that Kaepernick began. That player is Kenny Stills, the 27-year-old Miami Dolphins wide receiver. He recently made headlines when he openly criticized on Twitter the billionaire Dolphins' owner, Stephen Ross, for hosting a fundraiser for Trump.

Stills told reporters: "It just doesn't make sense to me. It just doesn't align to be running a nonprofit focused on equality and talking about sports and equality and then to be holding a fundraiser for a man that we know isn't standing up for that same cause or championing that same cause." (latimes.com, Aug. 9) Stills said that he has received close to a dozen death threats for criticizing Ross — but that will not stop him from speaking out.



Colin Kaepernick (left) and Kenny Stills (right)

Anti-Trump protests at Pan-Am Games

The movement that Kaepernick sparked was played out at the XVIII Pan-American Games held in Lima, Peru, from July 26 through Aug. 11. Forty-one nations from South America, Central America, the Caribbean and North America participated. Two U.S. gold-medal-winning athletes protested against Trump's policies during the medal ceremonies.

Gwen Berry, a Black hammer thrower, courageously raised her fist and bowed her head during the playing of the national anthem. She stated: "Somebody has to talk about the things that are too uncomfortable to talk about. Somebody has to stand for all of the injustices that are going on in America and a president who's making it worse." (CNN.com, Aug. 12)

Louis Moore, professor of history at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich., and author of "We Will Win the Day: The Civil Rights Movement, the Black Athlete, and the Quest for Equality" told CNN: "Specifically, for Berry, her protest is especially significant because hers first should come as

a reminder that Black women athletes in 1968 were not asked to join the protest leading up to the Games or during the Games. But today, whether we are talking about the WNBA players, Serena Williams, or Gwen Berry, they aren't waiting and they aren't asking. They are using their platform how they see fit." (Aug. 12)

Fencer Race Imboden, who is white, took a knee, to also protest Trump's racism. He pointed out on Twitter, "multiple shortcomings of the United States ... racism, the need for gun control, the mistreatment of immigrants, and a President who spreads hate." (Aug. 9)

Both Berry and Imboden face punitive measures from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which could have repercussions for their participation in the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

Bravely speaking out on sexual abuse

Simone Biles is the 22-year-old reigning world champion gymnast, who won her sixth straight U.S. championship on Aug. 11 in Kansas City, Mo. She is one of the more than 300 survivors of sexual predator Dr. Larry Nassar. He was convicted in February 2018 of seven counts of sexual assault against hundreds of majority female gymnasts. Now adults, they were victimized as children and teenagers.

After one of her dazzling, historic routines, Biles stated, while in tears, that USA Gymnastics "failed" her and her fellow gymnasts when it came to protecting them from Nassar, the team doctor, against sexual abuse. She continued, "It's hard coming here for an organization and having had them fail us so many times. They couldn't do one damn job. You had one job. You literally had one job and you couldn't protect us. Every time I go to the doctor or training, I get worked on, and I don't want to get worked on, but my body hurts. I'm 22." (nbcnews.com, Aug. 8)



Simone Biles

Not to forget Megan Rapinoe. A lesbian, she is the U.S. soccer player who has taken a knee in solidarity with Kaepernick and fought for equal pay for women and gender-oppressed players.

All these multigenerational athletes have refused to shut up and just play sports when it comes to fighting for social equality and protesting against white supremacy and misogyny. □



John Carlos & Tommie Smith with statues of their 1968 protest.



Gwen Berry



Race Imboden kneels.

Follow the money

What’s behind Hong Kong protests?

By Sara Flounders

Aug. 19 — Since this article was written on Aug. 15, hundreds of thousands of Chinese people have demonstrated in support of the People’s Republic of China and against the counterrevolutionary protests in Hong Kong. Almost half a million reportedly marched in Hong Kong on Aug. 18, while thousands of Chinese youth held pro-China demonstrations and confronted right-wing actions in Canada, France, England, Australia, the U.S. and elsewhere.

The demonstrations in Hong Kong, now an open confrontation with the People’s Republic of China, have a global impact. What are the forces behind this movement? Who provides the funds and who stands to benefit?

The increasingly violent demonstrations in Hong Kong are completely embraced and enthusiastically supported in the U.S. corporate media and all the imperialist political parties in the U.S. and Britain. This should be a danger sign to everyone fighting for change and for social progress. U.S. imperialism is never disinterested or neutral.

The disruptive actions involve helmeted and masked protesters using gasoline bombs, flaming bricks, arson and steel bars, random attacks on buses, and airport and mass transit shutdowns. Among the most provocative acts was an organized break-in at the Hong Kong legislature where “activists” vandalized the building and hung the British Union Jack flag.

U.S., British and Hong Kong’s colonial flags are prominent in these confrontations, along with defaced flags and other symbols of People’s China.

The New York Times described the airport shutdown: “The protests at the airport have been deeply tactical, as the largely leaderless movement strikes at a vital economic artery. Hong Kong International Airport, which opened in 1998, the year after China reclaimed the territory from Britain, serves as a gateway to the rest of Asia. Sleek and well run, the airport accommodates nearly 75 million passengers a year and handles more than 5.1 million metric tons of cargo.” (Aug. 14)

U.S. media have consistently labeled these violent actions “pro-democracy.” But are they?

Even if the leaders of these reactionary actions decide to pull back from the brink and recalibrate their tactics, based on the Chinese government’s strong warnings, it is important to understand a movement that has such strong U.S. support.

China has a right to intervene

It must be strongly stated that China is not invading Hong Kong if it moves against these violent disruptions. Hong Kong is part of China. This is an internal matter, and the call for independence for Hong Kong is an open attack on China’s national sovereignty.

Under Hong Kong’s Basic Law, the constitution for the city, the government is legally allowed to request help from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.

The Chinese government has announced that it will intervene militarily to defend China’s sovereignty. Top government officials have labeled the most extreme acts as “terrorism” and denounced U.S. support. Several times officials raised the analogy to the Western “color revolutions” that



July 21 protest in Hong Kong.

violently overturned governments in Serbia, Ukraine, Libya and Haiti and were attempted in Venezuela and Syria.

“The ideologues in Western governments never cease in their efforts to engineer unrest against governments that are not to their liking, even though their actions have caused misery and chaos in country after country in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Now they are trying the same trick in China,” China Daily explained on July 3.

Liu Xiaoming, China’s ambassador to Britain, told reporters that their country was still acting as Hong Kong’s colonial master. (nbcnews.com, July 4)

“A spokeswoman for China’s Foreign Ministry claimed Tuesday that recent comments from American lawmakers [Nancy] Pelosi (D-Ca.) and [Mitch] McConnell (R-Ky.) demonstrate that Washington’s real goal is to incite chaos in the city,” according to CNBC. “By neglecting and distorting the truth, they whitewashed violent crimes as a struggle for human rights and freedom.” (Aug. 14)

Where is U.S. support for other resistance?

Hong Kong police are denounced in the U.S. media for violence, but actually have shown great restraint. Despite months of violent confrontations, with flaming bottles constantly thrown, no one has been killed.

There is no such favorable media coverage or support from U.S. politicians for demonstrations of desperate workers and peasants in Honduras, Haiti or the Philippines, or for the Yellow Vest movement in France. There is never an official condemnation when demonstrators are killed in Yemen or Kashmir or in weekly demonstrations in Gaza against Israeli occupation.

These struggles receive barely a mention, although in every case scores of people have been killed by police, targeted for assassination or disappeared.

While Hong Kong protests receive widespread attention, there is no similar coverage of or political support for Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the U.S. or the masses protesting racist Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and roundups of migrants.

U.S. pressure continues

Despite China’s warnings of possible martial law, strict curfews and military intervention to restore order, protesters have shown no signs of retreat. The U.S. and Britain are determined to propel forward those hostile political forces they have cultivated over the past two decades.

The escalating demonstrations are linked to the U.S. trade war, tariffs and military encirclement of China. Four hundred—half—of the 800 U.S. overseas military bases surround China. Aircraft carriers, destroyers, nuclear submarines, jet aircraft, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile batteries, and satellite surveillance infrastructures are positioned in the South China Sea, close to Hong Kong. Media demonization is needed to justify and intensify this military presence.

Encouraging the demonstrations goes hand-in-hand with international efforts to bar Huawei 5G technology, the cancellation of a joint study of cancer and the arrest of Chinese corporate officers. All these belligerent acts are designed to exert maximum pressure on China, divide the leadership, destabilize economic development and weaken China’s resolve to maintain any socialist planning.

Martial law in Hong Kong, a major financial center, especially for international investment funds coming into China, would impact China’s development.

Capitalist economic ‘freedom’

British imperialism, in the 155 years it ruled Hong Kong, denied rights to millions of workers. There was no elected government, no right to a minimum wage, unions, decent housing or health care, and certainly no freedom of the press or freedom of speech. These basic democratic rights were not even on the books in colonial Hong Kong.

For the past 25 years, including this year, Hong Kong has been ranked No. 1 in the right-wing Heritage Foundation’s list of countries with the “greatest economic freedom” — meaning the least restraints on capitalist profit taking. Hong Kong’s ranking is based on low taxes and light regulations, the strongest property rights and business freedom, and “openness to global commerce and vibrant entrepreneurial climate ... no restrictions on foreign banks.” For this Hong Kong is the “freest society in the world.”

This “freedom” means the world’s highest rents and the greatest gap between the super-rich and the desperately poor and homeless. This is what Hong Kong youth face today. But the youth are consciously being misdirected to blame the city administration for the conditions Hong Kong is locked into under the “One Country, Two Systems agreement.”

An unequal colonial treaty

Hong Kong is stolen land. This spectacular deep water port in the South China Sea at the mouth of the Pearl River, a major waterway in south China,

was seized by Britain in the 1842 Opium Wars. After negotiations with Britain had dragged on through the 1980s, the British imposed another unequal treaty on the People’s Republic of China.

Under the 1997 “One Country, Two Systems” agreement that officially returned Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories to the PRC, Britain and China agreed to leave “the previous capitalist system” in place for 50 years.

China, determined to reassert its sovereignty over land stolen by imperialist invasion, also needed funds for development. Most money in Asia moved through the Hong Kong banking system. So in 1997 China was anxious to reach a smooth transition that would not destabilize the transfer of investment funds into the 99.5 percent of China that had previously been denied development funds. Since the victorious Chinese Revolution in 1949, China had been sanctioned and blockaded from accessing Western investment and technology.

U.S. and British imperialism took full advantage of the 1997 concession that maintained their economic control of the former colony. Their hope was that Hong Kong could serve, as it had in the past, as an economic battering ram into China.

Their hopes were not realized. In 1997 Hong Kong’s gross domestic product was 27 percent of China’s gross domestic product. It is now a mere 3 percent and falling. Much to U.S. and British frustration, the world’s largest banks are now in China and they are state-owned banks.

What confounds the capitalist class, far more than China’s incredible growth, is that the top 12 Chinese companies on U.S. Fortune 500 list are all state-owned and state-subsidized. They include massive oil, solar energy, telecommunications, engineering and construction companies, banks and the auto industry. (Fortune.com, July 22, 2015)

U.S. corporate power is deeply threatened by China’s level of development through the Belt and Road Initiative and its growing position in international trade and investment.

U.S., Britain built a network of collaborators

When Britain and China signed the One Country, Two Systems agreement, all foreign intervention and colonial claims on Hong Kong were supposed to end. Full sovereignty was to return to China.

However, U.S. and British efforts to undercut Hong Kong’s return began in advance of the signing. Just before the transfer of sovereignty, Britain hastily set up, after 150 years of appointed officials, a partially elected, although still mainly appointed, government. They quickly established and funded political parties, composed of their loyal collaborators.

Millions of dollars were openly and secretly funneled into a whole network of protected social service organizations, political parties, media and social media, student and youth organizations, and labor unions established to undercut support for China and the Communist Party of China.

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions receives U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding, along with British support. It promotes “pro-democracy, independent unions” throughout China. The HKCTU was established in 1990 to counter and

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WW Commentary

Solidarity with the people of Kashmir

By Sara Flounders

Workers World Party has always recognized the right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination. WWP considers Kashmir to be an oppressed nation under the rule of India.

At this time, the entire state, called Jammu and Kashmir, is under total lockdown and martial law. The Indian government has more than 600,000 Indian troops in Kashmir. They act as an army of occupation against Kashmir's 14 million people, the majority of them Muslims.

All communications have been shut off, including internet, phones and social media. Schools and markets are closed and millions of people are under complete curfew and incommunicado, not even allowed to go outside. Indian police have opened fire on protest demonstrations in Srinagar, the capital, and other towns and cities. Hundreds have been arrested.

All autonomy was revoked by an Executive Order of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Aug. 5, which has now become Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. This wiped away a decades-old provision that gave Kashmiris special land ownership rights in the area, which is located in a fertile valley between rugged mountains. It will encourage millions of Hindus from India to move into the valley.

Kashmir's population is about 14 million people. Two-thirds of its population are Muslims, making it India's largest Muslim-majority state. Two-thirds of the valley is in India, about one-third in Pakistan, and a very small piece is in China.

Kashmir has been a region of deep dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947, when both countries gained

independence from British colonial domination. India and Pakistan have fought four wars over the status of Kashmir.

British 'divide and rule' legacy

For 100 years, Britain used "divide and rule" tactics that have left a legacy of national, and especially religious, animosity among all the peoples of the Indian subcontinent. The U.S. and Britain have continued to exploit these differences to keep all South Asia divided.

At this time, Modi and his right-wing Hindu nationalist BJP party have a close alliance with U.S. imperialism. Earlier, especially during the war in Afghanistan, it was Pakistan that had a close relation with the U.S. Pakistan is still deeply in debt due to extensive U.S. weapons purchases.

The BJP has also gained the presidency in India. However, it is Prime Minister Modi who wields the power and has used anti-Muslim attacks throughout India to build a base of support among the Hindu majority population. This is similar to the way Trump in the U.S. has whipped up racism, white supremacy and anti-migrant attacks.

Muslims are an oppressed minority in India, with almost 15 percent of the population.

Under British rule of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir was a princely state with a Muslim majority but ruled by a Hindu monarch. This oppressive system was kept in place by Britain's colonial policy.

In 1947, a British partition plan divided the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. Most Kashmiris wanted independence, but the British plan only allowed them the option of being part of either India or

Pakistan, whose competing claims on the region ended in a war.

A United Nations-sponsored plebiscite for the people of Kashmir has been promised since 1948 but has never taken place.

However, Kashmir was supposedly guaranteed a special status of autonomy within India that ensured the

Muslim-majority state its own constitution and independence over all matters except foreign affairs, defense and communications. This status has now been illegally revoked by Modi's declaration.

Demonstrations in solidarity with Kashmir have occurred around the world. □

Philadelphians rally for Kashmir



Dozens of supporters rallied in solidarity with Kashmir at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia Aug. 17. The action was called by the Philadelphia South Asian Collective and was attended by a broad multinational, multigenerational crowd that protested the invasion of Kashmir by India's racist Hindu nationalist government. The action was followed the next day by a banner drop, which disrupted a "Festival of India" event to bring attention to the military incursion. From Kashmir to Palestine, occupation is a crime!

— Report and photo by Ted Kelly



What's behind Hong Kong protests?

Continued from page 6

undercut the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions founded in 1948, which is still the largest union organization with 410,000 members.

The HKFTU suffered years of brutal repression under British colonial rule as it fought for basic protection of workers' rights. A strike organized by the HKFTU shook British colonial rule in 1967. The strike became a citywide rebellion sparked by mass layoffs of workers from the plastic flower factory. British colonial authorities harshly suppressed the uprising, resulting in 51 deaths and hundreds injured and disappeared. The HKFTU supports China and opposes the reactionary demonstrations.

NED funding = CIA support

Allen Weinstein, a founder of the NED, told the Washington Post in 1991, "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA." (Sept. 21, 1991) The NED funds, coordinates and weaponizes nongovernmental organizations and social organizations with the capacity to put tens of thousands of misdirected, idealistic and alienated youth on the streets.

Funding from the NED, the Ford, Rockefeller, Soros and numerous other corporate foundations, Christian churches of every denomination, and generous British funding, is behind this hostile, subversive network orchestrating the Hong Kong protests.

The NED bankrolls the Hong Kong Human Rights Movement, the Hong Kong Journalists Association, the Civic Party, Labor Party and Democratic Party. They are members of the Civil Human Rights Front that coordinates the demonstrations.

This role of the NED in China is increasingly harder to obscure. Alexander Rubinstein reported in "American Gov't, NGOs Fuel and Fund Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Protests" (mintpressnews.com, June 13): "It is inconceivable that the organizers of the protests are unaware of the NED ties to some of its members." (tinyurl.com/y6nhmapz)

The goal is to promote a hostile and suspicious attitude toward China and toward communism and to foster the false concept of a past democratic Hong Kong with a distinct identity. China Daily warns: "In recent years, there have been warnings that color revolutions are emerging as a new form of warfare employed by the West to destabilize certain countries." (Aug. 12)

Which system works better?

The Aug. 13 New York Times refers to Hong Kong as a "bastion of civil liberties" to counter "Beijing's brand of authoritarianism."

British colonial past is deeply mythologized. Twenty-two years of constant nostalgia for this past, supposedly glorious time has influenced increasingly impoverished youth.

Despite decades of multimillion-dollar

Western funding, Hong Kong has a poverty rate of 20 percent (23.1 percent for children) compared to less than 1 percent in mainland China. In the past 20 years, mainland China has lifted countless millions of people out of poverty

Just across the river from Hong Kong sits the city of Shenzhen. It is one of the Special Economic Zones established to lure Western technology. These zones, originally with thousands of labor-intensive factories and millions of workers earning low wages, were centers of capitalist exploitation and enormous profits for U.S. and other global capitalists.

Shenzhen grew from a city of 30,000 in 1979 to a megacity of 20 million, with the largest migrant population in China. Shenzhen had a population three times the size of Hong Kong. With investments via Hong Kong, this new city became a massive polluted factory town with sweatshops spewing out clouds of dark toxic smoke.

In the past five years, through city and national urban planning, Shenzhen is today one of the most livable cities in China, with extensive parks, tree-lined streets and the largest fleet of electric buses in the world (16,000), along with all-electric cabs. Shenzhen aims to have 80 percent of its new buildings green-certified by 2020. It is full of apartment blocks, office towers and modern factories with advanced equipment manufacturing, robotics, automation and giant tech startups.

For the last 10 years wages have been

stagnant in Hong Kong while rents have increased 300 percent; it is the most expensive city in the world. In Shenzhen, wages have increased 8 percent every year, and more than 1 million new, public, green housing units at low rates are nearing completion.

The U.S. is demanding that China abandon state support of its industries, the ownership of its banks and national planning. But contrasting the decay, growing poverty and intense alienation in Hong Kong with the green vibrant city of Shenzhen across the river shows that there are two choices for China today, including the angry forces mobilized in Hong Kong: modern socialist planning or a return to the super-exploitation and imperialist domination of the colonial past.

For decades Britain and the U.S. used the people of Hong Kong for cheap labor. Now they are using the same population for cheap political propaganda. This cynical maneuver is just one more weapon in a desperate effort to disrupt China's further development.

U.S. corporate power is incapable of meeting any of the desperate needs for housing, health care, education and a healthy environment for people here. Instead, in a relentless drive for profits, enormous resources are squandered on militarism to threaten countries around the world.

**We must demand:
U.S. Hands Off China!
U.S. Out of Hong Kong!** □

On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

Alaska ferry workers win strike

More than 400 ferry workers at Alaska Marine Highway began picketing when their ships arrived in port on July 24. These workers help run the Marine Highway system that connects 30 remote communities and islands across the state. The Inlandboatmen’s Union, an affiliate of the Longshore and Warehouse union (ILWU), represents the largest group of workers.

The IBU ferry workers were fighting pay cuts and a higher health care contribution demanded by Gov. Mike Dunleavy, who had already slashed ferry funding by 75 percent earlier this year and keeps pushing for privatization. (IBU memo, July 26) “We tried to work with the state, but we’re just beating our heads against the wall,” a union official told USA Today, calling the strike a last resort. (July 24) Their last contract expired in 2017, and the workers have been operating under interim contracts since then.

Solidarity from major unions and a support demonstration July 29 in Bellingham, Wash., where one ferry docks, helped win the strike. IBU reached a tentative agreement Aug. 2 for a three-year contract (one year was all the state had offered). Though their pay will still be frozen at 2017 levels, the workers will get a 1.5 percent increase in 2020 and 2021. And while the workers will begin contributing to their health plan in 2021, they will not automatically lose coverage when they’re not working, and they will no longer have to pay for hotels out of pocket. (Reuters, Aug. 2) This is the first IBU ferry worker strike since 1977 and a partial win!

Mass. plant strike brings company back to table

The workers at the Kennametal Tap & Die plant in Greenfield, Mass., ignited a three-day warning strike Aug. 11 to protest management’s contract demands for forced overtime, significantly increased deductibles for health insurance plans, no living wage increases and a steady flow of exploited temporary workers. Contract negotiations started in March. United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 274, which has represented the workers since 1941, put forward solid proposals for fair wage increases, but Kennametal refused to budge. The union subsequently filed charges of unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board. In April, the workers unanimously agreed to strike if negotiations stalled.

Kennametal is a ridiculously profitable company that received \$2.4 billion in revenue in 2018. That same year, President/CEO Christopher Rossi was given a total package of more than \$5.7 million in salary and stock options, including a \$500,000 bonus. (UEunion.org, Aug. 12) The community and other unions are siding with the workers — rallying with them and dropping off food, coffee and donuts. Restaurants are providing discounted pizza and more. (Greenfield Recorder, Aug. 14)

On Aug. 15, the company agreed to return to the bargaining table Aug. 20-21. If the union doesn’t get a reasonable deal, the workers vow they’ll return to the picket line. (#Union Strong, Aug. 15)

Amazon workers in Minn. win new strike

The latest strike by part-time, unorganized Amazon workers occurred at a delivery center in Eagan, Minn., on Aug. 8. This time it wasn’t about job safety, work conditions or religious freedom, but about lack of parking, which caused workers to be late punching in. Appeals to management were ignored for months. Then the bosses issued an ultimatum that double-parked cars would be towed and owners fined \$350 if cars blocked vans and shuttles.

The angry workers immediately walked out, vowing not to go back until the situation was addressed. Near midnight that day, Amazon issued a statement that it would provide additional parking across the highway where workers could punch in and that it would cover towing fees already incurred. (gizmodo.com, Aug. 8) There is nothing like a strike to grab the bosses’ attention!

Airline catering workers arrested for protesting low pay

Some 58 airline catering workers, represented by UNITE HERE, blocked intersections near American Airlines’ headquarters in the Dallas-Fort Worth airport and were arrested during a protest over pay so low they can’t afford health benefits. The union says one in four workers hired by catering contractor LSG Sky Chefs earns less than \$12 an hour. The union is pressuring American, Delta, United and other airlines to pay more to catering companies so they can improve pay and benefits for workers. UNITE HERE, which represents 11,000 LSG workers, is targeting American because it’s LSG’s biggest customer.

Bobby Kirkpatrick, a truck driver who flew in from Charlotte, N.C., for the protest, said he makes less than \$16 an hour after 38 years. “American squeezes Sky Chefs so much, and then [Sky Chefs says] they can’t pay us as much.” (DallasNews.com, Aug. 13) □

Argentina

Pre-elections indicate pro-imperialist defeat

By John Catalinotto

It is rare that primary elections hit the news cycle like a thunderclap. Yet political observers across Latin America see the Aug. 11 primary in Argentina as indicating a continental shift, reversing the right-wing wave in that region. Some even call it a setback for Donald Trump.

Mauricio Macri had won the 2015 elections in the second round by a narrow margin against the opposition, a continuation of the Cristina Fernández de Kirchner government but moving rightward. Its candidate, Daniel Scioli, aroused no enthusiasm among the left.

Macri’s regime has been lined up internationally with U.S. President Donald Trump, Brazil’s Jair Bolsonaro and Colombia’s Iván Duque against Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Cuba. He turned the Argentine economy over to the International Monetary Fund. In turn, the IMF tried to guarantee Macri’s reelection, with a \$57 billion loan that it hoped would avoid a default on Argentina’s debt.

Under Macri’s government during the last three years, the number of people living in poverty has expanded, jumping to 35 percent in the last few months, while the purchasing power of workers has plunged. His regime has closed schools, cut health services and allowed homeless people to freeze.

This year Macri’s main opponent, The Front for All, is running Alberto Fernández for president and Kirchner, who was president from 2007 to 2015, for vice president.

Because most parties had only one set of candidates for the upcoming presidential elections in October, the Aug. 11 primary took the form of a popular poll of the parties. Observers expected Macri’s party, Together for Change, to come in a

close second to the moderate opposition party, the Front for All, maybe losing by 4 points but still in a position to contend.

Vote crushes Macri

Instead, the opposition trounced Macri’s party by 48 percent to 32 percent (percentages were rounded off). While nothing is guaranteed, the 16-point spread indicates an electoral victory for the opposition in the first round, even if most of the remaining 20 percent were to shift to Macri.

A more left-wing, pro-working class and anti-imperialist coalition called the Left and Workers’ Front got 3 percent of the vote, enough to play a political role.

Analyzing this election, Argentine Marxist Claudio Katz wrote, “Macri promoted resentment against the poor, but triggered massive rejection of the ruling elite. He tried to rebuke the past decade [of Kirchnerism] and consolidated the people’s indignation with the overwhelming current role of his administration.” (lahaine.org/katz, Aug. 19)

Macri’s own reaction to the vote indicates a certain panic. Macri said on Aug. 14 that he will cut income taxes for workers and increase subsidies for social services. Given the turmoil in the economy, this is too little, too late. Brazil’s ultra-rightist Bolsonaro, in his usual exaggeration, also warned of massive Argentine migration to Brazil should Kirchner’s party win, calling her a Bolivarian — a form of red-baiting.

A mere electoral change is insufficient to bring a real reversal of right-wing policies as long as imperialist and capitalist wealth controls the economy. However, such a change can encourage mass actions in Argentina, especially in the period between now and the Oct. 27 election. A day of protest is set for Aug. 22, which will give an indication of the struggle’s direction. □

Negotiations discuss military/civilian mix in Sudan regime

of much of the state apparatus.

Negotiations have been especially strained since June 3 when TMC-controlled forces violently dispersed a mass sit-in demonstration in Khartoum, Sudan’s capital. The attacks caused the death of 127 people and injured about 700 protesters and others.

After talks on July 15, the Sudanese Communist Party, which had been involved in the civilian coalition, announced it would refuse participation in the transitional government. The SCP blamed this choice on the TMC’s decision to withdraw from points to which they had previously agreed.

The civilian coalition and Sudan Call — another alliance which includes armed rebels — had rejected the proposals of the TMC. In relation to the expected Constitutional Declaration, the SCP continues to call for mass mobilizations, according to statements on the SCP Facebook site.

The SCP remains concerned that the currently configured transitional government will not meet the people’s demands to withdraw Sudan’s troops from the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led war on Yemen,

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Portland teach-in

Bolivarian revolution and Black liberation

By Lyn Neeley
Portland, Ore.

Portland's Hands Off Venezuela PDX sponsored a Skype teach-in on Aug. 17 with Dr. Layla Brown-Vincent, an assistant professor of Africana Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, who spoke about the role of racism in Bolivarian Venezuela to a room of 25 Oregonians. She said, "Just as Haiti was a stronghold of Black liberation in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and Cuba became a beacon of global struggle for Black/African liberation in the 20th century, Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution ... is the most earnest attempt to facilitate Black liberation of our time."

Brown-Vincent recalled the 2017 murder of Orlando Figuera, a 21-year-old

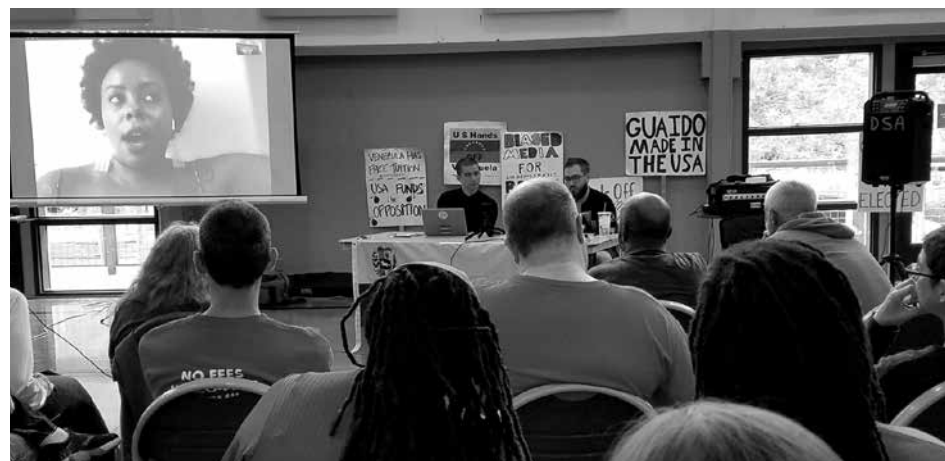
grocery worker, caught in the middle of opposition protesters in Venezuela. Figuera was doused with gasoline and burned to death while right-wing white supremacists yelled: "Hey Black guy, are you a Chavista? You see what happens to Chavistas?"

She noted that nearly 54 percent of Venezuela's citizens are of discernible African ancestry. "Afro-descended people's realities have become more visible since 2002, and their realities increasingly inform the political rhetoric/agenda of the Bolivarian Revolution, making Blackness synonymous with the people, socialism and Chavismo—while whiteness is synonymous with capitalist exploitation, anti-Blackness and the anti-people counterrevolution led by the opposition."

Brown-Vincent called opposition

leader Juan Guaidó a white supremacist who is part of the U.S.-led drive to maintain racial capitalism across the globe.

Backed by the U.S., Guaidó attempted to declare himself president of Venezuela in January. □



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY

Dr. Layla Brown-Vincent (on screen) is an assistant professor of Africana Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

New power outage in Caracas

By Marco Teruggi
Caracas

Published in pagina12.org.ar on July 24. Translation by Michael Otto.

The people of Caracas woke up on July 23 with the uncertainty that power outages bring. The electrical system in most areas of the capital had already been restored, but the morning was marked by the loss of power for a few hours in different sectors. The government declared it a no-work day. The metro [transportation] service was disabled due to electrical instability, and the people were busy, as always after outages, buying food and refueling with gasoline.

At 2 p.m., Minister of Electric Power Freddy Brito provided information about the restoration of "100 percent power in most of the states of the country." The power outage had occurred at 4:45 p.m. on the previous day, July 22, so it continued for less than 24 hours in Caracas and elsewhere in the country. The reality in the capital contrasts with that in many states. In Caracas, there have been [four] outages since the beginning of the year, while in such states as Zulia, Lara and Táchira power outages occur daily.

Sabotage hits Guayana, main power provider

Minister of Communication Jorge Rodríguez charged that the outage occurred as an attack: "The first indications received from the investigation point to the existence of an electromagnetic attack that sought to affect the hydroelectric generation system of Guayana, the main provider of this service in the country."

According to Rodríguez, this was a new attack on the national electrical system, [unlike] those which had been condemned by the national government on previous occasions — particularly the biggest power cut which began on March 7 and lasted for several days. He announced that the recovery would be rapid because "protection and security protocols" had been implemented after the apparent attacks.

Right-wing opposition forces blamed the [Venezuelan] government for what happened. The same message came from the United States, where Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, a leader in the strategy against the Nicolás Maduro government,

affirmed that the cause of the outage was "the regime."

There was tension in the streets due to the breadth of the outage and particularly its timing. It hit as people were heading home and as night gradually arrived. This meant it directly impacted transportation and caused uncertainties for workers and



PHOTO: PAGINA12.COM.AR

A Caracas resident returns home with groceries during the middle of the power outage.

their families. However, along with this, in the corners of working-class neighborhoods, there was calmness and resignation, as conversations went on.

Caracas displayed the usual attitude in the face of difficulty. The government activated emergency transport services, and cars lined up at points in the city where residents knew there was a telephone signal when power cuts occur.

In that context, [opposition leader] Juan Guaidó completed six months since his self-proclamation [to replace President Maduro] on July 23. He called for a public session of the National Assembly at one of the usual concentration points of anti-Chavismo in Caracas. Attendance at the activity was small; it was representative of the traditional sectors of the Venezuelan right wing. Popular groups were absent.

At that event Guaidó announced the [National Assembly's] approval for Venezuela to join the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the pact for inter-American mutual defense [the so-called "Rio Treaty" of 1947] from which Venezuela withdrew in 2012 along with Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador. IATRA opens the door to the request for the formation of a coalition of inter-American forces to carry out military intervention. (TelesurTV.net, July 24)

There are elements in the government's opposition who say an action by foreign military forces is the only way [for them] to get out of the crisis. They have been demanding the National Assembly's approval for several weeks. Guaidó has gone back and forth in his arguments regarding the implications of IATRA, pos-

U.S. aims clear: Oust Maduro

It is not yet known what the possible points of the agreement would be if an accord was reached. One of the key sticking points is whether or not Nicolás Maduro remains as president. U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela Elliot Abrams, stated in an interview on July 22, "The notion that Maduro might remain president to preside over free elections ... is laughable." (state.gov/on-the-record-briefing-2)

Abrams' rhetoric asserts not only the need for President Maduro to stand down for a possible presidential election, but to step aside prior to an election.

Meanwhile, President Maduro called on the apparatus of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) to prepare for elections to form a new legislative body, something he has talked about for several months. No Chavista leader has contemplated presidential elections thus far. Diosdado Cabello, president of the National Constituent Assembly, asserted his disagreement with that possibility.

The following elements are developing simultaneously along with the Barbados talks: The government condemns the power cut as a new attack, the IATRA card, and the U.S. reconnaissance plane which was intercepted by two Sukhoi fighter planes after an unauthorized incursion into Venezuelan airspace on July 20. Also, the recent [July 20] meeting of the 120 governments of the Non-Aligned Movement recognized Maduro and opposed the U.S. blockade.

The negotiations don't interfere with how the other variables serve to shape the correlation of forces for a possible accord. □

Negotiations in Sudan

Continued from page 8

to withdraw from agreements with AFRICOM (the U.S. Africa Command, which is responsible for military relations with 53 African nations) or to prevent the CIA from operating in Sudan.

Further, the TMC has withdrawn from agreements that would empower civilian bodies to investigate allegations against members of the Rapid Support Forces. The people have the right to demand a security force that acts on behalf of the

people and not for their own opportunistic purposes nor for the defense of imperialist interests.

Members of the SCP also express concern that the transitional government will refuse to provide measures to ensure that the people have access to bread. They say this government will fail to build organizations capable of responding to new waves of economic crises that further worsened when some areas of Sudan recently experienced deepening food shortages and extensive flooding. □

Make the country hate again—yet again

“Make America great again” — the catchphrase of the current president and the fascistic movement he represents — has really always meant “hate again.” No oppressed group has been spared from the vile acts and statements emanating from the White House every day.

People of color, im/migrants, Muslims, women and other oppressed genders, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ2S+ community have all seen their hard-fought rights rolled back — as has the working class as a whole.

Many in the LGBTQ2S+ movement are incredulous about an Aug. 15 op-ed piece in the Washington Post by the president and vice president of the Log Cabin Republicans, who endorse Donald Trump for reelection in 2020. Robert Kabel and Jill Homan praised Trump for “taking bold actions that benefit the LGBTQ community.”

Well, that’s a mountain of equine excrement if there ever was one!

The day after the op-ed appeared, BuzzFeed reported: “The Trump

administration on Friday took one of its most aggressive steps yet to legalize anti-transgender discrimination by telling the Supreme Court that federal law allows firing workers solely for being transgender.” (Aug. 16)

That happened just two days after the Department of Labor granted federal contractors permission to practice workplace discrimination — as long as it’s based on religion. This has widespread implications for millions of workers employed by thousands of entities that contract with the federal government.

‘Bold actions’ indeed!

These two outrages are the latest in a series of anti-LGBTQ2S+ actions, including the military ban on trans people, removing trans-specific health care benefits from the Affordable Care Act, giving federal agencies and medical providers a religion-based license to discriminate, denying visas to same-sex partners of foreign diplomats, and removing trans youth and students from Title IX sex

discrimination protections.

Trump rescinded a Barack Obama administration memorandum that had interpreted Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on “sex-stereotyping” — that is, discriminating against a worker whose gender identity, gender expression or sexuality conflicts with patriarchal norms. Now the sex discrimination case of a fired trans woman has made it to the Supreme Court and Trump has weighed in on the side of a bigoted funeral home director.

Need more? How about the appointments given to blatantly misogynistic and anti-LGBTQ2S+ individuals like Supreme Court Judges Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who has lavished her Amway fortune on hate groups like Focus on the Family.

These political moves serve to legitimize and encourage the violent hatred that has killed at least 12 trans people this year, most of them women of color.

But Kabel and Homan go on to argue

that LGBTQ2S+ people also benefit from other aspects of the Trump agenda, such as tax cuts and foreign policy. Really? Who benefits from tax cuts for the rich? Who benefits from a bloated military budget? Not working-class queers who shoulder the cost.

Why would any member of an oppressed group go on public record supporting the bigot-in-chief? Because these Log Cabin capitalists have gotten richer under Trump. They are putting their class interests ahead of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

While the world’s most influential newspapers like to give ink to the gay elite, the real conversations are happening in the streets. Anti-corporate, anti-police alternative Pride events have taken place all over the country, from Austin, Texas, to Columbus, Ohio, to a march of 40,000 in New York City.

Queer youth, especially queer youth of color, see no future under the capitalist system of exploitation — and are rising up against it.

In defense of Palestine

The issue of occupied Palestine once again took center stage in the world press when two women members of the congressional Squad — Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) — were initially denied the right to enter Israel by its fascistic Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Aug. 15, at the urging of white supremacist U.S. President Donald Trump.

Just last month at a xenophobic rally in North Carolina, Trump called for these two congresspeople, along with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), to be “sent back” to their countries of origin in response to their criticism of Trump’s racism toward migrants.

It was the first time that U.S. congressional representatives were denied the right to visit Israel. Why now?

Netanyahu explained the denial in a statement: “As a free and vibrant democracy, Israel is open to critics and criticism, with one exception: Israeli law prohibits the entry into Israel of those who call for, and work to impose, boycotts on Israel, as do other democracies that prevent the entry of people believed to be damaging to the country.” (New York Times, Aug. 15)

Omar, who is Somali, and Tlaib, who is Palestinian, have especially been

outspoken against the inhumane treatment of the Palestinian people, who have been systematically denied the right to their homeland since the Zionist state of Israel was established in 1947. The two women are also strong supporters of the U.S.-based Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. In fact, Omar introduced a resolution in Congress in support of boycotting Israel and asserting the right of groups to call such actions.

Tlaib has demanded that the money funding Zionist settlements and the Israeli military be spent on providing health care, education and other human needs at home.

In describing their trip to “Palestine,” not “Israel,” the two said they had hoped to meet with an Arab representative in the Israeli-majority Parliament and to pay visits to the occupied territories of Hebron, Ramallah, the West Bank and the Al Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem. Tlaib was also planning to visit her 90-year-old grandmother, Muftiyah Tlaib, who lives in the West Bank.

The denial of entry created opposition within both big business parties, with even Republicans who support Trump saying that the decision would set an unwelcome

precedent for other elected officials and prominent figures planning trips to Israel. Even the extreme right-wing, pro-Zionist American Israel Public Affairs Committee denounced the decision.

This criticism had more to do with trying to protect the decades-long illusion of Israel as being a model of “democracy” in the oil-rich region. In reality, Israel is a racist, white settler regime, a garrison state that protects the superprofits of U.S. imperialism.

Rejecting Netanyahu’s terms

As the denunciations continued to mount, Netanyahu quickly reversed his decision just 24 hours later on Aug. 16, with the provision that Omar and Tlaib not propagate pro-BDS campaigns during their visit.

Tlaib then emphatically stated that she would not go due to Netanyahu’s oppressive restrictions.

Her statement read in part: “The Israeli government used my love and desire to see my grandmother to silence me and made my ability to do so contingent upon my signing a letter — reflecting just how undemocratic and afraid they are of the truth my trip would reveal about what is happening in the State of Israel and to

Palestinians living under occupation with United States support.” (Washington Post, Aug. 16)

Israeli officials are claiming that Tlaib’s rejection of the trip restrictions was just a provocation, trying to give the false impression that anyone who opposes Israel’s policies is either anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish.

The U.S. ruling class, including Democrats and Republicans, is united in its defense of the Israeli state, despite any differences in policies or tactics its members may have with various Israeli rulers.

The fact that Israel received \$3.3 billion in aid this year from the U.S. government, a \$200 million increase from 2018, reflects the strong geopolitical, strategic alliance that has existed between the two countries for more than 70 years.

The movement must continue to defend elected officials, especially those of color, when targeted by the right wing, which relies on divide-and-conquer tactics to maintain the status quo. Groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace have taken principled stances to defend both Tlaib and Omar. Comparing the detention of migrants in the U.S. to the internment of Jewish people in concentration camps during World War II, the groups have been organizing protests inside the U.S.

Detroit
Jewish activists support Congressperson Tlaib



Shabbat observance to support Congressperson Rashida Tlaib.

By Martha Grevatt

About 60 members of Metro Detroit’s Jewish community held a rally and Shabbat service Aug. 16 to support their congressperson, Rashida Tlaib.

Israel recently denied Tlaib permission to meet with Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, along with Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota. Tlaib had also planned to visit her 90-year-old grandmother.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu granted her permission to visit her family on the condition she refrain from voicing support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israeli apartheid. Tlaib refused to abide by these terms, which she called “oppressive.”

“Shabbat is a day for rest and rejuvenation in community,” JVP Action, an arm of Jewish Voice for Peace, explained. “We

invite Rashida to come restore, and to feel our love and support as we gear up for the road ahead. We stand with Rashida as her proud constituents, community and neighbors, together continuing the struggle for freedom, equality, and freedom for all people, from Detroit to Palestine.” (Jewish Voice for Peace, Detroit Facebook page)

“Thank you for lifting up peace, love and justice,” the congressperson told supporters. “I’m proud of my Palestinian roots, and I’m also strong because I grew up in the most beautiful, Blackest city in the country, in the city of Detroit.

“I can’t wait to show my grandmother how I was supported by all of you — it would bring her so much joy. One day we’re going to be able to hear the voices of people like my grandmother, who have not been truly seen or heard.” (jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

Justice for Tymar, abolish prisons

Pensacola People's Assembly gathers

By Devin Cole
Pensacola, Fla.

Over 100 people packed the gymnasium July 26 at the Fricker Community Center in downtown Pensacola, a Black-majority area. The first Pensacola People's Assembly was put on by Pensacola Dream Defenders and began with a march to the community center from the home of Tymar Crawford, a Black man killed by Pensacola police. The march was brief but effective in temporarily shutting down several streets. Once inside, speakers from the community spoke about their experiences as Black people in a police state. Dream Defenders served food and provided child care, exemplifying revolutionary self-determination and community-based organizing.

For the second half of the assembly, Dream Defenders read sections of The Freedom Papers, the official manual outlining their goals as a socialist prison abolition group. Attendees were split into groups and asked what they would do if money were not an issue. Many people discussed dreams they have that really should be a reality, but can't be due to capitalism and the poverty that stems from it. Afterwards there was a discussion of the breakdown of the city of Pensacola's budget. The revelation was that the police received \$32 million, while programs for communities, anti-sexual violence, etc., were given just \$30,000. The Assembly discussed how the money should be reallocated. The consensus was clear: Distribute the money to the



The first meeting of the Pensacola People's Assembly, July 26. WW PHOTO: DEVIN COLE

community — to the masses! This was only the first People's Assembly; there will be more. Demands for justice can be drowned out by reactionary politics and exploitative tourism no more! The masses are rising! □

Austin Pride: FIRE challenges police presence, capitalist cooptation

By Eno
Austin, Texas

With temperatures in Austin creeping just over 100 degrees, Austin Pride kicked off Aug. 10. This year, activists representing Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere showed up at the Texas capitol building's south steps, where the parade took a southern turn down Congress Avenue, saying, "We do not want pigs in our community."

Playing music just behind the mounted cops, FIRE chanted slogans such as "Cops and borders, we don't need 'em. What we want is total freedom!" and "Sexists, Racists, anti-Gay, APD, go away!" Many people came up to show support and to talk about the upcoming action against Greyhound. Austin Police Department's (APD) cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement was also addressed.

Pride, a time of festivities, began June 28, 1970. The original Pride march was the "Christopher Street Liberation Day March," named for the New York City street where the Stonewall Inn — flashpoint for the famous uprising against police brutality — is located. It is a time when LGBTQ2S+ people can freely celebrate themselves out in the open, rather than being rebuked. They are instead put on a pedestal or a float and enjoy a day of celebrating unconventional sexual expression and gender identities, free from the everyday oppressions faced on the streets any other time of the year.

Pride, however, like many other revolutionary movements and icons under capitalism, has increasingly become more and more embedded into the capitalist mainstream. Rather than being a revolutionary display of defiance against a reactionary system that has historically repressed gayness, gender expression or anything that doesn't meet the neat and clearly defined cis heteronormative lifestyle, Pride has become a way for markets to expand into a new demographic. Pride has also become increasingly more policed, with dire consequences for many LGTBQ2S+ folk.

Alcohol companies first to exploit LGBTQ2S+ market

Companies started appealing to gay communities as far back as 1981 with "coded targeting," when Absolut Vodka began running ads in The Advocate and After Dark, two magazines regularly read by gay men. Since then, other companies such as Miller Brewing Co. and Smirnoff have taken the lead in appealing to the gay



August 10 WW PHOTO: TAEGAN

community with marketing schemes. Stereotypes of Dionysian parties, stretching long into the night, filled with debauchery and drugs, have dominated the image of gay life. But clubs were getaway spaces in a time where being out meant being out of a job, or worse, losing your life (as if that's changed much). These companies made one thing clear: What they saw was a new market to exploit.

"If you're not appealing to every minority community, be that racial or in terms of sexual orientation, you're missing out on market share," said senior editor of Adweek Robert Klara. (June 29, 2014) Thus began the assimilation of gay culture into capitalism. In a VinePair article, vice president of Smirnoff Jay Sethi said, "We do know that the Smirnoff brand is category leader with the LGBTQ audience, and we also know that LGBTQ vodka category consumption has grown year over year." (June 8, 2018)

Recent times have seen much more ingratiation between corporate entities and LGBTQ2+ communities. Companies like Apple, Google, Indeed and a host of others have changed their logos to a rainbow alternative during Pride month to claim support for the community, but ultimately, LGBTQ2+ people will never be fully accepted under capitalism.

Leslie Feinberg's "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba" explains how colonialism and class society always tend to suppress gay and trans communities, often through unspeakable violence. (Free download from workers.org/books.) At least 26 trans people, mostly Black, were violently killed in 2018, as reported by the Human Rights Campaign. At least three trans refugees, including Johana Medina Leon, died or were killed shortly after being released from ICE custody.

Austin Pride ingratiates cops, ICE

Austin Pride has been especially sinister. Last year, Austin Pride included an

APD recruitment booth at its annual festival in an effort to make their brutal police force more inclusive. The Austin Police Department is infamously violent. APD murdered a man on July 31 in the midst of a mental health crisis. In 2016, APD shot and killed an 18-year-old unarmed Black man, who was completely naked at the time. And anyone who has ever attended a protest in Austin could attest to the APD's willingness to break necks and leave people without treatment, as happened to someone this writer knows. Recently, it was discovered by Grassroots Leadership that Austin police were in fact collaborating with ICE and providing them with immigration status reports, despite Austin supposedly being a sanctuary city. This year, after the recent mass shooting

in El Paso, Austin Pride announced on its Facebook page that it was going to increase police presence, plainclothed and uniformed, as well as SWAT cops, sheriffs and drones as a "safety measure." It's hard enough for immigrant LGBTQ2+ people to exist in this country, but this is a perfect way to exclude them altogether from the one place they should feel safe and accepted. Not to mention the violent history between police and the LGBTQ2+ community. Pride Austin has not only become a capitalist playground, where it can cost hundreds of dollars to participate in festivities, but a highly militarized one at that. FIRE's action made one thing clear. In the words of an organizer, "We do not want or need our existence justified by just being another marketable demographic — but that our right to exist is intrinsic and that police are a real existential threat to that existence, and we do not want them in our spaces. Needless to say, an event which was once meant to commemorate the Stonewall uprising would doubtless now have [Stonewall Uprising leader] Sylvia Rivera back up in arms." □

Honor Black August! Invest in Workers World!

Did you know the month of August holds special meaning for the Black Liberation struggle? This August marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first ship of Africans brought in chains to the shores of the British colony of Virginia in 1619. That makes it the 400th anniversary of slavery — with its countless injustices, brutality and institutionalized crimes against humanity. These atrocities continue, in this white supremacist, capitalist society, to this day. But August is also a time to celebrate the Black Resistance Struggle: From the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 to the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, from the Underground Railroad of 1800-1865 to the Fugitive Slave Law Convention in 1850, from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 to the March on Washington in 1963, the Watts Uprising in 1965 and last year's National Prison Strike from Aug. 21-Sept. 9. A number of freedom fighters were born in August, including Marcus Garvey, Fred Hampton and Russell Maroon Shoatz, while a number died: W.E.B du Bois; Huey P. Newton and Jonathan Jackson, killed Aug. 7, 1970 while attempting to free the imprisoned

Soledad Brothers, who included his brother, Black Panther leader George Jackson. One year and two weeks later, on Aug. 21, 1971, George was executed by prison guards. His assassination was an important factor leading to the heroic Attica Prison Rebellion in September 1971. We know you depend on Workers World for people's power news — like the fight against the racist, xenophobic, misogynist, anti-LGBTQ2S+ hostility tweeted daily from the "White" House. But Workers World depends on your help to do our job. The WW Supporter Program was founded 42 years ago to help build the only revolutionary socialist paper in the U.S. that's now printed weekly as well as on the web. For a donation of \$75 to \$100 a year or more, members receive a year's subscription, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks, either monthly or once a year, to Workers World and mail them with your name and address to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at workers.org. We're grateful for your help in building Workers World — sign up today!



#TrumpDesbloqueaVenezuela!

FOTO: CLAE

¿Es posible un bloqueo naval de EE.UU. contra Venezuela?

Autor: Redacción Internacional, granma.cu

19 de agosto — El magnate presidente Donald Trump ha insistido en el bloqueo naval como opción a tomar contra la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y, de acuerdo con el portal estadounidense Axios, citado por Misión Verdad, se trataría de un embargo directo a las costas venezolanas “para evitar que los bienes entren y salgan del país”.

Los analistas de Misión Verdad apuntan que “el bloqueo naval a las costas venezolanas haría estallar el conflicto actual y darle un matiz violento, beligerante, netamente militar. Un estado de guerra convencional con tácticas no convencionales, donde los recursos del

Pentágono quizá no darían abasto”, pero con el apoyo de contratistas paramilitares y “aprovechando el estatus de Colombia en capital y despliegue, podría ser una opción” considerada desde Estados Unidos en meses anteriores.

La Casa Blanca ha apostado por una estrategia de sanciones a Caracas que no han tenido los resultados esperados, pues aunque han arreciado las dificultades económicas para el país sudamericano, no han sido suficientes para deponer al gobierno encabezado por el presidente Nicolás Maduro Moros.

A simple vista, la evaluación de un bloqueo podría ser una de las opciones que manejaría Estados Unidos; sin embargo, “para un despliegue militar naval de ese tipo se necesitarían los recursos que

ya están expuestos en otras latitudes, incluidos los de la OTAN”, señala Misión Verdad.

“La filtración de Axios —considera la publicación— lo que promueve es mayor especulación en torno a la situación en Venezuela, con el embargo total a la economía del país”. Es, además, una expresión de las “frustraciones del magnate presidente por no ver a su par Nicolás Maduro fuera de Miraflores” y por los errores del denominado “gabinete Guaidó”, al cual ha apoyado desde el inicio el Gobierno estadounidense y que los ha hecho quedar en ridículo debido, entre otras cosas, a los “intereses financieros personales y transnacionales” que atraviesan a sus integrantes.

“¿De verdad se atreverá la

Administración Trump a darle tiempo político (con elecciones presidenciales en 2020), militar (con varios frentes abiertos en otras latitudes), financiero (compra de armas, financiamiento a contratistas, etc.) para iniciar una operación de ese calibre?”, se pregunta Misión Verdad.

“¿Acaso el Comando Sur puede hacerse cargo del plan? ¿Colombia, Brasil y Guyana se unirían al embargo transfronterizo, totalmente ilegal a la luz de los tratados internacionales? ¿Washington cree que los países que no forman parte del Grupo de Lima y bajo la dirección de Luis Almagro se quedarán callados? ¿Piensa que Rusia, por ejemplo, no rechazaría la medida y apoyaría activamente a su aliado venezolano?” □

Béla Lugosi: De actor a activista y anti fascista

Por Mike Kuhlenbeck

Lugosi nació como Béla Ferenc Dezső Blaskó el 20 de octubre de 1882, en Lugos, Reino de Hungría, Austria-Hungría (ahora Lugo, Rumania), a 50 millas del castillo de Vlad III (Vlad Drácula). El joven Lugosi se sentía atraído por las artes. Manifestó sus inquietudes teatrales a su padre, un banquero conservador, quien rechazó la decisión profesional de su hijo. Siendo ya un espíritu rebelde, Lugosi escapó de su casa a los 12 años para seguir sus sueños.

Después de trabajar como minero y maquinista, Lugosi hizo su debut en el escenario a los 20 años en 1902, adoptando el nombre artístico de Béla Lugosi el año siguiente. Los críticos lo llamaron “el Laurence Olivier de Hungría”, y fue invitado a formar parte del Teatro Nacional de Budapest.

Durante la Primera Guerra Mundial, Lugosi se enlistó en el ejército austro-húngaro y obtuvo el rango de capitán en la 43ª División de la Patrulla de Esquí. Fue herido en combate. Una vez que terminó su servicio regresó a la actuación.

En la medida en que el cine ganaba popularidad como una forma de arte, Lugosi protagonizaba algunas de las primeras películas mudas de Hungría. Permaneció en la compañía del Teatro Nacional hasta 1918, año en que acudió al llamado de la revolución obrera.

La vida cotidiana en Hungría era una pesadilla de la cual pocos podían escapar. Desde hacía tiempo Lugosi protestaba por los bajos salarios, la explotación laboral y el trato injusto a los jóvenes actores. Pronto se dio cuenta de la influencia que podían tener los artistas en las luchas políticas.

Hungría: partidario de la revolución de 1919

Lugosi apoyó al partido húngaro comunista, fundado en diciembre de 1918, y a su líder, Béla Kun. Siguiendo el ejemplo de la Rusia revolucionaria, una insurrección de masas derrocó al antiguo régimen comprometido con la clase dominante. La República Soviética Húngara fue fundada el 21 de junio 1919.

Mientras las banderas rojas de la nueva república ondeaban sobre el edificio del Parlamento por solo 133 días, el gobierno de Kun introdujo la primera protección jurídica para las minorías étnicas, la jornada laboral de ocho horas y salarios nacionales más altos.

Lugosi encabezó una manifestación de actores en marzo de 1919 perfilándose ya como un organizador de alto nivel. Jugó un papel decisivo en la fundación de la Organización Libre de Trabajadores Teatrales, que más tarde se convirtió en el primer sindicato de actores de cine en el mundo, el Sindicato Nacional de Actores.

Don Rhodes escribió en Lugosi: Su vida en el cine, en el escenario y en los corazones de los amantes del horror que “Lugosi ayudó a concertar la unión de la Organización Libre de Trabajadores Teatrales y de los miembros del Sindicato Nacional de Actores (NTUA, por sus siglas en inglés) y actuó como su secretario general”.

El Primer congreso estatutario del NTUA inició el 17 de abril de 1919. El discurso de Lugosi decía: “Hace medio año inicié la lucha con la convicción de que debe establecerse el Sindicato Nacional de los Actores Socialistas” (Arthur Lenning, “The Immortal Count: The Life and Films of Béla Lugosi” — El Conde inmortal: La vida y películas de Béla Lugosi).

Entre los artículos de Lugosi publicados en Színész Lapja (La página del actor) hubo uno que analizaba la explotación de los actores:

“La anterior clase dominante mantuvo a la comunidad de actores en la ignorancia a través de diversas mentiras, la corrompió moral y materialmente y, finalmente, la despreció y desprestigió por el resultado de sus propios vicios”. El actor, que subsistía desmoralizado y con salarios de hambre, muchas veces y de mala gana, tuvo que ponerse a disposición de la clase dominante. “Martirio fue el precio a pagar por el frenesí de actuar”.

Poco duraron los sueños de una nueva nación; el 6 de agosto de 1919 la República Soviética Húngara fue derrocada. El historiador Eugen Weber, autor de Las variedades de fascismo: Doctrinas de la revolución en el siglo XX, describió

al nuevo régimen como un «gobierno altamente conservador con un gabinete ministerial de aristócratas adiestrados en su mayoría por grandes terratenientes magnates”.

A medida que el brutal contragolpe del “Terror Blanco” barrió el país, Lugosi huyó a Viena, posteriormente estuvo una temporada en Berlín, donde trabajó en la industria de cine alemana. En diciembre de 1920 emigró a los Estados Unidos.

Mientras tanto, en Hungría, miles de comunistas y judíos fueron encarcelados, torturados y/o asesinados. Los comunistas llevaron una existencia precaria bajo tierra y emergieron solo después de que el Ejército Rojo entró a Hungría en 1944.

Organizador sindical, voz contra el fascismo en EE.UU.

Después de desembarcar en Nueva Orleans, Lugosi aprendió inglés y se fue a Nueva York, donde continuó actuando. En 1927, creó el personaje del Conde Drácula para la versión teatral de Broadway de la novela de Bram Stoker. En 1931, repitió el papel para una adaptación cinematográfica, convirtiéndose en una estrella internacional.

Durante la Gran Depresión, Lugosi desempeñó un papel activo en el Sindicato de Actores de Cine (SAG, por sus siglas en inglés). Como miembro fundador del SAG, fungió como miembro del consejo consultivo del sindicato. Lugosi organizó el sindicato en el set de “The Raven”, que coprotagonizó con Boris Karloff, un miembro del SAG famoso por representar al monstruo de Frankenstein, en 1935.

En la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el dictador húngaro Miklos Horthy se alió con Adolf Hitler y los nazis. En oposición, Lugosi ayudó a formar el Consejo Húngaro-Americano para la Democracia, y pidió que “el nazismo sea eliminado en todas partes”.

Como miembro de la Organización de Ayuda Humanitaria Húngaro-Americana, Lugosi fue el orador principal en un mitin



el 28 de agosto de 1944 en Los Ángeles. Exigió a Washington rescatar a los refugiados húngaro-judíos, presionar al régimen nazi de Horthy y flexibilizar las restricciones de inmigración.

El Dr. Rafael Medoff y J. David Spurlock escribieron: “Pudo haber representado a villanos salvajes en la pantalla de plata, pero en la vida real Béla Lugosi alzó su voz en protesta por la persecución brutal de los judíos en su Hungría natal” (Libro mayor judío, 3 de enero de 2011).

Años de encasillamiento condujeron a menos papeles actoriales para Lugosi. La falta de ingresos combinado con una adicción a la morfina inducida por dolencias físicas, lo dejaron casi en la miseria. Lugosi murió en su casa de Los Ángeles el 16 de agosto de 1956. Fue enterrado con una de sus capas de “Drácula”.

Lugosi es recordado por su trabajo en papeles protagónicos y secundarios en más de 100 películas. Pero sus contribuciones a la lucha por los derechos de los trabajadores y la causa antifascista deben recordarse como parte de su legado inmortal.

El actor húngaro Béla Lugosi fue coronado como el «Príncipe de las Tinieblas de Hollywood» por su interpretación del vampiro Conde Drácula en varias películas. Pero hoy en día pocas personas saben que fue un líder sindical y antifascista que luchó contra monstruos de la vida real.

Referencias adicionales: Stephen J. Lee, “European Dictatorships 1918-1945”. Traducción al español para Jerónimomx de Ximena Atristain López y publicado por jeronimomx.info, del artículo en Workers World, 5 de marzo de 2019.